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The EU, Men and Masculinities

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Critical approaches on men and masculinities are relevant whether we are talking about EU politics as an amalgam of national and local politics, institutionally or geographically, or the international or transnational politics in or of the EU itself and its various constituent institutions and bodies. They are relevant in the analysis of political institutions, social movements and political actors, both individual and collective, as well as the very question of what counts as politics in the first place, seen as pervasive and not only formal politics in the public domain. Thus, politics is not just mainstream politics in the public domain; rather politics pervades gender ordering of and across societies.

Men and masculinities are just as gendered as women and femininities, individually and collectively: whether we are talking about party politicians, policy-makers, professionals, activists, supporters, clients, citizens, migrants or refugees, amongst many other political actors and groupings. This may seem obvious (to some), but is still frequently forgotten or obscured, in both mainstream and critical analyses. It is so much the case that political institutions and organisations – whether local, national, transnational or European – are often described in either gender-neutral or implicitly masculinised terms, into which women move or which affect women, albeit in differential ways. The centre, the One (as opposed to the presumed Other[s]), typically and easily remains undeconstructed. Likewise, the EU and its institutions and processes may appear, to many, as gender-neutral or implicitly masculinised.

Three basic points are important: (1) studies on men and masculinity are not new, sometimes explicitly, more often implicitly; (2) studying men and masculinity is in itself no guarantee of criticality; and (3) the ‘Man/Men Question’ has figured long and strong in feminism and related gender theory and practice. There has been an expansion for over fifty years of focused, explicitly critical research, sometimes referred to as Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) (Hearn and Howson 2019; Kimmel et al. 2005). CSMM refers to critical, explicitly gendered studies of men and masculinities that engage with feminist critiques, as well as some men’s positive responses to feminism, along with critiques from LGBTIQ+, poststructural and postcolonial positions, amongst other critical perspectives.

Approaches range across disciplines, methodologies, ontologies and epistemologies – psychological, institutional, societal, ethnographic, discursive, and so on. Significantly, there has generally been a greater development within sociology. The relative neglect in political science is gradually being addressed, especially in respect of international relations, nationalism, populism, and war and peace (e.g. Bjarnegård 2013; Enloe 2013; Hooper 2001). Certain themes have been stressed, notably around work and family, sometimes in contradiction with what may be assumed dominant definitions and priorities of men, rather more than, say, political organising. Research has often been local, bodily, immediate, interpersonal in focus, as in the ‘ethnographic moment’ (Connell 2000). Increasingly there is a turn to the ‘big picture’ of globalisations (Connell 1993, 1998), world-centred approaches (Connell 2014), transnational patriarchies, and transnational change (Hearn et al. 2013; Hearn 2015).

The explicitly gendered ‘naming men as men’ (Hanmer 1990; Collinson and Hearn 1994) has been made within this critical context, not to essentialise or reify men, but to see men and masculinities

as an object of critique and critical interrogation. This insight applies whether we are talking of men as explicit public or implicit political actors, and whether as individuals, collectively, or institutionally. Importantly, CSMM is certainly not the preserve or property of men, as in some ambiguous or even anti-feminist versions of ‘Men’s Studies’ (as if most academic work is not already), but comprises studies by women, men and further genders. CSMM can be characterised as:

- *a critical explicit focus on men and masculinities, rather than an implicit or incidental focus on men and masculinities;*
- *informed by feminist, gay, queer, trans and other critical gender scholarship;*
- *gendered, socially constructed, (re)produced, not just ‘naturally this way’;*
- *variable and changing across time (history), space (culture), within societies, and across the life course and biographies;*
- *emphasising men’s differential relations to gendered power;*
- *spanning the material and the discursive in analysis;*
- *(re)produced in the intersections of gender and further social divisions* (see Connell et al. 2005, 3) – or to put this another way, men are not only men.

CSMM comprise *historical, cultural, relational, materialist, deconstructive, anti-essentialist* studies, seen throughout within gender relations (Hearn and Pringle 2006). The most cited approach is what can be called ‘masculinities theory’ (e.g. Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 1995), in which different masculinities are framed in relation to gender hegemony, patriarchy and patriarchal relations. The concept of hegemonic masculinity – a central pillar – has been defined most notably as ‘the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the

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problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women' (Connell 1995, 77). Related concepts, e.g. complicit masculinity, have been interrogated far less.

Numerous applications and interpretations of hegemonic masculinity exist, in theoretical, empirical and policy studies (Bridges and Pascoe 2014; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn et al. 2012; Messerschmidt 2012). The concepts of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity have also been critiqued for: lack of clarity in meaning; challenges from comparative, postcolonial, transnational and queer approaches; and usefulness of 'hegemonic masculinity' as a heuristic rather than a precise concept (Hearn 1996). A number of reframings have followed, such as the move to 'the hegemony of men [that] seeks to address the double complexity that men are both a *social category formed by the gender system* and *dominant collective and individual agents of social practices*' (Hearn 2004, 59). Overall, CSMM involves critical gendering of men, 'naming men as men', and simultaneously problematizing and deconstructing both masculinities and the social category of men.

Research in and on the EU

This section summarizes and assesses previous research studies, policy developments and activist interventions on men, masculinities and the EU. In so doing, we relate such research and policy to the broad persistence of intersectional gender inequalities and domination across the EU.

The EU political and policy context

Paramount is the lack of a gender perspective in much mainstream research on the formation of the EC/EU, its workings and many studies thereof. A lack of gender perspective typically means an

implicit perspective of certain (kinds of) men, and an assumed 'male-as-norm' (Kronsell 2012), whether in politics and/or political analysis. The whole concept of EU integration was very much masculine and men-orientated from the beginning, following the post-war situation, the ECSC, and the Common Market. The Founding *Fathers* entrenched the lack of women's involvement in institutional and political development within the so-called 'Reign of old men' (Wallström 2008), reflecting men's overwhelming domination of political parties and mainstream public politics in the early post-World War II period. Indeed, women were largely excluded as politicians from the integration project until the 1970s and the first direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (see chapter Ahrens and Rolandsen Águstin in this volume). Until then, women were implicitly included via Article 119 EEC Treaty on equal pay for equal work (van der Vleuten 2007), but they rarely took part in the decision-making processes as individuals. Thus, one might even talk of the concept of a 'Maleuropean Union' and point to critical analysis of the concept of the 'masculinity/femininity of EU', and various supposedly gender-neutral, but meaning 'men-oriented' EU politics, initiatives and agencies.

According to researchers working on the nexus of gender and EU integration, until recently masculine norms that are still predominant in this particular approach have remained unquestioned (e.g. Abels and MacRae 2016a; Kronsell 2005, 2016). Despite adding a 'gender perspective' to EU policies and research thereon, certain policies and political designs, often seen as 'neutral', in fact reinforce 'traditional' male norms (e.g. Prügl 2011). Such a 'gender perspective' has usually focused on gender equality and women, and until now mainly on workplace issues (Hubert 2012; see Milner in this volume). In fact, the 'gender turn' initiated in the 1970s was initially limited to equality and the (paid) workplace, and in its initial form lasted until the early 1980s. In research terms, feminist and critical gender analyses of European integration did not become well

established until into the 1990s (Abels and MacRae 2016b, 20-26; Hoskyns 1996), and even since then in-depth gendered analyses of men and masculinities in the integration project have not been widely developed in most countries.

The first phase of, and approach to, ‘gender equality’ policy saw women as participants in the labour market; its main goal was to enable female workers equal position in the market (Kantola 2010). This position was based on male norms; a ‘sameness approach’ was promoted as equality seen through the lens of equal opportunities. This lasted until the 1980s when it was replaced with ‘positive action’ aimed at switching ‘from equality of access to creating conditions more likely to result in equality of outcome’ (Rees 1998, 34). Positive action enabled recognition of the different social positioning of men and women and was primarily aimed at improving the situation of women in the workplace. In 1997 (Amsterdam Treaty) this approach was superseded by gender mainstreaming as the primary policy tool for achieving gender equality. Thus, gender equality was defined as beyond women-targeted policies, with the incorporation of a gender perspective into all EU policies and activities recommended at every stage: from design, through implementation and monitoring, to evaluation.

Increasingly, questions of gender identity and sexuality have also been brought into sharper policy focus. For example, the Treaty of Amsterdam introduced a broader anti-discrimination provision (Article 13), involving appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation. This was and is clearly important for LGBTIQ+ persons (see Solanke in this volume). The Employment Equality Directive 2000 bans direct or indirect discrimination based on religion, belief, disability, age, or sexual orientation, and

seeks to implement the principle of equal treatment in employment and training irrespective of religion or belief, sexual orientation and age (Council Directive 2000/78/EC).

Having said that, the significant and more recent growth of both gender (equality) policies in practice and gendered studies of the EC/EU have been largely in terms of adding women's perspectives, that is, responding to women's demands for greater equality and including women in gendered analysis more explicitly. This does not necessarily entail gendering men and masculinities in a critical and thoroughgoing way; indeed, many otherwise excellent EU documents and reports, and related academic and research texts on gender equality, power, processes and policy fail to begin to do that. What is needed is to make explicit the position and actions of different groupings of men and different masculinities in the structuring and operation of the very institutions of the EU and in the phenomenon of the EU itself; in short, gender is clearly not a synonym for women (Bieling and Diez 2016). For example, some studies have addressed men and masculinities within the European Commission (e.g. Woodward 1996), and in the construction of the EU and 'Europe' (Novikova et al. 2005).

Historically the EU and its member states have often separated the issue of trafficking women and children from prostitution and pornography; moreover, policy debate around trafficking has often been dealt with in the broader context of policies on inward migration. This association, even confusion, in policy terms, along with the allied topic of racism, demonstrates how power relations associated with dominant forms of masculinity enter into processes that construct the idea of 'Europe'. Racism is widespread throughout Europe, even if its precise configurations vary across cultural contexts. Yet, issues around dominant forms of masculinity and men's practices are remarkably absent in academic and policy debates on racism in Europe. Often central to racism in

Europe and how EU member states treat migrants are such questions as what is 'Europe', who is 'European', and who is 'more European' – who is 'other'? These questions are often partly about 'whose masculinity' is 'purer' or 'superior'. Yet both member states and the European Commission itself have largely avoided confronting those highly gendered issues in their policies to combat racism and address migration. Power relations associated with dominant forms of masculinity in the processes of 'Europe creation' – including both the pre-2004 and newer member states – have often been disguised and ignored.

Meanwhile, Western European nations, especially the Nordic countries, may often have been over-privileged as comparative 'benchmarks' when different European societies are being assessed for their alleged degree of 'European-ness', in terms of how far they have achieved gender equality. Such assessments often utilise international comparisons adopting conventional economic, political, educational, and wellbeing measures (e.g. World Economic Forum 2017). By contrast, it is instructive to realize that even in the Nordic countries some major forms of men's domination still stubbornly persist, e.g. business, violence to women, sexual violence to children, the military, academia and religion (Hearn et al. 2018; Hearn and Pringle 2006; Pringle 2011, 2016).

Looking towards the future, Walby (2018) notes that the EU is currently engaged in a major process of shifting its subsidiarity boundaries in response to severe global economic and geopolitical challenges: moving the levels of competence and implementation toward the EU-level and away from member states. The potential gender implications, positive and negative, are immense: 'Whether this change is to the detriment of gender equality depends on the extent to which the EU gender-equality project is mainstreamed into the new or reformed institutions that will be created or developed' (Walby 2018, 320).

Research developments

A wide variety of critical research on many different aspects of men and masculinities in most parts of the EU exists. Initially, most studies were developed in Germany, the Nordic region, and the UK; topics included family, care, work, sexuality and violence. In the last case, this involved focusing on perpetrators, as well as the structural roots of violent practices in the dominant gender order, and its symbolic grounding in the patriarchal system of masculine domination. Critical approaches to sexism and the relation of men and masculinities to violence were predominant in the German and Nordic contexts, with further focus on education and also men's role in gender (im)balance in the private and public spheres, involved fatherhood being among the central issues. The question *Can Men Do It?* – move towards gender equality – was aptly elaborated in a book by the Norwegian sociologist, Øystein Gullvåg Holter (2003). In a number of countries, there have been various popular and research texts on nurturing or involved fatherhood, such as the German case (Richter and Schäfer 2007), published in several languages. In addition, a number of online portals exist which provide networking and research information. The theme of men and care, the gendered understanding of care and of men's involvement in care, is at the core of the research and policy agenda (Hanlon 2012).

Specific institutes or divisions of existing institutions have been founded (e.g. Dissens in Berlin in 1989, the Men's Counselling Centre [now Association for Men and Gender Issues Styria] in Graz in 2001) critically researching issues on men and masculinities (see Hearn and Howson 2019).

Academic courses have been incorporated into university social sciences curricula. Critical attention has been paid to structural positionings of men – as an analytical category, as well as social actors – in broader relations of power, reproduction and dismantling of institutions sustaining

the status quo. Focused journals have been launched, notably *NORMA: The International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, originating in the Nordic region, and *MCS - Masculinities & Social Change* in Spain.

Attention to geopolitical divisions and borders and emergent attempts at dismantling or re-institutionalising them form another established agenda. Examples include those addressing the Post-Socialist experience (Novikova and Kambourov 2003; Wojnicka and Ciaputa 2011), and work on intimate and global citizenships (Oleksy 2008, 2009). There are now also extensive studies in Portugal focussing on the postcolonial and recently trans-masculinities (Aboim 2010, 2016), and in some parts of Central and Eastern (CEE) Europe, notably Slovenia (Hrženjak 2016).

Thematic issues of a number of journals mark the network of involved scholars in the Czech Republic and Poland among other research publications (Šmídová et al. 2015; Wojnicka and Kluczyńska 2015), as well as publicationst analysing issues such as men's migration in the European and global contexts (Charsley and Wray 2015; Wojnicka and Pustuka 2017). There is also growing interest in the Balkans and the Baltics. Following the aforementioned Post-Socialist focus (Novikova and Kambourov 2003), there are networks of scholars in Estonia (Kadri Aavik in the Gender Studies Research Group in Tallinn) and Latvia (Irina Novikova at the Gender Centre in Riga).

The CSMM community has built international networks by cooperation on cross-border projects. Conferences have been organized by very active, as well as well established, institutionalized research centres, such as GEXcel in Sweden that has organized several intense international workshops and conferences and published papers from them. Several international conferences

grounded in critical approaches to studying men and masculinities have been organized by the Nordic Association for Research on Men and Masculinities (NFMM) for those from the region and beyond (Oslo 2012, Reykjavik 2014, Göteborg 2016, Örebro 2017). Moreover, critical perspectives on men and masculinities have recently become an integral part of more general sociological conferences: e.g. at European Sociological Association Congresses (e.g. Geneva 2011, Manchester 2019) and also at national venues (e.g. during Polish Sociological Association congresses 2016 and 2019).

European Commission-funded interventions

Several research projects addressing men, masculinities and gender relations in EU member states have been funded by the European Commission. These provide a mass of information and analysis on men, masculinities and intersectional gender relations. The first such projects were the 1995 Arianne policy-orientated project on boy pupils in schools, and the Fourth Framework Programme-funded (FP) European Profeminist Men's Network (1997-99), which was primarily a resource-gathering project with a clear political positioning. These projects can be understood in relation to various contemporary academic and policy developments in the 1980s and 1990s within some European countries, especially those in Northern Europe. For example, relatively early examples include the formation of the Finnish Council for Equality Subcommittee on Men's Issues from 1988, and the Nordic Council of Ministers Men and Gender Equality programme 1995-2000.

A key development was the formation of the (initially) ten country EU-funded European Research Network on Men in Europe which in turn led to the creation of the collective – Critical Research on Men in Europe (CROME; www.cromenet.org). The Network formally operated from 2000, though planning began much earlier. The Network was initially funded as part of the FP5 project 'The

Social Problem and Societal Problematisation of Men and Masculinities 2000-2003'. This was an important step forward in bringing together women and men, feminist and profeminist researchers and policy-makers in Europe. The Network comprised 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; from 2003 Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Denmark and Sweden became affiliated member countries. Data in the form of academic research, statistical sources, policy/law, and media representations which focused on men's relations to work and family, violence, health, and social exclusions, were assembled and critically examined (Hearn and Pringle 2006; Pringle et al. 2013). This work pointed to:

- great variations in the state of men and masculinities across Europe;
- differences in how the social problem of men came onto public political, policy and media agendas in different countries and regions;
- the challenges of unified English language conceptualisations (not least the difficulty of using the term 'masculinities'); and
- the identification of gaps for both research and policy.

Special note should be made of the adoption of the priority themes of 'Men and Equality' by the EU Swedish Presidency in 2001, and the EU Finnish Presidency, with accompanying conferences in Örebro and Helsinki (Varanka et al. 2006) respectively. Some other relevant projects have a more specific focus. For example, an important initiative that was not specifically on men and masculinities, but was heavily imbued with those concerns was the EU Fifth Framework project 'Work Changes Gender' (2002-04; Puchert et al. 2005). This examined how relations to work, paid and unpaid, constitute a major factor in the construction of gender (including men and

masculinities), together with the implications for changing men and masculinities. Detailed studies were conducted in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Norway, Spain and Israel, at the national, corporate, and individual worker levels. It was found that a culture of work, based on ‘traditional’ models of masculinity, along with tax policies and paternal leave regulations, still promotes the breadwinner mode.

A related concern is men’s place in the gender structuring and policy politics of care, as taken up critically in the EU ‘FOCUS – Fostering Caring Masculinities project (see Hrženjak et al. 2006) that ran in 2006/07 in five countries. This broad approach has subsequently been taken up in policy work, such as the ‘Fostering Caring Masculinities’ national programme of MenCare Switzerland 2014 to 2027.

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Another key area bringing research and policy together has been the issue of violence and anti-violence (see Roggeband in this volume). The FP6 Coordination Action on Human Rights Violations (CAHRV) provided and synthesised a mass of information and research, mainly on men’s violence to women and children (Hagemann-White et al. 2008). It also continued some of the previous work of the CROME network. The Council of the EU’s Positive Recommendations on men and gender equality, published in 2006, also highlighted the problem of men’s violence, noting that ‘the vast majority of gender-based acts of violence are perpetrated by men’ and urging ‘Member States and the Commission to combine punitive measures against the perpetrators with preventive measures targeted especially at young men and boys and to set up specific programmes for victims as well as for offenders, in particular in the case of domestic violence.’ Meanwhile, though separate from the EU, a wide variety of further formal international policy and legal work, such as that of the UN, CEDAW, the Council of Europe’s Istanbul Convention on preventing and

combating violence against *women* and domestic violence has provided general frames for changing men, and specifically stopping men's violence.

One of the most extensive research projects, entitled 'The Role of Men in Gender Equality', was conducted between 2011 and 2013 by the consortium of European scholars representing several research institutes and universities (Bergmann et al. 2014; Scambor and Seidler 2013; Scambor et al. 2014, 2015; Wojnicka 2015). The project connected more than a hundred European researchers and policy-makers, supported by an international advisory board. It gave a special attention to questions of education, work, care and family, violence, health and political representation in the EU and EFTA countries. A key finding was that traditional concepts of work slowly disappear and men's share of care work as well as a gender equal balance become visible in some parts of Europe. Caring masculinities emerged as a central path forward, and one that is increasingly taken up in practice, together with women's increasing education and professional role, and rising expectations of gender balanced task divisions. This focus means engaging with the large variations in the extent of men's unpaid care work, as well as with the dangers of a possible return to and re-emphasis on the heteronormative 'rights of fathers'. Instead of widening the definition of masculinity and gender roles, a fathers' rights approach focuses on promoting patriarchal understanding of family, where the power is solely male prerogative (Bergmann et al. 2014; Wojnicka 2016). In order to take a broad strategic approach to the politics of care, and not conflating it with fatherhood politics, the research consortium adopted the advocacy of 'caring masculinities' as a policy aim, which could be applied not only in families and households, but also in men's care and caring in workplaces, politics, and so on.

Following analysis of the men's and boys' situation with regard to education, positioning in the workplace and labour market, involvement in care work mostly in family contexts as well as men's health issues, gender-based violence and institutionalized and non-institutionalized politics, based on secondary quantitative data analysis, national reports, qualitative interviews, and other research methods, important policy-related recommendations were developed. Those recommendations were presented in terms of how men and boys can contribute to greater gender equality. This network of researchers has continued under the auspices of a planned COST project, as yet unfunded. (The authors of this chapter have been involved in almost all of these projects above.)

Finally, men and masculinities issues have become an integral part of the gender equality research framework implemented by European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), based in Vilnius (see Jacquot and Krizsan in this volume). In 2011, EIGE presented the outcomes of its study on European profeminist social activism undertaken by men in 27 countries. The goal of the study 'was to map relevant stakeholders in all EU Member States whose activity could be considered as contributing to a more effective involvement of men in the promotion of gender equality' (Ruxton and van der Gaag 2012). Since then EIGE has supported several profeminist initiatives mainly through cooperation with the European network, MenEngage Europe.

Gaps and intersections

This section paints in broad brush strokes some key gaps and intersections in research and policy. We build on analyses provided by the CROME network and subsequent EU projects, particularly relations between home and work, social exclusion, violence, and health. Interestingly, these analyses suggest that key lacunae in both research and policy tend to occur where there are intersections between these four themes, with clear intersectional relationships between social

problems that some men create and those that some men experience (Hearn and Pringle 2006; Hearn et al. 2018).

Regarding intersections between social exclusion and work, we observe an incremental dichotomy within many European (and other) societies governed by neoliberal principles along the dimensions of increased unemployment of some men in tandem with the stubborn retention of political economic power by other men. Thus, the social marginalisation of the former is primarily the responsibility of the latter. New forms of social exclusion have developed, with shifts from industrial to more post-industrialised society. Long-established oppressive power relations between men colliding with new social labour constellations have left major gaps for research and policy. The intersectional relations between the dynamics of social exclusion in the form of racism and some dominant forms of masculinity have been under-researched and often ignored in policy initiatives.

Likewise, there is the need to recognise that men's sexual violence to children is a major global (including European) gendered problem, and a profound form of social exclusion of the violated in itself, to be treated as such in research and policy (Hearn et al. 2013, Pringle 2016). The linkage between men as parents and carers, and men as violent partners or violent fathers/parents has also often been seriously neglected in research and policy. In most of Europe, fatherhood and men's violence are treated as separate policy issues. In research and policy, splits between 'problems which some men experience' and 'problems which some men create' need to be bridged.

An integrated policy approach to joined-up policy areas is needed: there is no contradiction between positively promoting the role of men as carers, and emphasising the prime requirement of

protecting children from (what are typically constructed as other) men's violence. This applies to policy machineries and political processes at both national and supranational, such as EU, levels. What is striking is how rarely such an integrated dual approach is adopted. There are profound tensions in integrating policies encouraging positive fathering while protecting families from violent fathers. In parallel, (with some exceptions) childhood studies have tended to neglect the dimension of men's violence whilst research on men's violence has tended to underplay men's violence to children compared with men's violence to women and men's violence to each other (Pringle 2016).

Turning to the intersections of health, violence, work and social exclusion, we find further issues where both sufficient research and policy attention has been lacking. There is a considerable body of research conducted across many countries illustrating correlations between poor health, including men's health, and social disadvantage associated with class, ethnicity and other social divisions. However, we note that a study of 51 countries suggested a significant association between levels of patriarchy (as indicated by female homicide rates) and men's higher mortality and morbidity (Stanistreet et al. 2005). Following such findings, we need to unpick a range of potential factors, for instance:

- the tendency of some men not to seek medical help early enough, partly perhaps because of a masculinist desire to 'cope' or not face reality, to be 'tough';
- the suggestion that some men may demonstrate greater reluctance to make emotional contact with others to deal with emotions, and this may relate to social isolation and mental wellbeing, including suicide;

- men's, especially young men's, higher mortality and morbidity rates potentially being partly associated with a range of 'dominant and dominating' men's practices, such as accidents and risk-taking behaviours in traffic, crime (including victimisation), sexuality (including non-condom use and multiple sexual partners), gambling, self-created stress at work in trying to 'get ahead', and drinking/drug-taking/other self-destructive behaviours.

Framing a range of men's profound health difficulties within this more power-oriented perspective is insufficiently developed in European research and policy.

Finally, in terms of our intersecting themes, social exclusion/inclusion can be seen as an important element entering into the dynamics of all the other themes – not only as usually seen as immediate social welfare matters for white, host, supposedly autochthonous populations, but also the rise of far-right groups and racist refugee politics.

Conclusion: future directions

This overview raises key issues for future directions. First, the development of critical research and informed policy is very uneven and also changeable across different regions of Europe (Hearn and Howson 2019). These concerns are far from mainstream agendas in much of Europe, especially so in CEE countries, as with Gender Studies and feminist theories more generally. This is even if a certain level of institutionalisation of issues relating to men and masculinities in gender equality policy has taken place, in the EU, the European Commission, and in some countries within that region. In Poland, the political climate is a crucial obstacle in increasing critical research on men and masculinities. The country seems to follow Hungary's steps as Gender Studies are subjected to a high level of (right-wing, conservative) critique, with less and less resources allocated to gender-

focused research, including those on men and masculinities. Growing populism and conservative political agendas do not favour incorporation of these themes into state policies or other forms of institutionalisation (see Siim and Fiig in this volume). There remains an urgent need to support scholarly initiatives on men and masculinities, especially with processes of re-masculinisation, in CEE societies, where democracy is still fragile or obscured, but also elsewhere in Europe. Thus, institutionalisation and sustainability of bodies ensuring the agenda of targeting gender inequality with focus on men and masculinities is of critical importance in such geopolitically turbulent times. Examples are ready at hand. An expert working group on Men and Gender Equality was founded in 2012, affiliated to the Czech Government Office and its Advisory Board on Gender Equality, or another Czech initiative, the Genderman (2017/18), is a prize awarded to a man defending gender equality and combating sexism in the public domain. However, the latter initiative solely depends on non-governmental funding, and the sustainability of the former on political will.

Second, and relatedly, current social and political events across Europe provide much topical and fruitful material for critical analysis and reflection on men and masculinities: men in power, polarisation of public debates regarding gender issues, and assessment of ‘crises’ of men and masculinities. The place of men and masculinities is increasingly clear in EU politics, party politics and policy-making. The political elite in V4 (Visegrad) countries, but also across the EU, provide a rich source of data for critical reflection, as are moves towards the political right and far-right. Far-right groups, dominated by men in their leadership and voting patterns (Spierings and Zaslove 2015), are gaining greater popularity, including attacking (male) immigrants and refugees coming from other parts of the world (see Siim and Fiig in this volume). The urgency for stepping up such research and policy attention is clear not only in the run up to and aftermath of the Brexit referendum (Dustin et al. 2019), but also in other profound crisis manifestations across Europe

associated with the intersections of nationalism, (opposition to) migration, and economic inequality and exclusion. Such trends connect to the resurrection of authoritarian, racist, Islamophobic and homophobic masculinities, as well as creating new marginalised masculinities. These matters need to be problematized in the light of a crisis of liberal democracy and attacks on the value of gender equality. Such turbulent times can also lead to unexpected alliances for critical scholars with critical media and NGO and other activists. Global, international support networks play an invaluable role in this context. In this respect, the work of the German-UK-based network, 'Political Masculinities', which has organized conferences, a summer school, and publications on these themes, is especially relevant.

Third, further specific studies are needed on men and masculinities within the machinery of the EU and the European Commission, and in the very construction of the EU and 'Europe', including how 'lesser others' outside, and sometimes within, are constructed, both through both formal and informal practices.

Finally, there is a need for much more critical engagement with men and masculinities, especially dominant and dominating forms, as they apply across a whole range of further social and political fields. These include ageing, migration, environment, consumption, travel and transport, gender identity, religion, big business, finance, militarism, and impacts of such new technologies as ICTs, AI, robotics, and biotechnologies.

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