

THE MULTIPLE EMPIRES OF MEN: IVA ŠMÍDOVÁ INTERVIEWS JEFF HEARN

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Jeff Hearn is Guest Research Professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, based in Gender Studies, Örebro University, Sweden; professor of Sociology at the University of Huddersfield, UK; professor at Hanken School of Economics, Finland; and UK Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences. He has published extensively on such areas as sociology, social policy, gender, men and masculinities, sexuality, violence, organisations, management, ICTs, and cultural studies. His current research focuses on men, gender relations, organisations and organising, and transnational patriarchies and processes, along with violence and autoethnography. He is co-managing editor of the *Routledge Advances in Feminist Studies and Intersectionality* book series, and co-editor of *NORMA: International Journal of Masculinity Studies*. His many books include *The Gender of Oppression* (1987), *'Sex' at 'Work'* (with Wendy Parkin, 1987/1995), *Men in the Public Eye* (1992), *Men as Managers, Managers as Men* (co-edited with David Collinson, 1996), *The Violences of Men* (1998), *Gender, Sexuality and Violence in Organizations* (with Wendy Parkin, 2001), *Handbook of Studies on Men and Masculinities* (co-edited with Michael Kimmel and Raewyn Connell, 2005), *European Perspectives on Men and Masculinities* (with Keith Pringle and CROME, 2006), *Sex, Violence and the Body* (co-edited with Viv Burr, 2008), *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship* (co-edited with Elżbieta Oleksy and Dorota Golańska, 2011), *Rethinking Transnational Men* (co-edited with Marina Blagojević and Katherine Harrison, 2013), and most recently *Men of the World: Genders, Globalizations, Transnational Times* (2015). He has been heavily involved in EU and North-South research and policy projects, for example, the *EU Study on the Role of Men in Gender Equality* (2013), and currently the *Engaging South African and Finnish youth towards new traditions of non-violence, equality and social well-being* project, and the *EU GenPORT* project developing a portal on gender in science, technology and innovation.

Iva Šmídová: You have been an editorial board member of this journal for some time now and we are co-editing this special issue on men and masculinities. Since you are one of the most qualified persons in this respect, I wonder, how did you get into research in this area?

Jeff Hearn: Well I can answer this in different ways, but usually, it's easier to begin in 1978 – because that's when I began

being involved in a men's group, which had a personal-political agenda, broadly consciousness-raising, anti-sexist. The first group that I started with a friend ran for quite a long time, and also then I was involved, from the same year – and this was also when my youngest daughter was born – in a mixed-gender campaign group, which was called Bradford Under-fives Group, BUG – we had 'bugs', like the insects, as our logo. It was mainly women campaigning, but there were a few men involved. It was a feminist campaign group around young children, under-fives, in pre-school provision, which was not good in the UK, and also for mothers and carers, and so on. That was a long-running, mixed activity, which went on until at least the mid-eighties, maybe 1987. And it was actually quite effective, very active as a pressure group.

But then, meanwhile, from the mid-1970s I was working at the university, and doing my PhD part time, whilst lecturing full time. And, well, gradually, I realised that the issues that I was involved in, personally-politically, were very, very similar to the issues I was trying to work on more academically. And to be a bit more precise in terms of the research scene, I wrote a kind of long pamphlet, or a short book, on birth and children.¹ I wrote it as a personal-political piece of writing. But then somebody else, one of my colleagues in the same department, started using it in teaching. In fact he didn't ask beforehand – it didn't matter to me, but I was kind of surprised, by the use of such a text on a course that was then called 'Human Development and Socialisation', so that was a rather strange experience. The course was for social worker students. That was a very particular moment, maybe 1984. But also, I was doing academic work in teaching about gender and organisations and social policy, and doing my PhD part time on social planning and patriarchy. To try to summarise that time during the late seventies and early eighties, more and more I realised my personal interests were close to my academic research interests. So that's when I then more explicitly started working on men, masculinities and gender. But the teaching side developed when I offered an optional course called 'Men and Masculinities' on one of the Master's courses. I think it was 1984 and it was for experienced social workers, community workers and youth workers. And it was mixed, men and women. And the year after that, in the same department, we had a Women's Studies Master's that had a particular emphasis on applied work; it was called Women's Studies (Applied), which was unusual, and was founded in 1981. So

after the first year of offering the course just for social and community work students, most of whom were 30+, some older, the women's studies students knew about it and they said, 'We'd like you to do the course for us'. So then, the next year, I had two different groups, and they were mixed between the two Master's courses. Which was very, very difficult, because they had had different interests and different knowledges: one was more towards social work and community work, while one was more towards feminist theory and practice. So after that, the following year, I offered the course to the two Master's groups separately, which was much better.

So that was the teaching side. And on the research side, I didn't know then what I was going to focus on in my research. Some of the interest came from studying organisations, where studying high managerial levels means usually studying men; some of it arose from trying to understand what was happening in terms of social movements.

I mean, some of the interest came from being part of social movements and studying them at the same time. Some work was to do with having a double interest in both being part of and sort of studying these social movements and the directions they were going in. And then, some of it was more theoretical work around critical theories of patriarchy, and to what extent they were engaging explicitly with issues of men and masculinity. A little later, around the late eighties, I got very interested in historical perspectives, the late 19th century and early 20th century, which eventually became the book, *Men in the Public Eye*.² I'm not sure how that interest developed, exactly, but it was partly from an interest in early film and what I would call material-discursive analysis.³ But I've become more and more interested in how to understand the 'modern' in contemporary formations of men and masculinity, what and where they come from. And for reasons I'm not sure about now, I posed some of these questions to do with looking back at how organisations developed, because from the last third of the 19th century you get the growth of these really big organisations, state organisations and large companies and various other developments, such as mass media. I spent four or five years really looking into that historical area, at the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century. And following that I did some of empirical work on violence, in the early nineties.

I don't know if you're interested in going back to the beginning of that again because, when people ask this kind of question, 'when did you get interested?', I mean, there are always other answers. [laughs] Well in some ways, I've been interested in gender issues since I was five years old, actually. And the short story is that, the one which I really realised pretty much later, as an adult, was that, as was usual then, in the early 1950s, I went to a mixed, what was called an infant school, from five years to seven years, and before five there was no kindergarten. But then at five I went, dramatically, to a school – quite a shock. It's different now, in some

countries at least. And that was a mixed school, so then my best friends were girls. I remember exactly who they were: Judith, Gillian and Mavis. And then at seven, I went to an all-boys school. And so at seven, you were just separated by sex. It was many years later, about 30 actually, that I thought about that seriously, what that was about; there was never a question about it at the time. And then, after the first boys school, another all-boys school from 7 to 11, and then 11 to 18. And coming out from that, I went to university in Oxford, but it was, as was then usual, an all-men college. [laughs] So that's a different story, really, which I've thought about a lot. It was very dramatic, looking back. And very, very sad in some ways. Yeah. So from 7 to 21 I was in male educational establishments; that's the way it was done. Shocking, isn't it? Do you understand?

Iva Šmídová: I totally understand that there are many narratives, many stories, of how to answer the question how you became interested in these issues. There are a lot of crossovers between these different personal, political and academic influences. So now, what were your theoretical, conceptual and even empirical inspirations, I mean, we have had it easy, the next generation, but whose work led you to the research area?

Jeff Hearn: Okay, well, academically, obviously there's a lot of feminist work from that period, from the seventies. I can mention lots of names if you want me to: Germaine Greer, Kate Millett, Andrea Dworkin, many. That's the most obvious inspiration. However, the person who stands out particularly, and I still think she is pretty neglected, is the feminist theorist Mary O'Brien. I think her work is really important, but she's not so well-known to some people. Some people can oversimplify her ideas. So when I came across her work, which was a Marxist-Hegelian analysis of reproduction, I was very excited. She published on this in the late 1970s, and then carried on, I think it was 1978, in *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, and then into the eighties she published a couple of books, *The Politics of Reproduction* and *Reproducing the World*.⁴ And I met her a few times as well. She was somehow very particularly inspirational,⁵ but there are many others of course.

Typically, feminist works are usually talking partly about men, though not always explicitly. That's an issue which one could discuss at length. In terms of working explicitly on men and masculinities, in a broadly feminist, profeminist way, there were a first couple of books I came across, if I remember correctly. [laughs] The one by Andrew Tolson, which is called *The Limits of Masculinity*,⁶ which I think was published in 1977. That was a slim book and British in orientation, because it is about the so-called 'end of empire', or all the changes in the empire at least, and how that affected men and masculinity, which I thought was very, at the time, very exciting to come across. And then another book, which I remember particularly during that period was a collection

called *A Book of Readings for Men Against Sexism*, which was edited by Jon Snodgrass,⁷ which was a US book and very different, with lots of short pieces and more overtly political in one sense. Then, in the United States, there was Joe Pleck's writing, Joseph Pleck. Although, some of his work was a bit social-psychological for my taste, more of a sex-role approach. But he was very active doing that from quite an early time.

And then there was a particular conference in Bradford, where I worked for 21 years, in the early eighties, 1984, a conference of the British Sociological Association, and the themes were work and employment, or something like that. And one of the presenters was Bob Connell, now Raewyn Connell. I think that's when we first met. But there were a number of photocopied, or mimeographed, articles that circulated around that time, one of which actually led to the article on 'Towards a New Sociology of Men and Masculinity', published in 1985.⁸ But the first draft version of that I saw was around 1982, I think; it was in circulation as a photocopy, it was pretty low-key stuff, really. It's still low-key now, I guess, it was very different, like finding a new, additional article that someone, your friend of a friend, had come across and you would get a poor quality copy of it, and so on. So those exchanges were going on within the academic area. There was very much this crossover with the more overtly political things being written in that area. I mean, not necessarily long academic articles, but there were articles being written that were more than a couple of pages. *Achilles' Heel* was one of the journals that began in 1978 and that went on for quite a long time, maybe even till the early 1990s. So there were things being written there that were sort of semi-analysis, particularly around what you would loosely call the relation between patriarchy and capitalism. *Achilles' Heel* was influenced initially by the left party *Big Flame* and its magazine of the same name, which I would also buy when I could, and it was also about personal lives and experience as well, so there was also a sort of input from a more therapeutic angle as well, using that word very loosely. *Achilles' Heel* was a magazine, rather than a journal. The magazine was being produced every several, six months, or something like that. Mainly from London initially, then it moved to other parts of Britain. But then there was an idea to put together a collection which involved many of the men involved in *Achilles' Heel*, and a few others, which led to a book called *The Sexuality of Men*,⁹ which has a picture of Clint Eastwood on the cover, actually. [laughs] But that book is quite interesting. It was published in 1985 and there were quite big differences of opinion, actually, on producing that book. One was in terms of to what extent, what kind of feminism should be drawn on. Some of the men-contributors involved wanted to draw more on feminist psychology and psychoanalysis, people like Nancy Chodorow and Dorothy Dinnerstein, and so on. And some of them were more influenced by socialist feminism or socialist profeminist positions. But personal-

ly, I was actually influenced much more by radical feminism, which is a bit unusual. [laughs] And that was partly due to the university department where I was working, where radical feminism was very much a presence. Because there were different sort of versions of feminism, obviously. But it was also relevant in my private life as well. In domestic life, it was as well. So that was an important influence for me, actually. I think quite a few men were interested in feminism in the workplace. One of the most important women in this phase was Hilary Rose, who was head of department, who – I don't think she would classify herself as a radical feminist, but probably rather a socialist feminist, a feminist scholar of science and social policy. And Jalna Hanmer was the leader of the Master's course in Women's Studies. And she worked more on violence¹⁰ and reproductive technology. And eventually we collaborated, but that was over ten years later. There was much interest from the local working environment, and I could list some of the feminist colleagues if you were interested. There was Jo Sutton, Hilary Graham, Marilyn Lawrence, Kum Kum Bhavnani, Claire Callendar, Elizabeth Harlow, Gail Lewis. So there were a lot of local colleagues.

Iva Šmídová: Was it easy to do research on men from the very beginning, I mean, was it easy to get funding for it, or how did that work?

Jeff Hearn: [laughs] Mm, no funding, no. When I was doing my PhD, which was an examination of the relationship of social planning and social theory, and which also involved work on men at the structural, societal patriarchal levels,¹¹ that wasn't specifically funded. I did it part time during my lecturing job, working full time. So there was no funding there. And all the work that I've done with Wendy Parkin, which has been on gender, organisations and sexuality, that's all been unfunded, which means it's been done in our spare time. [laughs] Over more than 35 years. But the first project with funding I was involved in was in the mid-seventies, which actually was all about men, on homeless men. And that project was funded by one of the government ministries. Hilary Rose was the leader of the project, and then Pete Bluckert, who was the person who formed the first men's group with me, he was a friend. That project was about alcoholic homeless men in Leeds, which is nearby Bradford. But we didn't frame that project specifically around men and masculinities, although we were, of course, aware of it. Maybe we learnt quite a lot from them in this study. They were men at the bottom of the pile, so to speak. Pete did the fieldwork, which was very tough, as you can imagine. Anyway, that was begun even before the 1978 group, and then, jumping on ten years, the first bit of funding I got personally was in 1988, for one year, as a Visiting Fellow at Manchester University. That's when I worked on the historical work that eventually became the book *Men in the Public Eye*. That was a first bit of fund-

ing I received myself to work on men and masculinities. So, that was like fourteen years after being employed. So, that was 1988–1989 for one year, and that was really, really good for me, I think. It was about an hour and a half away from Bradford, so it involved more traveling. But in terms of bigger funding, what happened was that Jalna Hanmer and I had been colleagues for many years; she had joined the department around 1976–1977 and was head of the Women's Studies Master's. We were working in the same corridor, in fact, in adjacent rooms. This was the time of a kind of a radical feminist politics. She was researching on violence against women and also involved in activism. It was important, early research in the UK on violence to women and children. And then I was in the very next door. [laughs] And I had done more historical studies on men and violence, and work on sexual harassment, with Wendy Parkin, and been involved in a collective which produced two books on child abuse. So one day in 1989, Jalna and I sat down, anyway, and she must have suggested, 'I think we should work together', having been colleagues for twelve years or more. It was an important moment. So, we thought: we'll organise a research unit with a proper structure, a formal name, and everything else. And we did that, and then we had a few internal members and more people who were external members. And we got some funding from the police, West Yorkshire Police, who were very interested in this issue of violence against women. Or some were. [laughs] We got quite a lot of money from the National Research Council to do detailed research on violence. And that continued basically for the next five years. It was very, very all-embracing, all-absorbing. It was also very difficult work, some of it. And she mainly worked on women's experiences of men's violence, and I worked mainly on men's experiences of doing violence to women and children, particularly physical violence but not only physical violence. And there were other researchers involved who were employed in different ways at different times. I worked with particularly two or three other men on that. And she was working with other women-researchers. This eventually led to the book, *The Violences of Men*.¹²

Iva Šmídová: Was it up to you, could you choose the topics of your research, or how did this work, were these the top burning issues?

Jeff Hearn: We both were very interested in violence, definitely, absolutely. We'd worked on it separately up to that point. And then we said, we must create this sort of apparatus, like this infrastructure, which was the research unit that had a very long name, a very long name. And it was called Violence Abuse and Gender Relations Research Unit. And then we looked around for money to fund this kind of research. What happened was that the ESRC, the National Research Council, issued a mini-programme that they called, 'The Management of Social Welfare'. This is quite

a long story, I'll try to keep it a short story, but this mini-programme was asking for research bids broadly in social policy. The particular call initiative was very ambiguous, because it was all about the movement from a universal, more monolithic welfare state to a more diversified welfare state. It was very contradictory because it was both about looking at questions like difference in terms of, say, gender, racialisation, and so on, but also, part of the call from the Research Council was also looking at how people cope with problems. And that can be seen very individualistically. So it had very strong positive, but difficult aspects. And the call proposed a particular model, the so-called Stress, Coping and Social Support Model: if you're under stress, if you've got some sort of problem in your life, or something negative happens, the way you cope is affected by the social support you have; the more support you've got, then probably the more you cope, it's really obvious, actually. It's a kind of US individualistic model. So we said: OK, we'll look at this coping approach, but in terms of violence. Because the problem, then, is violence coming from somebody like your spouse, partner or husband, who would, you would hope, otherwise be assumed to give social support. So we were a little bit mischievous, and we put in the bid for a replication study. We got quite a lot of money to look at that over three years. There were another six or seven projects elsewhere on various issues, like children, disability, poverty, and community deprivation. So, anyway, that's why we did quite deliberately set up the infrastructure and then – in a kind of mischievous way, we thought – we'd turn the coping model on its head.

And then we, Jalna and I, with colleagues, including women in the women's refuge movement, did a lot of work together on policy development, trying to feed back all this research and experience from the women's movement, loads of stuff, data, information, back to the agencies, that were involved, including the police, social work, and health organisations, and prosecution services, and some housing agencies, and so on. In some cases some of the agencies wanted what you might call free training; this applied to the police, for example, where we had some support from the highest levels; in other cases, it was much more difficult, especially so from the judges and senior court lawyers, partly from the nature of their work schedules. We tried, in seminars, workshops and short policy documents, to take the key issues from our research and from our links to feminist activism and put them into clear organisational language in the form of policy and practice points. In that sense, I see good theoretical and empirical work as tied closely with getting involved with policy-making and politics – this has been a theme in various EU projects, especially around violence; as an aside, policy and politics are the same word in Finnish and Swedish.

Iva Šmídová: I understand that the term violence reappears in your life trajectory.

Jeff Hearn: I think, it's very important.

Iva Šmídová: Is there any topic that you try to avoid?

Jeff Hearn: Yeah, if one's interested in issues of men and masculinity, I think, it's very hard to avoid violence. In fact, the study we did was one of the first studies in the UK about interviewing men around violence; we didn't know how to do it before that. So that is the way it seemed at the time, although there were clinical studies in prisons and psychiatry, but we weren't doing that. However, in terms of avoiding issues, I'm generally not so interested in working on boys, although I have done a few bits and pieces on boys and education. Actually I'm involved in a project now, exactly on this question in South Africa and Finland.

In terms of avoiding, there are some areas, some kinds of violence that are very difficult, such as work on organised crime and the sex trade, although I've done some work on the latter. What have I avoided? I've wanted to look more at finance. I've been looking for a collaborator for a long time, a feminist expert or a similar finance expert, to study the financial system. I think there are lots of issues that are avoided, but you can't do everything. [laughs] I mean, there are lots of global issues, or transnational issues, like foreign policy, environmental questions.

Iva Šmídová: You've been a part of many international projects or collaborations. Do you think it is possible to name the most burning problem related to men and masculinities that is global?

Jeff Hearn: I think, from around the mid-nineties, I'm not exactly sure when, I got an increasing interest in transnational issues. I mentioned financial institutions, which are pretty much run by men, often quite young men. That's one really big issue which is often not part of what is usually called studies of men and masculinities. I think there are many other areas, among them would be transport, a really strong men's area, you can list all of them, railways, cars, air transport, and then energy, energy policy, in the broad sense of the term, oil, that's another big area, I could go on with this.

Well, terrible things happen in the world, that's the biggest problem. Famine and war are high on the gender agenda. I can't imagine much worse than having bombs dropped on you. Militarism has grown as an area of study, in terms of both gender and sexuality, and more specifically work around men and masculinities, there's quite a lot going on in that area, that's one area, I think. It's kind of a paradox or contradiction, there is a reluctance to study not just the finance issues, which I mentioned, global financial institutions, and so on, but there is a bit of reluctance sometimes to engage with capitalist big business, because it's difficult to do some of those studies. And the sort of huge inequalities that are probably growing in many parts

of the world. And that affects everybody, the basic issue of economic inequality, it's really fundamental. Everyone knows this in a way, and there is a kind of bitter paradox in terms of researchers trying to get away from this simple work model of men. Work, or paid work or being employed is often a central part of men's lives. Researchers are trying to get away from that to look at other issues, like sex, violence, bodies and health and so on. But then one can forget the obvious stuff, really – perhaps there's a need to go back to that in a very focused way. The sex trade is grim. If you work on sex and violence, pornography, the sex trade, things are always worse than you imagine, I'm afraid. There is also environmental change, I'm sure there is a lot more that can be done in that area. So that's three or four big areas. But it's hard to rank them, of course, very hard, because they are connected to each other as well, to some extent at least.

Iva Šmídová: The next question follows a similar line. You were involved in many international projects dealing with specific areas or problems related to men and masculinities. Were any of the outputs of these comparisons striking to you? I don't want to engage in national stereotyping, but do you remember anything like a striking difference that you would not have expected?

Jeff Hearn: Well, one thing that comes to mind is that Keith Pringle has argued quite strongly that the fairly conventional ways of dividing up Europe into three or four or five country groupings doesn't really work very well when you focus on some of the things we're talking about now. And he's been particularly critical of Esping-Andersen as representing the Nordic region as the best system. The assumption that things are always worse [laughs] in Southern Europe is not necessarily the case in terms of certain issues. I think Keith may overstate this a bit. He has called this turning Esping-Andersen on his head.¹³ If you look at certain measures of inequality, there are some societies that are, you know, a long way away from Northwestern Europe, that are or appear to be in some respects equal, or more equal, but they're mainly at lower income levels. So I can't make this strict sort of simple assumption that North and North-West is more equal, and everywhere else is worse.

Another important issue in European work is the danger of imposing Anglophone concepts and theories. So trying to start with seeing what's happening in the different places and recognising that, even within certain regions, such as the Balkans, there are huge differences. Some post-socialist, post-communist countries, like Poland, are clearly very highly influenced by religion; some, such as Estonia, are not. So much more caution about generalising is necessary. Finland is actually very interesting in that respect; as you know Finland stands between Sweden and Russia, and has a very particular history, as everywhere has. I think Sweden is much more similar to Britain, although Sweden is much

more equal than Britain, whereas Finland operates a bit differently. And that's a good lesson to remember, even with the language, which is totally different. Some people are shocked that there're no gender pronouns in the language, no 'he' or 'she'. Some people ask: 'How, how can you...?' So I think Finland is a good reminder that things can be very different, and of the importance of not making assumptions about places.

Iva Šmídová: Okay, you've mentioned that you might get back to the child abuse issue?

Jeff Hearn: In the 1980s I was in a department where we taught social workers and similar professionals, and there was this network of researchers in the region who produced two collective books. There were separate chapters by different people who read and commented on all the chapters, which were then revised accordingly. The thing I was saying, that I'm coming back to now, that's a project, not on child abuse, but on young people in South Africa and Finland which I'm involved in. I don't particularly want to work on child abuse. At the moment, I'm co-supervising doctoral research on sexual exploitation, which is a heavy subject, in Britain ... but I don't want to work on violence all the time, having done it intensively for a period. It's very demanding. Some people do work for their whole working life, twenty, thirty, forty years, on violence, but I'm not sure it's a good idea for me; though I would never drop that, I don't want to drop that area of work. Another issue, which is very relevant, is about living in another country. I have been cautious about doing empirical work myself there, particularly on these kinds of issues, partly for language reasons. So I decided to be more involved in supervising people who are doing these studies. I think it's more useful. I really disagree with academics who parachute in and become instant experts on another country. So I'd rather be involved in projects with other people who do their work particularly on violence issues. So in the early 2000s we had a research group which was funded by the national research council in Finland, coordinated with Suvi Ronkainen, and we supervised five or six PhD students who did their PhDs on violence. That seemed better, a better idea; to pretend to be an instant expert is not a good idea.

The other thing I've mentioned barely at all, which, when you're asking about influences, and which is very important, is what you would loosely call scholarship on race, racialisation and post-colonialism. This is pretty well developed, I would say, in the UK, probably, obviously, stemming from its bad history of imperialism. In all sorts of academic and political debate it's what you'd expect people to know about, talk about. When I went to Finland it was a bit of a shock, because it wasn't a part of the discussion. This has changed a bit in the last maybe five or ten years, but it wasn't very precise on differences between race, ethnicity, racialisation, nationality, migration, and related terms. To bring this onto agendas is very important for me.

Iva Šmídová: Well, this topic also relates to the region where this journal is based, I mean the Czech Republic, post-socialist countries, Central Europe and the like. You've mentioned post-colonial studies; do you think by any means this could be inspirational for grasping the experience we have here? And do you have any observations, while here in the Czech Republic or elsewhere in other post-socialist countries, that relate to studying men and masculinities?

Jeff Hearn: Yeah. Well, actually, two things come to mind. First, the Czech Republic has a lesser gap between rich and poor than many countries, on certain numbers less even than Sweden, which has actually a slightly larger gap than Finland,¹⁴ which Swedes sometimes find hard to understand. But, secondly regarding gender, the gender inequality gap, putting this very simply, was relatively high in the Czech Republic.¹⁵ This is very interesting to me; maybe people here are familiar with this strange contradiction; whereas both Finland and Sweden have lesser inequality both economically and gender gap-wise, putting it simply.

The second story I was going to mention was that I've done a couple of doctoral or summer school courses organised by Irina Novikova in Latvia, teaching them along with other people, like Ursula Müller and others. On one of those I did some lectures and discussions on these kind of issues, men and masculinities, and one thing is that I used the article 'The Big Picture',¹⁶ which goes through a really broad macro-historical overview, in terms of masculinities of conquest and settlement, and masculinities of imperialism and colonialism, and masculinities of post-colonialism and neo-liberalism. There were these three very big periods, and their associated different masculinities, which, maybe, formed for different classes of men, economic classes of men. And this links back to Andrew Tolson's book, where he makes this his focus. Anyway, so I went through this macro picture, and then just asked the students, and all apart from one, who was a Finn, were from post-socialist countries, from the Baltics, Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Tajikistan, and several other places. And they just got to work on this for a while in groups, to reflect on this, in their own situation, and it was very effective. There were some people from the Balkans, with the whole situation of Serbia as a central power in that region, historically, but also at the same time, this regional situation was very problematic, even dominated, by other powers, like the US and its allies. So it's a very multi-level picture, not just one-dimensional, if you want to use the words, post-colonial or post-imperial. And there were local empires of various kinds, including some I'd never heard of, and I'm sure that's true within many countries, regionally. It was very educational, I wrote a little bit about that in the book that came out after that, which Irina Novikova and Dimitar Kamborouev edited.¹⁷ So there are lots of possibilities for thinking this way. And it's about this balance or relationship between forms of power and forms

of powerlessness – perhaps it is too strong – but this possession, so certain groups of men can be very empowered, and then, the next year disempowered, so to speak, or they can experience both of those things either relative to some women, in their own lives or in the community, or in a different way to other powers, like nationally, or regionally in the broad sense, or even globally. This is quite a fruitful way of thinking about things. Raewyn Connell was writing mainly about Western Europe, the seaboard empires of the 16th, 17th, 18th centuries, and wasn't addressing Eastern or Central Europe, but there are quite big parallels. There are multiple empires and multiple post-colonial entities. And perhaps that's the other thing to say, in terms of the UK, it was obviously a formative experience, although it feels a bit distant as well, and there's the Irish question, it was part of how the British Empire had worked, on the doorstep.

I mean, that relationship has changed, I think, quite a lot in the last 40 years, but the Irish question was undeniable. It has a familiarity. I'm not an expert on Irish history, but it is necessary to be aware of that so you can also think about these things in context. This has some resonances with the Finnish situation vis-à-vis Russia and Sweden, even though Finland stopped being part of Sweden in the early 19th century. I think in some ways this is still actually more important than the Russian connection, because most Swedes aren't interested in Finland at all. That's my big generalisation, big stereotype.

Iva Šmídová: Maybe just one clarification: Do you think it is a problem or there is any danger in having no particular disciplinary projects on men and masculinities?

Jeff Hearn: No, well, I'm writing myself on the issue of the impact of projects on research at the moment.¹⁸ These projects arise in all sorts of different ways. In the project with South Africa, there is a strong emphasis partly on that issue, partly because of the people involved, in South Africa, and in Finland as well. So that will definitely be one of the themes, but it's just not labelled that way. It was in the project plan, but overall was framed in terms of empowerment of young people.

I'm really against the idea of having a separate disciplinary area on men and masculinities. So in some ways I favour mixing the boundaries more. But this looks different at different times and at different places. What seemed like a good idea in 1982 is different in 1992, and so on.

Iva Šmídová: It is still rather exceptional in my country for men scholars to be involved seriously in feminist research and in critical studies on men and masculinities. What is your experience regarding the general acceptance of such a profile in academia in the countries you have worked in?

Jeff Hearn: That's another complex question. I would say that profeminist research by men is most accepted in

Sweden, slightly less in the UK, and perhaps less still in Finland. Most men are uninterested in this approach, or perhaps simply threatened by it. I have had some hostile reactions from academic men over the years, with some men just losing self-control, getting totally very angry, even being physically threatening to me. Interestingly, the most vicious reactions, at least openly, have been from men who would see themselves as progressive, even radical, including, for example, a world-renowned expert on violence, a leading researcher on social movements, and another a committed Marxist. I also once had a website specifically dedicated to attacking me.

Iva Šmídová: Have you encountered discrimination based on your specialisations? Or is it an advantage to be a man doing such thematic social analyses? Or a combination of these?

Jeff Hearn: I was very fortunate to get a permanent lecturing job when I was relatively young at just 27, but I think my career progression was earlier slowed down because of what I worked on and how I worked on it. This is an experience many women have. I also faced a major discrimination case in Finland.¹⁹ I even think some men think about me or relate to me as a woman. Also, I realised fairly early in my career that I had to establish academic credibility, and that could be done partly by publishing a lot and in some respected outlets. Is it sometimes an advantage? Well, in theory, maybe I am listened to by non-academics more than some women experts, but I struggle to see strong examples of this within academia. I do fairly often get invited to gender or feminist conferences or seminars to talk.

Iva Šmídová: There's a question I always ask towards an end of any interview. Have you expected me to ask something in particular that I haven't and that you would like to speak about? Or would you like to add anything at all?

Jeff Hearn: Anything at all. Well, I've written a number of things that are somewhat autobiographical – that's not quite the right word. I've been interested in doing this every so often over the years, not in a regular way, but I've written some just very recently²⁰ which overlap with much of this discussion. So, in going through some of these thoughts, some of what I'm saying is not actually rehearsed, but I've had to write down some of these things very recently. I remember the words I've written. I'm also very interested in the process and form of different kinds of writing. Also, there is another area I haven't mentioned which is important to me in this whole discussion, which is the empire question. When I was an undergraduate I studied as a special subject the social and political geography of the former Commonwealth territories. I've had an interest long time in Africa, Southern Africa particularly. There you really have to think about politics in the terms of gender and racialisation.

Iva Šmídová: What are you working on, where are you moving onto next in research?

Jeff Hearn: A co-edited book came out in 2013, *Rethinking Transnational Men*,²¹ in which it was very satisfying to work on some of these transnational issues. And I have this book I've been working on for fifteen years, that's an authored book, *Men of the World*,²² on the same subject. I'm very interested in the impact of information technology on sexualities, and what that means, might mean, in the future.²³ And I'm involved in various research projects. Research funding to me is extremely random. Sometimes you get money very easily, sometimes you work fantastically hard and you get nothing. For various reasons, I've had lucky or fortunate periods, and then some quiet periods. Recently, I have had several research projects in Finland that have been funded, which is also good for other people, mainly to get research jobs. There is one with colleagues in South Africa, which is on young people in Finland and South Africa; one is on work-life boundaries for intensive knowledge workers, and how different generations deal with the boundaries between work and the rest of their lives. And that's very interesting, as you can imagine. And then another is on women's careers and gender equality, an action research project.²⁴ So other people are doing the work in the field, but I've had to be responsible for these. And then there are couple of projects in Sweden, there's the project in which Liisa Husu is the official partner, a project called GenPort, which is creating a portal on gender in science, technology and innovation. The other one is on transversal dialogues in feminist theories, it's a long project, looking at relations between different feminist theories in a dialogical way. Though they are very diverse, all have some link to gender. None of them name men and masculinities in the title, but all involve these issues in different ways.

But the last thing that I'll mention is that I've been involved in this long-term memory workgroup. That's a lot about gender. It's all men in the memory work group, I should say, there's seven of us now.²⁵ It started in 2002. We do talk and write about men's memories and experiences around gender and age. And that's really very interesting indeed. And I don't know how to say much more about it, really. It generates memories and stories and writings of ageing men, which is not the kind of thing you read about much. [laughs] You get different kinds of information, some of which is very non-stereotypical, and some of which, of course, is reproducing what you might expect, so there's a lot of ambivalence and ambiguity going on in the writing, which is very powerful, challenging, intimate and at times moving. We now have a book manuscript ready and we're looking for a publisher. It's been one of the most absorbing collective experiences I've had, very difficult to categorise.

Notes

- 1** Hearn, J. 1983. *Birth and Afterbirth: A Materialist Account*. London: Achilles Heel.
- 2** Hearn, J. 1992. *Men in the Public Eye*. London: Routledge.
- 3** See also Hearn, J. 2014. 'Men, Masculinities and the Material(-)discursive.' *NORMA: The International Journal of Masculinity Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1: 5–17.
- 4** O'Brien, M. 1978. 'The Dialectics of Reproduction.' *Women's Studies International Quarterly*, No. 1: 233–239; O'Brien, M. 1981. *The Politics of Reproduction*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; O'Brien, M. 1990. *Reproducing the World*. Boulder, CO: Westview.
- 5** Hearn, J. 1999. 'Mary O'Brien: ... Certainly the Most Important Single Intellectual Influence ...' *Canadian Women's Studies/Les Cahiers de la Femme*, Vol. 18, No. 4: 13–17.
- 6** Tolson, A. 1977. *The Limits of Masculinity*. London: Tavistock.
- 7** Snodgrass, J. (ed.). 1977. *A Book of Readings for Men against Sexism*. Albion: Times Change Press.
- 8** Carrigan, T., Connell, R., Lee, J. 1985. 'Towards a New Sociology of Masculinity.' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 14, No. 5: 551–604.
- 9** Metcalf, A., Humphries, M. (eds.). 1985. *The Sexuality of Men*. London: Pluto.
- 10** For example, Hanmer, J., Saunders, S. 1984. *Well-founded Fear: A Community Study of Violence to Women*. London: Explorations in Feminism Collective and Hutchinson; Hanmer, J., Itzin, C. (eds.) 2000. *Home Truths about Domestic Violence: Feminist Influences on Policy and Practice – A Reader*. London: Routledge.
- 11** Hearn, J. 1986. *Theorising Social Planning: Analysis, Critique and Alternatives*. University of Bradford.
- 12** Hearn, J. 1998. *The Violences of Men: How Men Talk about and How Agencies Respond to Men's Violence to Women*. London: Sage.
- 13** Pringle, K. 2011. 'Comparative Studies of Well-being in Terms of Gender, Ethnicity and the Concept of "Bodily Citizenship": Turning Esping-Andersen on His Head?' Pp. 137–156 in Oleksy, E., Hearn, J., Golańska, D. (eds.). *The Limits of Gendered Citizenship: Contexts and Contradictions*. New York: Routledge.
- 14** In 2009 the Czech Republic had a figure of 5.2 for the ratio of the income or expenditure share of the richest 10% to that of the poorest 10%, compared with 5.6 for Finland, 6.2 for Sweden (*Human Development Report 2009: Overcoming Barriers: Human Mobility and Development*, New York: UNDP, 2009).
- 15** In 2011 the estimated male : female ratio for earned income was 2.08 for the Czech Republic, compared with 1.28 for Finland and 1.10 for Sweden, and the male : female economic activity rate was 1.38 for the Czech Republic compared with 1.15 for both Finland and Sweden (Hausmann, R., Tyson, L. D., Zahidi, S. 2012. *The Global Gender Gap Report 2012*. Geneva: World Economic Forum).
- 16** Connell, R. 1993. 'The Big Picture: Masculinities in Recent World History.' *Theory and Society*, Vol. 22, No. 5: 597–623.

- 17** Novikova, I., Kamborouv, D. (eds.). 2003. *Men and Masculinities in the Global World: Integrating Postsocialist Perspectives*. Helsinki: Kikimora Publishers, Aleksantteri Institute.
- 18** Hearn, J. 2015. 'Transnational Reflections on Transnational Research Projects on Men, Boys and Gender Relations.' *NORMA: The International Journal of Masculinity Studies*, Vol. 10.
- 19** Hearn, J. 2004. 'Organization Violations in Practice: A Case Study in a University Setting.' *Culture and Organization*, Vol. 9, No. 4: 253–273; Hearn, J. 2004. 'Personal Resistance through Persistence to Organizational Resistance through Distance.' Pp. 40–63 in Thomas, R., Mills, A. J., Helms Mills, J. (eds.), *Identity Politics at Work: Resisting Gender, Gendering Resistance*. London: Routledge.
- 20** Hearn, J. 2014. 'On Men, Organizations and Intersectionality: Personal, Working, Political and Theoretical Reflections (or How Organization Studies Met Profeminism).' *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, Vol. 33, No. 5: 414–428.
- 21** Hearn, J., Blagojević, M., Harrison, K. (eds.). 2013. *Rethinking Transnational Men: Beyond, Between and Within Nations*. New York: Routledge.
- 22** Hearn, J. 2015. *Men of the World: Genders, Globalizations, Transnational Times*. London: Sage.
- 23** Hearn, J. 2014. 'Sexualities, Organizations and Organization Sexualities: Future Scenarios and the Impact of Socio-technologies. A Transnational Perspective from the Global "North".' *Organization: The Critical Journal of Organization, Theory and Society*, Vol. 21, No. 3: 400–420.
- 24** Hearn, J., Lämsä, A.-M., Biese, I., Heikkinen, S., Louvri-er, J., Niemistö, C., Kangas, E., Koskinen, P., Jyrkinen, M., Gustavsson, M., Hirvonen, P. 2015. *Opening Up New Opportunities for Gender Equality Work*. Helsinki: Edita. Available from: https://helda.helsinki.fi/bitstream/handle/10138/153272/76_978-952-232-276-0.pdf?sequence=3
- 25** JH: Very sadly, one of us, Dan McEwan, died suddenly after this interview, and I dedicate this interview to him.

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