

## Chapter One

# Introduction

Politicising Masculinities in Development

**Andrea Cornwall, Jerker Edström and Alan Greig**

Men and masculinities have captured greater space in development's 'gender agenda' over the last decade. The growing visibility of gender violence and HIV has given rise to exciting gender work with men, addressing the impact of norms of masculinity on how they think and act as men. Yet there seems to have been relatively little transfer of energy or experience from initiatives focused on the more internal and interpersonal aspects of men's lives to efforts to address the unjust effects of men's privilege in the worlds of politics and the economy. Organizations working with men on gender issues are often surprisingly silent when it comes to gender injustice in the public sphere, from men's dominance of leadership positions to persistent gender pay gaps. Mobilizing to demand equal pay, equal rights and equal representation still seems to be as much 'women's work' as doing the housework.

At the same time, there is a widespread sense amongst feminist activists and researchers that the gender agenda has been depoliticized as it has been taken up by development agencies, stripped of the original concern with inequitable power relations and reduced to interventions that are palliative rather than genuinely transformative (Cornwall, Harrison and Whitehead, 2007). A number of writers have observed the extent to which this embrace of 'gender' has been accompanied by a tendency to play down challenges to the status quo and play up the benefits of instrumentalizing women in the service – or broader project – of development (Batliwala and Dhanraj, 2004; Chakravarti, 2008; Wilson, 2008). Power has come to be represented as something that can be bestowed or acquired rather than a structural relation that is in itself gendered. And targeted 'investment' has come to displace any consideration of the broader social changes that need to take place if the persistent inequalities associated with gender difference are to be eradicated. In a recent and extremely worrying trend, this instrumentalist logic is being taken to its

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limit through an increasing focus on the adolescent female as the agent of economic recovery, if only she can be empowered sufficiently. From this deeply individualized perspective, the complex interactions between gender and other axes of inequality in the lives of both women and men are lost from view, and the policies and programmes of economic and political elites that shape such interactions rendered invisible. It is hardly surprising, then, that work on men and masculinities in development has seen the more radical edge of early interventions in this field blunted.

This book aims to contribute to shifting the gender agenda back to a concern with the fundamental structural inequities that continue to make our world unfair and unequal. Written and edited by practitioners and researchers engaged in work on men and masculinities in different institutional and geopolitical contexts, this volume is both self-reflection and self-critique. It builds on dialogues at a symposium on masculinities in Dakar in 2007, *Politicizing Masculinities: Beyond the Personal*, which brought together people from a diversity of engagements with men and masculinities.<sup>1</sup> It examines key preoccupations, dilemmas and absences within the field and explores the challenge of engaging men in work that more explicitly addresses the structuring of gender orders and their concomitant inequalities and injustices. In this introduction, we first provide a brief sketch of the intellectual trajectories, advances and limitations which motivate the book. We then propose three dimensions of politicizing masculinities, around which the sections of the book take shape. Finally, we highlight emerging questions and challenges for future work on men, masculinities and the gender agenda in development.

### **Of masculinities and men**

Debates on masculinity first began to capture the attention of social scientists in the 1980s. What came to be dubbed ‘the new men’s studies’ (Brod, 1987) and the ‘new sociology of masculinity’ (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985) focused on the cultural production of masculinities, alternative models of ‘manhood’ and questions of naturalized male power (Brittan, 1989; Kaufman, 1987; Kimmel, 1987; Kimmel and Messner, 1989). The emerging rubric of ‘men and masculinities’ proved remarkably fertile in generating new conversations and connections in relation to a diverse set of issues and social concerns (Hearn and Morgan, 1990; Brod and Kaufman, 1994; Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Connell, 1995). In reviewing the contours of this emergent field of enquiry and debate, Jeff Hearn noted in 1996, for example, ‘the increasing interest in the links between masculinity and power, masculinity and violence, masculinity and crime, masculinity and child abuse and masculinity and the law’ (1996: 206).

A strong thread in this literature from the beginning was a focus on male subjectivities, men's inner lives and the harms of masculinity, with contributions to the field by authors as diverse as Robert Bly (1992), Lynne Segal (1990) and Victor Seidler (1997). An interest in men's relationships to masculine representations brought into question the contingency of gendered identities and depictions of masculinity and power in culture and everyday life (Chapman and Rutherford, 1988; Silverman, 1992). Such contingency, in part, was the result of the queering of the gendered body in the work of Judith Butler (1999) and other queer theorists, whose inversion of the nature/culture model of the sex-gender system significantly troubled assumptions about the connections between masculine identifications, the maleness of bodies and 'man' as a social subject (Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1995; Halberstam, 1998).

An interest in bodies and their practices led Connell, in her seminal *Masculinities* (1995) and subsequent writings to conceive of masculinity in terms of 'body reflexive practices', culturally constituted and institutionally embedded, that performed and thus produced maleness, or what it means to be a man, within distinct but overlapping domains of power. In emphasizing the plurality and plasticity of such meanings, Connell challenged the dichotomous thinking of sex role theory, helping to lay the groundwork for much of the subsequent work with men on doing 'their' masculinity differently. The concept of 'hegemonic masculinity' has proved particularly useful in this regard (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). As well as drawing attention to the reality of hierarchies among men, it has highlighted the interests that men have in challenging such hierarchies because of the harm that hegemonic practices of masculinity do not only to women but also to men.

Less well understood, though perhaps more important, was the utility of the concept of hegemonic masculinity for exploring the workings of power, and the ways in which specific practices, representations and narratives of masculinity secured consent to patriarchal arrangements of power. This wove together another thread of the emergent rubric of 'men and masculinities', a thread that emerged from men's engagement with the women's movement in the 1980s and was concerned with men's experiences of and relationships to structural and institutional dimensions of power (Hearn and Morgan, 1990). Sociologists like Les Back (1994) and Paul Willis (1981) explored the lives of men and boys at the intersections of gender, class and race, and the complex interplay of privilege and oppression that shaped such lives.

Over the course of the last two decades, the literature on masculinity has expanded exponentially. Anthologies abound, as do websites populated with

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literally hundreds of volumes dedicated to the study of men and masculinity, and to activism engaging men. The burgeoning nature of the field owes partly to its theoretical eclecticism, drawing variously on social psychology, psychoanalysis, social constructionist gender theory, post-structuralism and queer theory. The radical political promise of the turn toward masculinities was born of this plurality. In moving beyond the static binaries of sex role theory, the emerging 'men and masculinities' field opened up a deeper exploration of the relationship between gender and power, drawing attention to the extent to which certain ways of being a man are culturally and socially privileged. By insistently focusing the gender gaze on men, and thus decentring the traditionally unmarked male, the field has helped disrupt patriarchal knowledge-power systems and made room for new questions to be asked of sexuality and intimacy, as well as violence and trauma, in men's lives.

As a result, there has been a remarkable growth in programming and policy debate on men and gender in international development. The 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was the first forum where the international community challenged men to play their full part in the fight for gender equality. Within a year, the Platform for Action outlined at the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing restated the principle of shared responsibility and argued that women's concerns could only be addressed in partnership with men. It called on men to support women by sharing childcare and household work equally, and for male responsibility in the prevention of HIV and sexually transmitted infection (STI). Indeed, as the international response to the HIV epidemic gathered momentum, so too did gender work with men. In 2000–1, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) mounted a world campaign on the theme 'Men make a difference', emphasizing the positive role men can play in HIV/AIDS prevention and care (UNAIDS, 2000); and the Declaration of Commitment from the 26th special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS the following year addressed men's roles and responsibilities related to reducing the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, especially the need to engage men in challenging the gender inequalities driving the epidemic (UNGASS, 2001).

Increasing attention to the relationship between gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS has also helped expand violence prevention work with men and boys in many countries of the Global South, with a predominant focus on male violence in heterosexual relationships. This work has drawn on the longer traditions of men's anti-violence activism and batterers' treatment programming that emerged out of men's work within the women-led domestic violence and sexual assault movements in the Global North (Funk,

1993; Kaufman, 1987; Kivel, 1992; Stoltenberg, 1990). A groundswell of public concern and policy debate about men and care – especially as fathers – has grown in recent years, and has been the focus for imaginative programming around the world. Men's health has also emerged as a locus of attention and action for researchers and practitioners. For all the ambivalence about men in the Gender and Development field, there have been a number of initiatives and publications that have sought to highlight how development has been 'missing men', to make the argument that *Masculinities Matter!* (Cleaver, 2002), to explore what 'men-streaming' might mean (Chant and Gutmann, 2002) and to explore different dimensions of men's gendered experiences in development settings, from men and work (Jackson, 2001; Whitehead, 2000) to the politics of the personal (Cornwall and White, 2000).

Across this diverse set of interests and issues, some common themes can be discerned. A key premise of a wide range of programmes and campaigns is that men can change and are changing, and that as masculinity is socially constructed, it can be reconstructed. This builds on long-established feminist arguments about 'gender' as malleable and amenable to change (Oakley, 1972). Such programmes often focus on the plurality of masculinities in order to emphasize the possibility of men's resistance to hegemonic forms of masculinity. There is an emphasis, too, on motivating men to get involved in supporting gender equality through highlighting the costs of masculinity for men, as well as a desire to avoid 'turning men off' by appearing to blame them for the harms of patriarchy – an approach that has engaged quite some hostility from feminists who have seen it as soft-peddalling on questions of men's exercise of power (Win, 2010; Turquet, 2010).

Equally striking are some of the silences and absences in this work. For all the attention given to masculinities work with men on HIV/AIDS, surprisingly little is said about men's plural sexualities. HIV work with men who have sex with men (MSM) has developed in parallel with, rather than as a part of, mainstream HIV prevention work with men. Much of the work that is done with men on the harms they suffer from norms of masculinity fails to locate these harms, and indeed the norms themselves, in the context of oppression, and many men's experience of class exploitation, racism and ethnic exclusion and/or homophobia. When it comes to gender-based violence, the focus on behaviour and norms has precluded much discussion of the institutionalized nature of this violence and the kinds of mobilization that will be required to address it. The typical focus on fatherhood has said rather less about other issues relating to men in the domestic arena, particularly in relation to equity in the division of domestic labour. More fundamentally, this emergent body of masculinities work with men has paid

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insufficient attention to the political and economic inequalities that constrain women's lives. This lack of attention includes both a neglect of the masculinities in the political domain that make it so difficult for women to gain and use their voice, as well as a failure to highlight men's lack of active involvement in advocating for gender justice in relation to issues like equal pay and representation of women in senior leadership positions.

Engaging men in the project of gender equality has come to be about addressing the need to transform masculinity by changing cultural or social norms that guide men's behaviour, rather than addressing the structural basis of gender inequalities. It is not surprising, then, that many feminists both recognize the need to engage with men and express concern over its potential implications, whether in terms of funding or control. Ensuring that this engagement gets to grips with gender and its structuring of inequalities is critical if the promise of masculinities work with men for greater gender justice is to be realized.

### **Politicizing masculinities**

What, then, would it take to politicize the 'men and masculinities' field? Some would argue that the field is already politicized, arising as it has from a deeply political commitment to addressing men's abusive behaviour towards women, and rooted as it is in feminist and queer research from the 1980s that put the spotlight on patriarchal and heteronormative power structures. The premise of this collection is that much has indeed been done, but also that much more needs to be done. A concern with men and masculinities has been taken up selectively by development agencies to pursue a very partial gender agenda. This has involved the avoidance of certain topics for fear of 'scaring off' the men, and a selective emphasis on certain issues and areas at the cost of addressing the structural inequities at the root of gender inequality. At the same time, the field itself has developed in a way that has retreated from a more critical analysis of men's attitudes and behaviours, neither politicizing the personal nor exploring the interpersonal dynamics of power and privilege within broader struggles for gender justice (McMahon, 1993).

This book seeks to contribute to the project of politicizing masculinities in a number of ways. First, it seeks to challenge the normative perspectives on men and on masculinity that have come to pervade both Gender and Development and the 'men and masculinities' field. This involves challenging the naturalization of the gender binary in much work on gender in development. The first section of this book engages with this challenge, bringing to bear insights from queer theory and gender studies, as well as research and

activist perspectives from the worlds of HIV and sex work, on thinking about bodies, gender and power. We seek to make visible that which is often obscured, challenging the heteronormativity that is virtually hegemonic in development studies, as well as in the HIV and sexual and reproductive health fields. We do this by expanding the cast of characters associated with the category ‘men’ to include men as sex workers’ clients, as female-to-male transgenders or *meyeli chbele* (‘soft boys’), and explore men’s positionalities *vis-à-vis* idealized heterosexualities as well as queer alternatives.

A second move is to examine critically assumptions about men, money and structures of power that inform Gender and Development discourse, and to bring some of the contextually diverse dimensions of men’s experience into closer view. Despite the adoption of the notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ in analyses of men and masculinity, relatively little attention has been focused on the ‘subordinate variants’ of masculinity that their ground-breaking work identifies, and to the intersections of race, class and gender in men’s lives. The second section of this book grapples with what feminist economists have called ‘the structures of constraint’ (Folbre, 1994; Kabeer, 2008), and with a host of thorny issues relating to men’s positioning in the complex intersections between cultures of gender and the gendered economy in highly unequal societies. Refocusing debate on these intersections, and on the structural roots of poverty and disadvantage, contributors challenge some of Gender and Development’s sacred cows amidst divergent suggestions on what needs to be done to address social and economic injustice and its gendered dimensions.

A third move is to think beyond current framings and fields of practice towards the kind of actions, actors and alliances that are needed to (re)politicize work on men and masculinities in development. The last section of this book seeks to do this by exploring experiences in policy advocacy and activism, focusing on the potential for building constituencies and broadening alliances in work on masculinities. It is part dialogue between activist-academics from NGOs, social movements and universities, part narrative of efforts to influence policy and mobilize men to address broader issues of gender justice in their communities and everyday lives, and part provocation to think beyond the limiting frames of current approaches to engaging men with gender issues. In what follows, we pick up on the three themes identified here, and expand on what contributors offer to the project of politicizing masculinities.

### **Narratives and bodies**

The first step in politicizing masculinities work in development practice is to put into question the gendered relationship between bodies and identities.

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This is to interrogate the relationship between the terms ‘men’, ‘male’ and ‘masculinity’ rather than assume a necessary correspondence between them (Cornwall and Lindisfarne, 1994; Kosofsky-Sedgwick, 1995). The chapters in this section explore the location of bodies, practices, desires and identities within normative narratives of gender and sexuality that inform programmes and policies on HIV prevention, sex work and work with ‘sexual minorities’. Contributors discuss the complicated political effects of these narratives and the trajectories of the political subject within them, from using such narratives to claim voice and carve space, to being rendered a visible and passive object of, but not agent within, the development process. Contributions to this section are selected with a view to challenging us to deconstruct critically the essentially heteronormative constructions and taken-for-granted assumption of the gender binary that pervade Gender and Development practice and the ‘men and masculinities’ field. Taken together, these chapters help us look at myths and implicit assumptions about men and women, our bodies and gendered identities.

As a starting point, Chimaraoke Izugbara and Jerry Okal provide a grounded account of the normativity inherent in young men’s narratives of masculine identity and understandings of adequately ‘performing heterosexuality’. Drawing on their research with young Malawian men, they explore how dominant narratives of sexual performance interact with their notions of male identity. They describe the ways in which these stories represent male behaviour as deriving from men’s essential nature, normatively naturalizing potency, pleasure and risk taking. Male heterosexual performance is seen as confirming and sustaining this idealized masculinity, which is understood as a space for exerting masculine control and power over women. Izugbara and Okal outline resulting vulnerabilities, uncertainties and risks in relation to HIV for young Malawian men and boys as shaped by these local constructions of a fiercely macho heterosexual masculinity.

Cath Sluggett looks at issues of embodied gender identification, norms and aspirations through a focus on female to male (FtM) transgenders in India, and how they constitute their masculinity. Engaging with Judith Halberstam’s (1998) call for reimagining masculinity in terms of the female, she asks: ‘But what kinds of masculinity are being defended in the name of “queer” identity?’ She shows how performing masculinity from within a female to male transgender body can uphold highly stereotypical notions of what it is to be ‘man enough’. In doing so, she questions the claiming of transgressive sexualities and genders as queer, and the assumption that they are progressive and liberating, exploring the extent to which the subversion of sexuality and gender ruptures or reinforces heteronormativity. Also writing

about India, akshay khanna provides an account of how the epidemiological category of men-who-have-sex-with-men (MSM), created as part of the global AIDS response, has opened up opportunities for collective organizing across diverse local sexual and gendered identities in South Asia. Many of those who are given or who have come to occupy the label MSM identify neither with hegemonic forms of heterosexual masculinities nor, necessarily, with Western notions of a sexual minority organized under a 'gay' identity. Instead, khanna argues, they have claimed a somewhat protected, and thus politically useful space through 'transformation of idioms of sexualness into epidemiological forms'.

If understanding gender requires (explicit or implicit) reference to sexuality, it clearly also relates to the materiality of sex and power. Cheryl Overs explores this materiality through the intersection of representations of men, women, masculinities and femininities within the context of sex work. Overs argues that policies relating to sex work persistently feminize the sex worker by air-brushing out male or transgender sex workers, labelling them instead under other HIV industry categories, such as MSM. She highlights how the construct of the sex worker as female, victimized and devoid of agency depoliticizes the issues and shores up the gender binary in its portrayal of clients and pimps as evil men. These essentially Western stereotypes – of the entrapped female sex worker, the criminal male pimp and the pathological, shadowy male client – are captured ironically in her evocative title 'The Good, the Bad and the Ugly'.

Jerker Edström reflects on some advances and shortcomings in gender work with men within HIV programmes and policy. He takes issue with common understandings of men and masculinities in relation to HIV epidemics and their bio-social dynamics. The latter, he argues, tend to be far more complex than standard gender binary constructs explain. He deconstructs the central notion of vulnerability and its association with femininity in HIV responses, arguing that it too easily becomes counter-productive for understanding the interplay between epidemic dynamics and the complex structural influences and inequalities that channel the progress of the virus. He argues that in order to make progress in HIV prevention, the gender issues that warrant most urgent attention are those facing communities most marginalized by the prevailing gender order, such as sex workers and men who don't conform to hegemonic notions of masculinity. Edström maintains that narratives of gender and HIV continue to be deeply heteronormative and he points to the need for more politicized thinking and practice on masculinities and HIV, with more creative alliances across communities of dissident men, sex workers and feminists.

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What becomes clear from this set of chapters is that femininities and masculinities are not only socially constituted, but also have political implications via morally loaded assumptions about sex and sexuality, agency and power. How we understand these constructs and our bodies, positionalities and multiple identities in relation to them will have fundamental implications for how we interpret and address broader issues of inequity and oppression.

### **Masculinities and structures of oppression**

The second dimension of the politicizing project is to use masculinities as a tool with which to excavate the structures and workings of power, and look more closely at the sediments of gender within them. The second part of this book, then, is concerned with the political economy and geo-politics of masculinities, and their impacts on the lives of women and men at the intersections of class, race and gender. Contributors discuss different conjunctions of historical forces – economic, political, military, religious, cultural – and the masculine practices and ideologies that are both called upon and contested within these force fields.

This section's dialogue on structures is opened by Raewyn Connell, who uses a case study of Edward – a male Australian manager in a transnational corporation – to illustrate how aspects of global corporate capitalist masculinities impact on issues such as the HIV response in the South. She underlines the limitations of classic ethnographic studies and their attempts to fix a static picture of gender norms, stressing that the reality of 'globalization' is one in which social change is itself increasingly the norm, in the wake of colonization, post-colonial adjustment policies and in conflict-affected societies. 'If there is no coherent gender order', Connell suggests, 'we may have to think in new ways about how men and women improvise their gender arrangements and practices, across what kinds of fissures or gaps, and under what kinds of stresses.' She reminds us that the corporate world described in this case study is only part of a larger system of neo-liberalism and its creation of new market-oriented patriarchies. 'Whilst we should not lose sight of the structural sources of violence or the global role of the rich and powerful', Connell concedes that 'perhaps, we do need to focus for the moment on small-scale, achievable changes', whilst also urging us to be looking for the kinds of 'reforms that might set in motion trends towards systemic change'.

Margrethe Silberschmidt probes into the connections between masculinities and post-colonial capitalist development strategies, with their prevailing

assumptions about gender. She describes what, in the context of East Africa, she sees as happening to gender relations through a combination of neo-liberal economic policies – leading to economic hardship for many – and an emphasis on women’s empowerment initiatives within the development ‘industry’. In the midst of all this, men are left stranded and Silberschmidt documents some of the effects as men submit to ‘crises of masculinity’ and fall back on patriarchal attitudes and behaviours. She suggests that this is creating greater vulnerability amongst men to a host of problems, such as alcoholism, HIV and violence. Given this collision between powerful economic forces within the structures of capitalist development and men’s expectations of masculinity, Silberschmidt asks what would make men interested in engaging in the struggle for gender justice and broader social change.

The next chapter grew out of comments written by South African feminist practitioner Penny Morrell on her social historian brother Robert’s paper for the *Politicizing Masculinities* symposium in Dakar. Recognizing Penny’s comments as concerns raised by many feminists about the men and masculinities agenda, we encouraged them to develop the chapter in the form of a dialogue. They debate the extent to which men should be the object of gender equality work, which men are important to work with, and the reasons why they might engage in such work. Robert argues for a strong focus on the situation and needs of poor and disenfranchised African men, whilst Penny draws attention to the need to work with middle-class men, making the most of their capacity to affect change, and for more engagement with the women’s movement.

Chris Dolan introduces other dimensions of structural power that interact to construct oppressive hegemonic masculinity in northern Uganda. He focuses on the connections between the state’s military power, hetero-normative Christian interests and populist nationalist sentiments opposing neo-colonialism, which draw on traditional notions of manhood and mix these with a Western Christian morality. This ‘triple bind’ of unholy alliances and ideologies, Dolan argues, upholds particularly violent and homophobic ideals of hegemonic masculinities and rejects alternative expressions of masculinity. Written before the infamous Anti-homosexuality Bill was discussed in the Ugandan Parliament, this piece is particularly pertinent for considering strategies for protecting and promoting gender justice and sexual rights in similarly challenging contexts.

The chapters in this section highlight the structural roots of many different aspects of masculinities and inequalities, whilst also showing how different dimensions of the structural context – whether economic, cultural, religious or political – can come into play or combine historically in unexpected ways.

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This section makes clear, too, that the AIDS response has provided an arena, resources and energies for new debates and dialogues on the links between masculinities and inequalities. But developing clearer analyses of and responses to these links is about more than the epidemic; it is about social justice more broadly. Better structural analyses can inform better strategies for politicizing men's engagement with gender justice along various intersecting fault-lines of inequity, strategies that necessarily link the struggles against gender oppression with, in Nancy Fraser's words (2009: 6), a 'radical transformation of the deep structures of the social totality'.

Radhika Chopra's chapter takes us towards looking at structural transformations, by tackling the question of how we may understand the notion of men's supportive practices in relation to women. She contrasts the gendered practices of men within domestic service with those of progressive men active in the processes of India's post-colonial reforms. In a thoughtful meditation on histories of men's practices as domestic workers and reformers, Chopra examines a dimension of the 'men as partners' discourse that has remained under-explored. Her contribution to opening up discussion about men's supportive practices in relation to the domains of domestic labour and politics is especially valuable given the extent to which these are such under-emphasized themes in the contemporary men and masculinities field. What Chopra brings to the discussion is a nuanced understanding of 'support' which highlights its structural, ideological, material aspects but also the extent to which everyday practices of support shape men's multiple subjectivities. In doing so, she highlights productive possibilities for men's engagement in addressing the materiality of persistent gender inequities in the fields of the domestic and formal politics. It is to this that the last section of the book turns.

### **Dissident masculinities in action**

The third and final dimension of the project of politicizing masculinities is where the domains of the structural and the institutional reconnect with the intimate. For all that has been done in the field of work with men and masculinities to focus on the arena of the personal, there has been relatively little emphasis in this work on developing men's reflexive awareness of their own power and privilege, and locating that in relation to societal structures and institutions. For second-wave feminists it is this process – one that moves between the private and the public sphere, or between the personal and the structural – that was the fundamental entry point for developing a collective consciousness as women and for inspiring collective action. Politicizing

masculinities calls for a far greater focus on reflexive self-awareness in gender work with men, as a starting point for developing forms of collaborative political conduct that do not replicate conventions of oppressive male behaviour in other spheres. This kind of practical engagement with a political project, based on a commitment to personal change, is critical if effective alliances are to be built with women's movements in pursuit of common concerns with equality and justice. Contributions to this third part of the book provide examples of the kind of conversations and connections that are an important part of making this happen.

The first set of connections is between efforts to change broader policies and grassroots organizing with men to address issues of gender inequity in their own lives. The section opens with a chapter by Jeff Hearn that looks at the challenge of changing gender regimes from the 'top down' through social policies that seek to bring about greater gender equality, and from the 'bottom up' by working with men to engage them in processes of transformation in gender relations in their everyday lives. Hearn draws attention to men and women as products of gendered social and economic policy, as well as actors for change and architects of policy.

Hearn's reflections are complemented by the contribution of Gary Barker, Marcos Nascimento, Christine Ricardo, Marianna Olinger and Marcio Segundo on the work of Instituto Promundo, an NGO addressing precisely this interface between policy and practice in its work in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. The starting point for Promundo's work has been the six million men 'missing' from the Brazilian population mostly as a result of death in traffic accidents and homicide, the vast majority of the latter being gun-related and mostly occurring in low-income, urban areas in Brazil. Barker and colleagues describe their efforts to amplify the voices of resistance from young men who were challenging these norms of violent masculinity and embracing gender-equitable ways of being a man. Recognizing the challenge of broadening beyond individual-level change to challenging the community conditions that fuel men's violence, Promundo is working to stimulate and sustain community activism, in part by allying with youth-led social justice work and linking this with policy analysis and advocacy in relevant social, public health and public security policies. Barker and colleagues conclude that work with men on masculinities and violence is about developing a 'gender literacy' not only among individuals at the community level, but also among a cohort of partner civil society organizations and policy makers who understand that gender justice and social justice are indissolubly linked.

The second theme in this section is that of another kind of connection: alliances between social movements in pursuit of greater social justice. In a

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dialogue between masculinities activist and researcher Fang Gang and queer feminist activist and researcher He Xiaopei, introduced by Susan Jolly, the two debate some of the difficulties inherent in seeking connections between an established feminist movement and emergent forms of gender work with men, with reference to their experiences in China. In the Chinese context, official commitments to gender equity and women's empowerment have not always been reflected in the distribution of power within society, economy and polity. The idea that men should organize for gender equality remains distinctly marginal. As rapid social and economic change transforms the political economy of gender relations, women's movements face new challenges. Against this backdrop, a nascent men's movement will need to negotiate alliances carefully and with great sensitivity.

One of the concerns that has been articulated by women since the very beginnings of the emergence of the 'men and masculinities' field is the very real danger of existing forms of patriarchal gender relations being superimposed onto engagements by men in 'gender work' (Hanmer, 1990; Win, 2007, 2010). Asking the question 'What do men have to do with women's empowerment?' Henry Armas, Mbuyiselo Botha and Andrea Cornwall explore areas of common ground with respect to women's and men's aspirations for gender justice, but also some of the challenges and contradictions that present themselves as men engage with issues of gendered power. Mbuyiselo Botha speaks of the motivations that men might have to address inequitable gender orders, but also the challenges of really taking on what is needed to make change happen. Henry Armas reflects on the power of small acts that unsettle assumptions about gender, and on the need to actively address the privileges vested in men at every level. Highlighting the absence of men's voices in the articulation of demands on some of the most basic issues of equity and justice for which women continue to battle, Andrea Cornwall challenges those men who profess a commitment to gender equality to follow through with actions that challenge taken-for-granted male privilege.

Patrick Welsh brings another dimension of the contradictions of men's engagement in activism on issues of masculinities and power to our attention, delving into the experiences of (mostly pro-feminist) men working on issues of gender at community and national levels in Nicaragua. Welsh's chapter is a further reminder that men are not simply the products of context and underlines the essential link between the personal and the structural. He soberly reflects on the challenges and deep personal changes required for men to be able to work towards greater gender equality in a society like Nicaragua. In this, he stresses the importance of strategic moments of collaboration with women's movements on feminist issues, the need for ongoing engagements,

networks for peer support and a sense of community as essential to providing the sustenance for this work, concluding that 'swimming against the tide is easier in a shoal'.

In a closing provocation, Alan Greig rounds off this collection by looking critically at the ways in which much of the 'men and masculinities' field has been complicit in efforts to manage the anxieties of economic and political elites in the face of the changing political economy of gender. Greig delineates key features of this complicity and the possibilities of resistance. To seize the possibilities for radical political change inherent within a changing gender order, and its threats to the masculinity of hegemony, he argues that the goal must be to agitate for deepening the intrinsic gender insecurities of anxious states, especially as they coalesce around the figure of the masculine. This should be work that creates enough conceptual and political 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.

### Conclusion

Our call for the need to politicize masculinity in development work is for a return to the more radical roots of the moves made in the 1980s to open up a debate about men, masculinities and power. This is a debate about gender and power, about body politics and political bodies, about norms and hierarchies, about intimate and institutional violence, and about liberation and justice. By reclaiming a space within the contemporary men and masculinities field for a reappraisal of fundamental structural power relations that have tended to be neglected in the emphasis on changing men's behaviour and attitudes, this book suggests a number of productive directions for future work.

One is the need to address the heteronormativity that characterizes much of the work that is done in the name of Gender and Development, and with it the essentialisms that abound about 'men' and 'women'. This has become increasingly urgent, the more that the 'gender agenda' in development is transformed to accentuate a long-present tendency in development discourse towards highly reified representations of women and girls as heroines and victims and men as perpetrators, or indeed as shadowy figures who are being virtually airbrushed out of the picture. Addressing this calls for further excavation of the normativities that structure the field of Gender and Development and that are manifested in policies and practices on gender equality, women's empowerment and men's engagement. It calls for new ways

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of addressing the effects of heteronormativity on us all, as gendered subjects, beyond a narrow focus on 'sexual minorities'. Within that, it calls for greater consideration of the play of power in the production of particular sexual and gendered subjects through development interventions, and the role of international development agencies in reproducing inequitable sex and gender orders.

A second direction for work on men and masculinities is to return to a more explicit concern with the deeper structures of gendered oppression, redressing the tendency in recent years to focus primarily on the challenges of personal change within individual lives. Charting a course in this direction must involve greater attention to the institutional workings of gender orders in relation to hegemonic social, economic and political forces, and the ways in which masculinity, as a set of representations and practices, has become a site of struggle and instability within this hegemony. In this sense, perceived crises of masculinity become opportunities to highlight the political economy of gender in the context of the bankruptcy of neo-liberalism. Engaging men in conversation about the harms that norms of masculinity do to them opens ways to talk about privilege and oppression at a systemic level, enlisting men's energies in working with women to overturn patriarchal ideologies and inequalities, for example through campaigns for equal pay, as a part of their own liberation. At the same time, the growing interest in working with men to change the violent norms of 'traditional' or 'conventional' masculinity opens up a space for mobilizing men to challenge the social, economic and political institutions that reproduce this violence from which they, too, suffer in so many ways. In doing so, the calls for a new, gender-equitable masculinity become moments for forging alliances for gender justice among people of all gender identities, envisioning a world of equitable social relations in which masculinities and femininities are points of gender identification available to all.

Last, this book arose out of a desire to bring together people from different strands of work on gender, sexuality and development and spark a dialogue that could lead to new avenues for activism and action. These dialogues, and processes that make space for people from different contexts and areas of engagement to come together to explore common concerns in honest debate, are vital if we are to begin to build effective alliances for change. May this book start other conversations, inviting new perspectives and challenging the boundaries of the possible, so that we can begin to see the kinds of changes happen that are needed to make the world we live in a fairer place.

## Notes

- 1 For a full report of the symposium, see <[http://www.siyanda.org/docs/esplen\\_greig\\_masculinities.pdf](http://www.siyanda.org/docs/esplen_greig_masculinities.pdf)>.
- 2 An excellent online bibliography can be found on XY online, <<http://www.xyonline.net/>>. Another useful resource is provided by MenEngage, an alliance of NGOs that seek to engage men and boys in effective ways to reduce gender inequalities and promote the health and well-being of women, men and children – see <<http://www.menengage.org/>>. Also useful is Engaging Men.Net, a gender justice information network – see <<http://www.engagingmen.net/>>.

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### About the Editors

**Andrea Cornwall** is Professor of Anthropology and Development in the School of Global Studies at the University of Sussex and Director of the Pathways of Women's Empowerment Research Programme Consortium, <[www.pathways-of-empowerment.org](http://www.pathways-of-empowerment.org)>. She has worked intermittently on men and masculinities in development since the early 1990s, and is co-editor of *Dislocating Masculinity: Comparative Ethnographies* (with Nancy Lindisfarne, 1994), *Men, Masculinities and Development: Politics, Policies and Practice* (with Sarah White, 2000), *Feminisms and Development* (with Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead, 2007) and *The Politics of Rights: Dilemmas for Feminist Praxis* (with Maxine Molyneux, 2009).

**Jerker Edström** is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Development Studies, where his research interests focus on men and masculinities in relation to structural dimensions of sex, gender and power in HIV epidemics, as well as on the politics of the global response. He has studied and worked in HIV, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Population, Gender and Poverty since the mid-1980s. His most recent post was at the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, where – amongst other things, like NGO support programme development – he drove the promotion and development of 'Participatory Community Assessment' (PCA) methodologies in HIV with partners.

**Alan Greig** has worked for over ten years as a consultant with community-based organizations and activist formations in sub-Saharan Africa, South and South-East Asia, and the USA on the links between personal and political violence. Much of this work has been concerned with issues of masculinity and male power, and how these shape the lives of people of all genders. Through strategic planning, curriculum development and programme evaluations, Alan has supported the design and strengthening of innovative gender work with men, rooted in a commitment to gender justice as a central element of social justice.

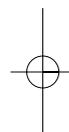
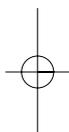


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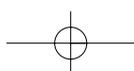
## Politicising Masculinities

EDITED BY

Andrea Cornwall, Jerker Edström and Alan Greig



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