Chapter Seventeen
Anxious States and Directions for Masculinities Work with Men

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Changing gender orders

The gender order is changing. Structural changes in the global economy as a result of neo-liberalism have 'undercut once and for all state-organized capitalism's ideal of the family wage' (Fraser, 2009: 8), with profound implications for understandings and practices of gender. As Connell (2005: 11) observes: 'In third-world cities there has been a de-institutionalization of economic life that has left very large numbers of young men in precarious conditions.' For men who, in Ellen Willis's words (1999), have 'tended to conflate . . . achievement in the world of paid work with proving their manhood', the consequences have been severe.

This changing political economy of gender is affecting gender relations inside and outside of the home, as women participate more actively in the waged economy, public life and the political process. The implications of such changes are being registered both within men's lived experience of gender and through its ideological expression in public discourse on masculinity. There is much talk of men's crisis of masculinity. As has been noted, 'Some of this discussion is fanciful, and some is a way of avoiding issues of gender equality; but some of it refers to genuine changes and difficulties in the lives of men and boys' (UNDAW, 2008a: 8).

The masculine anxieties provoked by these 'changes and difficulties' extend beyond the 'lives of men and boys', however. Changes in the gender order as a result of challenges to the androcentric division of labour are not only undermining men's masculine identities predicated on the subordination of women. They also threaten the patriarchal foundations of current arrangements of political and economic power. As Fraser explains, second-wave feminism understood the broader significance of the gender division of labour and helped to uncover

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 220

> the deep-structural connections between women's responsibility for the lion's share of unpaid caregiving, their subordination in marriage and personal life, the gender segmentation of labour markets, men's domination of the political system, and the androcentrism of welfare provision, industrial policy and development schemes. (Fraser, 2009: 5)

It is unsurprising, then, that changes to the political economy of gender are provoking anxiety among those who have benefited most from these 'deep-structural connections'. Such changes have the potential to destabilize a fundamental tenet of patriarchal ideology, whose masculine/feminine binary serves to naturalize social inequalities. The ideological work done by this gender binary in helping to secure consent to hierarchical social relations made it clear that

> feminism appeared as part of a broader emancipatory project, in which struggles against gender injustices were necessarily linked to struggles against racism, imperialism, homophobia and class domination, all of which required transformation of the deep structures of capitalist society. (Fraser, 2009: 6)

Hegemony has a masculine appearance; power and authority remain deeply masculinized. It is this masculinity of hegemony that changes in the gender order threaten to undermine. This chapter will explore the states of anxiety engendered by this threat, taking particular interest in the ways in which contemporary formations of economic and political power are managing their anxiety in the face of the changing political economy of gender. It will argue that the evolution of the 'men and masculinities' field, in work on issues of violence and sexual health, must be understood not only in the context of, but also as complicit with, these crisis management efforts of anxious states. The challenge of resisting this complicity remains, as yet, largely unacknowledged within the field. This chapter delineates key features of this complicity and the possibilities of resistance. It argues that such resistance requires more critical self-reflection within the field about both the political subjectivity of the category 'men' that it calls into being and the locations and formations within which it engages men in work on masculinities.

Anxious states of masculinity

Neo-liberalism has brought unprecedented numbers of women into the waged economy, putting the androcentrism of the male breadwinner model under severe strain. Kabeer (2007: 12) notes that: 'The rise in female labour force participation has often been in the context of stagnant and even declining rates of male labour force participation', meaning that 'women have

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 221

emerged as the flexible labour force par excellence for the highly competitive labour intensive sectors of the global economy'.

This is not a simple story of neo-liberalism being the engine of women's economic empowerment. Indeed, neo-liberalism's impact on women through its undermining of the welfare state, public education, health service delivery and public sector employment make it one of the greatest determinants of continuing gender inequality.

Yet research on the entry of younger unmarried women into paid work generally finds that this has meant a greater sense of autonomy in their lives (Kabeer, 2007). If the situation for married women remains more mixed, '[s]tatistics from different regions of the world, both developed and developing, all testify to major shifts in patterns of marriage, motherhood and family life' (Kabeer, 2007: 51–2). Writing of the North American context, Willis is clear that

> women's increased economic independence and personal and sexual freedom have transformed the institution of marriage and eroded male dominance in everyday relations between the sexes. Where once men who were wounded in their work-based masculinity might have found some compensation in their dominance at home, now they are likely to feel unmanned in both public and private spheres. (Willis, 1999)

The changing political economy of gender is also affecting gender relations outside of the home, as a result of women's greater participation in public life, the political process and collective struggle. The extent of these changes in the gender order clearly varies according to differences in economy, culture and history. But there is a way in which this sense of men being 'unmanned' by a changing gender order has a cultural currency and ideological saliency that transcends the specifics of very differing societies. As a result, conversations about the problems that men are having with their manhood have become a feature of both policy and popular discourses in many countries. Dowsett highlights the heterogeneity of problems named within these discourses, including

> men's falling fertility rates; increasing impotency; the flight from women; more turning gay; enhanced morbidity and mortality rates in relation to various diseases; higher rates of accident in the workplace and in motor vehicles; a proclivity for domestic and sexual violence; overindulgence in drugs and alcohol; and increasing problems among young men in relation to alienation and suicide. (Dowsett, 2005: 3)

The common thread that links the items on this laundry list is the understanding of these difficulties in men's lives as a function of a problematic

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 222

masculinity. If the changing gender order has been read, in part, as a narrative of women's progress, then this narrative is increasingly shadowed by anxiety about masculine crisis. Feminist concern with the problem of men is now, in this apparently post-feminist age, also a conversation about the problems of men. Whether it be in relation to poor educational attainment, low health service usage, high rates of HIV and other STIs, or disproportionate involvement in violence and crime, boys and men are being identified as themselves 'prisoners of patriarchy', whose harmful norms of masculinity distort and damage male lives at the same time as oppressing women and girls. In this thesis, the crisis of masculinity is both a problem of men adhering too rigidly to a pathological masculine culture (too much masculinity, if you will) and a problem of being unable to adhere closely enough to their prescribed masculine roles, as a result of political and economic change (in other words, too little masculinity). Either way, gender has become a problem for men.

Neo-liberalism and the uses of masculinity

Because this analysis has become central to the efforts of the 'men and masculinities' field to engage men in work for greater gender equality, it is worth exploring its political implications, and in particular its relationship to the anxieties generated by the changes in the gender order described above. When situated in relation to the links between the histories of feminism and neo-liberalism, this discourse of harmful norms of masculinity can be seen to have played a role in managing such anxieties, and the threats posed to hegemonic arrangements of political and economic power by the changing political economy of gender.

If the massive entry of women into the waged workforce has helped to undermine the androcentric division of productive and reproductive labour that was a central target of second-wave feminism, the result has not been a genuine liberation for women. Rather, the replacement of the family wage with the new 'norm of the two-earner family' has produced lower wage levels, greater job insecurity, and falling living standards for many. Fraser notes 'a steep rise in the number of hours worked for wages per household, exacerbation of the double shift – now often a triple or quadruple shift – and a rise in female-headed households' (2009: 8).

Neo-liberal ideology, in Fraser's view, has finessed this 'sow's ear into a silk purse by elaborating a new romance of female advancement and gender justice' (*ibid.*), a romance whose politics has shifted increasingly further away from a materialist analysis of gender injustice. Her analysis of the history of this shift is worth quoting at length:

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 223

> Neoliberalism's rise coincided with a major alteration in the political culture of capitalist societies. In this period, claims for justice were increasingly couched as claims for the recognition of identity and difference. With this shift 'from redistribution to recognition' came powerful pressures to transform second-wave feminism into a variant of identity politics. A progressive variant, to be sure, but one that tended nevertheless to overextend the critique of culture, while downplaying the critique of political economy. (Fraser, 2009)

It is significant, then, that the anxieties about masculinity produced by a changing gender order have usually been couched in terms of a critique of culture and not political economy. Unwittingly, the emphases within the 'men and masculinities' field on critiquing cultural norms of masculinity as the problem to be addressed, and on engaging individual men as the primary agents and sites of change, have buttressed this neo-liberal ideological turn. Even as the Gender and Development (GAD) framework sought to resist and insist on women's material subordination, the effort to include men within the framework has worked in the opposite direction (White, 2000).

Downplaying the critique of the political economy suited the architects of the new political economy. So it should come as no surprise that the male responsibility paradigm, an early instance of the 'men and masculinities' field being put to work, should be ushered on to the world stage by the then president of the World Bank, James Wolfensohn. In his speech to the 1995 Beijing Conference, he called on participants to focus on

> not just the liberation of women, but also the liberation of men – in their thinking, attitudes, and willingness to take a fairer share of the responsibilities and workloads that women carry on their shoulders. To bring about real improvement in the quality of women's lives, men must change. And action must begin at home. (1995: 3, cited in Bedford, 2007)

The 'romance of female advancement' is here made dependent on a complementary romance of male domestic responsibility. Such romances serve to mask the true nature of the crisis of social reproduction engendered by neo-liberalism's embrace of women's waged productive labour and concurrent attack on welfarist social spending. This is not to argue that there are no irresponsible men. Nor is it to say that men do not need to share the responsibility of domestic labour more equally with women; in so many societies, they clearly do. But the effect of locating the household as the site for the response to the crisis of social reproduction has been to 'render individual poor men culpable for a range of development outcomes better explained – and resolved – at the suprahousehold level' (Bedford, 2007: 303).

With the focus on the reactionary politics of fathers' rights groups, the covert conservatism of this male responsibility paradigm has been neglected.

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 224

Its concern with the cultures of masculinity that prevent men's responsible parenting and partnering has been used to displace attention from institutional responsibilities in relation to social reproduction. The effect of this has been to domesticate discussion ('action must begin at home') of how best to address the societal challenge of balancing the labour of production with social reproduction. And in taking up the call for more work with men on the problems their masculinity is posing to their domestic responsibilities, Bedford argues, 'feminists are running the risk that their interventions are complicit in the neo-liberal retreat from social provisioning' (2007: 303). To challenge this retreat, it is essential to articulate the issue of men's domestic responsibilities in terms of political economy and not simply in problematic cultures of masculinity. In this respect, a way forward has been shown by recent work on men and the care economy, with its discussion of the structural factors determining the inequitable distribution of care labour (UNDAW, 2008b).

Domesticating violence

A similar domestication can be seen in the ways in which masculinities work with men has been enlisted in efforts to explain and address the violence of the gender order, with similar implications for complicity with hegemonic arrangements of political and economic power. One of the clearest successes of second-wave feminism was its challenge to the gendered demarcation of private from public space, and its opening up of men's violence against women within the private sphere to public scrutiny and judicial sanction. The emergence of the domestic violence movement in countries of the anglophone Global North, and of organizing around gender-based violence in the Global South, changed public perceptions of, and state responses to, patriarchal violence in the home. They did so by challenging the belief that such violence was a private matter, insisting rather that it was part of a broader system of male violence that infused political, economic and social institutions.

Yet success in challenging the violence of domestic patriarchy came at the cost of this broader systemic analysis. In looking to the state to take action on violence in the domestic sphere and to provide justice for its survivors, it became difficult to maintain a focus on the violence of the state itself, and on the ways in which state violence is bound up with oppressive gender orders. Not only is the state defined by its monopoly of legitimate violence, but that violence has long been deeply gendered, in both its iconography and institutional apparatus. The observations of Banerjee *et al.* on the state in South Asia can be applied more broadly:

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 225

> The state in South Asia emerges quite literally as the primary regulator of the means of violence. Its investment in the mechanism and language of war, in structures of inequality, in the glorification of military cultures, and nuclearization only reinforces violence, and gendered violence in particular. (Banerjee *et al.*, 2004: 128)

Work with men on the connections between gender and violence, as it has grown over the last two decades in the form of both intervention and prevention programmes, has been slow to make the links between the personal violence of men and the political violence of the state. Indeed, in its emphasis on violence as a learned behaviour that results from harmful norms of masculinity, arguably the 'men and masculinities' field has served to undermine efforts to make these links by framing violence in terms of culture and not politics, socialization not oppression. As a result, the field has contributed to a domestication of the ways in which the gendered violence of the social order is understood and addressed.

This is significant, not least because of the relationship between such violence and the anxious masculinities provoked by neo-liberalism. One response to the sense of being 'unmanned' by changes in the political economy of gender has been a 'sharp re-masculinization of political rhetoric and a turn to the use of force as a primary instrument in policy' (Connell, 2005: 1816). The War on Terror is exemplary in this regard. The racism of this imperial war has been much discussed, yet its gender politics less noticed. But, as Puar makes clear,

> The depictions of masculinity most rapidly disseminated and globalized at this historical juncture are terrorist masculinities: failed and perverse, these emasculated bodies always have femininity as their reference point of malfunction, and are metonymically tied to all sorts of pathologies of the mind and body – homosexuality, incest, pedophilia, madness, and disease. (Puar, 2007: xxiii)

The iconography of the War on Terror, from the queering of the Islamic terrorist to the virilizing of the US War President, make clear that one of its functions is to reaffirm the authority of white, Christian, heteronormative masculinity. Indeed, one can read the last 30 years of US political and cultural life as, in part, about this effort to recuperate a secure masculinity from the crisis in white, patriarchal authority provoked by the gains of the women's, gay and civil rights movements.

Ideologies of a male-dominated order continue to be actively modernized and renewed in response to anxiety over sexual and social change, both through the social conservatism of religious fundamentalism (Christian, Hindu or Islamic) and the patriarchal narratives of militant nationalism. From

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 226

Ahmadinejad to Zuma, there is a resurgence of masculinist populism within otherwise differing political cultures that is concerned with curing the pathologies of 'failed and perverse' masculinities. The domestication of male violence in the form of 'enlightened' state policy on domestic violence not only coexists with this re-masculinization of political life but in some ways provides cover for it.

To break this cover implies a need for the 'men and masculinities' field to resist the domestication of male violence and confront more clearly the institutionalized violence of the state. The emphasis given to masculinity as an explanatory framework for male violence has tended to mystify rather than clarify the relationship between violence and power. Framing violence in terms of the problems men are having with 'their' masculinity leaves unspoken the politics of violence, not least in terms of addressing the connections between the violence of individual men and the violence of the institutions that shape the societies in which those men live. In so doing, it locates the change that is needed within individual male bodies, their behaviours and the norms that are purported to determine them, suggesting that promoting a healthier masculinity for men is the way to end such violence rather than challenging male supremacy and its ramifications in related systems of oppression. Holding men accountable for their violent behaviour is, of course, essential. But such accountability needs to be understood and practised in relation to the imperative to hold powerful institutions accountable for their structuring of violence within social relations.

It is essential for organizations within the 'men and masculinities' field to be holding the state accountable for its responses to men's interpersonal violence, as Men's Action for Stopping Violence Against Women (MASVAW) in India is doing with regard to government's failure to adequately fund the implementation of the Domestic Violence Act (MASVAW, 2009). But it is also critical to be challenging the violence of the state itself. Refusing complicity with the state's presentation of itself as 'benign' requires that organizations within the field address the institutional as well as interpersonal dimensions of violence and the links between them.

This will involve partnering with those who have come to recognize the limitations, contradictions even, of relying on oppressive state institutions to end men's violence. For the many places where the struggle remains one of engaging the state to act on men's violence, through law and policy, this view may not seem relevant. But as former political prisoner and anti-prison activist Angela Davis asked at the landmark conference "The Color of Violence against Women", held in California: 'Can a state that is thoroughly infused with racism, male dominance, class bias, and homophobia, and that constructs

itself in and through violence, act to minimize violence in the lives of women?' (2000).

As the former Board President of Men Overcoming Violence (MOVE) in San Francisco, I saw a men's anti-violence organization with a 20-year history torn apart by the contradictions of doing violence prevention work in communities targeted by state violence, at the same time as serving as the coerced counselling component of the state's response to domestic violence and being dependent on the state's financial support. For Davis, coming to terms with such contradictions means that:

> We need to develop an approach that relies on political mobilization rather than legal remedies or social service delivery. We need to fight for temporary and long-term solutions to violence and simultaneously think about and link global capitalism, global colonialism, racism, and patriarchy – all the forces that shape violence against women of colour. (Davis, 2000)

Masculinities at the intersections

What would it look like for masculinities work with men to contribute to such a political mobilization? To begin with, it would be work that was interested in the ways in which men learn, practice and produce notions and norms of masculinity within circuits of power energized not simply by gender. Paul Willis's groundbreaking ethnography of working-class teenage boys in an industrial town in the UK (1981), and the rich seam of research and academic enquiry that it opened up, has yet to be adequately mined by 'men and masculinities' work. The study highlighted the young men's active and self-conscious cultivation of a 'traditional' working-class masculinity as a form of resistance to being labelled failures in the context of the middle-class aspirational values of school. Their gender practice became a source of class dignity that, in its rejection of education, only served to reproduce capitalist relations by ensuring working-class kids stayed in working-class jobs.

Understanding the interplay of identity and inequality in men's lives, related to gender, class, race/ethnicity, sexuality and other markers of difference and axes of oppression, is critical. It is in this interplay that workings of hegemony can be discerned in the range of masculine identifications and representations that collectively help to reproduce elite rule. Challenging this masculinity of hegemony is a key task facing the 'men and masculinities' field. But this will require a clearer analysis of, and response to, the material and the ideological links between global capitalism, neo-colonialism, racism, and heteropatriarchy than has hitherto been characteristic of the field.

And if this sounds abstract, a good way to get more grounded is to follow the money, as it were. Men's experience of themselves as men, as gendered beings in a gender order that subordinates the feminine to the masculine, is also about their locations and trajectories within social hierarchies more broadly. Masculinity is never just about gender, and within the terms of the masculine/feminine binary that organizes so much of our worlds, it is always about power. The working-class boys of Paul Willis's ethnography, the white male settlers in Morrell's (2001) South African historical survey, the young men of colour in Byron Hurt's documentary on masculinity and hip hop culture in the USA, and the stone butches and female-to-male transgenders discussed by Halberstam (1998), are all enacting masculinities in relation to the social hierarchies of class, race, gender and sexuality, historically formed and institutionally maintained, in which they are located.

But the 'norms of masculinity' framework, so dominant within 'men and masculinities' work, offers little grip on the relationship between the body-reflexive practices of masculinity (Connell, 1995) and the circuits of power within which bodies and practices come into being. This framework tends to confuse rather than clarify the relations of power. Its emphasis on masculinity as the scripts men are expected to follow and the roles men are expected to play means that

> relations between the sexes [are] anaesthetized as differences between roles, as if it so happens that his role is to be assertive and hers to be submissive. That thinking power is impossible in this framework is clear if we try to employ the language of role in a situation where power is impossible to ignore. Do we understand imperialism as a result of colonized and colonizer following a 'black role' and a 'white role'? (McMahon, 1999: 167)

The importance of 'thinking power' in relation to masculinities is apparent not simply because gender identities, representations and practices are constituted by the forces structuring social, economic and political power. It is also because the construction and reproduction of dominant and subaltern masculinities have long played a central role in the ideological work needed to preserve social, economic and political inequalities. The racial and sexual have been mutually imbricated in differing embodiments of masculinity, and in particular the production of the masculine 'other' against whom hegemony secures itself. European colonialism and the settler societies of the 'new world' imposed their rule 'through a very gendered exercise of racial power' (Canessa, 2008: 41). As McClintock emphasizes, one of Fanon's key insights was that the 'dynamics of colonial power are fundamentally, though not solely, the dynamics of gender' (1997: 97). These dynamics involve 'a colonial

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 229

discourse of sexuality that appropriates masculinity as the exclusive prerogative of white male colonizers while relegating black male sexuality to the culturally abjected, pathologized space of femininity, degeneracy, and castration' (Fuss, 1995: 154–5).

This emasculation of the colonized often coexisted with fearful depictions of the subaltern male's sexual depravity and rapaciousness. In related fashion, portrayal of the 'failed and perverse' masculinities of the contemporary Islamic (always male) terrorist draws on an Orientalist version of Muslim male sexuality, in which, as Puar comments: 'Muslim masculinity is simultaneously pathologically excessive yet repressive, perverse yet homophobic, virile yet emasculated, monstrous yet flaccid' (2007: xxv).

The black male as sexual predator was a familiar trope in the racist imaginary of white, slave-holding societies, a fear used by elites to forge a racial pact with poor whites. As Wiegman notes,

> Rape was not simply a crime against all women but a vehicle for criminalizing black men. . . . In the figure of the black male rapist, which proliferated as a popular icon after the Civil War, the contestation between patriarchal and white supremacist social formations is simultaneouslv made legible and managed. (2001: 366n)

Such fear can still be mobilized for political ends, as the infamous use of the Willie Horton political advertisement by George H. W. Bush during his 1988 presidential race makes clear. Similarly, the anxiety about the 'dangerous classes' clustering in the newly industrializing towns and cities of nineteenth-century England, centring on the figure of the violent working-class male, finds contemporary echoes. As Ros Coward observed with regard to depictions of young men's violence in the UK media,

> Anti-male rhetoric is sharpest around the most vulnerable members of society – poor, unemployed, young men. The media and politicians often describe disenfranchised young men in quasi-bestial terms – yobs, louts and scum. (Coward, 1999, cited in Heartfield, 2002)

These interconnected codings of masculinity in terms of class, race and sexuality as well as gender have long served the interests of social, economic and political elites. Furthermore, when the power of these elites has been threatened by the struggles of oppressed communities, masculinity has also proved a useful means of disrupting their solidarity by 'reaffirming men's difference from women' and repressing 'those hierarchical differences among men that might expose the race, class, and heterosexist elitism that organizes social power arrangements' (Wiegman, 2001: 367n).

If one of the tasks of political mobilization urged by Davis is to ensure the

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 230

exposure of the 'race, class, and heterosexist elitism that organizes social power arrangements', then a key contribution the 'men and masculinities' field can make is to name and address these uses of masculinity within the workings of hegemony. In turn, this contribution will depend on a more explicit questioning of the political subjectivity being invoked for this constituency for change, 'men' that is, whom the field addresses. What is it that masculinities work with men wants, politically?

While such work has been critical in articulating a gender subjectivity for men, it is equally essential that such a subjectivity be reflective of the 'hierarchical differences among men'. This is more than simply using the plural 'masculinities', with its unhelpful conflation of different ways of being a man with men's differing locations within hierarchies of power. It is the latter that must be attended to in any political mobilization of men to challenge an unjust gender order. For, as Connell makes clear, these locations materially affect men's experience of the gender order:

> Class, race, national, regional, and generational differences cross-cut the category 'men', spreading the gains and costs of gender relations very unevenly among men. There are many situations where groups of men may see their interest as more closely aligned with the women in their communities than with other men. (Connell, 2005: 1809)

The challenge for the 'men and masculinities' field is to forge a constituency among men for social change that is organized around the interplay of privilege and oppression in men's lives; around the interests they share with women and people of other genders in their communities, as a result of their common experience of 'racism, imperialism, homophobia and class domination', as well as the interests they share with all men in overturning the patriarchy that harms as well as privileges them. This would be a constituency whose political subjectivity is premised on the conviction that the struggle for gender justice is necessarily about social justice.

Understanding the linked nature of struggles against oppression insists on different kinds of gender work with men than the 'men and masculinities' field has hitherto embraced. Beyond the focus on changing individual men's attitudes and behaviours in their personal lives, this would be work, for example, that mobilized men, in their leadership roles within labour unions and community-based organizations, to challenge the discrimination and violence that deny women their economic rights, especially working-class women and women from ethnic minorities. This would be work with men within political parties and government bureaucracies that focused on men's roles as allies of women in their struggle for full political rights, and that held

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 231

political leaders to account in relationship to this struggle, as Sonke Gender Justice has done in winning its case against Julius Malema, head of the African National Congress Youth League (ANCYL), in South Africa's Equality Court for his sexist and homophobic public statements (Keehn, 2009).

Given the linked nature of struggles against oppression, community struggles for racial, economic and environmental justice, and social justice movements and spaces more generally, are important locations for masculinities work with men on male power and privilege. This would be work concerned with supporting such organizations and movements to address gender injustice as part of their campaigns as well as to confront issues of male power and privilege as they show up in their internal processes and dynamics – something the Challenging Male Supremacy Project has sought to do with male political activists in New York City (Maccani *et al.*, 2010).

While the 'men and masculinities' field has done much to deepen and expand work with with men on gender-based violence, this work is rarely understood or implemented as a form of community building. Yet for many communities, fractured by the depredations of neo-liberalism, male violence, in Segal's words, is the 'barbarism of private life reflecting back the increased barbarism of public life, as contemporary capitalism continues to chisel out its hierarchies along the familiar grooves of class, race and gender' (1997: 271).

A community-building orientation in gender-based violence work with men would involve developing processes that hold men accountable for their violence in the context of seeking to build stronger communities in the face of this 'barbarism of public life'. This would be work that went beyond educating men about masculinities to focus on strengthening men's connection with their communities; addressing the harm men's violence does to their communities; leveraging the relationships that men care about to hold them accountable for their violence; reconnecting men with the traditions and practices of their communities that promote equality and dignity for all; and forging greater solidarity between men, women and people of other gender identities to resist the oppression that they face in common. In turn, this implies a need to locate and support this politically conscious masculinities work within political formations and community associations that are working within oppressed communities.

This work will not be possible unless men's own experiences of sexual and gender-based violence, whether as children or adults, is dealt with more explicitly. Men's violence against other men and boys is frequently manifested in gendered terms, as feminizing the victim, most explicitly in the case of

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 232

sexual violence. Little is known, and even less is said, about the full extent of men's experience of such gender-based violence, but the indications are that it is grossly under-reported. It is clear, though, that race/ethnicity, class, sexuality and age position men very differently in relation to their experience of violence based on the hierarchical logic of the gender binary, not least in terms of their exposure to institutionalized violence in prisons and detention centres, as well as residential schools and health facilities.

There is an understandable concern that talk of men's experience of gender-based violence is at best a distraction from, and at worst a challenge to, the continuing struggle by women to have the violence done to them by men recognized and addressed. Yet the analysis offered above is explicitly not about paralleling let alone equating men's and women's experiences of gender-based violence. Rather, it is to argue that this violence is based in a gender order that is shot through with other hierarchies of power, and that men's differing locations within such hierarchies have an impact on their exposure to such violence. Developing the tools and resources to work with men on the trauma they have experienced as a result of violence must be an important part of mobilizing them to end the violence.

At the same time, it is important that masculinities work should address the workings of male privilege more explicitly. In its effort to enlist men in the struggle for gender equality, the field has gone out of its way to stress the harms that masculinity does to men. Yet, in doing so, it has risked under-playing the extent to which men continue to be politically, economically and socially privileged by current gender orders, albeit in ways that are shaped by race/ethnicity, class, sexuality and age. Unless such privileges are acknow-ledged and addressed, it will not be possible to build powerful alliances for gender justice between men, women and people of other gender identities.

The political subjectivity that masculinities work can seek to build with men relies, in part, on a clear analysis of and accountability for male privilege. Men's own experiences of violence and oppression must be used as a way of addressing rather than avoiding the continuing significance of male privilege and power in the workings of hegemony. The joint statement issued by Critical Resistance and INCITE! (Women of Colour Against Violence) on 'Gender Violence and the Prison Industrial Complex' is instructive on this point, urging

> all men in social justice movements to take particular responsibility to address and organize around gender violence in their communities as a primary strategy for addressing violence and colonialism. We challenge men to address how their own histories of victimization have hindered their ability to establish gender justice in their communities. (Critical Resistance–INCITE!, 2001)

Unsettling heteronormativity

Changing the meaning of masculinity for men has been the predominant project of the 'men and masculinities' field, but the political limitations of this desire have become evident over recent years. The effort to redefine a new masculinity for men has unwittingly contributed to re-securing the hegemony of political and economic elites, made anxious by changes in the gender order. Investing hope in 'kinder, gentler expressions of masculinity' as a way to bring about changes in the social order has proved illusory. This is not only because it has domesticated the challenge of social change and distracted attention from the structural changes in political and economic power that are needed. Equally, the project of a new masculinity for men remains deeply tied to the heteronormative gender binary, and thus to a central foundation of current hegemonies. Much of the field remains focused on changing men's gender practices and politics through redefining norms of masculinity. But as Kosofsky-Sedgwick (1995: 12) emphasizes, 'when something is about masculinity, it is not always "about men"'. Given this, she makes clear the need to '[d]rive a wedge in, early and often and if possible conclusively, between the two topics, masculinity and men, whose relation to one another it is so difficult not to presume'.

But that is just what the prevailing discourses of violence and masculinity do: presume a necessary alignment between men and masculinity rather than put their relation to one another into question. And if the heteronormative gender binary rests on the binding of masculinity to men and femininity to women, then it is heterosexuality that provides the adhesive. In the gender discourse that informs the 'men and masculinities' field, it is men's heterosexual desire for women that secures their masculine identification with other men. Patriarchal heterosexuality 'rests on the use of women as exchangeable, perhaps symbolic, property for the primary purpose of cementing the bonds of men with men' (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1985: 26, cited in Wiegman, 2001). As already noted, women's increasing entry into waged work and public space has threatened the masculine bonds cemented by the androcentric organization of labour. At the same time, the increasing visibility of gay and queer political struggles further challenges the hetero-masculine identifications on which current hegemonies rest.

Thus, the gender insecurities of anxious states are also sexual insecurities. In part, this instability is linked to 'women's sexual agency and erotic autonomy' which 'have always been troublesome for the state' by posing 'a challenge to the ideology of an originary nuclear heterosexual family that perpetuates the fiction that the family is the cornerstone of society'

Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 234

(Alexander, 2005: 22–3). At the same time, this 'originary nuclear heterosexual family' is threatened by the erotic autonomy of those who choose to have sex with people of the same gender. The fear of this threat is evident in the prevalence of homophobic legislation and policy the world over, and the linking of threats to the established economic and political order with sexual 'deviance'. Yet, the heterosexist assumptions that characterize much of the 'men and masculinities' field preclude it from analysing, let alone addressing, the links between heteronormativity and oppressive gender orders. In general, the men and masculinities field still takes the heterosexual male as its subject. Where efforts to include gay men have been made, they have usually been understood in terms of reaching out to gay/queer constituencies 'out there' rather than embracing a multiplicity of gender and sexual identities and practices within the domain of 'men and masculinities' itself.

To seize the possibilities for radical political change inherent within a changing gender order, and its threats to the masculinity of hegemony, the goal must be to deepen the gender insecurities of anxious states, especially as they coalesce around the figure of the masculine. This would be work that was interested in the political uses of cultural constructions of gender, in the ways in which discourses of masculinity and femininity secure consent to oppressive formations of power by naturalizing hierarchies and mystifying structures of power. When it comes to the masculine, this would be work that sought ambiguity not authenticity, complexity not conformity. Above all, this would be work that created enough space between men and masculinity in which to organize around the shared political interests of people of all genders in specific communities targeted by intersecting forms of oppression.

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Cornwall et al 05 2/1/11 13:44 Page 235

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