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For session 4b (Feminists studying men and masculinities)

EUROPEAN-WIDE CRITICAL STUDIES ON MEN:
ASKING THEORETICAL, SUBSTANTIVE, POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

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Abstract: Over the last twenty years or more there has been a substantial development of the critical sociology of men and masculinities. More recently there has been increasing sociological research on men and masculinities that moves beyond the earlier sex role models and places questions of power more centrally. These questions lie at the heart of the EU Research Network on Men in Europe (2000-2003), a 10-nation network of feminist and pro-feminist researchers researching collaboratively on men's practices in the countries involved. The network's main foci are men in relation to home/work, violences, health, and social exclusion. This paper reviews major theoretical, political, substantive, and practical issues arising in the conduct of the project, and the general development of the academic field. Theoretical issues include the extent to which research on men's practices can be separated from other sociological fields; national and cultural contextualisation of the problematisation of men and masculinities; and the development of appropriate comparative measures. Substantive concerns include the relationship of men's power and privilege throughout the countries, and the intersection of structural change in work and employment, violence, relative ill-health and social exclusion of some men. Political and practical issues are also explored.

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EUROPEAN-WIDE CRITICAL STUDIES ON MEN: ASKING THEORETICAL, SUBSTANTIVE, POLITICAL AND PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

Jeff Hearn (Finland/UK), Ursula Müller (Germany), Elzbieta Oleksy (Poland), Keith Pringle (UK/Sweden), Emmi Lattu (Finland), Janna Chernova (Russian Federation), Harry Ferguson (UK/Ireland), Øystein Gullvåg Holter (Norway), Voldemar Kolga (Estonia), Irina Novikova (Latvia), Eivind Olsvik (Norway), Carmine Ventimiglia (Italy), Teemu Tallberg (Finland).

I: Background Fields of Study to the Research Network

Over the last twenty years or more there has been a substantial development of the critical sociology of men and masculinities. More recently there has been increasing sociological research on men and masculinities that moves beyond the earlier sex role models and places questions of power more centrally (Carrigan et al. 1985). These questions lie at the heart of the EU Research Network on Men in Europe (2000-2003), a 10-nation network of feminist and pro-feminist researchers researching collaboratively on men's practices in the countries involved. In March 2000, the Network project, "The Social Problem and Societal Problematisation of Men and Masculinities",was initiated. The project, planned for three years (2000–2003), is funded by the Research Directorate of the European Commission under its Framework 5 Programme. This paper introduces the work of the Network and present some preliminary findings on its work in progress. The design and work of the Network draws largely upon two particular fields of study: critical approaches to men's practices; and comparative perspectives on welfare. So before saying more about the activities of the Network, we provide a brief overview of each of these fields in turn (also see Hearn et al. 2001, 2002a, 2002b, Pringle at al. 2001).

1. Critical Approaches to Men's Practices in European Contexts
For a long time, men, masculinity and men's powers and practices were generally taken-for-granted. Gender was largely seen as a matter of and for women; men were generally seen as ungendered, natural or naturalised. This is now changing; it is much less the case than even fifteen years ago (Metz-Göckel and Müller, 1986; Brod, 1987; Kimmel, 1987; Hearn, 1987, 1992; Connell, 1987, 1995, Segal, 1990; Holter, 1997). Throughout much of Europe contemporary gender relations can be characterised by relatively rapid change in certain respects, for example, rates of separation and divorce, new employment patterns, alongside the persistence of long-term historical structures and practices, such as men's domination of top management, men's propensity to use violence and commit crime, and so on. This can thus be understood as a combination of contradictory social processes of change and no change (Hearn, 1999). An important *feature and effect* of these changing gender relations has been the gradually growing realisation that men and masculinities are just as gendered as are women and femininities. This gendering of men is thus both a matter of changing academic and political analyses of men in society, and contemporary changes in the form of men's own lives, experiences and perceptions, often developing counter to their earlier expectations and earlier generations of men.

The making of men more gendered, in both theory and practice, has meant that previously taken-for-granted powers and authority of men, social practices of men,

and ways of being men can now be considered to be much more problematic. They may not yet be much more negotiable, but they are at least now recognised as much more open to debate. The paradox is that men and masculinities are now more talked about than ever before when it is much less clear what and how they are or should become. The critical analysis of these matters lies at the heart of the development of feminist/pro-feminist Critical Studies on Men (Hearn, 1997), 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'. In this sense Critical Studies on Men are part of the broader project of Women's Studies and Gender Research, rather than competitive with them.

Not only are men now increasingly recognised as gendered, but they, or rather some men, are increasingly recognised as a gendered social problem to which welfare systems may, or for a variety of reasons may not, respond. This can apply in terms of violence, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, buying of sex, accidents, driving, and so on, and indeed the denial of such problems as sexual violence (for example, Ventimiglia, 1987). These are all activities that are social in nature, and can have both immediate and long-term negative effects on others, friends, family and strangers. The association of the gendered problematisation of men and masculinities, and the gendered social problem of men and masculinities is complex (for example, Holter and Aarseth, 1993; Månsson, 1994; Ekenstam, 1998; Popay et al., 1998), as indeed are the differential responses of welfare systems (Pringle, 1998a, Pringle and Harder, 1999). But at the very least it is necessary to acknowledge the various ways in which the more general gendered problematisations of men and masculinities both facilitate and derive from more particular recognitions of certain men and masculinities as social problems. Such recognition can apply through the use of measurable information, such as official statistics, as well as through less exact discursive constructions in politics, policy, law, media and opinion-formation.

These processes of problematisation of men and construction of men as gendered social problems apply in academic and political analysis, and in men's own lives and experiences; they also exist at the societal level, and very importantly in quite different ways in different societies. Thus while it may be expected that some kind of problematisation of men and masculinities may now be observable in many, perhaps most, European societies, the form that it takes is very different indeed from society to society. In some, it may appear in public concern around young men, crime, relatively low educational attainments in schools; in others, it may take the form of anxieties around the family, fatherhood, and relations with children; elsewhere, links between boyhood, fathering and men may be emphasised; or the question of men's ill-health, alcohol use, depression, loneliness and low life expectancy; or problems of reconciling home and work with pressures for long working hours; or men's violence to and control of women and children; or men's participation in and continued domination of many political and economic institutions; or changing forms of men's sexuality. Men's violence to women and children is receiving some attention from the EU, the Council of Europe and other transnational organisations, such as UNESCO (Breines et al., 2000).

These and other forms of gendered problematisation of men and masculinities and constructions of men and masculinities as gendered social problems are being examined in a range of European national contexts. It is very important to consider

how the national, societal variations in how men and masculinities interact with issues not only culture but also other major social divisions and inequalities, particularly class, "race", xenophobia and racism, ethnicity, nationalism and religion. The intersection of "race", ethnicity, nationalism and nationality appear to be especially and increasingly important for the construction of both dominant and subordinated forms of men and masculinities. This entails investigation of the complex interrelations between these varying genderings and problematisations and the socio-economic, political, state structures and processes within and between the countries. Fuller understanding of these issues is likely to assist the formulation of policy responses in existing and potential member states, and the EU.

The Network aims to facilitate greater understanding of changing social processes of gender relations and gender construction particularly in the context of welfare responses to associated social problems. To undertake this exploration necessitates attention to the challenges and difficulties of comparative research. Consequently, the activity of the Network builds on existing comparative welfare analysis.

2. Comparative Welfare Systems in European Contexts
In recent years a comparative perspective has been applied to various studies within sociology and other disciplines. There are many reasons for this; one of the most convincing reasons is the potential offered for deconstructing the assumptions which underpin social practices and policies in different countries. In turn, such a process of deconstruction facilitates a reconstruction of more effective policies and practices. There is also an awareness that such practices and policies increasingly interact transnationally, at both European and indeed global levels: consequently research may seek to explore the processes and outcomes of those interactions and connections.

In many cases where specific social issues have been studied transnationally, attempts have been made to apply various general theoretical categorisations to particular issues. In the case of differential welfare regimes, the most common model applied in this specific fashion is that devised by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1996). There has also been an extensive critique of such models in terms of their insufficient attention to gender relations (Lewis and Ostner, 1991; Leira, 1992; Lewis, 1992; Orloff, 1993; O'Connor, 1993; Sainsbury, 1994, 1996, 1999; Tyyskä, 1995). There has been a considerable development of further research on gender relations and welfare issues in Europe (Dominelli, 1991; Rai et al., 1992; Aslanbeigu et al.; 1994; Leira, 1994; Duncan, 1995; Walby, 1997). Commentators have taken various positions regarding the analytic value of these applications from the general to the particular (Alber, 1995; Antonnen and Sipilä, 1996; Harder and Pringle, 1997, Pringle, 1998a; Pringle and Harder, 1999), partly depending on the issue studied. There has been a strong tendency to focus on Western, Northern and Southern Europe in these debates rather than the full range of European nations including those of Eastern Europe. There is also a need for considerable open-mindedness in the assumptions that are brought to bear in such analyses. For example, Trifiletti (1999), through a feminist perspective on the relationship between gender and welfare system dynamics, has provided detailed arguments that Southern European welfare regimes may not in fact (contrary to some of some opinion) be more sexist than those in Northern and Western Europe.

The critical study of men's practices has, until very recently, largely escaped specific comparative scrutiny, although it has received important attention within broader and

relatively established transnational feminist surveys of gender relations (for instance, Dominelli 1991; Rai et al. 1992). Yet the limited amount of work devoted specifically to men's practices transnationally suggests there is immense scope for extending critical analysis in that respect, through the national and cultural contextualisation of men, men's practices and masculinities, and their problematisation.

In the field of social welfare there are complex patterns of convergence and divergence between men's practices internationally which await further interrogation (Pringle, 1998b). Similarly, Connell's initial enquiries regarding the global transactions in processes of masculinity formation have opened up a whole range of possibilities for exploration and contestation (Connell, 1991, 1995, 1998; Hearn, 1996a). These studies have begun to conceptualise broad transnational categories of men and masculinities, such as 'global business masculinity' (Connell, 1998) and 'men of the world' (Hearn, 1996a). Recently, attempts have been made to push forward the boundaries in the comparative field using pro-feminist perspectives to consider men's practices in Asia, Southern Africa, the Americas (South, Central and North), Australasia and Europe (Pease and Pringle, 2001). This seeks to locate such considerations within recent debates about globalisation and men's practices, throwing some doubt on the more ambitious claims of globalisation theses. Despite these recent developments, there remains a massive deficit in critical transnational studies of men's practices and in the sources available for such study. It is this ongoing deficit which the Network seeks to address within the European context.

Given recent advances in the critical study of men without particular reference to transnational perspectives, the time is ripe for the application of such perspectives to studies in Europe. There is now a developed theoretical and conceptual infrastructure, and a sociological language, for addressing these concerns at a transnational level. The research focus of the Network is conceptualised around the notion of 'men in Europe', rather than, say, the 'European man' or 'European men'. This first perspective highlights the social construction and historical mutability, of men, both within the welfare contexts of individual nations, and within the context of the developing form of the EU. This involves examining the relationship of men and masculinities to European nations and institutions in several ways:
(a) national, societal and cultural variation amongst men and masculinities; (b) the historical place and legacy of specific forms of men and masculinities in European nations and nation-building; (c) within the EU and its transnational administrative and democratic institutions, particularly the differential intersection of men's practices with European and, in the case of the EU, pan-European welfare configurations; (d) the implications of the new and potential member states of the EU; (e) examining the implications of both globalisation for Europe, and the Europeanisation of globalisation processes and debates; (f) the formation of new and changing forms of gendered political power in Europe, for example, regionalised, federalised, decentralised powers, as derived by subsidiarity and transnationalism.

However, in undertaking the transnational comparisons, the problematic aspects of the enterprise have to be acknowledged. In almost all fields of transnational social study there will be major difficulties posed by differing meanings attached to apparently common concepts used by respondents and researchers. This specific difficulty 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 will permeate all aspects of the research process itself. There are several possible practical responses to such dilemmas. On one hand, as some commentators suggest (Munday 1996), 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 constantly check out with each other the assumptions each brings to the research process. The impact of cultural contexts on the process and content of research is a central part of the project.

The configuration of Network countries presents opportunities for comparative study:
(1) The "testing" general welfare regime typologies in relation to the issue of men's practices, including "representatives" of all three of the welfare regime typologies identified by Esping-Andersen (1990, 1996): Neo-liberal; Social Democratic; and Conservative. The spread of the countries – in Southern, Northern, Western and Eastern Europe - presents a broad cultural, geographical and political range.
(2) Developing notions of what "being European" constitutes. This has salience in relation to the fact that some influential sectors of society within Poland and the Russian Federation have recently evinced a greater desire to be considered "European" in certain ways including their relationship with the EU. The issues of social marginalisation consequent upon the development of an alleged "Fortress Europe" are also highly relevant to the lived experience of many men, both those who are excluded and/or those who actively involved in processes of exclusion.
(3) The extent of differential social patterns and welfare responses between countries which are often grouped together on alleged grounds of historical, social and/or cultural proximity, for instance, Norway and Finland; and Ireland and the UK.
(4) Exploration of how recent huge economic, social and cultural changes in Eastern Europe have impacted upon attitudes and practices relating to men. The inclusion of Estonia, Latvia, Poland and the Russian Federation provides richness to the analysis, since it allows investigation of the different constellations of practices and beliefs between countries in the context of their historical and cultural trajectories.

II.   The Activities of the Research Network

1. Aims and Objectives
The overall aim of the Research Network is to develop empirical, theoretical and policy outcomes on the gendering of men and masculinities. Initially, the Research Network is focusing on two closely related gendered questions: first, the specific, gendered *social problem* of men and certain masculinities; and, second, the more general, gendered *societal problematisation* of men and certain masculinities. More specifically, this exploration is primarily contextualised in terms of welfare responses to associated social problems and inequalities. However, it clearly also has direct relevance to policy outcomes in relation to changing family structures; and work configurations within the labour market, the home and wider European society.

The specific objectives designed to achieve that overall aim are as follows:
(i) To analyse and understand more fully across the EU and its potential members the differential associations of men's practices with various social problems including: *men's relations to home and work; men's relations to social exclusion; men's violences; men's health*. These themes are the initial focus of the Network's work.
(ii) To formulate provisional strategies to address some of those social problems in terms of national and EU responses on equal opportunities and other policy areas.

(iii) To identify areas for ongoing enquiry so as to further develop such strategies.

(iv) In the context of European Union enlargement, to anticipate some of the national and transnational social problems relating to the impact of men's practices upon social cohesion and inclusion in existing and new member states of the EU.

(v) As a consequence of (i) to (iv) above, to gain a more adequate understanding of contemporary and changing representations of men, and negotiations around such representations in governmental and other official, media and research contexts.

The Research Network brings together women and men researchers who are researching on men and masculinities in *an explicitly gendered way*. Such a meeting point for both women and men researchers is extremely important, necessary and timely in the development of good quality European research on men in Europe. For, 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. As such, research and networking based on only men researchers is likely to reproduce some of the existing gender inequalities of research and policy development. In contrast, gender-collaborative research is necessary in the pursuit of gender equality, the combating of gender discrimination, the achievement of equality and anti-discrimination work more generally. Gendered political and practical issues are fundamental and pervasive throughout the work of the Network. The Research Network comprises researchers with backgrounds in a range of academic disciplines and from a number of European countries - initially Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Norway, Poland, Russian Federation, and the UK. In the medium and longer term, it is planned that the Network will: include researchers from other European countries, both within and outside the EU; and expand its focus to other relevant research questions. The methodological perspectives of the Network are characterised as: *comparative orientation*; *gendered approach to both research content and research process*; *use of multiple methods*; and *ethical sensitivity*.

2. Methods

Initially, four main methods are being used to gather information on critical research on men, and to develop that research in the ten countries:

(i)   Review of relevant academic and analytical literature within each country. The large amount of existing material is often scattered within a wide variety of different traditions and disciplinary locations;

(ii)   Review of each country's statistical sources in relation to home and work, exclusion, violence, health;

(iii)   Review of governmental and quasi-governmental legal and policy statements that explicitly address men;

(iv)   Review of two (non-contiguous) weeks' national press output to examine explicit and implicit analyses on men and masculinities, and their problematisation.

In each case, national reports, as well as a summary report, are being written.

3. Information Outreach

The Research Network also acts as an information resource for other researchers, policy-makers and practitioners for the future. Currently, it is either actively seeking, or planning, to achieve this in a number of ways including:

(a)   the web-based European Database / European Documentation Centre on men. This Database and Documentation Centre became operational towards the end of 2000. They are located at the web-site of the allied, "umbrella" organisation: Critical

Research on Men in Europe (CROME) (www.cromenet.org). The national reports and cross-Europe summaries (on academic research, statistical information, and law and policy) are available at that site.

(b)   published articles, conference papers and edited volumes.

(c)   several interface workshops and an international conference, involving Network members and key personnel in terms of research/policy-making/practice, and specifically geared to making key outcomes more widely known.

(d)   linking with other researchers in other countries in Europe and beyond. Affiliate members are located in Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark and Sweden.

The remainder of this paper is devoted to summarising some of the findings from the first phase of the Network's work that has focused on reviewing the four main themes within relevant academic research within each country. Subsequent work has focused on statisitical sources, law and policy, and media and newspaper representations.

III. Academic Research on Men in the Ten Nations

1. The General State of Research

It is clearly difficult to summarise the state of research on men in the ten countries, even though the Network is at this stage focusing on only four main themes: home and work, social exclusion, violences, health. There are of course broad patterns, but it should be strongly emphasised that the social and cultural contexts in which the national reports on the state of research are written are very varied indeed. The national and local contexts need to be understood to make sense of the different orientations of the national reports. Each operates in different political and academic traditions in studying men, as well as distinct historical conjunctions for the lives of men. In some cases these social changes are profound, for example, the German unification process, post-socialist transition in Estonia, Latvia, Poland and the Russian Federation (Müller 2000, Kolga 2000, Novikova 2000, Oleksy 2000, Chernova 2000), and in Ireland rapid social changes from a predominantly rural society through a booming economy (Ferguson 2000), as well as its own nearby political conflicts, challenges and changes in Northern Ireland. Somewhat similarly since the 1950s Finland has experienced change when people moved from rural to suburban areas in search of work. This has been reflected in 'lifestyle studies' studies and 'misery studies' of working class and structural change (Kortteinen 1982, Alasuutari and Siltari 1983). These address men, patriarchal structures and changes in lifestyle in some ways, though they do not usually identify as research on men.

The state of studies on men in the ten national contexts varies greatly in terms of the volume and detail of research, the ways in which research has been framed, and substantive differences in men's societal position and social practices. The framing of research refers to the extent to which research on men has been conducted directly and in an explicitly gendered way, the relation of these studies to feminist scholarship, Women's Studies and Gender Research, and the extent to which research on men is focused on and presents 'voices' of men or those affected by men. Differences also stem from theoretical, methodological and disciplinary emphases and assumptions.

In all ten countries the state of research on men is uneven and far from well developed. In most countries research on men is still relatively new and in the process

of uneven development. The extent of national research resources seems to be a factor affecting the extent of research on men. In some countries, especially in Germany, Norway, the UK, but also to an extent elsewhere, it can be said that there is now some form of relatively established tradition of research on men can be identified, albeit of different orientations. In most countries, though there may not be a very large body of focused research on men, a considerable amount of analysis of men is still possible.

Different national reports emphasise different key points: some focus on the general state of research, others on research content or other implications. The range of interests, concerns and framworks underlines both the variable state of critical studies on men and the variable national contexts. While the greatest quantitative development of studies on men has been in Germany and the UK, there have been important developments in all ten countries. This applies especially to Norway, to an extent in Finland and Italy, and rather less so in Ireland and the four transitional nations of Estonia, Latvia, the Russian Federation and Poland.

In many of the former Soviet bloc territories the restoration or transformation of statehood have shifted many welfare measures from state to local levels, so leading to new, previously unknown, forms of dependency for people. The new conditions for property acquisition and upward social mobility have, however, benefited selected men-dominated echelons already structured by the vertical gender segregation of the Soviet political, ideological hierarchies and labour market. Industrial closures, reduced housing construction and withdrawls from the army have drastically changed conditions for many men, and brought associated unemployment and health problems. Even so, gender issues are not seen as a top priority; while problems like crime, poverty and unemployment are strongly gender-laden, their gendering is generally ignored; explicit gendering of men and focus on masculinities is not directly present in most studies. Russian discussion on a "Masculinity Crisis" (as distinct from the US debate on the "Crisis of Masculinity") began in the 1970s (Urlanis 1978). At that time the basic characteristics of this crisis were: low life expectancy compared with women, self-destructive practices, such as hard drinking and alcoholism, smoking, "excessive eating", accidents. These problems remain in the 1990s. Recent qualitative investigations have examined men's relations to violence and the exclusion of some groups, such as homosexuals, from normative masculinity. This has led to the appearance of a particular and rather peculiar "victimisation theory", in which men are passive victims of their biological nature and structural/cultural circumstances, and can hardly be called "actively functioning" social agents. Despite its rather short history, studies on men in Russia have their own theoretical concepts, conceptual devices and research field. Recent research has recognised both plural masculinities and hegemonic masculinity in relation to Russian gender culture (see, for example, Kukhterin, 2000; Meshcherkina, 2000).

An interesting, paradoxical issue is that the more that focused gendered research on men is done the more that there is a realisation of gaps that exist, both in specific fields and at general methodological levels. Some national reports identify clear gaps in research. In many countries the situation is made complex by a difference between the amount of research that is relevant to the analysis of men, and the extent to which that research is specifically focused on men. For example, in Finland and Italy there is a considerable amount of relevant research but most of it has not been constructed specifically in terms of a tradition of focused, gendered explicit research on men. One

might also see certain contrasts between the UK and Ireland, even though they share some geographical, historical, social and linguistic features, or Norway and Finland, even though they share some features of broadly similar social democratic, relatively gender-egalitarian systems. This way of understanding variations between and within countries is more accurate than crude typologies of nations.

While overall relatively many studies have been conducted on some research topics, there is much variation in the relation of research on men with feminist research. Research on men can also be contextualised in relation to the timing and extent of development of the women's movement, and the extent of identification of 'men' as a public political issue, for example as objects and/or subjects of change. This may be clearest in the UK, where feminist and pro-feminist research has been influential in producing what a large amount of studies (Pringle 2000). In Norway there is a growth of equal status policy development that is not necessarily directly feminist-related (Holter and Olsvik 2000). In Germany, as in most countries, both non-feminist and feminist traditions, or at least influences, can be seen (Müller 2000). Parts of the newly emerging studies on men refer in a distorting way to feminist research, with sometimes overt, sometimes more subtle contempt for their results and theses - a challenge that has had to be dealt with. While in most countries there is evidence of the positive, if sometimes indirect, impact of feminist scholarship on research on men, there is a frequent neglect of feminist research in much of that research.

There are also very different, sometimes antagonistic approaches within the same country, for example, between non-gendered, non-feminist or even anti-feminist approaches and gendered and feminist approaches. These differences sometimes connect with different research topics and themes, for example, research on men's violences may, understandably, be more critical towards men, while research on men's health may be more sympathetic and less critical. They to some extent represent and reflect disciplinary and indeed methodological differences in the analysis of men, which in turn sometimes are differentially influential in different research areas. The large amount of existing material is often scattered within a wide variety of different traditions and disciplinary locations. In some cases, much research material and data has been generated without an explicit gendering of men and masculinities (see, for example, Hearn and Lattu, 2002).

3. General Discussion on the Four Main Thematic Areas

Home and Work: Recurring themes across the ten nations include: men's occupational, working and wage advantages over women; gender segregation at work; many men's close associations with paid work. In some cases the situation of men in nontraditional occupations is discussed. There has been a general lack of attention to men as managers, policy-makers, owners and other power holders. In many countries there are a twin problems of the unemployment of some or many men in certain social categories, and yet work-overload and long working hours for other men. These can especially be a problem for young men and young fathers; they can affect both working class and middle class men as for example during economic recession. In working life, work organisations are becoming more time-hungry and less secure and predictable (Holter and Olsvik 2000). In a number of studies, time utilisation emerges as a fundamental issue of creating difference in everyday negotiations between men and women (Metz-Göckel and Müller 1986; Höpflinger et al. 1991; Notz 1991; Busch et al.

1988; Jurczyk and Rerrich 1993; Niemi et al. 1991; Tarkowska 1992). Increasing concerns about men and time-use – in Estonia, Ireland, Norway and Germany (Anttila & Ylöstalo 1999, McKeown et al. 1998). Also in Italy research is highlighting the importance of quality of time for men in their family relations (Pitch and Ventimiglia 2000). There is also there a relatively strong development of work on fatherhood, sexuality, violence, emotions, and the complexity of family dynamics with more or less traditional forms of fatherhood. In some cases, there is also the problem of a high rate of change in work and working place, with high amounts of layoffs. This has been very significant in many of the important in the Baltic, Central and East European countries, but also in the UK and elsewhere. In Poland men aged 55-59 have been most affected by unemployment (Borowicz and Lapinska-Tyszka 1993).

Another recurring theme is men's benefit from avoidance of domestic responsibilities, and the absence of fathers. In some cases this tradition of men's avoidance of childcare and domestic responsibilities still continues for the majority of men. In some cases it is being reinforced through new family ideologies within transformation processes, as in Latvia (Novikova 2000). In many countries there is a general continuation of traditional 'solutions' in domestic arrangements, but growing recognition of the micro-politics of fatherhood, domestic responsibilities, and home-work reconciliation for at least some men. In many countries there are also counter and conflictual tendencies. On the one hand, there are increasing emphases on home, caring and relationships. This may be linked to "family values", from either a politically right wing or gender equal status perspective. In Ireland a notable trend is the growth in the number of women, especially married women, working outside the home (Kiely 1996). By 1996, fathers were the sole breadwinners in only half of all families with dependent children in Ireland. On the other hand, there are tendencies towards more demanding and turbulent working life, through which men may be more absent. In Norway and elsewhere due to a post-parental-divorce system where most fathers lose contact with their children, higher work pressure and more work mobility, "father absence" has probably become more widespread in real terms over the last ten years, as has the "general absence of men" in children's environment, even if more positive trends can be seen (Holter and Olsvik 2000).

It is not surprising if there may be a degree of cultural uncertainty on men's place in the home and as fathers and a growing recognition of ambivalence, even when there is a strong familism. There is also in some countries, such as Norway, a significant debate on the possibilities for extending men's practices as caregivers, especially as fathers, and how barriers against this can be identified and removed. In Finland, UK and elsewhere there is growing interest in the reconciliation of work and home; and growing variety of ways of approaching this (Lammi-Taskula 2000, Oakley and Rigby 1998, Pringle 1998b, 1998d, Smart 1999). Given the considerable difference that still exists between men's and women's earnings, it is not surprising that it is the woman who stays at home after the birth of a child. Since she is usually the person with the lower income, a couple does not need to be wholehearted advocates of traditional domestic ideology to opt for the traditional solution. Evidence from Nordic countries shows that parental leave which is left to negotiations between men and women, become mostly taken up by women, although most people, men especially, say they want a more balanced situation (Lammi-Taskula 1998, Holter and Olsvik 2000). Men and indeed fathers are clearly not an homogeneous group. Men's unemployment can have clear and diverse effects on men's life in families. In Poland, for example, in

research on unemployed men under 36 of age, after they lost their jobs, 40 % reported the loss of 'family leadership' to their working wives (Pielkowa 1997). Finnish research suggests some unemployed men may have closer ties with children (Tigerstedt 1994). Traditional men may not see any need to engage in balancing home and work, and may show more propensity and support for violence. 'Money' may be used to legitimate gender-specific divisions of responsibilities within families when traditional patriarchal models have to be justified; when the opposite is the case, the argument may not apply. Italian researches have highlighted the complexity of family dynamics with more or less traditional fatherhood (Pitch and Ventimiglia 2000).

Among men there has long been a contradiction between the ideas they profess and the way they actually live. In several countries, for example Estonia (Kolga 2000), the reasons for the discrepancies between men's values and men's actual behaviour in families remain unclear. Men and women living together do not always give the same assessment of their relationship in general and the distribution of tasks between them; this is importantly methodologically. The paradoxical ways in which gender conflicts on the distribution of housework may be negotiated may be illustrated from German research: while in the early 1980s women living with men were generally more likely than men to claim that they did more of the work, some studies in the 1990s have shown the opposite. Men now tend to be the ones who claim they do relatively little, while women insist that the work is shared evenly (Frerichs and Steinruecke 1994). It is almost as if women's psychic inability to tolerate a lack of equality, noted in earlier research, is now being expressed in an exaggerated assessment of the level of equality in their relationships.

Relatively little research has been carried out on men as carers. For example, a huge gap in knowledge exists with respect to the sexual division of domestic labour and parenting in Ireland and most other countries. Irish fathers' accounts of their participation in childcare and domestic life remain to be documented. Little is known about why a third of Irish fathers work 50 hours a week or more: whether this reflects the adoption of traditional definitions of masculinity, or because men feel required to earn to meet the family's financial obligations and spend time away from home and children reluctantly. Further exploration of the complex dynamics surrounding negotiations between women and men in relationships regarding "housework", parenting and emotional work, would be welcome. It would be interesting to see how and when, if ever, women and men form coalitions through a politics of reconciliation, and how gender constellations at "work" and in the "private" sphere influence each other. It would be important to research further couples who experience difficult labour market conditions, so, for instance, making the female partner the main earner in the long term or forcing them to accept working times that do not allow traditional housework distribution.

Most research focuses on white heterosexual partners. There is a need for research on the intersections of men, the "home" and the "labour market" in its diverse configurations, including minority ethnic families and gay partnerships. In seeking to make sense of the albeit limited increases in parental activity by some men in the home, there is the question of to what extent do these changes represent real social "progress" or sometimes re-creations of patriarchal dominance in relatively novel forms. There is a need for much greater consideration of fatherhood in terms of

cultural, sexual and other forms of diversity, and more inclusion of the "voices" of women and children in studies of fatherhood.

Social Exclusion: This has proved to be the most difficult area to pre-define, but in some ways one of the most interesting. Social exclusion often figures in the research literature in different ways, such as, unemployment, ethnicity, homosexuality. National reports have approached this area differently. The social exclusion of certain men links with unemployment of certain categories of men (such as less educated, rural, ethnic minority, young, older), men's isolation within and separation from families, and associated social and health problems. These are clear issues throughout all countries. They are especially important in the Baltic, Central and East European countries with post-socialist transformations of work and welfare with dire consequences for many men, as emphasised in the Estonian and Latvian reports. Even in Nordic countries, which are relatively egalitarian and a relatively good social security system, new forms of problems have emerged. In Finland socially excluded men have been extensive studied through men's 'misery' and auto/biographical approaches (Kortteinen 1982, Alasuutari and Siltari 1983), rather than through gendered studies of men. On the whole, Norwegian men have experienced relatively little unemployment, alcoholism and migration in recent years (Holter and Olsvik 2000). However, in the last decade, new forms of marginalisation have developed, with shifts from traditional industry to more postindustrialised society. Globalising processes may create new forms of work and marginalisation. Some men find it difficult to accommodate to these changes in the labour market and changed family structure. Instead of going into the care sector or getting more education, some young men, become marginalised from work and family life.

There is a lack of studies showing the variety of structures and processes that may lead to the marginalisation of men as groups or individuals, and what differences and similarities there are to women. For instance, does ethnicity in some respects override gender? In most of the Network countries social exclusion is generally under-researched. For example, in Estonia the most visible example of social exclusion is people looking for something, usually bottles, in trash containers. Nobody knows how many 'container people' there are, but it is clear there are many, homeless, mainly non-Estonian, Russian speaking men, aged 30–50 years. More generally, the conceptual separation of "the social problems which some men create" from "the social problems which some men experience" is often simplistic and there is a need to study the intersections more carefully. There is also a lack of attention to men engaged in creating and *reproducing* social exclusion, such as around racism.

Violences: The recurring theme here is the widespread nature of the problem of men's violences to women, children and other men, and in particular the growing public awareness of men's violence against women (Ferguson 2000; Hearn and Lattu 2000; Holter and Olsvik 2000; Mueller 2000; Pringle 2000). Men are overrepresented among those who use violence, especially heavy violence. This violence is also age-related. The life course variation in violence with a more violence-prone youth phase has been connected to increasing exposure to commercial violence and to other social phenomena (Holter and Olsvik 2000), but these connections are not well mapped. Violence against women by known men is becoming recognised as a major social problem in most of the countries. The abusive behaviours perpetrated on victims include direct physical violence, isolation and control of movements, and abuse

through the control of money. There has been much feminist research on women's experiences of violence from men, and the policy and practical consequences of that violence, including that by state and welfare agencies, as well as some national representative surveys of women's experiences of violence, as in Finland (Heiskanen and Piispa 1998). There has for some years been a considerable research literature on prison and clinical populations of violent men. There is now the recent development of research in the UK and elsewhere on the accounts and understandings of such violence to women by men living in the community, men's engagement with criminal justice and welfare agencies, and the evaluation of men's programs intervening with such men (Pringle 1995, Brown and Caddick 1993, Lempert and Oelemann 1998, Brandes and Bullinger 1996, Hearn 1998). Gendered studies of men's violence to women is a growing focus of research, as is professional intervention.

Child abuse, including physical abuse, sexual abuse and child neglect, is being recognised as a prominent social problem in many countries. Both the gendered nature of these problems and service responses are receiving more critical attention, in terms of both perpetrators and victims/survivors. There is some research on men's sexual abuse of children but research on this is underdeveloped in most countries. In some, sexual abuse cases remain largely hidden, as is men's sexual violence to men. In Ireland there has been a series of scandals particularly involving sexual child abuse by priests, some of whom were known to the Church hierarchy but not reported or brought to justice by them and then moved onto another parish. There is still a playing down of the significance of violences by hegemonic men and a reluctance to problematise active married heterosexual masculinity and question gender/age relations within the Irish family (Ferguson 1995). There has been a strong concern with the intersection of sexuality and violence in Italy and some other countries (Ventimiglia 1987b, Castelli 1990); this is likely to be an area of growing concern.

There is a major lack of gender awareness in studies that understand themselves as dealing with "general" issues around violence, for instance, racist violence. The question of traditional masculinity and its propensity for racist violence has not yet been even articulated in high budget studies. Masculinity seems to be recognised as significant when violence against women is the explicit topic. In many countries relatively little academic literature exists on elder abuse and on violence against men. Studies on the reasons for non-violent behaviour in men are lacking. There is a lack of studies on connections between violence between men and men's violence to women.

Other key research questions round violences that need more attention concern: (a) how men's violent gendered practices intersect with other oppressive power relations around sexuality, cultural difference/ethnicity, age, disability and class, and the implications of such analyses for challenging those practices and assisting those abused; (b) how different forms of men's violences interconnect; (c) how programs against men's violences can be developed, particularly research into the promotion of successful initiatives at school, community and societal levels; (d) men's sexual violences to adult men; (e) men's violences to lesbians and gay men; (f) men's violences to ethnic minorities, migrants, people of colour, and older people.

Health: The major recurring theme here is men's relatively low life expectancy, poor health, accidents, suicide, morbidity. Men suffer and die more and at a younger age from cardiovascular diseases, cancer, respiratory diseases, accidents and violence than

women. Socio-economic factors, qualifications, social status, life style, diet, smoking and drinking, hereditary factors, as well as occupational hazards, can all be important seem to be especially important for morbidity and mortality. Gender differences in health also arise from certain men's hazardous work. Some studies see traditional masculinity as hazardous to health. In some countries, such as Estonia, this is argued to be the main social problem *of* men (Kolga 2000). Men constitute the majority of drug abusers and far greater consumers of alcohol than women, though the gap may be decreasing among young people. Men often neglect their health and for some men at least their 'masculinity' is characterised by risk-taking, ignorance of men's bodies, and reluctance to seek medical intervention for suspected health problems. Risk-taking is especially significant for younger men, in smoking, alcohol and drug taking, unsafe sexual practices, accidents. In this context it is interesting that Estonian research finds that men are over-optimistic regarding their health (Kolga 2000).

Men's suicide, especially young men's, is high in the Baltic countries, Finland, Poland, Russia, Ireland. In these countries there is also a high difference in life expectancy between men and women. In Ireland and Norway, men perform suicide about 3 times as often as women; in Poland the ratio is over 5:1 (Human Development Report 2000). In several countries the suicide rate has related to economic downturns. Studies on men sport, and the body are discussed in some national reports and are likely to be a growing research area.

There has been relatively little academic work on men's health from a gendered perspective in many countries. Despite the mass of information on men's health outcomes, there is relatively little on men's healthcare practices. Neglected health issues include intersections of wellbeing with age, disabilities and social divisions. There are, however, signs that this may be one of the major growth areas of scholarship and policy development around men in the future, with much interest being shown by governments, industry and political interest groups. Following the 'Men's Health Report of Vienna 1999' (Schmeiser-Rieder et al., 1999) and the WHO 'Men, Ageing and Health' Report (WHO, 2000) the First World Congress on Men's Health was held in Vienna in November 2001. The *International Journal of Men's Health* has recently been launched.

4. Some Preliminary General Issues

1.   **Men's relations to power.** There is a neglect of attention to men in powerful positions and to analyses of men's broad relations to power, both in themselves and as contexts to the four areas. The importance of the ongoing challenge to these persistent gendered relations of power and privilege throughout the countries cannot be over-emphasised. There is a very major lack of attention to men in powerful positions and men's broad relations to power, both in themselves and as contexts to the four themes.

2.   **The explicit gendering of statistics and other research data on men's practices.** In reviewing research studies on men in the ten countries, it could be argued that the more that research, especially focused research on men, is done the greater the realisation of gaps that exist, both substantively and methodologically. However, in terms of available statistical data on men the situation is somewhat different. On first reading of our statistical analyses, it might seem that relatively few specific gaps have been identified in the statistical sources. There is indeed a wealth of data, especially on work

and employment, as well as demography, family arrangements, health, illness and mortality. However, closer reading shows that while the national statistical systems provide a broad range of relevant information, they usually have significant shortcomings. Explicit gendering of statistics is still not usual. There is an absence of focused statistical studies on men, especially differences amongst men. Many statistical studies are cautious in their critical commentary. There is also a need to attend with great care to the source and methodology of statistical and other data on men's practices. For example, focused surveys of women's experience of sexual violence (in the broad sense of the term) tend to produce higher reports than general crime victim surveys. In turn, the latter tend to produce higher figures than police and criminal justice statistics. Thus the use of statistics on men's practices is a matter for both technical improvement and policy and political judgement. Many statistics provide data for further analysis, comparison with other data, critique and theory development. The explicit gendering of statistical measures is important in the development of appropriate comparative measures.

3.   **Unities and differences.** There are both clear similarities between the ten nations and clear differences, in terms of the extent of egalitarianism, in relation to gender and more generally; the form of rapid economic growth or downturn; the experience of post-socialist transformation; the development of a strong women's movement and gender politics. There are also differences between men in the same country, for example, West German men tend to be more traditional than East German, and groups of men. Future research could usefully examine regional variations amongst men within nations, for example, how the different cultural contexts of Northern or Southern Italy or the regional parts of the UK have framed the social relations associated with men. However, data on men's practices also reveal the pervasive and massive negative impact of patriarchal relations of power across all societal sectors. Unities and differences between men need to be highlighted, between countries and amongst men within each country.

4.   **Recent structural changes.** Analyses of the social problem of men should take into account the fact that many of the countries have experienced recent major socio-economic change. This applies especially to the transitional nations, though one should not underestimate the significance of changes elsewhere, such as economic boom (Ireland), and recovery from recession (Finland). In the transitional nations economic changes were often viewed as positive (more freedom, independence, individual initiative) compared with the Soviet experience. They also often brought social problems. While there is no 100% concordance between economic and social change, there is often a clear relation, for instance, weakening of the primary sector leading to social and geographical mobility. In the transitional nations people never expected economic freedom would be associated with a decrease in population and birthrate, high criminality, drugs, diseases such as tuberculosis, and often negative impacts on welfare.

5.   **Interconnections, power and social exclusion.** There are strong interconnections between the four focus areas: home and work, social exclusion, violences, and health. This applies to both men's power and domination in each area, and between some men's unemployment, social exclusion and ill health. Patterns of men's violence interconnect with the other three issues to some extent but also cut across these social divisions. Social exclusion intersects with all three other themes. Patterns of men's violence interconnect with all themes to some extent but also cut across social divisions. More generally, the intersection of gender with other power relations, such as "race", ethnicity, age and disability, in the lives of men needs much more attention. Statistics are mainly focused on

dyadic analysis, such as poverty and men/women. Developing triadic statistical analyses of, say, poverty, gender and ethnicity is much rarer, and a more complex task.

6.   **Social theory.** There are a large number of theoretical issues raised by this kind of Network-based inquiry. These include: the difficulty of constructing comparative grounds, both qualitatively and statistically; the relation of studies on men to studies on women and gender; the extent to which research on men's practices can be separated from other sociological fields; and the relation of sociological research and that deriving from other disciplines, in both the social sciences and the humanities. Such concerns can be understood as both epistemological and methodological, and practical matters in the conduct of the activities of the Network.

5.   Concluding Remarks

There is a strong sense in which the taken-for-granted agendered nature of society continues in both academic and more everyday constructions of society, and this means that men continue to be (un)seen as agendered, and not a suitable focus for sociological study. There has been a considerable amount of research providing information on men and men's practices. Some is focused on men; some is gendered but not necessarily in relation to men; some is not focused specifically on men, and either does not discuss in any detail that it is studying men or does not provide a gendered analysis of men. There is an "opacity" in men speaking about themselves, their own identity and life. It is often unclear what it means to men to acknowledge that any experience they go through is a sexed/gendered experience, thus discovering their partiality (as opposed to universality) and their own difference. Interrogating this is part of the broader gendered sociological analysis, both empirical and theoretical.

European transnational comparative research on men has begun but there is scope for much more such work, exploring the continuities/discontinuities between cultural locations and national systems. This applies in relation to all the themes. Transnational comparison can also help to examine central theoretical, empirical and policy debates on men and masculinities. For example, it is apparent that there are strong interconnections between the four thematic areas – especially between unemployment, social exclusion and ill health. Patterns of men's violence interconnect with these issues to some extent but also cut across these social divisions.

Across the European field, there is a need for further consideration of theoretical issues which have important material implications: What does "being a man" mean both in terms of practices and discourses? What is the relationship between practices and discourses in the context of this field of study? What are the precise interrelationships between macro level systems of power relations which contextualise men's practices and the micro level of individual men's everyday engagements and understandings of their worlds? It would be interesting to have an insights into the relevance of masculinity: has it become more or less important to be a "man"? Is there any consensus about what this would mean?

Many specific gaps have been identified. In some countries, such as Germany, there is great need for comprehensive secondary analyses of the large amounts of existing research results on "men" in a gendered perspective. Many studies have produced

interesting, but broadly spread data which could well be used to contribute to an adequate picture of men in society in a gendered perspective, but this remains to be done. The picture research provides often consists of fragmented details, lacking an integrating gendered perspective. Perhaps, most importantly, there is a neglect of attention to men in powerful positions and analyses of men's broad relations to power, both in themselves and as contexts to the thematic areas. There is still a need for basic research on men in positions of power, politics, management, associations, and friendship and support networks. Other areas need more explicit, critical gender analyses, such as generation, work and family; men's relations with women; gay men; disabled men; rural men; poorly educated men; men, ethnicity, racism; violence to women and children; racist violence, homophobic violence; suicide; men's healthcare practices; men and alcohol; health and violence. Other areas urgently requiring further research include the intersections of gender with other social divisions clustered around dimensions such as age, class, culture/ethnicity, disability and sexuality. There is a lack of research in work organisations on the intersections of gender and such other social divisions. Similar gaps exist around men's violences.

This kind of transnational, comparative research review highlights the importance of analysing the relation of men in power, men's social power and the social exclusion of certain men, albeit in different ways in national and cultural contexts. It also prompts more focussed attention on the social changes that are currently in Europe, and how these both reproduce and challenge existing patriarchal structures and practices. These questions are likely to be major concerns for future European theory, research and policy. While it is important not to diminish the importance of specific national and cultural contextualisations of the problematisation of men and masculinities, there is a sense in which there is Europe, or at least parts of it, is becoming a research site or arena itself. This is not to suggest any false homogeniety, but rather that the extent of cultural and other linkages is increasing to the extent that discussion of one part easily invokes other parts.

Finally, let us return to questions of politics and practice. As noted earlier, the Network brings together women and men researchers who are researching on men and masculinities in *an explicitly gendered way*. Matters of politics and practice apply throughout this work - in the forms of organising and collaboration between women and men across national borders and languages; in the attempt to develop ethically-sensitive sociological practice; in relations to other researchers, funders, and policy-makers; and moreover, in relation to the gradually developing and very different national and transnational political forces that there are of and around men, on the issue of men, and around different men and different men's interests. In this last sense at least, the sociological study of men nationally and transnationally is likely to become of growing political, policy-related, media and practical interest in the future.

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