

Mobilizing Gender Research Challenges and Strategies

Ed Katarina Giritli Nygren and Siv Fahlgren

Gender Studies at Mid Sweden University
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Forum for Gender Studies (FGV) is an interdisciplinary and intercampus platform from which to initiate and co-ordinate Gender Studies at Mid Sweden University. FGV shall contribute to creating a productive research environment, and the activities of FGV shall encompass the entire university. This is the university series of FGV and Gender Studies at Mid Sweden University. All contributions in this number are peer reviewed and proof read before publication.



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Katarina Giritli Nygren & Siv Fahlgren

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Introduction: Gender research, challenges and strategies

Katarina Giritli Nygren & Siv Fahlgren

The Forum for Gender Studies (FGV) is an interdisciplinary and intercampus platform that initiates and coordinates all gender research at Mid Sweden University. It offers seminars, international networks, conferences, and workshops, but also substantial collaborations in the shape of joint research and publications. Although the FGV is already active at Mid Sweden University as well as regionally, nationally and internationally, we are seeking to advance this collaborative research, the better to fulfil our vision of being a regional knowledge centre for innovative research of the highest national and international standards.

Ever since the advent of gender studies at Swedish universities in the 1970s, it has been supported by the body of knowledge itself, the *discipline*, with its own theory-building, research, and interdisciplinary courses. It first arose in response to the limitations of mainstream research in terms of language, methods, attitudes, and values, which were rightly regarded as andocentric, ethnocentric, and biased (Liinason 2009: 54). Equally, gender studies have been integrated as a *perspective* in teaching and research in all other established disciplines at the universities. This integration relies on the existence of a specific, developed knowledge area (Liinason 2009: 55). Indeed, it is our conviction that each is a requirement for the other.

Gender studies the discipline is the foundation of the education provided by Mid Sweden University as well as its more profiled research. In order to develop the important problematiques of gender studies, a close collaboration between several disciplines is required. It is in the dislocations and interactions between different scholarly perspectives that groundbreaking research is possible, and this is where the FGV has an important part to play.

In this newest volume in the FGV's series of working papers, we present our current research strategy 2013-2015 together with a broad range of examples from the research being carried out within the different research area that the strategy is defining. Since FGV:s mission is to mobilize and promote gender studies in all the diverse forms that it is practiced at Mid Sweden University the proposition and the contributions to this publication are by necessity varied. We have contributions from fields such as gender studies, literary studies, sociology, geography, ethnography, and public health.

However, in the coming years FGV intends to organise gender studies into three distinct areas, areas in which gender studies are currently conducted but developed at different degrees. While the research area 'Gender and normalization

processes' has progressed rapidly on the basis of interdisciplinary research carried out since 2007 (financed by The Swedish research Council), the other two areas 'A lifetime of gendered cultures' and 'Gender and Working life conditions', is less developed as research areas within FGV. By adding a research leader for each of the three areas and then undertake specific activities in each research area, our strategic aim is to strengthen, deepen and profile each area within the following three years. By this, we are working towards a realization of the FGV:s vision, to conduct: "innovative research with national and international excellence" in each area.

Below you will find a description of the context in which we situate our research and the challenges we have chosen to tackle, followed by a presentation of our three priority areas of research and their corresponding chapters in this volume.

Challenges to gender and feminist theory in global and neo-liberal times

Gender research has as one of its points of departure to explore how different power structures operate. One challenge is therefore to try to understand and analyse the changes that have occurred in recent decades in terms of the democratic welfare state. An inevitable concept in such a context is neo-liberalism. It does not necessarily have to be used as a negatively or positively charged concept, but could, as Foucault (2010) would have it, signify the changes in 'governmentality' that have come to pass in the last fifty years.

Neo-liberalism has come to mean, first of all, that choices made in a market have come to play a more prominent part as a model in an increasing number of social areas; second, that there has been an increasing individualization in terms of views on responsibilities and rights, and that as a result there has been a dismantling or restructuring of the modern welfare state; third, that there is increased inequality, seen either as a problem or as a requirement for the best operation of a market that ultimately is meant to bring prosperity; fourth, that financial methods of analysis have come to be used in areas that previously been unaffected; and fifth, that the state is admittedly less financially interventionist but *more* legally interventionist, which means that finances are left alone, but that the law is expected *actively* to create development opportunities in relation to civil society (Foucault 2010: 167). Measurability and fulfilment of objectives have also come to dominate the 'evaluation culture' that has increasingly penetrated most social areas, not least in academe (Davies et al. 2006; Davies & Bansel 2010; Carbin & Rönnblom 2012). These relations pose several challenges for gender research, among which we have identified the following three to be of particular importance for our research:

The Swedish gender-equality narrative confronts anti-feminism and racism

There is a widespread and normalized notion that Sweden is among the world's most gender-equal countries, and gender equality as a concept is often included in Swedes' self-image as something that characterizes 'us' (Fahlgren 2013; de los Reyes et al. 2002; Hellgren & Hobson 2008: 400), as is the notion that we belong to a country where there is no racism (de los Reyes & Gröndahl 2007). At the same time, in spite of this, there is still great lack of equality in circumstances and opportunities in society depending on gender, but also gender in intersections with other power relations such as race/ethnicity, age, and class. This is true not least in the academic community, as has been shown by a long succession of recent works (for example, Eduards 2007; Husu 2005; Lindgren et al. 2010; SOU 2011:1; Wahl et al. 2008; Wold & Chrapkowska 2004).

At the same time, there is a strong, parallel narrative, one which is transmitted in different media such as blogs and online comment fields. This narrative consists of the widespread abuse of femininity and women, but primarily of feminists, feminist journalists, and women advocating gender equality (Sveland 2013). On the one hand, this narrative is supported by the right-wing extremist movements that hold feminism responsible for the 'emasculatation' of Scandinavian men, and at the same time for the collapse of the Western World through immigration and multiculturalism. As a result, (anti-Muslim) racism and anti-feminism often coincide (Mulinari & Nergård 2012; Walton 2012).

On the other hand, this social narrative is supported by a wider, rhetorical social discourse that systematically conveys a widespread anti-feminism in everyday language practices in schools and workplaces (Gillander Gådin 2012), often also including the academic community and even gender researchers (Wahl et al. 2008; Wold & Chrapkowska 2004). The neo-liberal discourse highlighting individualism and the individual's freedom of choice, rather than structural obstacles, has done much to sustain this narrative. Because this and similar narratives are so normalized, they require us repeatedly to draw attention to them through research on a number of different areas, if only to bring them to light and to create counter-narratives.

Neo-liberal narratives confronting narratives of democracy

Freedom of choice in a market is a particular type of freedom that bears with it certain restrictions, the requirements and consequences that need to be analysed and understood with respect to the types of participation and democracy it renders impossible. If politics increasingly takes place through networks and in the shape of private-public partnerships, projects, and process politics, a number of questions about responsibility, representation, participation, and democracy are

raised (Newman 2013; Caplan & Stott 2008). A key challenge for gender research is to explore these changes.

In neo-liberal welfare states, responsibility has shifted from the state and collective political movements to individuals. Individual freedom and responsibility have become the central mantras of neo-liberal governmentality. Even though the *intention* may be to promote participative agency among citizens by extending choice and responsibility to them, these same mantras reflect a shifting focus from inclusivity to exclusivity (Young 1999; Connell 2008; Mulinari 2011; Schmauch 2011; Olofsdotter 2011). Those who are included are silent and normalized, assumed, and assumed by themselves, to belong because of the choices they make as individuals. By contrast, those who are excluded are lumped together as a group thought to lack real subjecthood and agency in their 'outsiderhood' (Fahlgren et al. 2011; Sahlin & Macado 2008).¹ Inequalities in gender, ethnicity or class cutting across different sections of the population tend to increase where people find it difficult to participate or exert influence. Ideas of representation and participation are rarely neutral; consciously or subconsciously, they make participation possible for some and damage the chances of others. A challenge for gender studies is how these relationships affect issues of democracy and influence.

The gender mainstream meets neo-liberal workfare regimes

In a Swedish context, such terms as 'work, not welfare' (*'arbetslinjen'*) and 'outsiderhood' (*'utanförskap'*), used together with much stricter social and labour market policies, have contributed to legitimizing the treatment of the (long-term) unemployed as the 'undeserving poor', thereby also depriving the individual of any claims on the welfare state. At a time when a workfare regime is gaining ground, the fear of not being employable and not having a stable job might well make workers and job-seekers deferential and obedient subjects, as they navigate the labour market and/or specific workplaces, trying to maintain their position and not risk a socially downward stumble (Crisp 2008; Rutherford 2010).

Feminist research has repeatedly shown that an increased emphasis on work as an ideological node for organizing society consistently neglects 'the operation of the axis of gender and other social inequalities in the labour market' (MacLeavy 2007: 736) as well as in individual workplaces (for example, Zampoukos & Ioannides 2011; Sjöstedt Landén 2012). The Swedish welfare state has undergone a major restructuring since the 1990s, with the intensification of the policy of 'work,

¹ The Swedish for outsiderhood, *utanförskap*, is a coinage frequently used by the conservative government in Sweden since 2006.

not welfare'. This has also given rise to further demands to govern workers' health and working life commitments more closely. In this context, women and young people have become viewed as particularly problematic. The increase in the number of Swedes on sick leave for long periods has been construed as an acute problem for the public purse, the labour market, and for the individuals on sick leave. It has also been constructed as a 'gendered' issue in debate and policy, as it has been observed that men's and women's sick leave rates follow different patterns. Women in the public-sector show the largest increase in sick leave rates since the late 1990s, and their sick leave periods are longer than men's.

A central challenge for gender research is therefore to address the importance to critically comprehend this formulation of a 'female problem' of workfare regimes, framed by a greater focus on gender mainstreaming forged in national as well as EU legislation and policy, and to explore this further by untangling how gender mainstreaming practices are carried through in a wide range of public-sector work.

The FGV research strategy 2013-2015 presented: Three priority research areas

The multidisciplinary research at the FGV currently falls into three major research areas: Gender and normalization in neo-liberal times; A lifetime of gendered cultures; and Gender and working conditions. One joint interest for all three areas is to explore gendered institutional practices and discourses, and new types of techniques of governing during the restructuring of the Swedish welfare state in an advanced liberal context.

The research environment at the FGV is characterized by intellectual curiosity both in terms of our own research as well that of others. Our approach is constructively critical, always applied in an open, welcoming, and inclusive spirit, since it is our firm belief that creative research environments require room for diversity. We consider gender equality and fair practice as central to the quality of our work, and therefore continually work to embrace different experiences and situations.

Research area 1: Gender and normalization in neo-liberal times

Most scholars agree that the post-war era was an era of inclusion and conformity. The role of the welfare state was to decrease social inequalities and to ensure social justice. Social policies aimed at redistribution and recognition (Fraser & Olson 2008) were largely developed in welfare states such as Sweden (Young 1999). Normalization here also took on the meaning of the *right to be treated as 'normal'*, where the normal was something common, desirable, and achievable for all (Piiva 2005; Lindqvist & Nygren 2006). During the last decades of the twentieth century,

this view of normalization as unproblematic has been challenged, insofar as normalization processes also depend on and produce exclusions and deviations.

In advanced liberal programmes of today what we see is a new type of techniques of governing. The responsibility for achieving normalization is no longer that of the state or of collective political movements. The human beings who are to be governed are now conceived as individuals who are to be active in and responsible for their own government. Normality has become a matter of (by economic arguments) regulated individual choices re-signified as individuals exercising their freedom. These normalization processes have profound consequences for the understanding of gender as a structurally based concept, and for the possibilities of gender theory to produce knowledge for social change. This kind of normalization might seem to be an inevitable effect of community formation, and it may therefore appear to be neutral, but the process of drawing distinctions is in effect an exercise of power, and it is therefore always normative.

Bronwyn Davies argues in 'Normalization and Emotions' in this volume that when the normative becomes the socially approved way of being, we should not underestimate the emotions involved in being outside the norm, or in confronting the norm, generated by both fear and rage. In her chapter, she brings Butlerian and Deleuzian thought side by side in order to understand how processes of normalization are interwoven with emotions.

If we are to be able to challenge rather than perpetuate the destructive effects of such processes, we must make them visible (Fahlgren et al. 2011; Hacking 1990, Sandell 2001; Fahlgren & Sawyer 2011). In *Siv Fahlgren's* essay " 'Outsiders within', or the complex meaning of time and place in feminist academic collaborations', the formation of such research groups are described, and how one came to be construed, or construe itself, as 'outsiders within', raising the questions of how one comes to belong to a research group, who belongs, and why. Belonging can be very productive, at the same time as it can be very risky. Feminist research is often marked by a yearning for unity prompted by a particular way of looking at the feminist research community as an inclusive and non-hierarchical, interdisciplinary open space. This is a beautiful thought, but something that tends to come into conflict with the narrative of a rational and profitable neo-liberal university that all research today must cope with.

One joint aim of this research area is to reflect on and further develop the theoretical and empirical understanding of normalization from a gender perspective within the context of the Swedish neo-liberal welfare state. The current research projects within this research area are the mutual challenges posed by gender theory to normalization and the neo-liberal welfare state, and the doing and undoing of risk biopolitics.

Research project: Normalization and neo-liberal welfare state. Challenges of and for gender theory

The primary focus of gender and feminist theory has often been very empirical, analysing the ways power and knowledge have discriminated against women by recognizing the inadequacy of existing models to explain women's position (Grosz 2010). Most of the research carried out at the FGV is based on a solid empirical ground (for example, Fahlgren et al. 2011; Fahlgren & Johansson 2010; Gillander Gådin 2012; Giritli Nygren & Schmauch 2012; Söderberg 2012). However, empiricism alone is insufficient, the empirical is given without some understanding of how it comes to be, and therefore we also need research focusing on more abstract theoretical and conceptual questions, for as Grosz (2010: 49) writes, 'not because the empirical has no place, but because, without a conceptual frame, the empirical has no value, no context, no power, it simply is'. Only within such a framework, can we also discuss how gendered power positions and discrimination/privileges may be undone, or done differently. Feminist theory development in a neo-liberal age is the focus of one of the large interdisciplinary projects at the FGV: 'Normalization and the neoliberal welfare state: challenges of and for gender theory' (The NW-project; Swedish Research Council 2012–2015).

Sara Nyhlén and Katarina Giritli Nygren are in their essay 'The able man and the lucky one: normalizing gendered understandings of agency in regional politics' looking at how agency is constituted in a form of politics increasingly characterized by networks, partnerships, projects, and process politics, with a particular focus on the ways in which they might be gendered. In order to do so, they draw on seven narratives from informants who were members of a political network. Their analysis shows that there is a situated use of gender symbolism that might propose a particular gendered understanding of political agency.

In 'Questioning the doing of 'privilege': on normalization and privileging in relation to the situation for asylum seekers in Sweden' Jonny Bergman and Siv Fahlgren state that it can be very comfortable to be white, male, heterosexual and middle class in a white man's world. To break out of the illusion of favours or comfort of being in a privileged position, they argue for a need to examine arenas where we are privileged, not as it often is done only those where we are not. In their essay, they lay both a theoretical and a methodological ground for such future studies by taking the starting-point from a previous research project on asylum-seeking refugees in Sweden (Bergman 2010). The question raised by this study was how the disempowerment of asylum-seeking refugees is constructed in normalization processes that at the same time seem to empower and privilege other positions and practices. These processes are discussed in relation to gender and race/ethnicity, racism, and paternalism.

Similar questions are picked up by *Eva Söderberg*, in her essay *titel*, where she uses her own dream as a complex meaning-producing narrative, open to interpretation in relation to other cultural objects, but for children, in order to introduce a project about ethnic and gender stereotypes in children's literature that she is involved in. She shows how easy it is in dreams, as well as in novels, films, and books for children, to fall into the trap of re-inscribing simplistic notions of black identity. The work with the dream not only forces her to reflect upon her white position and racist 're-inscriptions', it also encourages her to reflect upon her practice of knowledge production and to formulate research questions in a more ethical way.

Research project: Shifting governmentalities and the doing and undoing of risk

The use of risk, risk calculation, and risk prevention as a kind of normalizing politics that connects human bodies with policy issues and constitutive power is the theme of this research project performed in close collaborations with researcher at the Risk and crisis center (RCR). Following Foucault (1990), normalcy can be said to constitute a new power order among many in society, one that is both tightly regulated and unstable, and connected to the new processes that Foucault terms the biopolitics of the population, designed to regulate the population and control the body as the bearer of life—processes concerned with controlling reproduction, birth, mortality, health, domestic hygiene, and so on, and administered using various power techniques in a number of different institutions, including education, the health service, and the social services. It is a question of administering and managing life. The biopolitics of today are *risk politics* (Hacking 1990; Rose 2001), with a variety of strategies to identify, treat, manage, or administer those individuals, groups, or localities where risk seems high (Peterson & Wilkinson 2008). This research project thus explores the doing and undoing of 'risk' and its joint processes of normalization in terms of gender, ethnicity, generation, and class-based inequality and discrimination, as well as inclusion and privilege (partly founded by the NW-project and in cooperation with RCR network founding from Riksbankens Jubileumsfond).

Elin Montelius explores in her essay 'Natural, home-made, and real: gender and class in Internet postings' how gender and class is done in relation to the undoing of food-related risks in a parental Internet community. The Internet postings reveal a strong moral discourse on natural, home-cooked, 'real' food. Montelius draws here on Beverly Skeggs's discussion of respectability, arguing that to do or to be something 'real' could be understood as the Swedish counterpart to the desire for respectability that Skeggs found in Britain. Underlying the constitution of 'real' food as home-cooked, natural, safe, and desirable there is a moral classification that is linked to normative constructions of gender and class.

Research area 2: A lifetime of gendered cultures

Gender roles are under pressure in neo-liberal times as traditional roles move into different positions. This research area explores how our lives are shaped by different gender cultures over their full course. The research is carried out by analysing conceptions of masculinity and femininity; gender relations; gender inequalities; gender-based violence; the intersections of gender with other power relations such as class, race, sexuality, and stages in the life cycle; and the broad impact of gender on society (for example, in the political, legal, economic, popular, and religious arenas). By recognizing the influence of the wider structures of society, in conjunction with how individual biographies are situated within different types of gendered cultural practice, and how this may change over time, the knowledge necessary for resistance is made available. The centrality of traditional notions of sex and gender in different types of cultural practice contributes to the ongoing subordination of women to patriarchy by marginalizing or dismissing their concerns, labour, and cultural tastes. Studying how discourses of gender operate in cultural practices to support the continued gendering of the public and private spheres—for example, in independent music (Andersson 2013: 154), wedding preparations (Jarnkvist 2011), and art and theatre (Fahlgren et al. 2013, forthcoming), and related to other areas of interests such as risk and the sheer variety of digital practices (Giritli Nygren & Lindblad Gidlund 2012; Lidén & Giritli Nygren 2013)—can shed light on the power structures and normalization processes that exclude certain groups from these fields, and the structures that ensure that some voices are heard, and some not.

In ‘Just like in the movies’: the effect of popular culture on brides’ and grooms’ stories about their wedding ’ *Karin Jarnkvist* explores the influence of popular culture in a number of narratives about wedding preparations. The stories witness to how films, often Hollywood ones, provide inspiration for the informants’ own weddings. Interestingly, the images that seem to be hidden behind the desire for a proper wedding are very much produced Hollywood fictions. For example, the informants’ stories make clear that for a proper wedding, the bride has to be ‘typical’. To be a typical bride, the woman should be both the beautiful main character of the story, as in the Hollywood movies, but also the director of the wedding project.

A new research project has recently been founded “Safe living for elderly in rural areas – housing, gender and health within regional politics and everyday life” (founded by Länsförsäkringar). In the future we will develop knowledges on how the social transformations born of risk, consumption, and individualization, are reflected in the construction of later-life identities and how they intersect with gender, health and class in a Swedish context.

Research project: School health promotion and gender-based violence

This research area has developed from research on school children's health promotion and gender based violence (Challenging Gender", VR, 2007-2011; Folkhälsoinstitutet 2019-2012, PhD-project on gender and health, PhD-project on gender and cultural practices, and work done within the Nordic network FlickForsk (Nordic network for girlhood studies). School is an institution in which teachers and pupils negotiate the gender regime, and where boys and girls construct masculinities and femininities from an early age (Connell 1996), making it an important arena for change in gender relations. School can be a powerful agent in creating a supportive environment in which individuals are able to develop to their full potential without hindrance from gender boundaries, and where empowerment can be increased regardless of gender. In order to increase the participation of young boys and girls in cooperation with staff at school and stakeholders in the community, new methods need to be developed; methods that give young people a voice and see them as active agents in their own lives, individually and collectively.

The negative trend in children's and adolescents' health the recent decades, along with the asymmetric gender pattern, where girls report more health problems than boys, have been acknowledged in politics and in research (Gillander Gådin et al. 2013). However, the dominant interpretations do not include a gender perspective, and it is possible to claim that being a girl and having mental health problems has become normalized (Landstedt et al. 2009; Gillander Gådin 2011). At the same time, lower school achievement among boys compared with girls has received far more interest (KVA 2010). Bullying has been recognized as a problem related to ill health among the young, but other forms of violence such as sexual harassment, physical violence, threats, sexual abuse, online harassment, and the like have not been such a focus. This has been the focus of work within public health, highlighting gender-based violence and asymmetric power among pupils and students in relation to gender and other power orders, and developing methods to use in schools (Gillander Gådin 2007, 2011).

In *Katja Gillander Gådin's* essay in this volume, 'Predictors for online unwanted sexual solicitation: a cross-sectional study of Swedish boys and girls in years 6–9' the prevalence of unwanted sexual solicitation (USS) online and the predictors for victimization in a Swedish sample of pupils in years 6–9 are analysed. The results show that online USS is common among both boys and girls in this age group. The highest odds for online USS in this study were associated with offline victimization, which emphasizes the importance of not treating online activities as disconnected from offline activities, and of schools to work harder with children's Internet literacy.

Research area 3: Gender and working conditions

This research area has developed from research on the service sector, sociological perspectives on work in temporary work agencies, national decentralization and restructuring and employee's health in the public sector. In times of rapid economic and social change, it is an important task for feminist scholars to continue to analyse the processes, structures, and mechanisms creating unequal opportunities for people in working life, and to formulate new ideals and narratives in order to bring about change. Feminist and working-life research brought into dialogue can result in improved theoretical and analytical tools that can be used to deepen our understanding of how and why unequal opportunities in people's ability to live up to the ideals of workfare society occur.

Current labour-market and working-life divides are both spatial and social in character. They run between core and peripheral regions, between employed and unemployed, between core workers with permanent positions and peripheral workers in contingent and precarious employment, between labour markets and sectors mapped as male/female (Zampoukos & Ioannides, forthcoming). In 'Emotional and aesthetic labour in hospitality', *Kristina Zampoukos* discusses how the whole world can be represented, assembled in one hotel, but the existence of a social division of labour leaves certain bodies connected to (or excluded from) specific work tasks and spaces within the hotel. Zampoukos shows that to be employable in the hospitality industry requires the employee to have a body, and perhaps also conduct, to match the specific work: fine dining in the evening is classed differently to the serving of breakfast, and service roles seem to be allocated with respect to (imagined) national identity.

In the last two decades, salaried occupations and waged work have become increasingly privileged and idealized (Peck 2002; Rutherford 2010). In most modern states moving from welfare to workfare ideals, people must demonstrate that they are motivated and available to work or that they are willing to undertake other activities in order to be guaranteed a minimum income (Newman 2010; Crisp 2008). *Magnus Granberg* in his essay 'Poststructuralism, Marxism, intersectionality and public sector labour unrest' discusses how best to embark on an intersectional analysis of public-sector labour unrest, beginning with Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist version of social movement analysis, proceeding through debates on intersectionality and new feminist materialism, and revisiting traditional perspectives that still hold sway in social movement research in general and research on labour unrest in particular.

Although gender has been identified as important in this context, it has too often been overlooked in official as well as scholarly debate. The sick-leave rates have also a class bias, as people belonging to the lower social classes more often

report in sick compared to people with more fortunate economic situations (Olofsdotter Stensöta 2009). Despite all the policy documents underlining men's and women's equal opportunities, several studies show gendered inequalities in rehabilitation measures (Eklund et al. 2005). Men are likely to be offered far-reaching measures in terms of education and analysis, while women more often receive 'work training', the least costly and least ambitious measure (Eklund et al. 2005; SOU 2005:66). Many of these current explanations are closely related to a lack of gender equality seen from individual as well as societal perspectives.

In spite all these explanations for the differences observed between men's and women's sick-leave patterns, relations between insufficient gender equality and rising sick-leave rates has not been much examined (Palmer 2005). These are the questions addressed in 'Regional gender contracts and occupational segregation in non-conventional' by *Katarina Giritli Nygren, Magnus Larsson, and Gunilla Olofsdotter*. Using data from Statistics Sweden, the regional variations of gender-contract patterns are explored in relation to contexts of employment in areas that were identified as non-conventional twenty years ago. The results indicate that regionally constructed gender contracts are resistant structures that do not seem to be affected by Sweden's strong gender-equality discourse.

It seems that a traditional view of masculinities and femininities retains its social value in Swedish society, although the context and practices have changed (for example, Martinsson 2006). In neo-liberal times, with rapid economic and social change, it is an important task for feminist scholars to continue to analyse the processes, structures, and mechanisms creating unequal opportunities for people in working life, and to formulate new ideals and narratives in order to bring about change.

Research project: Temporary work agencies

The growing significance of temporary work agencies (TWAs) has an active role in the ongoing remaking of labour markets by facilitating more efficient and flexible employment systems, despite the industry's self-representation as a neutral mediator (Peck & Theodore 2002; Olofsdotter 2012, 2013). In TWAs, employment itself is converted from a relationship into a commodity; that is, TWAs 'profit upon handling the commodity labour power' (Endresen 2010: 218). In a Nordic context, corporate TWA networks in the Norwegian and Swedish labour markets are becoming more frequent. Migrant worker movements across national borders are often linked to flexible and casual forms of employment (McDowell 2009). TWAs are active in facilitating labour migration and are developing fairly sophisticated training and recruitment strategies for Swedish workers to come to work for example, in Norway, where a substantial number of young Swedes go for their first jobs. This research project will thus explore how TWAs impact on the Nordic

model of industrial relations by analysing the gendered and age-marked implications of the politics of work, identifying both trends and consequences (founded by the research council of Norway).

Research project: Gender mainstreaming

At the FGV there is a general interest in gender mainstreaming practices and their entwinement with neo-liberal forms of governance. Lean management, for example, is one of the governing practices intended to make the public sector more 'effective', broadly implemented at all levels of the public sector. Current research indicates that gender mainstreaming does not challenge market forces and power relations underlying structural inequalities (Mósesdóttir 2011: 44). This project therefore contributes with insights into the everyday doing of gender mainstreaming practices and how they could be adapted for use in varied and contradictory ways that even undercut workfare regimes, privileging the already privileged (founded by the The Swedish Work environment Authority).

In their essay 'The tiring practices of gender mainstreaming: As Sisyphus sisters push new stones, how do we get to mess with the hill?', *Angelika Sjöstedt Landén* and *Gunilla Olofsdotter* discuss the problems and possibilities of going forward with research on gender mainstreaming practices although it may seem that everything has already been said. Using examples from their own research on current gender mainstreaming projects in Sweden, they argue that we should not let gender mainstreaming out of our sights. Their experience is that although gender mainstreaming directs lots of energy at developing organizational knowledge about gender, this seems to be done without really questioning the initial organizing principles that formulated women as the problem in the first place.

Long-term Vision for the Research Environment

The research environment at FGV is characterized by an intellectual curiosity; both in terms of our own research as well that of others. Our approach is always critical, but with an open, welcoming and inclusive attitude. Creative research environments require room for diversity. We consider equality and possibilities to work under similar conditions as key equality aspects of our work and are therefore continually working with including different experiences and living conditions.

In order to guarantee a long-term sustainability of the research environment, a critical mass of researchers, doctoral students and supervisors is required, which is reinforced through collaborations, primarily interdisciplinary collaborations within the university, but also in national and international networks. In order to move steadily towards the future FGV needs to secure a significant and stable funding

from a wide range of contributors, and guarantee that the basic resources of FGV, for the coordination duties at the university, are sufficient and stable. During the next few years, focus will be on strengthening the environment in all these respects.

The Organisation of Gender Studies

FGV is organised as a network of researchers from different disciplines and departments working together in research projects, and with different outreach activities. The network is coordinated and administered by a director. Since 2013 a research leader for each of the three prioritized research areas has been appointed. FGV has a board with both internal and external representatives. The board meets four times a year.

FGV offers seminars, international networks, conferences, and workshops. FGV has an ongoing seminar series with invited guest researchers, as well as a seminar series for discussing research applications. Research area 1 holds a special ongoing seminar on the theme normalization.

Every year an internal two-day research conference is arranged for gender researchers at Mid Sweden University, followed by two one-day workshops/conferences a year with specially invited researchers. Every third year since 2004 the internal research conference is arranged. It consists of one day of short open lectures, called "Gender Marathon", where all gender researchers at the Mid Sweden University are given the opportunity to make a 15 minute presentation of their research. Usually, the day includes approximately 20 talks, from early in the morning until late at night. These open research days have been very well-attended and also recorded by Swedish television (UR – *Utbildningsradion*) both in 2010 and 2013. Our aim is to continue this work.

Finally, every year one international workshop/conference is arranged. Moreover, there are also substantial collaborations in the form of joint research and publications.

Strategy for National and International Collaboration

FGV is active at Mid Sweden University as well as regionally, nationally and internationally, and aims to advance the collaborative research – the better to fulfil our vision of being a regional knowledge centre for innovative research of the highest national and international standards.

In order to strengthen the research integration in the international research community and to maintain a high international quality, research is carried out in national and international collaboration. Important contacts for national and international collaboration have been built up within FGV, and formalized in the two networks MING (Mid Sweden International Network for Gender Studies) and

FlickForsk (Nordic Network for Girlhood Studies). FGV will continue 2013–2015, and also deepen and broaden its international research collaboration.

International workshops and conferences will be organized on a yearly basis. In this book the chapter by professor Bronwyn Davis, who has been a visiting professor at FGV, is an example of how prominent researchers have been invited to the research milieu to take part in the very discussion taking place here. Between 2012 and 2014 Professor Gabriele Griffin is a visiting professor at FGV – an important strategy for coming years will be to continue to invite international visiting researchers to the milieu.

The strategy is to be open to all collaboration, but at the same time to establish strong ties to specific researchers and research environments, for example gender studies at Lund, Gothenburg, Umeå and York University, and international researchers such as Bronwyn Davies and Bob Pease, Australia, Gabriele Griffin, England, Claudia Mitchell and Beverly Leipert, Canada, and Nan Stein and Philomena Essed in USA and Ann Cecilie Bergene, Norway.

Publication Strategy

The close collaboration FGV has with international researchers has resulted in the researchers being published internationally and in English to a greater extent than what is perhaps common in Swedish gender research and in several of the disciplines represented here. In the environment, several interdisciplinary texts have been published; the texts having been cowritten by researchers of different disciplines (for example Fahlgren & Johansson 2010; Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari, 2011; Giritli Nygren & Lindblad Gidlund 2012). The aim of FGV is for these publication strategies to continue and develop further.

FGV also has its own *series of publications*, of which this book is an example. Up to now it has been used to present working papers from Gender Marathon (2007:1), the day of open lectures held every third year, working papers presented at international network meetings (2011:3), and a more popular scientific and interdisciplinary gender reading of the Millennium series by Stieg Larsson (2013:4). All volumes included in this series of publications have been interdisciplinary and has also included researchers from the FGV network, national as well as international. The series of publications will from now on be used for an annual collection and publication of working papers more specifically belonging to the three prioritised research areas, and our goal is to continue to publish more strictly academic working papers as well as papers of a more popular scientific nature, catering to a wider audience. All volumes included in the series of publications will be made available on open access.

The working papers presented in this volume are all examples of the research being carried out within the interdisciplinary milieu of FGV as well as examples of

the questions that are raised within the research areas that will be prioritised and focused on during the coming years. All contributions have been peer reviewed and proofread before publication.

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Chapter 1

Normalization and emotion

Bronwyn Davies

A statistical *norm* is a pattern regarded as typical. It describes the way things are. And the way things are comes to be what is expected, and the expected slides quickly into morality: *is* becomes *ought*. The normative becomes the socially approved way of being. The Western philosophical tradition has tended to treat difference from the norm as a moral problem, 'identified with the forces of evil, the fall, sin, and monstrosity' (Dosse 2010: 152). In the first part of this essay, I will examine normalization from Butler's perspective, which has its roots in this tradition. Her work explores how the forces of normalization work on us and through us in a process of subjectification, producing in those who stand outside the normative order, a fearful and melancholic subjectivity.

In the second part of the essay, I will turn to Deleuze, who makes a break with this philosophical tradition and focuses not on external forces working on us and through us. He does not try to resolve the paradox of self and other, but seeks instead concepts that see difference as affirmation where life itself is difference happening. He is interested in 'the places where there is an excess of energy or a line of flight, in contrast to the dialectic, which transcends contradiction through synthesis. And in the name of this perspective, Deleuze seeks the line of flight that maintains the paradoxical tension' (Dosse 2010: 156). The essay looks for a way of holding these two philosophies together.

Butler's elaboration of normalization (1997a) begins with the unhappy consciousness of Hegel's slave, arguing that the processes of normalization are not merely the result of *external* forces acting on us and shaping us. They are also, inextricably, *internal* forces acting on us and shaping us. As Hegel (1977) demonstrated with the metaphor of master and slave, while the master's authoritative and demeaning world-view can be understood as external to the slave, its greatest power lies in the psychic reappearance of that demeaning world-view in the form of consciousness and conscience in the slave. The slave develops what Hegel calls an unhappy consciousness, engaging in constant self-abasement, with the master's world-view transmuted into the slave's own psychic reality. The master's world-view is normative, and the slave, in making it his own, comes to see himself within his own perspective as less than adequate.

In this metaphor, the master's world-view represents the external forces of normalization, and the slave's psychic reality the internal forces of normalization. These internal forces may be at odds with what we want for ourselves, such as

freedom from self-hatred, from self-destructive work habits, or from overwhelming anxiety about whether we are good enough. That unhappy consciousness and conscience can be seen in today's neo-liberal organizations, where individual workers constantly berate themselves for their inability to increase and refine their productivity according to the latest iteration of performance standards (Davies & Petersen 2005; Davies et al. 2005): 'I should work harder; I should be better organized; I should work harder to stay fit so I can do the job —'

In this model, normality cannot be explained as arising within, or natural to, the individual; the forces of normalization exist outside us, and in some sense prior to us. They produce, through language and structure, the *very terms through which we become recognizable as human*, as a particular kind of human, or as less than human, and as a viable or a non-viable subject. Our subjection to those forces, in Butler's words, 'exploits the desire for existence, where existence is always conferred from elsewhere; it marks a primary vulnerability to the Other in order to be' (1997a: 20–1). In that very process of coming to be, and continuing to be, we necessarily take up as our own those normative terms through which we become, and go on becoming, recognizable.

To accomplish, and go on accomplishing, our personhood, we are necessarily caught in, and catch ourselves up in, *citational chains*, through which the acts of recognition on which we depend, and which we desire in order to exist, take place. A citational chain is a repetition, with slight variations, of the same—the same identity, the same relations of power, the same categorizations, the same patterns of meaning-making. We cannot accomplish ourselves as viable subjects without these re-citations.

To be viable we must, in the first place, be recognizable within the terms of those citational chains, even while the terms that are reiterated may constitute us as less than human, or expendable, or powerless. As Butler says, 'our very sense of personhood is linked to the desire for recognition, and that desire places us outside ourselves, in a realm of social norms that we do not fully choose, but that provides the horizon and the resource for any sense of choice that we may have' (2004: 33). Those social norms may, however, provide us with no reasonable choice at all.

In Butler's definition, social norms are by their very nature implicit, rather than explicit, in social and discursive practices. They are visible as an *effect* of the social:

A norm is not the same as a rule, and it is not the same as a law. A norm operates within social practices as the implicit standard of *normalization*. Although a norm may be analytically separable from the practices in which it is embedded, it may also prove to be recalcitrant to any effort to de-contextualize its operation. Norms may or may not be explicit, and

when they operate as the normalizing principle in social practice, they usually remain implicit, difficult to read, discernible most clearly and dramatically in the effects that they produce. (Butler 2004: 41, italics in original)

We thus tend to read norms through *what* they produce—the normalized entities that we become—rather than through the ongoing sites of their production. We mistakenly see the products, the entities we have become, as naturally occurring, as, indeed, the spontaneous manifestation of our own normality. As such, the norms appear to be self-evident, rather than a performative accomplishment. It seems normal, for example, for the social world to be divided into men and women, dominant and subordinate, black and white, normal and abnormal, straight and queer; always one *or* the other, as if that either/or were inevitably and naturally so. Not both. Always either/or.

In this invisibility of the forces of normalization, the individual is *produced* as one who, naturally and from the beginning, belongs to one category and not to the other. It is a doubled production in which each individual takes up the very specificity of ‘who’ they are through the terms that dictate who and what will be counted as recognizable. Each person is individualized and identified as if they always were, recognizably, that individual with those essential characteristics. We get very good at spotting those continuities that create the illusion of a stable entity.

This doubled production means that the norms operate not just on us, but through us. Because we depend on them for our very existence, we come to *desire* them, and to desire to preserve them. Further, our own power, as autonomous subjects in a liberal, humanist world, depends, to a large extent, upon our taking up as our own the norms, through which we are made recognizable: ‘if, following Foucault, we understand power as *forming* the subject as well as providing the very condition of its existence and the trajectory of its desire, then power is not simply what we oppose but also, in a strong sense, what we depend on for our existence and what we harbour and preserve in the beings that we are’ (Butler 1997a: 2).

In this model, we depend on the norms for our continuing existence. Yet, to the extent that we define ourselves as autonomous individuals—as having agency or the capacity to make independent decisions and to act on them—we disavow that dependence. That disavowal of dependence, Butler argues, leads us to repress the knowledge that we are both subordinated by and dependent on discourse, and dependent on the others who engage in acts of recognition within that discourse. Our dependence, within any individualistic society, is thus relegated to the

unconscious, and as such is not accessible to reflection.² We become, through our subordination to those normative forces, subjects who cannot recognize our own dependence. 'If the effect of autonomy is conditioned by subordination and that founding subordination is rigorously repressed, the subject emerges in tandem with the unconscious' (Butler 1997a: 7).

There is a heavy price for this illusion of autonomy. It leads us to believe that when we are recognized, that recognition is of a prior subject, making us incapable of seeing that the act of recognition is a constitutive moment in a chain of such constitutive moments, and that we are brought into being again and again through those citational chains in which we recognize ourselves and are recognized. Citational chains can be broken, and they inevitably change over time. There is a radical potential lost when those chains are seen as no more than reflections of a pre-existing being.

Caught as we are in dependency on acts of recognition, and the disavowal of that dependency, then the emotions we experience include: *longing* for acts of recognition through which one's being is re-cited as a viable being; investment in the norms through a *passionate attachment* to the tenets of one's own conscience; destabilization, experienced as *fear* of non-survival, when the norms are disregarded or challenged (both by oneself or another); *anger or disgust* felt toward the one (which might include oneself) who transgresses the norms and thereby risks destabilizing them; anxiety when falling short in terms of one or another norm; and *joy* either in moments of being recognized as a viable being, or in changing the norms through which we are recognized. All of these make sense if our dependence on the norms for personal survival is not operating as a conscious choice, but as an unconscious, intensely felt, bodily experience intricately tied to our desire to persist in our own being.

The forces of normalization have intensified under the current neo-liberal forms of government. Its strategies of individualizing and intensifying vulnerability to risk and to competition drive each individual towards the accomplishment of an ever more *generic* perfect body and set of performative practices. Butler observes that running hand in hand with neo-liberal governmentality is the fantasy of producing perfect bodies through the human genome project's elimination of faulty genes. Plastic surgery, too, has become the new 'normal'; a normalizing, strategy to correct bodies and faces in search of a generic ideal that is the same for everyone and yet, paradoxically, more competitive. This trend has arguably intensified our anxiety about and fear of difference—both our own and other's. Butler observes in an interview about disability that '[our] assumptions about what

² That disavowal does not happen, for example, among Japanese subjects. It is a particular product of individualistic cultures

it takes to be a “person” are structured by ideal bodily morphologies which produce fear and anxiety in the face of individuals whose bodies challenge the norm ... we are witnessing an intensification of normalization at this time, which involves a focus on the body and its perfectibility. This is not unlike certain fascist tendencies in Europe in the middle of the last century’ (Butler et al. 2001: n.p.).

[In contrast, in disability studies] Performativity takes on a new meaning, since what happens when the less than human nevertheless assumes its place within the human, producing a paradox and a tension for the norm? It exposes the norm as exclusionary and its ideality as normative. But it also produces an aberration with the power to redefine the norm. What is important, of course, is to keep the ‘redefining of the norm’ from being ‘an assimilation to the norm’ (which is what gay marriage is doing). The redefinition has to take aim at normativity itself, establishing the progressive and irreversible dissonance of human life, its radical non-unity, as the only viable definition. (Butler et al. 2001: n.p.)

Thus although we depend on the norms at the same time as the norms are a performative effect of what we do, the contrary work of re-signification, Butler insists, is a necessary ‘offence’ that must be launched against the force of normalization:

Indeed, as we think about worlds that might one day become thinkable, sayable, legible, the opening up of the foreclosed and the saying of the unspeakable become part of the very ‘offence’ that must be committed in order to expand the domain of linguistic survival. The resignification of speech requires opening new contexts, speaking in ways that have never yet been legitimated, and hence producing legitimation in new and future forms. (Butler 1997b: 41)

So how might we think about that emotional work that must be done in order to engage in that offence against the processes of normalization on which we each depend for our continuing existence? I want to illustrate this emotional work using a video conversation between Judith Butler and Sunaura Taylor (2010). Taylor has minimal movement in her arms and legs and she uses a wheelchair for mobility. The conversation took place as Butler and Taylor went for a walk around San Francisco:

ST: I moved to San Francisco largely because it is the most accessible place in the world, and part of what’s so amazing for me about it is that the physical access, the fact that public transport is accessible [etc.] leads to social acceptability, that somehow because there’s physical access, there’s simply more disabled people out and about in the world and so

people have learned how to interact with them and are used to them in a certain way, and so physical access leads to a social access and acceptance.

Visibility or presence, then, is a vital first step in refusing the normative abjection of one's body when that body lies outside the normative construction of what it means to be human. That visibility or presence is made possible by a city that has decided to make itself wheelchair accessible. But there is much more involved in disrupting the norms that are based on people without bodily impairments. Taylor describes herself, for example, sitting in the park for a very long time, quite traumatized in the act of screwing up her courage to go into a coffee shop and order coffee, where she must either ask for special attention from the waitress, requesting that she carry her cup to the table for her, or upset and destabilize people by carrying the cup in her mouth.

JB: —do you feel free to move in all the ways you want to move?

ST: I can go into a coffee shop and actually pick up the cup with my mouth and carry it to my table, but then that becomes almost more difficult because of the—just the normalizing standards of our movement, and of the discomfort that causes when I do things with body parts that aren't necessarily what we assume they're for. That seems to be even more hard for people to deal with.

Taylor uses 'our' and 'we' when talking about the 'normalizing standards'. This illustrates quite powerfully the point that it is not just 'them' with their normalizing gaze, but she too who has internalized those normalizing standards as her own. Her choice of pronouns shows that the struggle with the coffee cup, how it looks to use one's mouth, is also her own struggle, not just 'their' struggle, to accept ways of acting outside the norm. The fact that she imagines using her mouth to carry the cup (an autonomous and usual act for her) to be more difficult than asking someone to carry it for her (and thus performing herself as dependent), shows the force of normalization at work. To carry one's cup in one's mouth is a *radical re-signification* of the relationship between the body and the cup. The struggle Taylor describes of getting up the courage to go into the coffee shop in the first place is a graphic example of the difficulty we experience in drawing attention to a bodily morphology and practice that lies outside the norm.

This experience in the park, trying to gather her courage, reminds me of a moment when I was a young academic in the early 1980s, when the gendered nature of language had just started to become an issue in feminist studies. I was sitting in a faculty meeting and the topic for discussion was a minor redrafting of the student regulations. I put my hand up to bid for a turn to speak, knowing that I

had to object to the fact that the generic pronoun 'he' was still being used in the re-drafted regulations. I raised my hand, and kept it raised, despite the fact that the Dean found it difficult ever to actually *see* that my hand was raised. As I waited to be given a turn to speak my heart began thumping. The pounding, I realized, was visible to anyone. Every thump, and the curious trembling that followed, were visible in the fabric of my clothes.

As I anticipated drawing attention to this hitherto normal language, requesting that it be changed, I knew that I would be drawing attention both to my gender and to my politics, both regarded by all those present, all men and all anti-feminist, as outside the norm of what an academic was and should be. As a woman and as a feminist I could not be recognized, at that time and in that place as a real academic.. So the only sensible thing to do was to make those aspects of my identity as invisible as possible. In raising my hand and then raising the issue of the gendered nature of the language and asking for it to be changed, not only was I a woman and a feminist, which was bad enough, but I was drawing attention to myself within those very terms. I was thus loosening even further any claim I might make to being recognized as a legitimate academic.

My desire was to break the mindless repetition of sexist language that made male students the norm and female students either invisible or less than the norm, less than human. I was demanding a radical re-signification of what it meant to be a student, and it was terrifying. Just so, the act of daring to go into the coffee shop as a differently abled person and asking that the difference be incorporated in what anyone understands as a normal coffee drinker is a terrifying task. In each case, it is a terrifying *but necessary* task—an offence committed against the current normative values and practices, attempting to produce 'legitimation in new and future forms'.

Deleuze provides a radical break with the philosophical tradition that Butler is working in, though her 'necessary offence' has some similarities with the Deleuzian line insofar as hers is a celebration of the opening up of the not-yet-known. Deleuze rejects the linear version of repression that Butler draws from Freud, arguing instead that it is the repetition itself that is the problem: 'We do not repeat because we repress. We repress because we repeat' (1994: 105). Deleuze thus rehabilitates difference, and develops a philosophy that begins, not with difference as monstrous, but with difference as affirmation. It is repetition without change that is the problem, not the divergence from that repressive repetition. He focuses his analysis on the repeated *event* rather than the repeated *attribute*, and in the event he finds the potential energy and the possibility of always emergent differentiation or continuous becoming.

Deleuze works to break open the image of the individual as fixed within normative structures and dependent on the repetitive re-citation of recognition and

recognizability. The Deleuzian self is 'no longer considered to be an irreducible, indivisible entity, [rather,] an individual ceaselessly divides itself and changes its nature, making itself multiple' (Dosse 2010: 158). Selves are dramatically unstable and divided in his philosophy. He plays with the figure of Alice from Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass*, recalling how she *both* grows smaller and larger, 'becoming smaller with respect to the bigger Alice who is growing away from her; but she is becoming bigger with respect to the Alice she is growing away from' (Williams 2008: 28). Deleuze's argument is that Alice is never 'at a point, an instant, called the "present" Alice.' And, furthermore, 'even in the present she is a stretch forward and back in time, becoming bigger and smaller and many other things' (Williams 2008: 29).

In the video conversation between Butler and Taylor, what is big about Taylor is the attractive, intelligent conversationalist, and the disabilities activist. What grows large as she moves towards the coffee shop in her imagination is Taylor the less-than-human freak, while Taylor as conversationalist and activist grows so tiny it is barely visible. But as people with bodily impairments come to occupy a place in an expanded sense of what it is to be human, through acts of bravery like the one Taylor envisages, a line of flight is opened up through which the carrying of the coffee cup in one's mouth shrinks in size while the attractive, successful activist grows big again. Similarly, in the early 80s, my bid for non-sexist language swelled my lack of fit to academic life to a huge size. It was an offence to the bodies of the normal men who sat around the table, whose continuing existence was tied to their assumption of natural dominance. But the language did change, and the men survived. I did get a place in the academy. And in the academy, it is now quite normal to check for sexism in written language.

Although Butler's thought is incommensurate with Deleuze's, I think it is useful to hold them together in exploring the forces of normalization and emotion. For Butler, difference is an imposition of the normative order, which deprives one of the conditions that enable a viable life. To the extent that normative consciousness is one's own, difference is accompanied by melancholy. The fear of difference, in oneself and others, is a realistic response given one's disavowed dependence on the normative order. Butler insists that we nevertheless and inevitably exceed the normative order, and she exhorts us, as a matter of ethics, to commit offences against the normative order.

In order to continue to be, in particular if we lie outside the normative order, she says, we must critique and challenge that order, changing the terms through which we become recognizable, to ourselves and the other, as a viable being:

... the 'I' that I am finds itself at once constituted by norms and dependent on them but also endeavours to live in ways that maintain a

critical transformative relation to them. This is not easy, because the 'I' becomes, to a certain extent, unknowable, threatened with unviability, with becoming undone altogether, when it no longer incorporates the norm in such a way that makes this 'I' fully recognizable. There is a certain departure from the human that takes place in order to start the process of remaking the human. I may feel that without some recognizability I cannot live. But I may also feel that the terms by which I am recognized make life unlivable. This is the juncture from which critique emerges ... (Butler 2004: 4)

One is thus caught in melancholy, in a heavy obligation to take dangerous risks. We cannot underestimate the emotional blow that is occasioned by those necessary offences to the normative. Not only do we, like Hegel's slave, berate ourselves, suffering in our unhappy consciousness, but we are genuinely afraid. We live in a world where a man with swishing hips might be murdered, as may a transvestite or a feminist. Their bodies and their performativity of themselves as being outside the norm, or even in confrontation with the norm, generates both fear and rage—even murderous rage. Their emplacement outside the norm grows large and overwhelming for the one who depends for continuing existence on the very categories and meanings that are being disrupted. And because their dependence has been disavowed and their normality naturalized, the source of their rage is, in all probability, not open for inspection and revision.

In Deleuzian terms, however, we are always in a continual process of becoming different. Normative forces are, in Deleuzian terms, striations, or lines of force that hold the world in place. Creative evolution depends on lines of flight that take off from those striations, opening up the not-yet-known. The practices of categorization that place us outside the normative order are striated lines of force. Rather than resist them, or oppose them, Deleuze sees them as interdependent with lines of flight, which take off from them and open up the new. Striated lines are associated with emotions of comfort and security, and also with stultifying suffocation. Lines of flight are associated with fear of the unknown, and with exhilaration and an energized sense of joy in life. Striation and flight are not aligned in a binary with good and bad, but work together in the continual production of the new.

I conclude with a Deleuzian line of flight that plays among bodies, technology, humour, and poetry. Aimee Mullins (2009) has twelve pairs of legs. She can choose between perfect model's legs; the legs of a cheetah; gorgeous glass, transparent legs; exquisitely carved wooden legs with grape vines and magnolias curving around them;; and legs that enable her to break records at the Paralympics, or to pose as a cover girl in a fashion magazine, or to strut on the boardwalk. She

suggests that we not think in terms of categories of abled and disabled, but of the creative potential of spaces that enable us to do being human differently: 'Poetry matters. Poetry is what elevates the banal and neglected object to a realm of art. It can transform the thing that might have made people fearful into something that invites them to look, and look a little longer, and maybe even understand.' She challenges audiences through laughter, provoking their senses and igniting their imaginations. She thus works affectively through emotion and poetry, combining these with cutting-edge technology, to take her audience with her in an exhilarating extension of what it means to be human.

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Chapter 2

‘Outsiders within’, or, the complex meaning of time and place in feminist academic collaborations

Siv Fahlgren³

Living as we did—on the edge—we developed a particular way of seeing reality. We looked both from the outside in and from the inside out ... we understood both. (bell hooks 1984: vii)

One of the key issues involved in any research collaboration is that of belonging—the question of how one comes to belong to a research group, who belongs, and why. Given that research funding for a large cutting-edge research project today frequently involves collaborating with other institutions or universities, this issue is particularly pertinent. This was the case in the research project discussed in this essay. To create the best possible research environment, the funding required a collaborative effort between two universities, one bigger and older than the other. This implied sameness (of excellence) as a criterion for collaboration. Still, we all know that universities do not have equal status; they involve significant hierarchies, objective and subjective, of age, size, status, prestige, and resources. These hierarchies and differences affect one’s sense of belonging, as they are mobilized in research collaborations to identify the ways in which you belong. This essay is concerned with conditions, consequences, and outcomes of collaborative interdisciplinary research from the standpoint of a theme leader of one of five project subgroups, here referred to as the minority group, based at a smaller university, in time related to the neo-liberal audit culture that makes up the unavoidable, present-day academic milieu (Davies & Bendix Petersen 2005; Carbin & Rönnblom 2012).

The research programme in question was one of three gender-excellence projects financed by the Swedish Research Council in 2007–2011. The programme was divided into five distinct subgroups, so-called themes, interdisciplinary in themselves and working to a large extent independently. Each theme had a theme leader, who together with the research leader made up the steering group of the programme. Four of these themes were based at the large of the two institutions, as was the coordinator of the entire programme. I was the theme leader of the fifth theme, the only one to be based at a smaller sister university. Researchers from a

³ This chapter is written within the project: Normalization and the neoliberal welfare state: challenges of and for gender theory’ (The Swedish Research Council 2012–2015).

large number of disciplines at both universities were involved, and were expected to collaborate not only on the five themes, but also on the joint interdisciplinary gathering that became known as 'the Arena'. One of the aims of the project was to create a setting for interdisciplinary gender studies that would mount a challenge on various levels not only to traditional, nominally gender-neutral research, but also to gender studies per se. We often talked about how unique this wide-ranging collaboration was, but exactly what was unique about it was far less clear.

However, being a member of such a research context is a complex matter. Since all the collaborative work was done at the university where coordinator was based, the researchers of the minority group were the only ones that had to travel to get to the Arena meetings four times a year. That also went for the steering group meetings and other meetings as well. The experiences of the minority group were shaped by this localization, by questions of place and time, and the fact that the members of this group 'were few' in relation to the other four themes all placed at the other university. This poses questions of minority and majority, of belongingness, of being outsiders or insiders, or even 'outsiders within' in relation to academic collaborative work.

Theoretical position: outsiders within

For five years, the fifth 'minority group' worked as part of the larger gender-excellence project, looking at normalization processes in different welfare institutions as well as academe itself (Fahlgren, Johansson & Mulinari 2011; Fahlgren & Johansson 2010; Johansson 2011). In using the word 'minority group', I do not mean the situation as a group to be in any way comparable to the ones often experienced by groups labelled as such. This research group has been a privileged group in the finest tradition of Western academia, and the patterns of belonging or not belonging that I seek to trace in this essay have mainly to do with how research was organized and done. Nevertheless, I do not use the word in a neutral way either, as I want to retain some of its connotations, since to be able to see how belonging works we are always helped by using different semiotic systems together to unravel the complexities of meaning. Still, theoretically, I prefer to use the concept of 'outsiders within'.

Being the smaller sister university sometimes created a sense of alienation and subordination in the wider context. A position similar to the one Collins (1991), talking about black female researchers, refers to as 'outsiders within', as being included but in a marginalized position, included but simultaneously excluded. Once again, I do not mean our situation as a group was at all comparable to black female researchers', yet the passing sense of being strangers within might perhaps be similar. This position might create a paradoxical experience, sometimes uncomfortable, but at the same time creative and stimulating.

In spite the obstacles that can confront outsiders within, they might also benefit from this status if it turns out to produce useful perspectives—the point where Collins (1991:41) refers to Simmel's essay on strangers. The first potential benefit of outsider-within status is *objectivity*, or as Simmel defines it 'a peculiar composition of nearness and remoteness, concern and indifference'; the second is the tendency for people to *confide in strangers* in a way they never would in those they know well; and the third is the ability of the stranger to *see patterns* that may elude those more immersed in a situation (Collins 1991: 41).

In writing this essay, I was very much aware of my own ambivalent position. As the theme leader of the minority group, this was the group I belonged to—it was 'we' and 'us'—but at the same time I was also part of the steering group for the whole project, so that for me was also 'we' and 'us'. In the course of writing, I have had to reflect on both groups as 'we' and 'us', and my place as well as the rest of the researchers of this theme belonging to both but in another way being an outsider in both.

Collective biography work in neo-liberal universities

For five years, gender researchers from literary studies, public health, social work, gender studies, and sociology met as the minority group to discuss texts we had written both individually and in collaboration as part of our work on the fifth sub-theme, 'Challenging normalization processes'. As in the research project as a whole, we felt we were doing something unique and creative. As a small group, we found ourselves in an open and inclusive academic 'space' where we could listen to one another, comment on one another's texts, and glean new ideas for collaborative texts, research projects, and international collaborations; a space where we felt comfortable and enjoyed ourselves, without feeling that restrictive hierarchization many of us otherwise experience in our respective specialisms (Fahlgren et al. 2011b).

To clarify what this collaborative process entailed, towards the end of the project we worked on collective biography, following Bronwyn Davies (Davies & Gannon 2006). The group had the privilege of working with Davies doing memory-work about the research collaboration, spending a whole day talking, listening, and writing down memories of key moments occasioned by the challenging of gender and normalization in the course of our collaboration. That day was followed by collective writing about the memories for several months, sending the text to each member of the group in turn, giving all the opportunity to write and rewrite the text. The work had thus been very much to the fore in writing these memories, but subject to a theoretical gaze that was attentive to normalization, since one might claim that body and theory are integral to each other, that 'bodies are always in theory' (Davies & Gannon 2006: 14). Neither, for

this reason, could these memories be regarded as entirely reliable descriptions of what actually happened. It would be more apposite to ask which truths were *produced*—and how that came about. The group encountered various complications in this work; very little was straightforward (Fahlgren et al. 2011b).

In this chapter I will re-use some of these memories to exemplify and explore the experiences of collaborative work as ‘outsiders within’: the joy, the pride, the fear, and the unpredictability of collaborating across boundaries determined by theories, disciplines, universities, and places in the context of interdisciplinary gender research that set out to challenge normalization processes in present-day, neo-liberal academic regimes.

By neo-liberalism, I here mean the transformation of universities in the past decade or so into ‘enterprises’, and individual academic lives into ‘the pursuit of a range of enterprises’ so that ‘all aspects of social behaviour are now reconceptualized along economic lines’ (Rose in Davies & Bendix Petersen 2005: 77). The neo-liberal technologies are governed through a pseudo-economy, in which each university competes for reduced funds tied to decisions about individual survival and success. Competition and hierarchical domination over others are legitimate if they lead to survival. At the same time, other discourses have been incorporated; for example, you are encouraged and rewarded for research collaboration (Davies & Bendix Petersen 2005). And as Davies and Gannon write, ‘in examining how discourse and practice work on us, we open both ourselves and discourse to the possibility of change’ (2006: 5).

Conditions of time and place

Given that all the project steering group meetings, as well as the Arena meetings, which brought together all five themes for interdisciplinary discussions, took place at the coordinating university, participation in the collaborative work of the project required members of the second university had to spend a lot of time travelling: a four-hour bus journey, one or two nights at a hotel—and then four hours back. And as Connell (2007: ix) writes, social thought happens in particular places, so place matters. At the beginning, we in the steering group did discuss the possibility of gathering at the smaller university occasionally, and as the theme leader based there, I really enjoyed the thought of planning an Arena meeting for the whole research project. But this is my memory of what happened:

Before they all leave for the day, she raises her hand and says: ‘Next time when the Normalization theme will be responsible for the Arena day, you’re all welcome to Otown and our university. We’re looking forward to see you all there’. That is when the research leader suddenly says that it is out of the question for the whole research group from Wtown should go to Otown. It will cost too much, and after all, it is at Wtown University

the project is placed, so the next Arena meeting will be in Wtown as usual. This is not what they had discussed before in the steering group, but she falls silent; surprised, humiliated, squashed in front of the whole Arena group—and angry. That is not what they had decided before.

The on-the-spot decision was no, there were not going to be any meetings at the smaller university. The research money held at the coordinating university was not going to be spent on the majority group travelling to the minority group. Put this way, it might be seen as a kind of dominating act—involving the objectification of the other, other than ‘us’ (Collins 1991). As a smaller part of the project run by the coordinating university I—and the other researchers in the minority group as well—often felt co-opted by the bigger university. As my written memory of it shows, strong and painful emotions may be evoked by such a positioning. The minority group was still one of five themes, but obviously only on special conditions.

To understand this memory better, I would like to position it not only in place, but also in historical time—in the audit culture of the new neo-liberal university. Reconstituted through the mentalities of the market, Davies and Bansel (2010: 6) write, this university is characterized by some major lines, primarily that all products are redefined in terms of their exchanged value, and that it works by pitting individuals against one another in intensified competitive systems of funding with clearly defined measures of success. Thus discourses of efficiency and measurable quality regularize today’s academic practices (see also Carbin & Rönnblom 2012). Of course, all being feminist academics in the project, we discussed our critique of the neo-liberal discourse and its principals and values, yet even so we were at the same time drawn or forced into them. In spite of the neo-liberal rhetoric of free individual choice, choice in this context is often illusory. If academics today do not take up the new discourses they will not be able to survive in the new institutions, so the mantra often goes (and so it went in this project): we must be pragmatic (Davies & Bendix Petersen 2005: 82–8). But in a way, we are also seduced by it. For academic women, until so recently excluded from academic discourses, there may be a particular satisfaction in becoming appropriate subjects. The increases in efficiency (in market terms) are seductive; again and again we are tempted by the discourses and practices of neo-liberalism, characterized as necessary, natural, and inevitable (Davies et al. 2005). In a way, you could say they become normalized (Fahlgren et al. 2011).

But the competitive system and the risk of credibility is not only a question for individual academics. In the management discourse, risk figures in terms of the credibility and survival of the university itself. The self-interest of the academic is reconstituted in terms of the interest of the university and vice versa (Davies &

Bansel 2010: 9). This was often very clear in the steering-group discussions of this project. As part of a global market, go-ahead universities must fashion themselves as both local and specific *and* global corporations able to be assessed according to whatever measure adopted (2010: 14).

To have funding for a big, cutting-edge research project such as the one we took part in, it is often necessary at least in Sweden to collaborate with other universities in order to be a viable candidate. This makes the work much more complicated. As a research leader, you must not only hold together a large, disparate, and in this case also widely interdisciplinary research group from your own university and see to that it produces 'excellence', with all the claims on your time that entails, but also to collaborate with one or more other universities, otherwise regarded as competitors, with the same issues redoubled. Neo-liberalism in a system tends to make for competitive individuals striving to produce what is desired by the government. This makes it possible to read my written memory above as an example of what neo-liberal structures do to us. We are all already part of the disciplinary regimes in which we work, 'constituted by them and constituting them with our embodied practices', as Davies and Gannon write (2006: 82).

The result of the decision referred to in this memory was that the minority group had to travel to become insiders and a part of the project throughout the five-year project. This gave this minority group a special position as outsiders within. This outsider-within position was occasionally very frustrating, not only in terms of the geographical distance and time-consuming bus journey, but also in terms of not really being acknowledged and regarded as partners on the same level. At the same time, this outsider-within position created unknown and unexpected potentials. For example, by leaving our ordinary, daily work and our own university behind us in order to collaborate in the project work, we could see the advantages of really *being there* in terms of place. Once we were there, we were fully present, taking part in all the planned activities. There were no other work distractions, no children to fetch, no dinner to hurry home to; something that may have had consequences for the engagement in the overall collaborative work. And since the minority group constantly felt this outsider-within position—and perhaps also upheld it ourselves—we also found it important to be represented and take part in every Arena meetings. So we were there, we remained active, and we did engage.

Conditions of fear, safety and engagement

The academic normalization process, that most predictable of processes, creates feelings of belonging that may make you safe—but at the same time this safety runs into the fear of being left outside. That is how normalization works. At the same time as 'the other' is positioned in outsiderhood, a fragile insider position of

belonging is created. Thus just as it creates belongingness, it confines and limits us by creating boundaries and pressure (Fahlgren et al. 2011a). Within such an instrumental system as the neo-liberal university, including an ever intensifying workload, short-term contracts, funding pressure, and excessive competitiveness, you would not be surprised to find institution-specific conflicts and issues as an effect of working within the same institution. In neo-liberal discourses, there is a systematic tendency to misinterpret structural and organizational deficiencies as individual and personal failure (Zabrodska et al. 2011). Of course, workplace bullying is not an invention of neo-liberal micromanagement, as Zabrodska et al. (2011) point out, but it still is deeply implicated in current institutional practices that may be experienced as scarifying acts of bullying. Emotions are not to be underestimated in the research collaboration, and have effects on the project members' energy and engagement, and the work outcome in the project.

As in most collaborative work, conflicts did exist in this research project. Positioned as outsiders within, a position both proximate and remote, concerned and indifferent, as Collins (1991) describes it, the minority group were a part of the conflicts of the project, but at the same time were apart from these processes, looking at them more from a distance. In a way outsiders, not part of the historical tradition and the institutional hierarchical processes and competition at the coordinating university, strengthened by a neo-liberal system, the minority group had a more neutral—or objective if you like—position.

From this position, the minority group did not have to feel the same kind of emotions of fear. The fear of disintegration, of being turned away from that witch will guarantee survival, can work to re-establish distance as well as preserve not only 'me' but also 'us', life as it is (Ahmed 2004) instead of challenging it. You may even say that the position of 'outsider within' may have resulted in a certain kind of responsible *irresponsibility* towards some aspects of the project such as positionings and hierarchies and belonging to a certain understanding of cultures.

This may have resulted not only in less fear in the minority group as the safety of belonging to this culture was not seen as the only possible way to be (Johansson, Söderberg, Fahlgren 2013), but may also have opened up for the minority group to take a special stand in the project. Even though the Arena meetings were suppose to produce new feminist interdisciplinary work, at first there seemed to be no one who had the courage to present their own academic work there for everyone else to discuss in this very broad interdisciplinary space. We were mostly discussing theory produced by well-known, international researchers. That was interesting to start with, since we did have different interdisciplinary readings of the texts, but it did not always bring our own work further, and it did not create the real interdisciplinary collaborations we were aiming for.

When it came to the minority group to choose a theme for the joint Arena day, we decided to present our work in progress, discussing our often very different ways of theorizing and studying the question of normalization from different disciplines. This was in my opinion the starting-point of a process of truly tackling work that was ongoing in the various subgroups as well as in the Arena. On several occasions, even after this meeting, the minority group arranged provocative and interesting interdisciplinary events and discussions for the whole Arena group (Söderberg 2013). Perhaps you could say that by the very active engagement in the Arena work, the minority group in a way rejected their otherness (Collins 1901). As outsiders within, the minority group was near enough to be able to engage and collaborate, but remote enough not to be threatened, being in the position of concern mixed with indifference. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to discuss the position of the minority group in terms of the different types of subjectivity that stem from different positions rather than the 'objectivity' of the minority group relative to the majority group. This might be regarded as an unpredictable effect of collaborating across boundaries.

Conditions of alienation and pride

This conditional belonging did create more than one ambivalence or paradox. As the example above shows, belonging under special conditions was not necessarily always a disadvantage for the interdisciplinary and collaborative work of the project. The kind of resistance the minority group sometimes met with as outsiders within could also create or strengthen a feeling of 'we' within the minority group, which made us strong and creative, and perhaps even more active in the collaborative work. We felt we had to do our homework in order to feel accepted within—and so we did:

At the head of the long table she sits, with one of the other women from her theme group. After all the work they've put in with the theoretical discussions in their own theme group, now they were presenting their theoretical foundations—as far as their discussions allowed—in a well-prepared PowerPoint presentation for the other groups. Shoulders up, she's feeling a bit nervous, but knows at the same time that they've 'done their homework'—as always; anything else would be unthinkable. While they talk and show their overheads, the room fills with silent but active listening. The others listen with interest; several take notes, and even seem pretty engaged. That feeling that spreads through her when they've finished their presentation is happiness, but also not a little pride at the recognition they're receiving from the group from the big university. She straightens her back a little, and leans back in her chair.

As the theme leader of a minority group I could rely on a very loyal group, always carefully doing the work they were suppose to do, which often made me feel proud. This pride was also expressed by the other group members, for example, in another memory one group member wrote: *When we head home I feel another burst of pride that our group is so clever and competent, and that we have such a good time together.* Why this need for pride? What questioning falls to the precondition of pride? The memories show how the normalization of the university hierarchy is just as evident in an interdisciplinary gender research group whose aim is to collaborate and build up an interdisciplinary research environment as in any other research group. It is there in the group who feel inferior or outside, the minority group, and it is there in the group who are assumed to be superior, the majority group. It is there, not only in the gaze of others, but also in our own gaze focused on ourselves—often perhaps only there? I am not even sure that what I here call the majority group ever conceived themselves as that, or as a united group at all; after all, they covered four different themes. At the same time, the paradox: does this sense of alienation and subordination in the wider context perhaps contribute to the *conditions* for a strong minority group? Is it through the constitution of ‘them’ that this group become ‘us’? Would that mean that the pleasant and salutary feeling of inclusion and pride, and the creative work done in the minority group presupposes exclusion or outsiderhood (Fahlgren et al. 2011b)?

The minority group were gathering around normalization as a theoretical concept for all to relate to interdisciplinarily, which prompted a creative interest from many. In this way, the project became something special for the members of the minority group; it was not just research as usual, but something done together. The theme forced all of us to open ourselves to the interdisciplinary friction in the group. Together we took a step into unknown territory, trying to think in new ways, finding the fascination of differences in an interdisciplinary milieu. Thus something productive happened.

The members of the minority group could not and did not always agree, but do we always want to agree? To agree on a common perspective is, after all, a way of establishing boundaries. Thus the spirit of community and belonging does not necessarily mean consensus—but rather respect, generosity, and, perhaps most of all, listening. This also became a way of challenging normalization processes within academe. We did interdisciplinary work we would not have done without this project, talking, writing, and working together, establishing new international contacts and networks together; work inspired by the interdisciplinary discussions taking place within the theme.

Challenging normalization processes

Can you fund good research collaborations? The political directive of this project was to do interdisciplinary work of excellence in a research milieu that we cannot but see as a part of the neo-liberal university system. What is the ideal interdisciplinary work in that milieu? As neo-liberal workers, we see one another and ourselves in terms of our (monetary) value to still-patriarchal academe—a value that does not always get higher (if at all)—based on our work in interdisciplinary gender research (Davies & Gannon 2006). The will to criticize is dismantled by the neo-liberal governmentality defining success and quality in measurable terms (Davies & Bansel 2010). At the same time, in this case the research project was set up with the explicit goal of challenging gender, and doing this by creating a good, productive interdisciplinary research environment. The following memory says something about how our working bodies are constituted in a neo-liberal workplace, and through neo-liberal discourses and power relationships; how we are pulled in different directions—wanting to be both outsiders and within.

After a while the seminar discussions drift away from the subject of how normalization can be understood as a theoretical term in our given subjects to what is normalized in this project and our own research. In our research, should we accept traditional academic demands, the normalized ways of doing research and writing, if we want to challenge normalization? I am torn uncomfortably between the two. Of course, I want to challenge scholarly theory, method, and form; that's what I've always thought. And written. At the same time, I know that at the end of every year I'm going to be asked to list the project group's international publications and external funding, and that's what's going to count. And it's me who's going to be held accountable for the answers.

Working on a theme titled 'Challenging normalization processes', the normalization trap there in neo-liberal period of transition must be challenged. But how? Having this ambition obviously behoves us to ask in what way we in our own research normalize and reproduce power. Partly the neo-liberal discourses are normalized in ways that makes them invisible and thus hard to challenge. The restrictions we meet as women in academe do not take physical forms as before, but are dressed up in discursive terms such as relevance, quality, excellence, impartiality, and scientific (Davies & Gannon 2006; Fahlgren et al. 2011b). Partly we are caught up in a paradox; we might perhaps see ways of challenging the discourse, but, at the same time, we are also aware of how these challenges come at a considerable cost.

Even if we take on critical gender perspectives as gender researchers, we want to be published and continue our careers in the same way as all researchers do. The feminist will to unmask and critically examine politics of power comes into conflict with the wish as an academic to qualify and attain academic legitimacy, both in order to be acknowledged as a researcher and to be able to hold academic positions (Wahl 2012: 69–70). Even as gender researchers, we are both outside and within, something that might help us see the patterns better, but also something we have to handle responsibly.

Thus the space we as gender researchers create for ourselves becomes an ambivalent place. That was certainly the case for the space the minority group created. One member of the minority group wrote in a memory that she felt under enormous pressure to produce within the group, and her resignation at knowing that she could not: *I can't do that; it's just impossible; no way*. Her ordinary work was more than enough (Fahlgren et al. 2011b). Not having the power to act makes us sad, as does too great a determination to produce (Davies & Gannon 2006: 69). Still, the conflict has to be handled: *This book has to be written. Want to run away*, as it was put in another memory (Fahlgren et al. 2011b). The 'real' work, the 'musts', will be the work in our own specialisms, not within interdisciplinary gender research.

Despite this instrumental force we all have to live with working in neo-liberal universities, and despite the pressure of constantly producing within our own disciplines, our more challenging interdisciplinary gender work did continue. Thus we are not only the victims of these discourses; we also see them as a force to be counteracted and challenged (Davies & Gannon 2006). During the whole of this project, the minority group held a running interdisciplinary seminar intended to challenge normalized ways of thinking and doing research. This seminar proved both creative and productive, with lively discussions between different disciplines, intent on theorizing and challenging normalization processes.

The importance, beauty, and risks of feminist collaborative work

Feminist research is often marked by a yearning for unity that is formed in viewing the research community as an inclusive and non-hierarchical, interdisciplinary open space. Perhaps this also was one of my own romantic dreams when embarking on this research project? This is a beautiful thought, but something that tends to come in conflict with the narrative of the rational and profitable neo-liberal university. The analysis above shows the ambivalence both of belonging to a big and strong interdisciplinary gender research group, and of being positioned as outsiders within—from another place or institution. Belonging can be both very productive, and very risky. Belonging to a research group of great openness can be very creative and productive, but belonging to a group that is strong in a unified voice can lead to a dogmatic standpoint that we all know and want the same.

Belonging to a group that is under heavy pressure from neo-liberal policy can also be very risky. You might get frightened, and thus vulnerable, and end up with little to show for your efforts: if you feel scared and unsafe (something that happened in the Arena meetings sometimes) it may appear better to cling to your ordinary discipline, the little you believe you know about your own field, in your own comfort zone.

At the same time, the position of outsider—or outsider within—is very ambivalent, both creating anger and frustration at not being acknowledged as really within, and at the same time opening up unforeseeable, creative possibilities by being able to see what is happening from within as well as from without. In a research group that freely accepts there will be differences, and where there is openness to thinking differently and to the joy of listening to the others, something productive may happen. The problem is that it may not really be calculable: you cannot plan for it, but a spontaneous eruption of something new may happen. That is one of the problematic elements in the neo-liberal regime—wanting the predictable and planned to happen, not the unforeseeable, thus *not a project of constant challenges*. A collaborative, feminist research project intent on challenging normalized gender orders is very important. Thus negotiating the neo-liberal structures in which we work might be unavoidable, but we have to discuss them openly and not be subordinate to those structures. Real feminist challenges might require rethinking how we belong to normalizing communities.

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Chapter 3

The able man and the lucky one: normalizing gendered understandings of agency in regional politics

Sara Nyhlén & Katarina Giritli Nygren⁴

In recent decades, there has been a transition from government to governance in Swedish regional politics, and several studies of regional politics in Sweden have shown that personal contacts organized in networks increases in importance as the governance aspects of the system increases (see, for example, Hedlund & Montin 2009; Hedlund & Lindberg 2012; Nyhlén 2013). A shift that leaves the politics increasingly characterized by networks, partnerships, projects, and process politics in which much decision-making takes place not in council chambers and representative assemblies, but in various forms of policy networks that transcend the boundaries between the public and private sectors. Often the real decisions are made informally in the networks, to which the recruitment of people is opaque in the extreme, and the most important contacts take place outside the formal political system, while the formal system is used in order to rubberstamp informal decisions (Newman 2002; Nyhlén 2013). There are a small number of individuals who are included in these networks and these individuals use the networks in their doing of politics. Sometimes the same agent represents both the public and the private sectors, with the ability to affect policy by agenda-setting, formal political decisions, and implementation. Under these circumstances, the network becomes included in the formal political decision-making, because within the networks politics is done by defining both the political problem and its solutions (Verduijn et al. 2012).

Thus, while there exists an extensive literature that documents changing state practices, local and global governance, and the spatial dimensions of politics, the extent to which it has addressed the gender issues involved is rather limited (Hudson & Rönnblom 2007, Newman 2002). In studies where the question has been addressed it has become evident that, depending upon their gender, agents are positioned differently vis-à-vis power, political participation, and political processes (for example, Tickell & Peck 1996; Little & Jones 2000; Nyhlén 2013). As already noted, gendered processes and practices in ostensibly gender-neutral political processes may be blatant or hidden. This means that gender is done at various levels and in diverse contexts in human life—in the symbols and images

⁴ This chapter is written within the project: Normalization and the neoliberal welfare state: challenges of and for gender theory' (The Swedish Research Council 2012–2015).

we use in interaction and self-definition (Acker 1992; Korvajärvi 2003). Tickell and Peck (1996) as well as Little and Jones (2000) suggest that this is related to the process by which gender, as a set of preferences, skills, and relationships, is inscribed in a masculine gendering of new governance where capital trumps social and welfare concerns, and the concept of agency becomes deeply entwined with progressive politics, masculinity, and the supremacy of business and businessmen. Taking this approach to gender analysis and applying it to the ways in which different skills and competencies are related to agency, we want to highlight the need for analysis of gender in new forms of governing in the context of regional partnership politics. To say that something is gendered means that it is patterned by the distinction between male and female, although not necessarily between men and women (Acker 1998; Yancey Martin 2003). Earlier research on these issues, as noted, has shown that this politics causes a masculine gendering of the new local governance by identifying a high valorization of discourses associated with hegemonic masculinity, such as the competitive nature of the funding process, the primacy given to hard economic outcomes and capital works over social and welfare concerns, and the dominance of business interests and businessmen (Tickell & Peck 1996; Little & Jones 2000, Little 2002).

Our purpose is to explore how agency, or the power to initiate actions, is constituted in a local network, and the ways in which it might be gendered. In order to do so, we draw on seven narratives from informants who were included in a political network. In our analysis, we make use of positioning theory in order to explore both their use of gender symbolism in the course of regional network politics and whether there is a situated use of gender symbolism that might propose particular, gendered understandings of agency in relation to politics.

Analytical strategies and research method

In this essay, we draw particularly on some important studies on the relation between gender and governance undertaken by Little and Jones (2000) and Little (2002). With their gender critique of new governance arrangements, they warn against a simple 'head count', and argue for a more nuanced gender analysis. Frequently, one of the arguments on which new forms of governance is predicated is that the private sector has a potential and capacity that cannot be assigned to the public sector (see, for example, Little & Jones 2000; Rai 2004). This dichotomizing of the private and the public is, as Little and Jones (2000) found in their study, highly gendered. The private sector and the subject positions it offers are often described in a masculinized way, with such attributes as efficient, decisive, robust, and risk-taking. The public sector and its subject positions are, in an oppositional way, described as passive, inefficient, weak, and slow-moving. This (re)gendering of the state in comparison with the private sector causes the state to become

feminized. Peck and Tickell (1995) identify a similar critique of the local state as overly bureaucratic when analysing narratives of business leaders in this type of politics. They argue that gender is embedded in this criticism since the local state is positioned as a 'dithering woman, bound by convention, whose problems can be solved by the purposive intervention of business (men)' (Tickell & Peck 1996: 609). Typically, what is masculine is prized and superior, and what is feminine is subordinate and devalued (Connell 1995; Whitehead 2002). However, what is confirmed by our findings in some respects challenges certain theoretical narratives about what is de/valued in the play of gender in public-private sector discourses.

Our discussion is based on narratives from politicians, business owners, and employees as well as regional and local governmental officials. The informants comprise three women and four men, who were interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide that gave the informants the opportunity to tell their own story about the regional network, in a free way with their own words. They were all part of the same (regional) strategic network from the beginning; some of them were major contributors to the creation of the network, but this contribution was described in very different ways. Mary is the consultant who was one of the ones who initiated the network. James, a local government official, presents himself as one of the most influential agents in the creation of the network. Susan and Nicole are two leading politicians in the community, and both held the positions of deputy mayor and opposition leader during the period of the study. Mike is another local government official, and speaks of himself, and is spoken of by others, as an important resource in terms of skills in the network. Jacob was the executive leader of the largest company in the municipality at the beginning of the process; he later became an employee of an international company that was established in the municipality as a result of the work of the strategic network. Bob is the owner of a local business and has his roots in the small village where the regional developmental work of the network was based. Bob is related to influential historical agents in the village.

Each narrative is understood as a representation chosen by the narrator that indicates on which terms he or she wants to be interpreted; it is not a representation of the world 'out there'. Past events and actions are constructed by a person to claim an identity (Reissman 1993). With the concept of agency, we here mean how narrators, in telling the chosen story, position themselves. Narrators can position themselves as, for example, victims of a circumstance, and thereby credit to other characters, rather than themselves, the power to initiate action. On the other hand, narrators can position themselves as characters who assume control over events and actions. Narrators can shift position in the narrative, 'giving themselves active roles in certain scenes and passive role in others' (Reissman 2002:

702). Such an analysis throws the focus on power relations between network members, and thus asks what kinds of positions are constituted, what competencies and responsibilities they are assigned, and how they might be gendered. When trying to understand men and women's involvement in new forms of governance, it is therefore an analytical point to explore how gendered binaries of masculinity and femininity come into play. We already know that there often is a concentration of women in structurally subordinate positions, and in low-status roles associated with normative definitions of femininity (see, for example, Butler 1990).

The able man and the lucky one

In another study, we have identified the position of Mary (the consultant), Susan, and Nicole (politicians) within the network as a kind of a servant position (Nyhlén & Giritli Nygren, forthcoming). This was a position that they took themselves (mostly Susan and Nicole) as well as a position that was attributed to them. The position of the servant is associated with being passive and acting within given structures. This position is highly gendered, often described in terms of what it is not, or what it is in short of, and it is intimately related to a disavowal of agency. The politicians' position in the network was primarily described as a role to serve the other persons in the network and work on the behalf of making the politics more 'professional' and businesslike.

Mary is described in positive terms by others as playing an important role in the group because she makes everyone feel comfortable and calm. However, the narratives about the outcome of Mary's strategic work are rather described as a 'lucky strikes' than as the result of her efforts. Mary's work is mentioned as vital, in the sense that she brought together the important agents in the framing of a common agenda for the agents. However, most of the time it is said that 'her work has not had any impact' except in enabling the strategically important people to meet, and to create trust between them. She is talked about as being greatly respected and highly engaged but 'she has no abilities'. At the same time, she is described as having great social skills, being able to make people feel good, but since the social skills and creation of trust and acceptance are not regarded as professional skills, the element to service is again present. However, in Mary's own narrative she does not really conform to the position of a servant, even though the other members position her in that way (Nyhlén & Giritli Nygren 2013).

Nicole, a politician, says that her role in the network was all about listening. She refers to it as 'putting the ear to the ground' and listening to what people want. Nicole believes that it is important to 'be yourself', to remember who you are, and not believe that you are extraordinary or special in any way.

I have to listen to people, I have to respect people and have good relations with all the local business owners. There are so many incredibly skilled entrepreneurs in this municipality.

She evidently positions private actors and entrepreneurs as skilled, in relation to which politicians are positioned as subordinated. This way of reasoning agrees with the (re)gendering of the state that Peck and Tickell (1996) talk about, where the local politicians' problems can be solved by the intervention of the businessman. Susan, the other politician in the network, is described as brave and committed when working to promote the development she believes in.

The one who showed the greatest courage was Susan ... she knows there is a resistance and it is very loud, but she is so damn convinced that this is the right thing to do so she dares and she push the process through the political system, and does so in a very powerful way.

Susan is described by others as someone who lost her position in the municipality in an election because she was too courageous. She is described as being the one who stood by her word, but the businessman she had made the agreement with did not. Discursively, it is clearly not as important for a businessman to keep his word as it is for a politician, and being commercial and entrepreneurial is a mitigating factor:

She stood by her word and he did not, but he is commercial...

Nicole's and Susan's narratives cast them in the role of brave agents as long as they were working on the behalf of the businessmen and making the right decisions. Politicians in general are described as wanting to travel to get inspiration from other destinations, and sometimes as wanting to take part and 'play business' like children. However:

The politicians have to be kept on a tight leash; they shall not play a bigger role [in regional developments] than is absolutely necessary.

This shows how politics is described as something that is opposite to business life. Business is the reality, and sometimes the politicians want to make a difference and to do so take part in 'real life' —business life. If political actions are to be considered real by the businessmen, they must be adapted to the logic of the market; politics is described as if it should be inspired by a private business life in order for it to be considered legitimate and to gain trust. The good thing that the politicians ultimately did was to cooperate with private agents. However, neither Nicole nor Susan claim agency for their part in creating a climate suitable for private investment. Instead, Nicole often refers to the municipality as being lucky that entrepreneurs want investment:

The capable, major financiers would not invest unless they believed they could get their money back ... and we should be grateful that they want to invest ... but sometimes we politicians can get cheated into a trap by their rhetoric about being in a hurry to take decisions.

This can also be interpreted in the light of a masculine discourse of action such as entrepreneurship and professionalism (Chalmers 2001; Whitehead 2002). Nicole puts herself in a position of being someone with a good fortune within her narrative, and not only in respect of the private investors in the municipality—she is also lucky to have the support of her family. Without her family, she says that she would never have been able to be a politician; she describes her husband as being 'kind'. Nicole is lucky in many senses, she is both a politician in a lucky municipality where investors want to invest, and she too has a husband who does not complain about her working long hours and being away from home. Nicole positions herself as a passive agent who has been lucky enough to be surrounded by enabling circumstances. As a successful politician, however, she renders herself invisible, because she has problems taking the identity of leader which in the new governance structure is a subject position gendered in a masculine way (cf. Chalmers 2001; Whitehead 2003). The positions that Nicole, Susan, and Mary ascribe are very different from the position Mike adopts in his narrative, a position that is also ascribed to him in other narratives.

Mike, the local government official in the network, is given the position of being *the able man* in the narratives; his role is characterized by being very competent and businesslike. Mike's own narrative about his role in the process is that his work was all about making the project more professional and businesslike. Mike refers to his role as a consultant or the CEO. He describes his role as being active as long as the project was businesslike, and not active now that the project had become a part of the daily life in the municipality. His narrative here dichotomizes between the businesslike and the political, and he positions his role as an active agent as long as the project was commercial and thus professional. He distances himself once the project becomes bureaucratic and political. The political is described as professional and efficient in the narratives in a very masculine way when the neo-liberal governance characterizes the political processes. Compared to Peck and Tickell (1995) and Tickell and Peck (1996), where business leaders' accounts of the local state as bound by convention and bureaucratic, our study also show that government officials will also criticize the state along the same lines and thereby position the state as feminine and subordinated, and themselves as (masculine) superior and competent. Mike is often talked about as a resource for the project, bringing unique expertise:

Mike added a competence to the project that an official at the municipality does not normally have, he is extremely experienced...he had a lot of skills and understood a lot of things.

Within his own narrative, Mike repeatedly refers to his role as a public actor as making the municipality more professional towards private investors. Earlier, the municipality was characterized as being a 'playground' and ruled by 'incompetent people'. The position Mike takes, and is assigned, is characterized by talk of competence and a focus on the concept of business that holds businesslike actions to be synonymous with professionalism. This storyline bears witness to not only a masculine discourse of action in which entrepreneurship and professionalism are central (for similar findings, see Chalmers 2001; Whitehead 2002), but also a kind of masculine gendering of the new local governance, where primacy is given to hard economic outcomes and the dominance of business interests, thus confirming earlier studies (for example, Little 2002).

There is also another person in the network, Bob, who is not mentioned as often as, say, Mike in the narratives, but there is anyway a strong sense of him within the project, with remarks such as 'yes, and so it will do you good to talk to Bob' from all the others, even though he is never mentioned as a professional agent in the development process. Also, when mentioned, he is the one who is described in the most varied ways. On the one hand, he is described as an untruthful person:

He is dishonest; he has been working against the project, but at the inauguration, he toasted it in champagne and took credit for the project.

Yet on the other hand, he is described as one of the most significant people in the strategic network, with unique knowledge of the end in view because of his roots in the village in question. The cooperation between him, local businesses, and the municipality created feelings of security and trust for the investors. This cooperation, working together and wanting the same thing, was created by Bob together with Susan and Nicole—according to Bob. Here it is clear that Bob puts himself in a position of power and importance, given that he says:

They [the local business owners] were worried in the beginning about what would happen, how it will affect them ... they talked a lot to me back then ... and I always got back to the vision, the broader picture of how it all would develop. My responsibility was to get the business owners to believe in what I believe is good for the village; I had some advantages in this matter because I have been living and working in the village my whole life ... and they [the local business owners] knew that they could trust me pretty much hundred per cent.

Concluding remarks

We opened this essay by asking about the ways in which understandings of agency become implicated with normative understandings of masculinity and/or femininity when politics is increasingly characterized by networks, partnerships, projects, and process politics. In our analysis, a similar dichotomization between political life and business life is present in the narratives, which are similar to the dichotomization that Jones and Little (2000), Rai (2004), and Peck and Tickell (1995) found in their studies. In the narratives, political life appears as (the other) incompetent, necessary, but needing to be kept on a tight leash and *unreal*. Business life, meanwhile, is *real life*—competent and professional. This leaves political life, in accordance with the new governance structure, real and professional when it adapts to the market, so when politicians conform to the interests of business they are talked about as brave and decisive.

It is Mary, Susan, Nicole, and Bob who depict themselves or are depicted by others as 'being lucky', but they do this in different ways. Bob adopts the position of an agent who is able to take advantage of the situation; he mentions this as 'luck and timing' in the strategic planning of the work of the network. Similarly, Nicole and Susan are described, and describe themselves, as lucky. Both are given the assignment to listen and cooperate with the professional and competent businessmen. Sometimes, they tend to be thought 'brave' and 'important' when they act in accordance with a governance structure, but they never claim agency in their own narratives. Mike is the only agent who never refers to luck or being lucky in his own narrative, neither does anyone else attribute *being lucky* to Mike. Mike is the able man—skilled, businesslike, competent. He is given a progressive agency both in his own narrative and in narratives about him. Nicole, Susan, Mary, and Bob have roles that are more fluid, in which they position themselves as both active and passive (in different ways), but Mike is always an active agent.

As we have seen, there are strong gendering markers present both in the disavowal of agency and in the narratives that claim agency. The *able man* is a highly masculine position associated with being professional, competent, and energetic, while the *lucky one* is a highly feminine position. However, while luck is not something associated with agency, it can at the same time be used as a component in Bob's agency in his own narrative. This is also evident in Mary's narrative: she claims agency, but she is more fluent than Bob in her narrative and she takes several different positions. However, her work is not associated with ability, since she is referred to as being without skills and competence; she is instead lucky, and duly positioned as a servant. Here an interesting space for agency and politics arises between luck and the disavowal of agency, which makes it important to further explore the interrelation between discursive representation (and self-representation) and socio-political effectiveness.

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Chapter 4

Questioning the doing of 'privilege': on normalization and privileging in relation to the situation for asylum seekers in Sweden

Jonny Bergman & Siv Fahlgren

Being white, or male, or heterosexual in the United States is like running with the wind at your back. It feels like just plain running, and we rarely, if ever, get a chance to see how we are sustained, supported, and even propelled by that wind. (Michael Kimmel 2003:1)

Michael Kimmel vividly describes the ease of being privileged, a white man in a white man's world, for, as he continues, 'only when you turn around and face that wind do you realize its strength'. To break out of these illusions created by favour or comfort, to understand society better, we need to examine arenas in which we are privileged as well as those where we are not (Kimmel 2003:1). In this essay, we engage with the possibilities of studying normalization and privileging in relation to the situation for asylum seekers in Sweden.

In Bergman (2010), the situation for asylum-seeking refugees from Afghanistan in Sweden was identified as disempowering in ways that created challenges and inhibitions in their lives, triggering acts of resistance. Everyday actions that might be taken for granted or conceived of as institutionalized routine by the many people working with the asylum seekers were in fact both meaningful and crucial to the asylum seekers. The interest in grounding the presented situation for these asylum-seeking refugees within a context of structural and discursive processes of inequality based on race/ethnicity intersecting with class and gender stems from our frustration at trying to understand the situation. The question raised was how this disempowering of asylum-seeking refugees is constructed in normalization processes that at the same time serve to empower and privilege other positions and practices.

We argue that it should be possible to visualize what is normalized and privileged by sensitizing research and us as researchers to asylum-seeking refugees' interpretations and actions in resisting disempowering positions and practices, and the whole disempowering situation itself. By introducing the concepts of privilege and normalization in relation to theories of class, gender, and race/ethnicity, the situation for asylum-seeking refugees in Sweden might be better understood. Thus the aim of this essay is to lay the theoretical and methodological ground for future studies by taking as the starting-point for the discussion the

research project whose findings are presented here (Bergman 2010) to see how the questions this project raised could be further explored.

Raising the questions

In Bergman (2010), an image was presented of the difficult situation for asylum-seeking refugees from Afghanistan in Sweden, and how that situation itself triggered emotions and acts of resistance that ultimately helped them cope with their situation and seek empowerment from it. By establishing the power to resist, the asylum-seeking refugees who participated in the study coped with a subordinate position in which they were violated and belittled. A struggle for recognition began when their perceived legitimate expectations and claims were denied. The area of study was approached through a field study and by employing a constructionist grounded theory (Charmaz 2006) informed by situational analysis (Clarke 2005). Data were collected from fieldwork mainly performed at three reception centres run by the Swedish Migration Board, and included participant observations and informal conversations (Bergman 2010:43-63). The quotations below are taken from memory-writing during this fieldwork.

The management of the situation for the asylum-seeking refugees took its starting-point in empowering actions, acts of resistance, and a struggle for recognition. These empowering actions hinge on the asylum-seeking refugees' reliance on the meaningful project of seeking asylum, expressed in the sense that 'return was just not an option' and through their actions to resist decisions denying them residence permits. Seeking empowerment was in turn related to how the challenges in, and of, a subordinated position triggered action through different sets of emotions. Some of the actions were related to relieving feelings of resignation, frustration, and despair, while others were related to hope and pride. The situation creating these challenges was mainly one of disempowerment, characterized by dependence, inhospitality, and temporality (Bergman 2010). Making sense of this situation was an important part of managing it. Empowering actions both gave and were given meaning in relation to interpretations of their own place in all this. The asylum-seeking refugees' interpretations were also what prompted us as researchers to start ask questions about how this temporal situation was framed by a nationalist discourse—racism in relation to gender as well as paternalism.

The inhospitality of the situation originated in restrictive immigration and repatriation policies, and the many contradictions the asylum-seeking refugees found in those policies, all of which can be traced back to the fundamental contradiction between how the right to protection should be maintained, while at the same time emphasizing repatriation of asylum seekers and refugees. In order to legitimize repatriation, the Swedish Migration Board described the situation in

Afghanistan as improving and being more secure, despite the asylum-seeking refugees' descriptions of the situation. To the same end, the concept of 'voluntary return' was used for what an asylum-seeking refugee was supposed to do if not granted a residence permit. There is no legal option, though, to refuse to be sent back if not granted permission to reside in Sweden (Johansson 2005).

On being sent back to Afghanistan and on the question of whether he knew anyone who had been sent back to Afghanistan from for example, Germany or Norway from where Afghans are being sent back he says that he does not know of anyone and that nobody returns to Afghanistan. One looks for some other place to flee to. Nobody returns. Why would one flee the first time if one did not need to!? (Bergman 2010:137)

Another contradiction found by the asylum-seeking refugees is how, despite the strong rhetoric of every application for asylum being treated individually, many asylum seekers and refugees are treated as groups.

it was possibly to deter people from Afghanistan to come here (Sweden) that they were in such a hurry to catch people from Afghanistan. This was because Sweden could not afford all the refugees from Iraq, Afghanistan. (Bergman 2010:118)

It was quite clear that the asylum-seeking refugees themselves reflected on the contradictions in their reception as individuals and as groups, and indeed in the reception of asylum seekers in Sweden in general. In the end though, the Swedish authorities decide whether the individual asylum-seeking refugee should indeed be treated as a refugee or not.

The contradictions perceived are based on the Swedish authorities' preferential right of interpretation and the asylum-seeking refugees not having the right to define the situation. (Bergman 2010:95)

Preferential right of interpretation is a way to speak of the relation between the asylum-seeking refugee and the Swedish authorities, making it possible for the authorities, using their expertise and knowledge, to decide 'objectively' on the 'subjective' reasons for protection given by the asylum-seeking refugee. It is in this way that the authorities exercise their dominant position. Analysing Swedish asylum politics from the point of the preferential right of interpretation refers to how global economic, political, and social systems are discursively created, maintained, and transformed. From the way post-colonial studies deconstruct practices, symbols, and texts used by dominant groups (Hoogvelt 2001), they can give an understanding of dominant positions in the world. One example is how civic and ethnic ideologies of the nation-state accompanied the introduction of

Swedish repatriation policies (Johansson 2005), and how the construction of the other through gender and racism is part of a Swedish nationalist discourse (Brune 2004). A historicist expression of racism through maturity and development (Goldberg 2002) may help us understand the construction of Swedish repatriation policies in relation to national ideologies, and how through their action the asylum-seeking refugees are subject to paternalism (Bergman 2010).

In accordance with national discourses of fairness, humanity, and solidarity, paternalism seeks to help and raise 'others' up to the same level as 'us'. Paternalism in this way constructs a position for 'us', from which we take upon ourselves to help, and to do so in a way claims a position of 'knowing better', which is enabled by 'our' preferential right of interpretation. For 'us', the discourse of refugee migration policy speaks to a national ideology of fairness and humanity, with an emphasis on individual wellbeing. This also adds to the importance of 'the situation' being looked at from several perspectives in order to understand what 'it' does to a population, and how discourses and structures can be understood as framing different positions.

The asylum-seeking refugees determination to flee Afghanistan to seek refuge in Sweden stands against Swedish migration policies of repatriation and decisions on who is in need of protection and who is not. This contradiction needs to be discussed from the point of view of how—from a privileged position with the preferential right of interpretation—a national discourse of paternalism can be understood as disempowering the asylum-seeking refugees while at the same time empowering other positions and practices. To better understand a situation of disempowering and 'othering', we need to look at which interpretations are indeed empowered. A relational form of analysis is needed in order to focus on how discourse

not only sets the limits and restrict that which can be said about a phenomenon but also, in the positivity of power, empowers certain agents to speak and make representations, while also disempowering others from doing so. (Clarke 2005:160)

Theoretical considerations

What remains now, perhaps, is to ask what about 'us'? Those are closing sentiments in a study of the asylum-seeking refugees from Afghanistan in Sweden (Bergman 2010). Closing words to encourage and challenge us as researchers to go beyond looking at the difficulties and challenges faced by different groups of people, and instead looking at the positions of those (of 'us') who are empowered and privileged. Such a broad and rather undefined 'us' can be useful as a position from where to seek to understand how the situation for asylum-seeking refugees at

the same time constructs the meaning and actions of people sharing the same time and place as asylum-seeking refugees do—but not the same position. To be able to do research on how this undefined ‘us’ is effected, we propose a way forward in which privileged and normalized positions are considered in relation to the situation discussed. This is based on the assumption that a situation that disempowers the positions and practices of asylum-seeking refugees at the same time empowers other positions and practices.

Thus we argue that the situation for asylum-seeking refugees in Sweden needs to be discussed in relation to various positions taken in relation to different discourses, not least to what positions are normalized and privileged. To be able to do this, we would like to make use of the meaning-making and practices of the asylum-seeking refugees in resisting the disempowered situations on the one hand, and make use of theories of normalization and privileging in relation to gender, class, and race/ethnicity on the other. From this perspective, the situation for asylum seekers in relation to discourses and practices at the national level could be linked to earlier research on normalization and privileging in the Swedish welfare state (Fahlgren et al. 2011; Schmauch 2011; Olofsdotter 2011). In this research, normalization is used as a central analytical tool in order to grasp the processes that define and produce what is considered ‘natural’, ‘normal’, or right, and *at the same time* produce outsiderhood, in Swedish ‘*utanförskap*’, a coinage by the conservative government in 2006. Normalization is in this research read as relational processes on many different levels, always both including and excluding, and at the same time, differential and repetitive.

Adopting such an approach, we aim to understand—and challenge—normalization processes and the ways in which gender, ethnicity/race, and class-based inequality, discrimination, and oppression intersect with inclusions and privileges perpetuated by power relations. Through a close analysis of these joint processes of normalization, privileging, and the production of outsiderhood, our aim is to pave the way for the inspection and critique of the nature of normalization (Fahlgren et al. 2011; Johansson 2011; Mulinari 2011; Schmauch 2011). With the advent of the neo-liberal welfare state that Sweden has become, the norms and hierarchies governing the processes of normalization tend to be hidden, as the processes themselves become mythicized as nothing but the outcome of free individual choice (Johansson 2011; Schmauch 2011).

In current Swedish migration policy, the processes of individualization can be found in the use of symbols maintaining an image of Swedish asylum policy as trustworthy and humane. Yet while presenting a system that is just and equitable, as evident in the humane, fair, and individual examination of each case, the discourse of the Swedish reception of asylum-seeking refugees also has to attend to its emphasis on a restrictive refugee policy, ‘burden-sharing’ among states

receiving refugees, containment, and repatriation. Swedish asylum policy also has to address the issues of xenophobic tendencies. The ambivalence and uncertainties of these discourses affect refugees directly.

At the same time, these discourses do things to those who are not asylum-seeking refugees, but share the same boundaries of time and place as the Swedish nation-state. It is not that all others sharing this relational space are in privileged positions. The importance of analysing the privileging, instead, lies in whether and how these privileged positions and practices are silently normalized and made the norm. On the invisibility and normalizing of privileges, Bob Pease (2006) demonstrates how those in a privileged position are less likely to be researched or studied, reflecting the fact that they are seen as 'normal' and thus do not have to be investigated. Those in a privileged position come to represent a hegemonic norm whereby 'white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian and financially secure people come to embody what it means to be "normal" ' (Perry 2001:192 in Pease 2006:19). This norm also comes to represent what negative evaluations of difference are measured by.

When a situation of oppression for one group generates privilege for another, there is a need to analyse how systems of domination relate to these privileged positions (Bailey 1998; Pease 2006). The study of power in this sense will not be accurate if it does not include both disadvantage and privilege, for, as McIntosh (2012) states, if we want to do research on discrimination, we need also to look at its upside. For those who are in a privileged position, it is often difficult to recognize that fact, which is the case with the invisible nature of white privilege—whites just do not see it (McIntosh 2012; Pease 2006). Pratto and Stewart (2012) discuss how members of powerful groups do not have to experience the discrimination, poverty, and prejudice that subordinate groups do, and therefore lack what the authors' call social comparison information, while for those outside the borders of privilege it is all the more ease to see (Bailey 1998).

Privilege is not monolithic; it is unevenly distributed and it exists worldwide in varying forms and contexts. Among members of one privileged class, other mechanisms of marginalization may mute or reduce privilege based on another status. Thus, a white gay man might receive race and gender privileges, but will be marginalized for his sexuality (Coston & Kimmel 2012:109). Privilege and oppression need to be seen as a myriad of variables of a situation if we are to understand the experience of both privilege and oppression.

Nobody is only privileged or only disadvantaged. Different types of privilege and disadvantage can add to, subtract from, multiply, or divide one's chances for a decent life. (McIntosh 2012:197)

Different forms of privilege and oppression need to be addressed from an intersectional perspective (McIntosh 2012). Ferber (2012) discusses how different lived experiences need to be understood from the point of view of interconnected axes of oppression and privilege forming 'a matrix of domination'. Intersectionality 'makes clearer the arithmetic of the various forces—the offsetting, ameliorating, intensifying, accumulating, or deepening effects within the operations of power in the person and in the institutions of the society' (McIntosh 2012:198).

We also need to acknowledge that privilege is something that is *done* in a normalization process. This means that it is rather *privileging*, and not being privileged, which is in focus. Rather than seeing the concepts of race/ethnicity, gender, and class as categories, we should be more attentive to processes of racism, gendering, and class (Pease 2006). Privileging can also be related to a normalizing paternalism, as for example, Peggy McIntosh (1988:4) points out:

whites are taught to think of their lives as morally neutral, normative, and average, and also ideal, so that when we work to benefit others, this is seen as work which will allow 'them' to be more like 'us'.

Investigating privilege in relation to oppression, or as in this case being empowered in relation to the disempowerment of asylum-seeking refugees, relates to and normalizes paternalism. This can be exemplified by the way national discourses of paternalism construct the repatriation of asylum seekers as being beneficial to the development of the individual asylum seeker as well as for the asylum seeker's community and region of origin (contrary to the asylum-seeking refugee's own interpretation of his or her situation).

Related to a situational understanding of normalization and privilege discussed here, we suggest it would be interesting to investigate how a certain position in a structure might also be related to what emotions arise. Positions of privilege may experience positive emotions associated with the compliance of others, while those forced to accommodate the power of others experience negative emotions (Pease 2012). Although this is a situational understanding of privilege, it is important to be aware of how people experience both privilege and subordination, as they occupy several positions in different structures and discourses.

A key emotion expressed among oppressed groups in response to injustice is anger. Thus anger has been an important part of resisting oppression and challenging power and privileges (Holmes 2004 in Pease 2012). For the asylum-seeking refugees discussed briefly above, the emotions provoked by the disempowering situation are the opposite of privilege, and it was found that emotions of resignation, frustration, and resentment trigger resistance (Bergman 2010).

To be in a position of privilege, on the other hand, is related to emotions of being at home in the world and freedom from feelings of fear, anxiety, unreality, and of not being welcome. Escaping penalties or dangers that others suffer, a privileged position also removes much cause of anger (McIntosh 1988). At the same time, the anger of subordinate groups in response to injustice often evokes defensive emotions—anger—in privileged groups, as their privileges are threatened (Pease 2012). Challenged members in privileged positions may have to choose between emotions of guilt and innocence. One way to discuss the role of emotions in promoting inequality is to investigate how men's emotional expression or lack of it is linked to privilege (Pease 2012). Sattell (1989 in Pease 2012) for example discusses how men's inexpressiveness is a prerequisite for power and privilege, as it reduces emotional involvement to the consequences of what they do.

Still, no one can really relax in a position of privilege; the boundary line is fluid and varies in terms of time, place, gender, ethnicity, and class in ways one can never be quite sure of (Hacking 1990; Svensson 2007). Using emotions in maintaining this vulnerability and uncertainty is an important feature of the power of normalization (Fahlgren 2005). As social beings, we are all vulnerable to the risk of being treated as 'the other'. This idea of vulnerability is closely connected to emotions of fear, anger, grief, shame, and disgust (Nussbaum 2004), and they and similar emotions play an important role in our daily lives in normalization processes of 'othering' as well as privileging. Thus within processes of normalization and privileging we are protected from some types of emotion when we experience belonging, at the same time as we may be exposed to those emotions to learn to know how the boundary line between belonging and outsiderhood is drawn.

Methodological considerations

Scholarly knowledge production, just like all social and discursive practices, can be said to be incorporated in the power relations that (re)produce structures of power such as gender, race/ethnicity, and class. Doing research on normalization processes, privileging, and 'othering', we find it important to reflect on who is doing the research and how the researcher is situated in relation to the field of study. In planning our future research project, we would prefer to adopt a knowledge-reflexive and scientifically critical position, both in the context of the field of research and the researched, the research results, and in the context of the further consequences of the research. What does it mean, for example, to hold a privileged position as researcher? While Pease (2006:21) recognizes how difficult it is to 'escape their materially embodied position', he argues 'that it is possible to escape our ideological position'. Drawing on Sandra Harding (1995), Pease

(2006:21) argues that 'just as oppressed people can develop a self-conscious engagement with their own position, so too can members of dominant groups develop a self-critical engagement with their dominant position'.

When people first become aware of their privileged positions, emotions of shame (Ahmed 2004) and sadness (Jensen 2005 in Pease 2012) may arise as they acknowledge their privilege in relation to whiteness or gender. Becoming aware of one's own privilege is also frequently a source of guilt, which to some extent can be dealt with realizing that we all have experiences of unearned advantage and unearned disadvantage (McIntosh 2012). In that way, in the field of privilege studies, everyone can find a 'data base in themselves' (McIntosh 2012:203), which is equally true in the case of the researcher.

Working towards a constructionist grounded theory we would like to use Bryant's conceptualization (2009) of a position in which there can be no fixed points from where reality can be observed and that 'the focus is on *knowing* rather than knowledge' (Bryant 2009, emphasis in original). Focus will thus not be on creating order from the empirical world, but rather on presenting possible representations of the same that are dependent on the situations and circumstances in which they were constructed (Charmaz 2006). Because all knowledge producers are situated, we argue in accordance with Clarke (2005:33) that grounded theory should home in on complexities, differences, and heterogeneities instead of normativity and homogeneity. Studying action is not quite enough: 'We need cartographies of discursive positions.'

Introducing intersectional positions to the study of grounded theory sensitizes the researcher to his or her own position and doing of empowering and disempowering, normalization and privileging. When it comes to the situated knowledge of the researcher, the methodological approach of situational analysis enables mapping and positioning of the researcher's perspective, activities and understandings in the same way as it enables the investigation of the area of study through mapping and positioning perspectives, activities and understandings.

For the theoretical approach taken in this paper in understanding privileged and normalized positions in relation to the situation for asylum-seeking refugees in Sweden, the identification of discursive positions will be crucial. These can be identified with an analysis of power relations between different positions and practices that are 'given' different power within and through a certain situation. Such an approach would make it possible to come closer to problems of power relations, tracing how the situation is situated in more lasting structures and discourses (for example, class, gender, ethnicity/race, ablebodiedness), as well as identifying the 'not-studied', normative, and privileged positions taken and done within a situation. By introducing theories of privilege, power, and normalization in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, and class, we should also be able to reach a

better understanding of why and how different positions are done in relation to more lasting structures and discourses surrounding the researched situation.

Conclusions

Continued studies into the research of the situation for asylum-seeking refugees in Sweden need to incorporate a deeper understanding of the positions and practices that are privileged and normalized, produced and reproduced, in relation to that situation. And not only *what* positions and practices, for we also need a deeper understanding of how they are framed through structures and discourses of gender, ethnicity/race, class, and so on. Only if and when we understand privileging, and how privileged positions are normalized in such situations, can we more fully understand the situation limiting the asylum-seeking refugees' actions in relation to a restrictive Swedish migration policy. The aim of this essay has been to present the theoretical and methodological grounds for that.

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Chapter 5

Situated in a dream: toward a deeper understanding of ethnic and gender stereotypes in Swedish children's literature

Eva Söderberg⁵

This essay will, as a point of departure, take an artwork presented on the 15 April 2012 at Moderna Museet in Stockholm. Thereafter it turns to other cultural objects, but for children, in order to briefly introduce a project about ethnic and gender stereotypes in children's literature that I am involved in.

From there the article plunges head first into a dream that was written down shortly after it was dreamt the night of 1–2 November 2012 in Edinburgh. The article then goes on to explore, in a reflexive way and drawing on theories of Sara Ahmed and bell hooks, some possible meanings of the dream. The point is not to prove any psychoanalyst's thesis or to argue that the dream gives me access to a deeper consciousness. I rather contextualize the dream and use it as a cultural product, a complex meaning-producing narrative, possible to read and interpret in relation to the project on children's literature mentioned above. A literary text is both related to the author's biography and interacts with other literary texts. In the same way, a dream narrative is related to the dreamer's situation and interacts with other narratives and structures.

The fact that I choose to see the dream as a cultural product does not mean that I want to distance myself from it. The article concludes by suggesting that the work with the dream does not only serve to situate the future outcome of the project, but also—which is the most important—help me, the dreamer/researcher, in my critical thinking.

The painful cake

Moderna Museet in Stockholm celebrated World Art Day in April 2012 with a reception at which an artwork in the form of a cake in the likeness of the body of a caricatured black woman was served, cut up, and eaten, while the artist, masked as the cake's head, screamed. The Swedish culture minister, who was the opening speaker at the event, was asked to cut the cake, which she duly did. She even

⁵ This chapter is written within the project: Normalization and the neoliberal welfare state: challenges of and for gender theory' (The Swedish Research Council 2012–2015).

offered a spoonful of cake to the cake itself and its open, screaming mouth. The theme for the event at the museum was freedom of expression, the struggle against censorship, and art's freedom to challenge and provoke (Adelsohn Liljeroht 2012).

This conceptual, relational, and contextualizing artwork was made by the explicitly anti-racist black artist Makode Linde, and his intention with it, according to Moderna Museet, was 'to problematize female clitoridectomy and romanticized and exoticizing notions from the west'. *The Painful Cake*, as he calls it, can be seen as part of Linde's larger project 'Afromantics', in which he uses the blackface figures in different historical, cultural, and religious contexts. The name 'Afromantics' reflects, says the artist, 'on the romanticized, supposedly positive stereotype of the happy, grinning "pickaninny" (a caricature of black children) that appears on all the artwork, and is meant to show the connection between those stereotypes and the more vicious ones, all connected in the same system of oppression.' In the Afromantic gallery, Linde the blackface is painted on Western icons: Beethoven, Betty Boop, the twelve disciples, the Queen of Sweden, a teddy bear. In case of *The Painful Cake* the blackface appears on the artist himself, lending his own head to the body of a black Venus of Willendorf (Palme 2012).

The event at the Modern Museum led to a heated debate in Sweden that took place in all types of media, and since it was filmed it had a chance to go viral and was also internationally discussed ('Swedish minister in 'racist cake' controversy' 2012). Some art critics acknowledged Linde's artwork to be anti-racist; others called it 'a racist-misogynist cake', and the event itself 'a cake scandal' or 'a tasteless, racist spectacle' (Patel 2012; Parson 2012 and Israelson 2012). Despite Linde's intentions with the cake, critics demanded the minister's resignation for participating in the event. Members of the Association for African Swedes said the cake was a crude racist caricature, which 'make a mockery of racism' (Parson 2012). Arguments about ethics and aesthetics were colliding, clashing and causing an infected debate atmosphere. The whole performance was even called 'cakegate' (Israelson 2012).

Makode Linde's artwork was also debated by the multidisciplinary research programme at Mid Sweden University, whose work is the subject of this volume. We five team members decided to explore the problematic of the cake event in terms of its socio-cultural significance. The research team allowed us to take interdisciplinary approaches that integrate different disciplines such as literary studies, picture theory, sociology, and gender studies. Siv Fahlgren raised questions about the ambivalence generated by the sense of shame and guilt which racist actions provoke. Magnus Granberg initiated a discussion about political art in a world without contention. Katarina Giritli Nygren utilized the concept of subalterity to analyse the politics of subjection articulated through the artwork of the cake. Anders Johansson raised questions of the viability of ethical positions vis-

à-vis racism in a context such as Sweden, which disavows racist positions. Finally, I consider the cake incident in the context of other cultural objects such as the white cartoonists and picture book artist Stina Wirsen's books and films (2009–2012) about the black figure 'Little Heart'.

Little Heart

The 'cakegate' had turned out to be not a single event discussed in media, but the starting signal for heated ongoing discussions in Sweden about ethnic stereotypes in cultural objects. The interest, the intensity, and all the argument were already there when the discussions started to focus on whether Tintin books should be removed from children's sections in public libraries or not ('Tintingate'), whether Stina Wirsen's black character Little Heart in the children's film, 'Little Pink and the motley crew' (*Liten Skär och alla små Brokiga* 2012) is racist or not, and whether removing the black doll from a Disney cartoon was a relevant thing to do. The carton has been broadcast on Swedish television every Christmas eve for more than forty years (Chukri 2012; Rönnberg 2013; Nelson 2012).

Most significant for me was the character Little Heart. The film in which she appears is based on a series of picture books and books for toddlers, where the explicit theme is to promote diversity. 'Brokig' is the imperative signal word! In Swedish it is the word for something multicoloured. Phonetically it is very close to the word 'bråkig', which means someone fuzzy, someone who breaks norms and rules. The multicoloured figures in the film and books are, except for Little Heart, slightly anthropomorphized. Some of them are dressed up in clothes with rhombic patterns reminiscent of Commedia dell'arte and Harlequin characters. Altogether, Little Pink and small Speckles evoke the picture of a 'motley crew' for toddlers.

As mentioned, the most criticized character in this crew is Little Heart. This character was accused of depicting a cartoon character in stereotypically racist fashion, where the original purpose was to dehumanize black children so that they could be treated like animals, livestock. Little Heart's external features—dark skin, dark hair in small braids pointing out in all directions, white thick lips and eyes that only show the whites—can easily be associated with characters in a racist tradition. According to many critics, Little Heart is a typical blackface figure, an heir to the white actors (and sometimes even black actors) with grotesquely painted faces who did the 'niggers' in so-called minstrel shows and in early American movies. Words like 'blackface', 'golliwog' and 'pickaninny' also began to appear more frequently in the debate (Rönnberg 2013).

Little Heart had played an important role earlier in Wirsen's picture books and books for toddlers but it was only when the film version based on the books was launched after 'cakegate' that the character was actually noticed and the public debate flared up. Wirsen was accused of being naïve and not fully aware of the

context in which the blackface figure had been used and to what extent it was historically and politically charged. Wirsén herself referred to African friends who, as she said, were pleased with the image of Little Heart. She was so sorry for the debate. 'We should', she claimed, 'rather talk about tolerance and see the richness in diversity' (Sigander 2012).

Thus, Stina Wirsén and Makode Linde partly used the same elements but different methods in their projects. In the latter, items from Eurocentric art and popular culture were taken and painted with a stereotypical blackface on top of them. 'The outlines, the specific features of the faces of these items are completely obscured', Makode Linde says, 'their characters are completely removed, and they have this new, supposedly "African" character imposed on them'. This can be seen as an almost 'painful symbolic reproduction of the process of Othering', where diverse individuals are being forcibly assigned a 'simplistic share identity' (Palme 2012). Stina Wirsén, on the other hand, takes a figure—stereotyped or stylized is the question—and tries to charge it with positive traits. Little Heart is a free spirit, energetic, playful, and inventive. The project, according to Wirsén, was inclusive and embraced diversity. Little Heart was supposed to be a role model, a real heroine, but in the end Wirsén decided to ask the publisher to withdraw the books about her (Wirsén 2012).

Both Linde's and Wirsén's projects show how difficult and hazardous it is to work with stereotypes in cultural products. As soon as a stereotype or a cliché is used, it is inevitably reproducing the image, however good the artist's intentions.

Ethnic stereotypes in children's literature

In my project on ethnic and gender stereotypes in children's literature, I will analyse the debate as well as the illustrations and the texts in Wirsén's books. This will, I hope, shed light on some other children's books that have earlier been accused of using ethnic stereotypes and being racist: Astrid Lindgren's trilogy featuring Pippi Longstocking: *Pippi Longstocking* (*Pippi Långstrump* 1945), *Pippi Goes Aboard* (*Pippi går ombord* 1946) and *Pippi i Söderhavet* (*Pippi in the South Seas* 1948), Astrid Lindgren's girl's fiction *Kati in America* (*Kati i Amerika* 1951) and Anna Höglund's picture book playing with travelogues, *Trips I /never/ made, by Syborg Stenstump* (*Resor jag /aldrig/ gjort, av Syborg Stenstump* 1992). These books raise interesting questions about ethnicity and ethnic stereotypes in children's literature and they all, Wirsén's books included, give access to important discussions about feminist issues. In an earlier research project I studied Lindgren's and Höglund's books, but this time I will broaden the perspective and go deeper into didactic questions related to ethical and aesthetical dilemmas (Söderberg 2009; 2011; 2013).

As I have already noted, the films and books about Little Heart were debated in all type of media in Sweden. The Little Heart figure was considered controversial

and attracted intense critique from a wide range of pens. In the process of writing this essay, I got an email whose subject line ended with a question mark: 'Silent children's literature scholars?' ('*Tysta bilderboksforskare?*'). The sender was Margareta Rönnberg, professor of film studies, who was stricken by the fact that very few children's literature scholars had been engaged in the debate about Wirsén's characters. Rönnberg has analysed both the debate and how small children perceived the figures in Wirsén's films and books (Rönnberg 2013). Using the concept 'adulto-normativity' she tries to understand how a cultural product destined for small children could be 'so successfully kidnapped'. Now Rönnberg wanted to ask me and a handful of other children's literature scholars how we conceive the characters in Wirsén's film, if any journalist had asked us for our opinion on *Little Heart* during the period September–December 2012, and if we on our own initiative had tried to express our opinion in the debate. If not—why didn't we?

In my answer to Rönnberg I informed her about my project and confirmed that I had not been contacted by any journalists during the current period of time. But I told her that *Little Heart* had been present in my multidisciplinary research team for months as well as in classes and in gatherings with other colleagues, with friends and family. I also told her that such a complex matter does not permit of short articles. It takes at least a book to get anywhere.

However, one thing I did not tell Rönnberg. I had kept one of Wirsén's books for toddlers, *Yellow* (*Gul!* 2012), in my bag for weeks in order to be able to discuss it as soon as there was a pause. *Yellow!* even accompanied me to Scotland in November 2012, where I was going to spend a week with my grownup daughters. When we were sightseeing in Edinburgh I constantly carried it with me wherever we went hoping for the opportunity to discuss it with my daughters. Why? The fact is that I was astonished, even disturbed, both by the plot and the illustrations. I wanted to discuss it with other people to learn what they saw.

In *Yellow!* every character introduces a colour by painting a page of the book. 'Little Pink' starts up with yellow. 'Bosse', a figure with blue dots all over its body, goes on with red. 'Little Square', dressed up in orange and white, introduces the colour blue. At this point the reader notices that red and yellow when mixed turn into orange, and blue and yellow turn into green. On the next spread the black figure *Little Heart* turns up. The text on the left page says: 'Look, *Little Heart*.... What colour has she got in her paint bottle?' With a thoughtful air *Little Heart* scrutinizes the colour in her bottle. On the right page of the spread she pours everything out. 'Oh! Black! But ...' The word 'but' followed by an elipsis works a verbal page-turner (Nikolajeva 2000: 81-82).

Thus, we turn the page and the next spread is to 50 per cent covered with a black field. Its contours are gradually vanishing and letting us only sense some of

the colours previously introduced by the others. Little Heart is standing in the middle of the black field. The pink worm enters the field from the left to the right. Between the girl and the worm the black colour seems to have floated out and emerges almost in the form of a black head with two white dots on and a red spot on top. It actually looks as if it is doubling Little Heart's own head and face with its white shiny eyes. And isn't there a waving arm sticking up from the black field? And a pointing finger? On the following spreads, the worm and the other figures are playing around with the different colours, initially possible to distinguish but in the end all turned into the same brownish nuance.

As the title indicates the book *Yellow!* thematizes colour, but most likely it is also about diversity and 'unruliness'. The fact that Little Heart is using the colour black probably makes her, in the children's eyes, more brave and powerful than the other characters. A lot of children have probably experienced that the black colour is confiscated by grownups, at home or in kindergarten. (Black is supposed to ruin children's paintings and turns everything dark and blurry.) The fact that Little Heart is using the colour of her skin may also point out her importance in the story and increase her impact, but a reading from my adult horizon it brings other connotations.

The book *Yellow!* makes me remember a stay in Switzerland more than thirty-five years ago. I was invited round by a woman who loudly complained about her daughter dating a black man. She did not want them to have children. 'Take a look at all the beautiful plants in my garden' she said, 'if they start to intermix they will eventually all turn grey'. Reading *Yellow!* gave me the impression that a lot of unconscious stuff was vibrating under the surface—or even *on* the surface, come to that. Did Wirsén really have full control over what she had created? In what ways could the book be read in terms of diversity? This I wanted to discuss, but one of my own cultural products, a dream, came my way and caught my attention.

A dream

The vast assembly hall feels like a church, a Free Church though, but with an austere quality more akin to an auditorium from the Fifties than an ecclesiastical space adorned with altarpieces and brass candlesticks. Everything here is decorated in pastel shades; some of the woodwork has retained its whitewood hue. It is clean and quiet. No trappings. No flowers. No fragrance. Outside, just a sharp sense of autumn, perhaps.

A bare twig against the window pane.

Otherwise, silence.

People in drab overcoats have filled the pews, their faces mute, gazing straight ahead. There they sit as one motionless, breathing body, waiting

for something. She is the only one standing in the side aisle towards the back. This position gives her an ideal view.

She intends to stand here.

She is not going to sit down.

Then, suddenly, a small band of people begins to move forward up the main aisle *away* from the chancel. She did not see where they came from; they first appeared in her sight when they passed the people sitting in the front pews.

Leading this band is a small group of dark-skinned babies. One has taken the lead and four others crawl in pairs behind the leader. From her position, she can look across and see how remarkably synchronized the babies are. They crawl in unison, their small arms and legs move together, and from the side the pairs appear to move as *one* body—so perfectly coordinated are they as they move their plump bodies. The five babies are very similar in size, and are in fact so similar that she assumes that they are quintuplets.

Behind them follow a pair of older dark-skinned children, one appears to be about two years old and the other one is perhaps four. They too are crawling in the same way as the smaller ones.

Bringing up the rear is their father, she assumes. He moves up the narrow aisle without touching the floor; with his left hand and foot on the half doors leading into the pews on his left side and with his right hand and foot on the half doors leading into the pews on his right side. He balances with a diagonal gait, or rather a *climbing* gait: right hand—left foot—left hand—right foot. This locomotion causes his head to extend forward at a strained angle and his body follows on, now rolling, now jerking, as his hands and feet move forward.

Since the man's body does not touch the floor he can float forward over the children. The whites of his eyes are bright, his smile is broad, proud and radiant but his face is shiny from the effort. Even though the children are moving so fast, he is able to move forward at the same pace, without wasting a second to look down or even stop smiling.

A moment later they are in an adjoining room; the man, the children and her. The others are no longer there.

Now the positions are somewhat changed. The man has come down from the pews and is standing upright by a large, empty table, the only piece of furniture in the room. His children have fallen out of the neat procession they were previously part of. The group is dispersed. The children are crawling in all directions and appear to be many more than

the seven that she previously observed. Yes, they are all over the room, all at the same time.

She is standing close to the large table and can see that the children have started to change form. They have shrunk and are now disturbingly small. They scurry around her feet and she is afraid, yes, a fear bordering on panic. I must not tread on them! she thinks desperately. Yes, the words literally *echo* in her head. I MUST NOT STEP ON THEM!

To avoid stepping on the children she decides to sit down on the floor and stay still there. But this is not simple; she does not trust herself to sit down before one of the frisky children ends up under her. The situation is so difficult to embrace! The children scamper with the speed of lightning and seem to change positions so fast you cannot see how it happened. I must not sit on them! she thinks aloud and bends down as carefully and slowly as ever she can. I MUST NOT—for goodness' sake—SIT ON THEM!

When she finally finds herself on the floor she feels safe. There is no longer any risk of her standing or sitting on them. She can relax; breathe out. She is now a little closer to the children and she notices that they have not only shrunk in size, they have also started to change form. The baby who is closest to her has taken on the shape and colour of a small, yellow duck, yet the bluish shades, which slowly began to appear on the child's forehead, suggest that another change is imminent; into a small bluish toy, perhaps, she wonders.

Just for a moment she imagines that this might not be a real child at all, but a toy, but then she catches the eye of the small duck, the right eye. It is small, completely round and it is fixed on her, unblinking. Then she returns the look. She allows her gaze to rest on the small, bright eye—now it is just her and the duckling—and she feels an inner calm, an assurance. Suddenly, she is absolutely convinced that she is not mistaken: this is really one of the dark-skinned babies.

Now she feels she should say something to the father of the children. But what should she say to him while she is sitting on the floor? She wants to ask about all the children, especially the quintuplets, if they really are quintuplets, that is. She starts to consider how to formulate a question so that he will understand... She cannot use the word *quintuplets*, she decides.

Then she gets it! She gestures to the youngest children and asks how many were born at the same time.

Her question is never answered.

Facing the dream

No, the woman never gets an answer. She does not get the chance. She—who is in fact me—wakes up from the dream before the man gets a chance to respond. At first I do not really know where I am. Then, as I look through the large window, I see a dimly lit castle up on a cliff and I recall that I am in a hotel room in Princes Street, Edinburgh. I had not drawn the curtains of the large windows before going to bed. I had been too tired. Now before dawn, I am awake, but the dark city outside is still half asleep and the famous buildings and monuments are barely lit. I can see from the display on the phone that it is too early to get up, so I decide to stay in bed—and reluctantly re-enter the dream.

This is a strange dream, I think to myself. Yes, not only strange and a little uncomfortable—it was downright twisted and caused mixed emotions. On the one hand I want to put it behind me immediately and not refer to it. On the other hand, I want to get into it, meet it face on—now in the dim light of dawn—and explore it as a narrative full of meaning. We dream in images, arrange the images to describe, explore, or address something, and those images can be analysed and interpreted. But we have to remember a dream to be able to work with it. Consequently, dream work involves a conscious effort to recall it from memory (Nordqvist 1997:125; Ullman & Zimmerman 1996).

I decided to force back the unpleasantness and let curiosity prevail. Since the dream contained many significant and unusual scenes, my main concern was not that it would fall from memory. Some dreams are absurd and muddled; others—even those that contain absurd scenes—are clear and stark with a beginning, middle and end. This particular dream belongs, inarguably, to the latter category. But even if a dream is intrusively current when you wake up, it has nonetheless a tendency to fade after a time. Since dreams leave weaker traces in the brain than our ‘waking’ thoughts, I decided to close my eyes and re-experience the entire sequence from start to finish, and to linger in the scenes and images.

It was after this that I recorded an account of the dream.⁶ Dreams are sometimes likened to theatre; nocturnal dramas that may have a degree of dramatic composition. They often begin, as mine did, with an exposition that features the location and atmosphere. This is followed by a series of scenes, sometimes joined together, yet devoid of any logic regarding time or space. Dreams bare false semblances of logic.⁷

⁶ Dream researchers like Montague Ullman point out that it is important to write down a dream as soon as possible if you want to work with it. Delay entails a risk that you might extrapolate or lose details, or forget whole sequences (Ullman & Zimmerman 1986: 89).

⁷ All translations from the Swedish unless otherwise stated are my own.

In many cases the dream ends with a resolution, but sometimes this is interrupted and we wake up instead—as in my case. Every night presents four or five dream–sleep cycles. Variations on the same theme may occur, but it is usually the last dream of the final sleep cycle that we remember in the morning—again, just as in my case. In spite of all my endeavours, I could not recollect the night’s earlier dreams (Nordqvist 2001:25).

Once I had recorded my dream, I decided to continue to explore what I had used as components in the design, since I was the unequivocal director of this my own nightly theatre. Everything in a dream is significant, according to many dream researchers, and can be read. It is all about what props are used; the colours, the shapes and the objects. The dreamer is not only the director of the whole experience but also the set designer.

Since I had spent an intensive twenty-four hours with my daughters in a foreign city, I suspected that I had not yet processed and stowed away all my new impressions. Dreams, after all, are related to what we have experienced, felt, and thought during the waking period, the so-called ‘day residues’ that are transposed differently in dreams as a way not only to process the impressions, but also to create something new (Nordqvist 2001: 199).

So, I lay there and once again allowed the dream to play out in my mind’s eye while I tried to understand in what way it was related to the previous day. Which components from the day in Edinburgh could have given rise to the sequences in the dream? I soon realized that there were many crucial moments vibrating in the dream, and also things that I recalled and associated with these moments. There were no simple temporal consistencies; the chronology of the dream in no way followed the course of the previous day, but rather the dream seemed to have quite randomly assembled aspects to create the internal logic of its story.

The dream in relation to a full day in Edinburgh

Which ‘day residues’ had I retained that the dream had made use of? A minor yet significant detail could have been the bookmark that I bought on the previous evening. It had been a long day, darkness fell quickly and we were on our way back to the hotel when one of my daughters noticed *Camera Obscura and World of Illusions*, a small shop that she had visited earlier and so wanted to show us. We squeezed our way into the crowded shop brimming with a range of optical experiences aimed at all ages. I did not really feel like exploring so I stood in a corner where I found a revolving stand with postcards and bookmarks depicting animals. The bookmarks were made using the lenticular technique, also known as lens printing, where several images are layered on the back of a plastic sheet with

longitudinal lenses. The technique gives an illusion of a 3D-animated effect without having to use special equipment.

The bookmark design that caught my attention was a sideways view of a mother bear with her two cubs. When I tilted the bookmark slightly it looked like the proud mother bear was romping forward through the landscape and over the bookmark, with her two cubs in tow. I twisted and jiggled and the small teddy bears moved in synchrony. I lost myself, as so many times before, in thoughts of the relationship between humans and bears and of the similarities that actually exist: we are both plantigrade, we have five toes on our feet with claws that we cannot retract, we can stand upright on our hind legs—and we share nesting instincts.

Another event had taken place the day before at the Scottish Storytelling Centre, where we listened to a discussion between three scientists: a biologist, a geneticist, and an astronomer. They spoke regarding the ambiguity in the term ‘cell culture’, of *faction* and *fiction*, and how they themselves, both as researchers and fiction writers, tried to incorporate science into fiction; to show how exciting research can be and to expunge the conventional images of the scientist.

One of the scientists, Jennifer Rohn, is a cell biologist and spoke passionately about work in the laboratory and how the experience can be used in fiction. She herself had begun working in laboratories at an early age. One of her experiments was on ‘cell culture’, the propagation of microorganisms. She was involved in supervising and ‘nourishing’ the cells in the proper way; the cells demanded the right environment to proliferate. She described how it felt to follow the process in the laboratory, how the cells were like small lively children to be nurtured and how they flew about in all directions and constantly multiplied.

However, the story had a controversial background, she revealed. Rohn told us that the cells she was watching over were so-called HeLa cells. These cells came from a sample taken from a black woman called Henrietta Lacks who was born in 1920 in the US. Henrietta Lacks was one of ten children and the mother of five. She was diagnosed with cancer and died in 1951. It was discovered that Henrietta’s vigorously, self-replicating cancer cells were perfect for research both in medicine and biology; the cells survived, grew and multiplied. The cell biopsy the doctors took—without Henrietta Lacks’s permission—was propagated in a cell line that has been sold and spread all over the world (‘The Henrietta Lacks Foundation’ 2013). While the research has generated several Nobel prizes, it has raised questions of life and death, body and gender, class and race and, of course, bioethics (Johannisson 2012). Henrietta Lacks is dead, but her cells live on and are, by any measure, the equivalent today of several dinosaurs, as my daughter, who is reading about Mrs Lacks at school, whispers in my ear. While money is being made from her cells, Henrietta’s children and grandchildren are struggling in

impoverished conditions and cannot even afford health insurance, according to Rohn.

Yet another event of the day was a visit to the *Museum of Childhood* in Edinburgh, which was the first museum in the world to showcase games and objects from the everyday lives of children. We were able to view toys from the Victorian era right up to our own time. It was interesting to see, in showcase after showcase, how these objects had developed and changed—and how much still exists. We reflected over the toys from the different eras and wondered how they had influenced and continue to influence children. Reflections on age, gender and class and even ethnicity, are so clearly inscribed in things. Does one eventually resemble one's toys? I refer to discourses in different historical periods about children and childhood and how we are constantly influenced by them and yet try to rebel against them.

When we had worked our way through the museum we found ourselves in the museum shop where I saw newly manufactured wind-up, tin toys and there amongst them were ducks, which I would have dearly liked to have, but I resisted the temptation to buy them. My suitcase was already full.

A final event that day was a shopping trip to a clothing store, where I discovered something that made me feel happy and invigorated. It was a pair of cotton trousers dotted with skiing Hemulens (characters in the Moomin series of books by the Finnish-Swedish author Tove Jansson). The Hemulens were dressed for the part in practical winter clothing. I took down the garment from the hook and inspected the perfect little figures a little closer. I recalled not only the Moomins on TV from my childhood, but also the first time someone read a Moomin story for me. It was the headmaster at my old school who read it for all the students when we had the weekly morning assembly in the giant dining hall. It was the story about the Moomin who was turned into an unrecognizable troll so no one knew who he was. It was not until his mother looked deep into his eyes and saw that it was her beloved little Moomin that the spell was broke and he became himself again. When the headmaster read out that last part, he looked up over the edge of the book and we could see that in his eyes, which had just experienced Moomin's desperation, were now Moomin Mother's grave, heart-searching eyes. The assembly of 400 pupils sat deathly silent, stricken by the realization of the strength and power of recognition.

To read a dream

When I had recalled the events of the previous day, I could see how fragments of the events were highlighted and transposed into the night's dream, as both emotions and mood, and yet also as completely recognizable elements. There were the small teddy bears lumbering along just as synchronized as the babies in the

dream. There were the black woman's HeLa cells that the scientist likened to lively children constantly multiplying, just like the babies in the dream who suddenly began to writhe uncontrollably, suggesting a sense of rapid growth or reproduction. There, both in reality and in the dream, was a black man alone with his children, Henrietta Lacks's husband and the black man in the assembly hall. There were toys and thoughts of the powerful discourses of childhood, and in the dream small children were transformed into toy-like figures. And ultimately there was the association to the Moomin mother who recognized her Moomin offspring, just as the dreamer recognized one of the black children in the small eye of the yellow duckling.

This quest for probable connections between reality and dream was just a beginning. I wanted to take a step back and contemplate the big picture. The language of dreams is often dramatic and, as mentioned, made up of images. Gestures can be exaggerated and images powerful. Parables and sayings can be embodied in images, images that may not become truly apparent until you put them into words. However, the dream analyst Montague Ullman has emphasized that it does not take a specialist to interpret dreams. There are several theories about dreams—those of Freud and Jung for example—that might lead to a better understanding, but Ullman gives the dreamers power over their own material. He argues that it is only the dreamer himself who can truly understand his own dream. There are many possible schemes for meanings which the dreamer can explore but no theory, according to Ullman, should transcend the dreamer's own reflections of the images in the dream (Ullman & Zimmerman 1996: 52-53).

What subject matter was there in my dream that could be interesting for me? The characters and the prop pointed in an obvious direction and inspired me to explore what the dream could mean in relation to questions that I had been pondering over for so long—the discussions about racial representations in art and culture that have led to all the hot-tempered discussions in Sweden over the spring and autumn. How could the dream be fathomed and grasped in that context?

When I recall my dream—I do not need to dig too deeply since the significant aspect is already there, exposed—I note immediately that in different ways it involves opposite pairs; child and adult, woman and man, black and white. There are also different power struggles between the pairs. In a way, the characters and animals that appear in dreams can be aspects of the dreamer's personality that they want to present outwardly; in other words, a projection. But people and animals in dreams might also just be themselves and represent how we perceive them, how they occupy a place in our lives and the roles they play there.

What is my role in the dream? All dreamers know that sometimes the dream ego takes an active part in the dream and participates in what is happening. Another time, the dreamer is a bystander, just watching. In my dream, the dream

ego is a bystander in order to behold the overall scene. Perhaps there is also a reluctance to be a part of the crowd that is the congregation, where all the facial expressions are identical. From where she is positioned, the dream ego can see the assembled throng.

When I woke up and experienced myself again in that same position, I realized that in fact the congregation had actually formed a kind of 'sea of whiteness', in the words of Sara Ahmed (Ahmed 2011:30). They all had the same skin colour. The place is an arena for rituals and traditions with roots dating far back in time. The popular Swedish hymn, 'Crusader's Hymn' ('Härlig är jorden') appears to lurk in the background evoking the famous line 'Generations come and go'. Only when the small band appears in the aisle is the mediocrity broken. How then is this demonstrated?

Firstly, I can observe that the original associations likened the leading group of crawling toddlers, to animals, and in this case bear cubs. Then there are the 'quintuplets' and the striking similarities between all the children; just as in many racist depictions, the logic, and point of the punch line is that 'the others' are confusingly similar. Furthermore, there are so many children that they will eventually be 'innumerable', which in itself bares the underlying racist notions of 'primitive' people's inability to control their birth rate (hooks 2013:84). They procreate, grow in number, pour across our borders and into our white lives, and we cannot control them.

The youngest children in the leading group crawl; that is logical since they are babies. Yet even the two- and four-year-old toddlers, who should be able to walk, crawl instead. The blacks 'crawl' in front of the seated, white congregation. To have to crawl for someone, to show submission and forced compliance is degrading; this is the slave mentality. Not even the adult man, the father of the seven children, moves normally. My dream ego has forced him to adopt a gait that resembles our ancestors, the great apes. This confirms the deeply racist undertones in my dream.

When I once again, consciously, position myself in that of the dream ego, the watcher, I realize that the smile on the man's face is just how I imagined Uncle Tom, the black character created by the white author Harriet Beecher Stowe. The dream ego assumes that every black person is a Christian or at least coming from a Christian background (hooks 2013:3). Uncle Tom is a complex cultural character in a novel charged with conflicting double standards. So is the black man in the dream. He is coming in direction from the altarpiece in the chancel but his movement pattern is an animal's. I do see however, that he is genuinely happy to show off his children—they are his only assets—yet his proud smile, which is unchanging, is also servile. This is a man who may believe that he has to smile to

please the white audience. Consequently, he is connected to a stereotype from the blackface tradition, a smiling 'darky' on the plantation.

In the adjoining room the man stands and the dream ego is sitting. The room is reminiscent of a 'meeting hall' where church coffee was usually served in a convivial setting, but the congregation has now been expelled from the dream. There will be no 'diversity' in the congregation, and no 'integration' of the black family, either. There is just an empty room with a table. No chairs, no coffee, nothing.

The dream ego, in the typical Swedish style of showing willingness to be welcoming, kind and non-racist, is now fully occupied with how she is regarded and how to get out before the man and his family. Firstly she does not want to STEP on them and secondly she is worried about SITTING on them. The dream expresses a real fear of actually stepping on and literally sitting on someone, but the expressions also conveys profound and figurative meaning. A naïve, ignorant, and uninformed person—the dream ego?—might say that pitfalls and dangers lurk everywhere, and no matter which way you look at them, things can turn out wrong even though the original intention was good. It is so easy to tread wrongly. The dream ego does sit down on the floor, on the same level as the black children. She has 'lowered' herself, yet at the same time wants to be equal, ethical and virtuous.

Although the white dream ego sits and the black man stands, social order and the power structure are maintained. She appears to assume that the man is intellectual inferior and has no refined way to communicate. She dismisses the word *quintuplets*, as too difficult. She tries instead a simple and concrete analogy for what it would be like when five children come out of the womb at the same time. Has he seen that?

To wake up

If the dream is interrupted before it is over then one should try to recall what happened just before waking. Did the dreamer need to wake up for a reason? Was there something important to pay attention to? To me the message is clear. What I as a person and researcher need to reflect more deeply upon is my own white, Swedish position in everyday life and in research, and the racist mindset that it inexorably bears with it.

My dream illustrates with brutal clarity that racism is not only found in other people, or in other people's cultural products—or that it in a simple way can be classified as 'right' or 'wrong'. It is in me as well, and not only in my own controlled discourse on racism in relation to me. No, it goes deeper than that. It lives inside me, I have lived in it; I am saturated, yes, completely impregnated by it, my perception is shaped by it, my imagination is influenced by it, my

relationships are determined by it and when I actually get to be my own director in the darkness, it stages a deeply racist and offensive scene that the enlightened, academic and humanist 'daytime me' could never believe, even if it had access to it.

What was the word that my dream ego did not want to, or did not dare to, utter just before I woke up from the dream? It was 'quintuplets' ('*femlingar*'). In Swedish it is phonetically very close to the word for 'strangers' ('*främlingar*') and is probably a word my dream ego does not want to deal with in its planned polite dialogue with the black man. Using the word '*främling*' should be to bring up a mindset where the stranger, the migrant, the other, is connected to all sorts of problems in the society. Ulrika Dahl reminds us in her introduction to Sara Ahmed's *The Hegemony of Whiteness* (*Vithetens hegemoni*, 2011) that Ahmed's way of thinking can help us to see how such a mindset also is related to the idea that this figure, the stranger, is treated as someone who has constantly 'just arrived' and therefore does not get the possibility to belong.

Obviously the dream-ego assumes that the black man has just arrived, that he cannot be anything else but a '*främling*', a stranger, someone who does not speak her language. In her eyes he is dressed up with otherness—but she is eager to find a subject that can make them equal and help them to communicate. Nevertheless, no dialogue takes place, no words are exchanged. The only point of contact is when two eyes meet in recognition; the eye of the dream ego and 'the right eye' of the little yellow anthropomorphized creature on the floor. Only a parent position allows the white dream ego to recognize The Other, The Other dually diminished—a baby transformed into duckling.

Envoi

This essay can be seen as a prologue to my project on children's literature. I want to share my experience of working with a dream, but doing so forces me to use ethnic stereotypes and racist caricatures, which is something hazardous. However I put it, and whatever my purpose is, I will inevitably be reproducing degrading representations. I cannot foresee how the article will be read and understood. Nevertheless, the dream analysis has worked as a necessary positioning of the 'dream ego' of a researcher about to start a project focusing on ethnicity and ethnic stereotypes in children's literature. In *Writing beyond Race. Living Theory and Practice* (2013:17) bell hooks proclaims:

Thinking about white supremacy as the foundation of race and racism is crucial because it allows us to see beyond skin colour. It allows us to look at all the myriad ways our daily actions can be imbued by white supremacist thinking no matter our race. Certainly, race and racism will

never become unimportant if we cannot recognize the need to consistently challenge white supremacy.

By paying attention to my dream, I realize that white supremacist thinking can imbue even our nightly actions. Just like Makode Linde's Afromantic project, my dream is a painful symbolic reproduction of the process of othering, where diverse individuals are being forcibly assigned a simplistic share identity—depicted unconsciously by me, a white subject.

Even in more conscious work with the intention to make psychological portraits—or to be explicit anti-racist—stereotypes can be found. We cannot avoid stereotypes popping up from our cultural ballast. Stina Wirsén's book *Yellow!* is one example. Another is the American science writer Rebecca Skloot's *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks* (2010), where the author intends to portray the anonymous black woman behind the worldwide spread of HeLa cells. This bestselling and many times rewarded book is criticized by bell hooks for not creating a humanized portrait of Lacks. According to hooks, Skloot frames Lacks in the usual racist and sexist ways of seeing black females. Skloot portrays her as a kind of modern, childlike primitive and also projects onto her, says hooks, the stereotypical strong black woman image (hooks 2013:84).

It is easy to fall into the trap of re-inscribing, in dreams as well as in novels, films, and books for children, simplistic notions of black identity. The work with the dream has not only forced me to reflect upon my white position and my own racist 're-inscriptions', it also encourages me to define and approach my topic more thoughtfully, to reflect upon my practice of knowledge production and to formulate a research question in a more ethical way. Eventually I hope to find—or rather be part of—a dynamic space between the polarized opinions where there is an openness and willingness to both share experiences and listen.

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Chapter 6

Natural, home-made, and real: gender and class in Internet postings

Elin Montelius

An important aspect of food choice and distinctions between good and bad food is the assessment of whether the food poses a risk or not. In news media, we are constantly faced with different messages and debates about what is the 'right' thing to eat, as well as who it is that holds the responsibility for avoiding risky food. The contemporary discourses that surround food emphasize the subject's own responsibility to choose the right thing (Lupton 1995). Diet has come to be a part of the biographical project, where you are supposed to invest in your future through what you eat (Bildtgård 2002). In contemporary Swedish society, the relationship between food and health, and, as such, the risks to health that some foods are assumed to pose, has gained more attention. Swedish eating has been the target for different forms of regulations that constitute a risk formation focusing, on the one hand, on influencing the food industry and, on the other, persuading the individual into becoming a risk-conscious subject (see, for example, Bildtgård 2002). People are given more and more complex advice about which food is good or bad, and which risks might stem from different types of food (Lupton 2011, 2005). Research shows that people tend to divide food stuffs into 'bad' and 'good' food, using rules of thumb in order to manage their food choices (Green et al. 2003; Lupton 2005). The discourses about food tend to emphasize self-control above all else, underpinned by notions of a 'civilized' and 'healthy' body (Lupton 2011).

But the food choices and the sense-making that go along with it may also be understood in relation to the social structures that surround our daily lives. Food functions as a boundary between different social classes, genders, nations, and cultures (Lupton 2011), and has long been used to create different forms of distinctions (Bourdieu 1984). Such distinctions are made not only through behaviour, but also through the approaches taken to distinguish oneself from others (Katainen 2010). In this way, food and eating are classed and gendered practices (Anving 2012; Ekström 1990). Socio-economical backgrounds have a great impact on food habits, as has gender (Amcoff et al. 2012). How people relate to, negotiate around, or resist discourses of food and the risks associated with food and eating, are thereby an important area to investigate (see Lupton 1999), as well as how the different perspectives people adopt on discourses of food and risk can be understood as a way to (re)produce class and gender. The aim of this essay is to

elaborate on a first analysis of how gender and class are done in the writing about food in different Internet postings.

The Internet data used in the essay consist of postings in discussion threads at an online community, familjeliv.se, one of Sweden's largest. The principles for the selection of discussion threads are based on the topics of the discussion, primarily that each should deal with food and foodstuffs. Threads that only included recipes or discussions about different recipes were excluded. The material used in this essay consists of four different discussion threads, with a total of a thousand postings, with quotations selected for their ability to illustrate the different discourses that are the subject here. In what follows, I will focus on three discourses identified in the material—a traditional motherhood discourse, a gender equality-discourse, and a class-based moral discourse—and how these discourses are done and reproduced in the material (Fahlgren 1999).

Theoretical perspectives

In this essay, I draw on theories of how gender and class are done (Butler 2004; Skeggs 1997) in relation to norms about food. Through social constructions of what it is possible, desirable, or reasonable to think, a division between normal and not normal is constructed. Gender is done and maintained through performative acts, and should therefore be regarded as a process where conceptions of femininity and masculinity are constructed and made natural (Butler 2004).

However, the doing of gender is entwined with other power configurations, such as class (Skeggs 1997). The notion of class has developed mainly as a way to create a distance from the other, in a process in which one's own class is constructed in relation to the other (Finch 1993). Class can in this way be regarded as a moral classification and a discursive construction (Skeggs 1997). Skeggs (1997, 2004) has investigated the ways in which subjects are produced in relation to class and gender, drawing on the work of Bourdieu and the theory of the symbolic economy, and she argues that class is (re)produced not only through economic stratification, but also through cultural values, which are internalized and as such become a part of the self.

The practising and doing of femininity is different for women from different social backgrounds. Femininity is read, judged, and often misrecognized in a process where classed and gendered subjects are constructed (Skeggs 2001). Lawler (2005) argues that the middle class has been constructed as the norm by its differentiation from the working class, where middle-class identity is constructed as disgust of working-class culture, taste, and behaviour. In an historical context, this has been done by describing the working class using a discourse of degeneration, specifically regarding working-class women (Skeggs 1997).

Respectability has been used as an attribution of moral or immorality, and has been central in the construction of class (Skeggs 1997). In a Swedish context, the ideal of the conscientious worker has had a similar function. The norm of conscientious has had a central position, including soberness and propriety, and is a part of a self-regulation that emphasizes self-control (Ambjörnsson 2001).

Three competing discourses on food and eating

The motherhood discourse

The normalization and regulation of the nation's eating patterns have in an historical perspective been carried out via the women as the ones responsible for family meals, but today the regulation is carried out by encouraging individuals to make the correct choices through education and nutritional advice with an emphasis on individual responsibility (Biltgård 2002). Still, what is put forward in the Internet postings is a strong ideal of home-cooked food, which is depicted as not only *natural* but also *ideal*, or morally preferred.

I agree! That is the way I was brought up and that's how my son will grow up. Home-cooked, real nutritional food. (Df, t1)ⁱ

Real food is home-cooked food, with a small portion of semi-finished products or made completely from scratch. In all the talk about home-cooked food, it is also usual to refer to past times or one's own upbringing, as in this post. Similarly, there are references to memories of mothers or grandmothers cooking. Home-cooked food is also depicted as something one just does, something that is normal. By relating to one's own upbringing and, as in this case, to the child's imagined upbringing, continuity is created through food, which reinforces the ideal of the home-cooked meal as real, natural, and normal—and has echoes of traditional gender roles, where food was even more tied to femininity.

The alternatives to home-cooked meals are ready-made food and fast food, which are commonly described using words such as slime, junk, or disgusting. The critique of this kind of food is primarily related to its unnaturalness, which is supported by pointing to the additives and how its produced. The 'real' food is thus constructed discursively by contrasting it to other food. In the critique of ready-made or fast food, there is a sense in which the home-made food is the opposite, something more natural, more genuine, and more real.

At the same time, the talk about the home-cooked, natural food normalizes certain practices, since someone has to be the one who cooks it, and previous research shows that this someone most often is a women (SCB 2011).

Otherwise I'm also one of those people who makes my own meatballs and cooks everything from scratch. Seriously, it doesn't take that long.

Besides, you can prepare a lot of things in advance, and then I have my husband who helps, prepares, or cooks. I don't slave away alone over a hot stove every day. (Mn, t1)

What comes out in this text is how gender is constructed in relation to the discourse about real and natural food, and how this intersect with a traditionally motherhood discourse. The image of the man given in most of the threads is of someone who helps with the cooking, aiding in the realization of the ideal of home-made food the same way as advance preparation can be a help. The cooking, and the main responsibility for it, is done by someone else. The talk of food thus reveals how different conceptions of femininity and masculinity are constructed (see, for example, Butler 2004). There is also some discussion about how the eating patterns change when children come along, a change to what I read as a motherhood discourse.

I almost always cook because I want to give my children and husband home-cooked food. But before I had children I used to live on ready-made meals. (Gh, t1)

As a mother, it becomes important to give the children *and* her husband home-cooked food. Norms about what it means to be a good mother are evident in the posts. To eat junk yourself is one thing, to give it to children completely another. Molander (2012) argues that control of family meals is an important aspect of mothering, and that women carry out a larger proportion of the household work, especially through mothering. In my material, this is evident in the responsibility adopted by many of the women for choosing foodstuffs.

If I see that the husband has put a bottle of juice in our shopping cart, he will get his juice, sure. But I'll switch it to Proviva or God Morgon Bifido ... so they get some healthy microbes along with it. (Bn, t3)

Here the man is constructed as someone with less responsibility and less control over the grocery shopping; someone whose decision about what to buy is not final.

My children also drink O'boy sometimes, they also eat white toast with jam, sometimes *sandy witches* ☺ (Fg, t3)

The norms about what constitutes good parenthood in relation to food are made obvious here, as I read the reference to 'sandy witches' as a joky way of acknowledging the norms about the right things to feed children, and that to give children food that is not regarded as real food is something to be slightly ashamed of. At the same time, these norms are contested in the posting.

What is apparent in the threads is how most posts draw on a motherhood discourse, where the man/father is constructed as a complement, a helper rather

than someone in charge, and someone to give home-cooked food to. In relation to this image, the mother is constructed as the one who is in charge, controls the shopping, and particularly has the keen interest in preparing home-cooked meals for someone else. This is in line with research showing that gender is important when it comes to the division of household work (SCB 2011), but also when it comes to attitudes towards food and cooking, where women perceive themselves as having a greater responsibility for cooking and regard it as a necessary task, while men has a more positive image of it, something that can be explained by their perception of cooking as being more of a choice (Prim 2007).

A gender-equality discourse

The ideal of the home-cooked, real, natural food is nevertheless contested. There is a struggle over the definition of ready-made food as something less than food, something unnatural and less nutritional, as well as a struggle over the ideal itself, particularly from a time perspective.

So I'd rather buy ready-made food, or semi-ready-made food from time to time to be able to have skilled work or take a challenging course. It is called balance. (Gl, t1)

The ideal of the home-made food assumes that someone is able to take the time to actually cook it. In Sweden, there is a strong gender-equality discourse, with an implicit presumption that women and men share the domestic work equally (Elvin-Nowak & Thomsson 2001). But even so, a great deal of research shows that domestic work is not a gender-neutral practice, and that family meals are an arena where gender relations are created and carried out (Anving 2012; Ekström 1990). In the previous posting, the ideal of the home-made meal is put balanced with the ability to get an education or to have a qualified job.

I for my part wouldn't be able to make it through the day without ready-made or semi-ready-made food, and I don't think anyone else does it either. (As, t1)

Here two discourses are set against each other: the one, the motherhood discourse and the ideal of the home-cooked food; the other, the Swedish equality discourse, which postulates that women and men should have equal opportunities to combine paid and unpaid labour (see Anving 2012). A refusal to go along with the definition of home-cooked food as more real and natural could be seen as an attempt to promote other ideals, the ones that are put forward in the gender-equality discourse.

Even with my resentment of ready-made food, I know something that is a lot worse. That's when the women in the family is the one who cooks everyday while the man waits. Unfresh and scabby. (Ng, t1)

Although previous research (SCB 2011) shows that there are great differences in how much time women and men spend doing the household work, the norm to be equal is strong. This posting shows just how strong, as it can be read as opposition to the ideal of the home-cooked meal and the motherhood discourse it draws on—opposition articulated here by drawing on the equality discourse.

A classed moral discourse

Through the discursive construction of food, an imagined eater of that food is also constructed, given that food also has a moral component to it (Lupton 2011).

I just can't understand how they can eat that disgusting slime? It's barely food? (Cw, t1)

By describing what 'they' do, the eating 'other' is constructed, who eats slime that is barely food. Implicitly, a 'we' that is included in the evaluation of other eaters is constructed. This imagined 'we' and 'them' are repeated in many of the postings, albeit not always as explicitly as in this one. In that way, the eating other is constructed. The eating other is someone who eats something that is not regarded as food, which is a moral evaluation. The posting thus draws on a similar degeneration discourse to the one Skeggs (1997) describes as important in constructing the working class as the other. The literature shows that socio-economical background has a great impact on food habits (Amcoff et al. 2007).

Other postings instead appeal to everyone's own impulses to eat properly, often characterized as a form of enlightenment:

When you get into the habit in the kitchen, it doesn't take more than half an hour to cook ordinary food. Doesn't everyone have one half hour? (Df, t1)

Postings of this nature are often addressed directly to an imagined reader, and the construction of a 'we' and 'them' is not as explicit. Instead, the postings draw more on a conscientious discourse (Ambjörnsson 2001), appealing to the other's will and responsibility to follow norms about what to eat and what not to.

Home-cooked food is also idealized from another perspective—thrift. Rather than the content, the focus is on economizing. In the discussion threads that have the economical advantages of certain foods as their starting-point, they concentrate on the cost to the exclusion of almost everything else. The content of the food is mentioned only in passing.

Me and my husband never lack money, but we buy cheap food anyway!
☺ Not that we have to, but I don't think you have to buy [ingredient] just
'cos it's a fancier brand. (Nm, t9)

To buy cheap food is positive in itself; not spending more money than necessary has its own worth. Such moderation also draws on the conscientious discourse (Ambjörnsson 2001). The construction of the real, natural food can be read as part of the conscientious discourse too, of course. To eat 'real' food becomes important, given that the food is embodied by the eater, and does something to him or her. 'Real' individuals eat 'real' food. To eat something that not really is food, instead defines the eater as less human. The struggle for the definition of certain foods as real food or not is thus also a struggle about what conscientiousness really is.

Concluding discussion

I have indicated in this essay how the authors of the Internet postings constantly struggle with the definition of certain foods, as well as how this intersects with risk, gender, and class. What come forward in the postings are different norms about food and what constitutes food. But the norms about food also draw on different discourses regarding gender and class. However, none of these categories are homogeneous. There are different ways to perform gender and class in relation to food, and these constructions are valued differently. In the postings, it is possible to see how risk serves to divide what is real, home-made, and natural from unreal, fabricated, and risky food. Risk is done and undone in the material in constant negotiations about different kinds of foods and foodstuffs. Risk thus also has a performative aspect, given that the postings' authors' expressions of risk represent norms of what is good and bad food, what is normal and abnormal, which in turn creates different subject positions. By the attribution of immorality and disgust to certain foodstuffs or certain kinds of eaters, different selves are created.

The way the postings' authors position themselves in regard to the discourse about food and risk is also a way to do femininity and motherhood. The struggle for definition of food as risky or not is thus also a struggle for moral authority, and the attribution of value to different subject according to their ability to present themselves as responsible and risk-avoiding. What is apparent in the material is that the postings divide the foodstuffs into natural and unnatural food, where the natural food is clearly related to an idealized image of things home-made and healthy. Home-made food is regarded as real food, whilst processed food is viewed as unnatural and uncertain.

Here the undoing of risk is bound up with gender and class. To be a real parent, a real mother, is to give your children real food. This implies that the real parent

has the time, money, and especially the knowledge to do this. In the construction of what counts as real or not there is a moral classification, drawing both on a discourse of degeneration (Skeggs 1997) and of conscientiousness (Ambjörnsson 2001). In line with Skeggs (2005), I see this as a way to draw gender and class divisions by the attribution of negative value to others. The notion of the real thus seems to have a similar function in Swedish society as Skeggs (1997) shows that the term respectability has in an British context—that is as a attribution of morality or immorality, and in that a way draws distinctions and maintains normative constructions of gender and class.

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Chapter 7

Predictors for online unwanted sexual solicitation: a cross-sectional study of Swedish boys and girls in years 6–9

Katja Gillander Gådin

The Internet has opened up opportunities we could not have imagined some decades ago. Children and adolescents can communicate with friends, connect with new friends online, seek information, or visit civic or political websites, as well as create their own websites, and it is thus a forum for increased and active participation in society (Livingstone et al. 2005). It is also a forum for the development of social subjecthood, where children present themselves through, for example, Facebook and MySpace, which can function as enablers and mediators of positive sexual relations (Brickell 2012).

However, the Internet has also opened up for different forms of Internet interaction, in the shape of victimization such as cyber bullying (Wang, Iannotti et al. 2009), online sexual harassment (Helweg-Larsen, Schutt et al. 2012), Internet harassment, and online unwanted sexual solicitation (USS) (Ybarra, Espelage et al. 2007). This paper will mainly focus on online USS among children and adolescents.

There have been several recent stories worldwide of girls who have committed suicide after being victims of online USS. In a recent case in Sweden, a 13-year-old girl committed suicide after being manipulated and sexually abused by an adult who pretended to be a 15-year-old boy. After this went public, more than twenty-five girls, all aged between 11 and 15, have since reported to the police that they have been the targets of the same man (Expressen 2013). One of his methods was to use a photo of his target that he manipulated with pornographic photos and then threatened to publish them online if they did not give him what he wanted. It is also suspected that he met two of the girls offline.

The opportunity for groomers to find victims has increased through the Internet, and they are skilled in building trust in children and gradually exerting power and control before ensnaring them in sexual interactions (Berson 2003). There are increasing concerns about online USS, and it has become an additional harassment problem for young people, on top of offline victimization as well as other forms of harassment online (Helweg-Larsen, Schutt et al. 2012).

An American study on trends in youth Internet victimization shows that there was a decrease in USS between 2005 and 2010 (Jones et al. 2012). Yet, the frequency of exposure to any sexual solicitation was still high in 2010 (13 per cent for girls, 4 per cent for boys), and thus remains a topic for increased mobilization. In general, girls are more likely to be exposed to online victimization than are boys. They are

more exposed to cyber bullying (Wang, Iannotti et al. 2009), Internet harassment, sexual harassment, as well as USS (Helweg-Larsen, Schutt et al. 2012), while boys are perpetrators to a far greater extent than girls (Wang, Iannotti et al. 2010).

There are some studies that show that race/ethnicity is a predictor for victimization. While a study by Jones et al. (2012) shows that fewer white adolescents are online victims than both Hispanic and Black adolescents, Mitchell et al. (2007) only found an increased risk for young black people. Living with only one biological parent is not associated with an increased risk (Helweg-Larsen & Boving-Larsen 2003; Mitchell, Finkelhor et al. 2007). Having parents with low education is associated with online limited solicitation, but not aggressive solicitation (suggestions to meet offline) (Mitchell, Finkelhor et al. 2007).

Children who are victims of online USS have weaker emotional bonds with their parents and a lower degree of parental monitoring compared with those with little or no experience of online USS (Ybarra, Espelage et al. 2007). Even if many victims of online USS not see themselves as victims, and have developed skills and can deal effectively with potential perpetrators by blocking them, parents are important in talking about risks and also supporting those who are affected negatively (Rosen 2006).

Earlier studies show that there is co-occurrence of different forms of victimization. Espelage and Holt (2007) found that bullying victims report a high amount of peer sexual harassment and more physical dating violence. There is a co-occurrence between different forms of online harassment such as Internet harassment and USS (Ybarra, Espelage et al. 2007), but another study did not find support for an overlap between being bullied at school and Internet harassment (Ybarra, Diener-West et al. 2007). Although Mitchell, Finkelhor et al. (2011) found that there are co-occurrences between many forms of victimization, they did not find an elevated risk for online USS for those experiencing sexual harassment or peer/sibling victimization offline.

Sweden is one of the computer-densest countries in the world and most Swedish children have access to a computer (Statistics Sweden 2004). Despite the positive possibilities that the Internet offers, we have to know more about risks that children and young people face when they are online, in order to develop online literacy among young users. To my knowledge, there is no previous Swedish study on the prevalence of or predictors for USS in this age group.

The aim of this essay is to analyse the prevalence of online USS and predictors for victimization in a sample of Swedish pupils in years 6–9.

Methods

The study is based on a web-based questionnaire distributed to pupils in ten schools in a medium-sized municipality in the north of Sweden. The study

population comprised 1,527 pupils (728 boys, 799 girls) in years 6-9 (about 12-16-year-olds). The response rate was 80 per cent.

The questionnaires were distributed via their school email addresses and were answered during school hours in computer rooms at the schools. All schools were given extra resources so they could each have at least one member of staff supervising the pupils in order to answer any questions and to make sure that all pupils could complete the questionnaire in privacy.

Online unwanted sexual solicitation

The prevalence rate for online USS was estimated based on four questions referring to the last six months and having the answer alternatives never, once, a few times, many times. The questions read as follows:

Many pupils are exposed to harassment of different kinds on the Internet. Have any of the following happened to you when using a computer in the last six months:

- 1) Has anyone tried to get you to talk about sex when you did not want to?
- 2) Has anyone asked you personal questions when you did not want to, such as what your body looks like or sexual things you have done?
- 3) Has anyone asked you to do something sexual that you did not want to do?
- 4) Has anyone you don't know asked you to meet offline?

It was counted as online USS where the children answered 'at least once' or more to any of the four questions. The questions were derived from questions used in earlier studies (for example, Mitchell & Jones 2011).

Demographics

Family structure was measured using a question about whom they lived with. Those who answered that they not live with both their mother and their father (in other words with separated or single parents, or other) were coded as risk = 1.

A proxy for family affluence was measured by asking whether they had had enough money to do the same things as their friends the last three months. Not having that 'always' or 'often' were scored as risk = 1.

The pupils were categorized as being of foreign extraction if their father, their mother or both were born abroad = 1.

As Sweden is a country where most children have access to a computer, having more than two computers in the family was scored as a risk for online USS.

Parental support

A low degree of parental support was scored as 1 if they not talked about almost everything 'always' or 'often' with either their mother or their father.

Friend/sibling support

A low degree of friend/sibling support was scored as 1 if they not talked about almost everything 'always' or 'often' with a friend or a sibling.

Teacher support

An index of teacher support was constructed from five questions: whether their teachers gave them support and help when they needed it; whether their teachers would notice if they not enjoy school; whether they felt their teachers were fair; whether their teachers gave praise and encouragement at school; and whether there was an adult at school they could talk to if they had problems. The answer alternatives were always, often, sometimes, seldom, and never. The index was dichotomized at the upper quartile = low teacher support and scored 1.

Parental rules

An index for parental rules was constructed from four questions regarding how important it was at home that they did their homework; that someone at home knew where they are; that they came home on time at night; and that they helped out at home. The answer alternatives were very important, fairly important, not very important, and not important at all. The index for a low degree of parental rules was dichotomized and scored as risk when it was not very important or not important at all to follow the rules asked about in all four questions.

Bullying

If a pupil answered that it had happened (once or more often) in the last six months that one or several pupils had teased, fought or shut them out, they were scored as being bullied = 1.

Sexual harassment

The sexual harassment index was derived from Gruber & Fineran (2007) and consisted of fourteen questions of experiential behaviours relating to sexual harassment the last six months. If a student answered that it had ever happened to them they were scored as being sexually harassed = 1.

Data analysis

Comparisons between boys and girls were conducted with chi-square analysis. A p-value < 0.05 was considered statistically significant. To analyse the association

between online USS and predictors for victimization, a logistic regression model was fitted to the data. A confidence interval of 95 per cent for odds ratio was used. All independent variables were significant in the crude analysis, although sometimes not both for boys and girls. All variables that were either significant for all students or among either boys or girls were included in the adjusted model. The adjusted logistic regression analysis was developed in three steps (Models 1–3) in order to analyse the relative impact of socio-demographics, social support, and off-line victimization. Model 3 shows the contribution of each variable independently while controlling for all other predictors.

Results

Table 7.1 shows that about one-third of the pupils were not living with both their parents and one-fifth of both boys and girls did not always or often have as much money as their friends. Two-thirds of the pupils had more than two computers in the family. A greater number of boys reported low parental and low friend/sibling support compared with girls, and boys also reported that it was less important to follow rules at home compared with the girls. One-quarter of the boys and one-third of the girls reported being bullied the last six months, and about half of both boys and girls reported experiencing sexual harassment, a slightly higher proportion of girls compared to boys.

TABLE 7.1 Socio-demographic characteristics, social support/parental monitoring, and offline victimization (N= 1,527). P-values from chi-square tests.

	Boys % (n)	Girls % (n)	p-values
<i>Socio-demography</i>			
Year			
6	20.9 (152)	19.9 (159)	0.18
7	24.6 (179)	26.2 (209)	
8	24.0 (175)	27.7 (221)	
9	30.5 (222)	26.3 (210)	
Not living with both parents	36.5 (266)	36.1 (287)	0.845
Not having as much money as friends	19.2 (139)	19.7 (156)	0.816
Parental foreign background	12.5 (91)	15.9 (126)	0.072
More than two computers in the family	71.7 (517)	67.6 (537)	0.085
<i>Social support/parental rules</i>			
Low parental support	41.0 (245)	32.4	0.001
Low friend/sibling support	53.5 (324)	31.4 (237)	<0.001
Low teacher support	24.7 (147)	28.2 (205)	0.153
Low parental rules	39.9 (255)	34.0 (256)	0.024
<i>Offline victimization</i>			
Any bullying	26.8 (175)	36.9 (282)	<0.001
Any sexual harassment	44.2 (297)	50.1 (385)	0.026

Exposure to online unwanted sexual solicitation

Table 7.2 presents data from the responses to the four different questions regarding online USS and the prevalence of experiencing any of these four forms. Girls reported they were victimized to a significantly higher degree than boys for all forms except for being asked to do something sexual that they did not want to. The most common form of solicitation for both boys and girls was to be asked to meet offline by an unknown person. This happened to one boy out of seven, compared with more than every fifth girl. One-fifth of the boys and one-third of the girls reported they had been victimized at least once in any of the four forms in the previous last six months.

TABLE 7.2 Prevalence of exposure for online USS among boys and girls in years 6–9 in the last six months (per cent). P-values from chi-square tests.

	Boys %	Girls %	p-values
Has anyone tried to get you to talk about sex when you did not want to?	10.7	16.3	0.002
Has anyone asked you personal questions when you did not want to, such as what your body looks like or sexual things you have done?	11.9	18.3	0.001
Has anyone asked you to do something sexual that you did not want to do?	9.6	12.4	0.099
Has anyone you don't know asked you to meet offline?	13.8	22.1	<0.001
Any of the above once or more often	19.2	31.5	<0.001

Predictors of online unwanted sexual solicitation

Tables 7.3 and 7.4 present the results of the unadjusted and the adjusted logistic regression analyses of predictors associated to victimization for online USS of boys and girls, respectively. The unadjusted analyses show that socio-demographic factors, social support, following parental rules, and being victims of bullying and sexual harassment offline are associated with online USS. For girls, low parental and teacher support increased the odds of being victimized, while a low degree of friend/sibling support decreased the odds.

TABLE 7.3 **Logistic regression analyses of predictors for any exposure to online USS – boys.**

	Unadjusted OR (95 % CI)	Adjusted OR (95 % CI)		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Divorced parents	1.09 (0.73–1.64)	0.86 (0.56–1.32)	0.81 (0.48–1.36)	0.86 (0.49–1.50)
Not as much money as friends	1.97 (1.24–3.11)	2.00 (1.24–3.24)	2.07 (1.16–3.68)	1.63 (0.88–3.02)
Foreign extraction	2.65 (1.58–4.43)	2.56 (1.51–4.34)	2.71 (1.39–5.30)	2.50 (1.23–5.06)
More than two computers at home	1.51 (0.95–2.40)	1.66 (1.02–2.70)	2.01 (1.07–3.79)	1.60 (0.82–3.11)
Nagelkerke R2		0.058		
Low parent support	1.62 (1.06–2.46)		1.20 (0.71–2.04)	1.22 (0.71–2.12)
Low friend/sibling support	0.76 (0.50–1.14)		0.84 (0.50–1.40)	0.74 (0.53–1.27)
Low teacher support	2.64 (1.68–4.15)		1.62 (0.93–2.82)	1.45 (0.80–2.61)
Low parental rules	2.59 (1.71–3.90)		1.91 (1.14–3.20)	1.70 (0.99–2.92)
Nagelkerke R2			0.120	
Any bullying	4.10 (2.71–6.22)			3.33 (1.95–5.69)
Any sexual harassment	5.63 (3.58–8.56)			3.13 (1.78–5.49)
Nagelkerke R2				0.255

TABLE 7.4 **Logistic regression analyses of predictors for any exposure to online USS – girls.**

	Unadjusted OR (95 % CI)	Adjusted OR (95 % CI)		
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Divorced parents	1.53 (1.12–2.11)	1.54 (1.11–2.14)	1.47 (1.03–2.11)	1.44 (0.98–2.13)
Not as much money as friends	1.26 (0.86–1.84)	1.16 (0.79–1.72)	0.90 (0.58–1.41)	0.68 (0.42–1.10)
Foreign extraction	0.86 (0.55–1.33)	0.82 (0.52–1.30)	0.91 (0.54–1.51)	0.74 (0.43–1.28)
More than two computers at home	1.44 (1.03–2.03)	1.39 (0.99–1.96)	1.37 (0.93–2.02)	1.27 (0.84–1.92)
Nagelkerke R2		0.022		
Low parent support	2.14 (1.53–2.98)		1.66 (1.14–2.41)	1.44 (0.96–2.14)
Low friend/sibling support	0.58 (0.41–0.82)		0.55 (0.38–0.82)	0.68 (0.45–1.04)
Low teacher support	2.25 (1.60–3.15)		2.10 (1.44–3.07)	2.01 (1.33–3.03)
Low parental rules	1.98 (1.44–2.74)		1.56 (1.08–2.26)	1.49 (1.00–2.22)
Nagelkerke R2			0.119	
Any bullying	1.51 (1.10–2.08)			1.04 (0.70–1.54)
Any sexual harassment	6.17 (4.32–8.81)			5.30 (3.54–7.94)
Nagelkerke R2				0.263

In the adjusted analysis, where all variables are controlled for one another, another pattern appears. For boys, the full model shows that the most important predictors for online USS were having a foreign-born mother and/or a father and being victims of offline bullying and sexual harassment. For girls, none of the socio-demographic variables were predictors for victimization, while low teacher

support and a little importance attached to following parental rules were associated with victimization, and also offline sexual harassment.

The full model explains a fourth of the variance in victimization among both boys and girls, and half of the variances are related to offline victimization.

Discussion

The results show that it was common for pupils in years 6–9 to be victims of online USS, girls to a greater extent than boys. The odds of being victimized seem to be evenly distributed among the pupils from different social backgrounds, with the exception of boys with a foreign background. The most significant factors associated with online victimization seem to be offline victimization. Sexual harassment was strongly associated with victimization among both boys and girls, while bullying was significant for boys only.

The higher proportion of girls among the victims is in line with previous studies in the US (Jones, Mitchell et al. 2012) and in Denmark (Helweg-Larsen et al. 2012). Even if girls were more exposed to online USS, the frequency with which boys were victims should not be disregarded. There is a risk that the focus on girls as victims in the media, together with a gendered stereotype of girls as weaker and less able to handle abuse, could increase the risk of boys becoming online targets and victims (Davidson & Martellozzo 2008), particularly if prevention programmes only target girls. The gendered pattern of the phenomenon, however, is important to consider, as the literature shows that it is boys and men who are perpetrators to a far greater degree than girls and women (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention 2007).

The prevalence of online USS in the present study is much higher compared to other studies (Jones, Mitchell et al. 2012; Helweg-Larsen et al. 2012), but an earlier report by the Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (2007) presents similar figures, although the report just presents the prevalence for 15-year-old boys and girls, and only concerns victimization from perpetrators more than five years older than the victims. The present study did not ask about who had harassed them, as it in most cases must be difficult to know.

As the studies by Jones (2012) and Mitchell (2007) not separate their results for boys and girls it is difficult to compare the results that boys with a foreign background were more victimized than Swedish-born boys, and that it not was a predictor for girls. It could be possible that boys with a foreign background are regarded as easier targets compared with boys with Swedish-born parents, while girls are thought vulnerable and easy to reach regardless of their background.

For all other socio-demographic variables, it seems as if victimization in online USS is equally distributed; belonging to a privileged group in society does not

protect boys or girls when they are using Internet. That is in line with previous research from Denmark (Helweg-Larsen et al. 2012), which found that not living with both biological parents was a predictor in the crude analysis, but not in the adjusted. Mitchell (2007) found that 10–17-year-olds were less likely to be the victims of online limited solicitation if they had parents with a higher education, while they were equally vulnerable for aggressive solicitation (being asked for offline contact by the perpetrator by mail, telephone, or in person, or attempts or requests for offline contact).

If there are many computers in a family, the likelihood that a young person has their own increases, as it does if there is a high Internet use in the home. This has been shown to increase the risk for Internet sexual solicitation in a study by Mitchell (2001) and Helweg-Larsen (2012), but the number of computers in our study might be a limited predictor for the frequency of Internet use. It is probably more important to know if they have their own computer, but the question was not posed in that way.

The greatest odds for online USS in this study were associated with offline victimization. Helweg-Larsen et al. (2012) use a wider definition of online victimization than the present study, including any type of harassment, and find that those exposed to parental violence or child sexual abuse were associated with being online victims. This supports the theory that more vulnerable children display different Internet behaviour compared to less vulnerable children, and thus put themselves at risk for unknown people who approach them on Internet or other social networking sites. The result that being bullied at school (for boys) and being sexually harassed offline was such a strong predictor for online USS in the present study can have a slightly other explanation. It is possible that most of the online victims are harassed offline by peers at school, and that Internet has given harassers a possibility to continue to harass pupils when they are at home. Jones et al. (2012) think that a high prevalence of online harassing behaviour mirrors the fact that the possibility of harassing others has increased with the new techniques, and that the harassing and bullying behaviour have migrated online in the same way as other forms of adolescent communication have developed. It is not possible to analyse the characteristics of the perpetrators in this study, which is a disadvantage, but the strong association to offline victimization means that schools need to look hard at the co-occurrence of different forms of victimization. However, although Mitchell et al. (2011) find that there is co-occurrence between many forms of victimization, they did not find an elevated risk for online USS among those experiencing sexual harassment or peer/sibling victimization offline. They included questions on other forms of sexual victimization such as rape, and when that variable was included in the multiple regression analysis the association between sexual harassment and USS became insignificant.

Even if some of the perpetrators are the same age as the victims, and possibly even schoolmates, we also have to be aware of the likelihood that some of them are groomers who can manipulate the children and slowly become more and more aggressive (Berson 2003). The fact that as many as 30 per cent of Swedish 15-year-olds have been contacted by a person they think is an unknown adult (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention 2007) shows that the high prevalence in this study must be taken seriously, and that we have to know more about the perpetrators and also how to protect children from victimization. It is possible that the decrease in online USS in the US are due to an extensive preventive work as reported by Jones et al. (2012), and it is thus of great importance that schools in Sweden work to increase Internet literacy among pupils, even at younger ages.

The concept of online USS is open to discussion. The same questions in an offline situation would be called sexual harassment or sexual abuse, and I think there is a risk of diminishing the problem if it just called 'solicitation'. If some of the perpetrators offline are the same students who are the online perpetrators it is not a 'migration' of sexual offensive treatment, but an extended forum for such behaviour, and should be named as such.

Also, the gendered aspects of online USS should be highlighted. It is apparent that the Internet both reflects and refracts the broader pattern of unequal social power in society, and that practices online follow the same axes of social stratification as offline (Brickell 2012). The higher degree of victimization among girls and boys with a foreign background can probably be a part of the power order in society, where people with less social power and status are more likely to be the victims of sexualization, objectification, and harassment.

Methodological considerations

As this study is cross-sectional, findings should be interpreted with caution, as we cannot infer evidence of causal relationship between data. Answering questions about sexual solicitation can be sensitive, and it is possible that the prevalence of victimization in this study is underestimated. The high response rate is an advantage, however, as is the data collection method. Our definition of online USS is different from Mitchell's, who says that they have to be victimized by an adult (2001). It is complicated to say anything about the perpetrator, and it is assumed that the pupils would have difficulties doing that too.

Conclusions

This study shows that online unwanted sexual solicitation was common among Swedish schoolchildren in years 6–9, particularly among girls, and that there is a co-occurrence with offline victimization such as sexual harassment, and for boys

also bullying. It is of vital concern that children become Internet literate and that schools commit to combating both offline and online victimization.

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Chapter 8

‘Just like in the movies’: the effect of popular culture on brides’ and grooms’ stories about their weddings

Karin Jarnkvist

In the twenty-first century, the number of wedding services in Sweden has steadily increased. One has to go back forty years to see marriage figures as high as those today (Statistics Sweden). In 2012, about 51 000 couples got married, of whom 34 per cent had a church wedding. This is a big difference in relation to ten years ago, when the majority of the weddings were church weddings (Church of Sweden 2013). Weddings, and relationships that may lead to marriage, are hot topics in today’s popular culture. In reality television there have been several shows connected to weddings. Brides competing against one another about who can arrange the best wedding is one example. On the Internet there are a number of websites about weddings and there are several magazines with wedding themes. Weddings are also common themes in movies, especially Hollywood-produced romantic comedies.

The purpose of this essay is to show how the public narratives about weddings presented in popular culture are expressed in the personal narratives of young brides and grooms in Sweden. The question is how the wedding narratives of the interviewed brides and grooms should be understood in the light of narrative theory and gender theory.

I have interviewed brides and grooms in eight heterosexual couples, where half of them married according to the rites of the Church of Sweden and the rest had a civil wedding. All those involved bar two (in different couples) were getting married for the first time. The bridal couples were living in a medium-sized city and a small town in northern Sweden. The interviews took place shortly before and shortly after that the couples had married. The material has been analysed using narrative methods.

Stories about weddings

The academic literature about weddings and marriage confirms that heterosexual marriage is normative in today’s Sweden (Adeniji 2008; Andersson 2011). Weddings are a part of the growing experience industry, and materiality and authenticity are highly valued in the wedding context (Knuts 2006; Åkesson and Salomonsson 2010; Åkesson et al. 2008). The majority of those who get married today have lived together for several years before the wedding (Duvander 2000; Andersson & Philipov 2002) and have children (Karlsson 2010). Previous research

shows that children in general and pregnancy in particular, stimulate thoughts of marriage (Baizan et al. 2004; Moors & Bernhardt 2008; Fagerberg 2000; Jarnkvist 2008).

The motives for marrying can be divided between formal and symbolic motives. Formal motives for marriage mean that the person sees legal advantages to being married. According to Swedish law, being married brings with it financial advantages that are not available to co-habiting partners. This applies in particular if one of the partners dies. Couples with children from previous relationships who are aware of the legal differences between co-habiting and marriage emphasize the formal motives in particular. The symbolic motives are partly connected to the nuclear family, mum–dad–child, and partly to the specific relationship between man and woman. ‘Family motives’ are to create a ‘real’ family and to consolidate the family. The children are important here. These are the motives that are emphasized most by interviewed couples. The ‘relationship motive’ is about showing that the relationship is serious. By marrying each other, the couple are showing, for themselves and for others, that they love their partner and want to spend their lives together (Jarnkvist 2011).

Media research indicates that media often set the agenda for what the individual should think about various issues (Jarlbo 2006). As a part of the growing experience industry, the wedding theme gets plenty of space in today’s media (Åkesson and Salomonsson 2010). This applies to the movie industry as well as television, radio, the Internet, and newspapers. Media stories are also strongly linked to commercial interests (Knuts 2006). The relationship between the media, consumerism, and the wedding is an example of what the media researcher Johan Fornäs (2001) describes as the economization of culture and culturalization of economy. According to previous research, the Internet is an inevitable element for anyone who is preparing for a rite of any kind (Åkesson et al. 2008: 43).

What kind of wedding story, then, is presented in today’s popular culture? Previous research shows that it is fairly gender-stereotyped. The woman is the main character in the drama and the man has a small role (Knuts 2006; Adeniji 2008). This is the situation for wedding magazines, movies, television shows as well as websites with wedding themes. The story also contains a variety of material things, such as the white dress, flowers, rings, and so on (Knuts 2006; Åkesson and Salomonsson 2010). The focus is on the wedding as an experience, and it is said repeatedly that it would be inexcusable to miss such an opportunity (Åkesson and Salomonsson 2010: 55). The heterosexual norm is the basis of both the story and the marriage. This has a direct effect on people: earlier research into young women who do not want to get married show that their experience is that the heteronormativity as well as the norm that a woman should marry is strong today, especially in media (Adeniji 2008).

Narrative theory and gender theory

Narrativity can be divided into different dimensions. The ontological or personal stories define who you are (Johansson 2005: 96). A person's narrative is a product of the stories that the individual self has produced and have been told by others through life (Lindgren 2004: 53). This personal aspect is important in the interpretation of a narrative. The practice of a person can be interpreted as a result of the interaction between the individual on one hand and different social structures (such as class and gender) on the other. But the personal narratives should also be understood in the light of an additional dimension of narrativity, namely the public story. This story is told by institutions such as the family, religious organizations, or in the various media, and has an important role of the social life in a society. Public relations can be understood as cultural performances that are used to create meaning, order, and integration into the practices carried out within the society (Johansson 2005: 97). All life stories should be interpreted in relation to the various discourses or public stories that dominate the social and cultural context in which the narrator lives (Johansson 2005: 241).

The public narrative that is expressed through popular culture appears in the stories of my interviewees, especially among those who marry in church. My understanding is that the official story that the media presents works as a frame of reference for their personal stories. The stereotypical public stories give legitimacy to individual narratives. The distinction between the individual and the social context is fluid. Individuals can integrate their unique experiences into a universal structure that makes the experience meaningful (Lindgren 2004: 68).

In her book *About gender* (2003), the Australian sociologist Raewyn Connell describes different dimensions of gender, which, according to her, are visible in the gender relations of modern society. I use Connell's theory to understand the gender relations that transpire in the narratives of the informants in this present study. *Power relations*, here especially in forms of *discursive power*, are practised by the way people talk, write, and imagine. The discourse of beauty and fashion is especially visible in the stories of the interviewed women who try to live up to expectations of what a bride should look like and how she should act. *Production relations* become visible in the narratives about sharing of housework and wedding preparations. The *symbolic relations* are spread across society as a whole, through the official narratives. These narratives present ideas of what the 'typical' wedding, bride and groom should be like.

Method

I conducted interviews using an interpretative reflexive interview (Thomsson 2002) method in combination with narrative method (Johansson 2005; Lieblich 1998; Skott 2010). My starting-point is that a person's story, in its content as well as its

form, says something about both the person and the subject that the person talks about. Each story is also marked by the context in which it is told. The purpose of the story, the relationship between narrator and listener, and the narrator's emotional state are some of the elements that affect the story.

I interviewed sixteen women and men who together made up eight couples. Every person was interviewed twice; before and after the wedding. In total, 32 interviews were carried out. The interviewees are aged between 24 and 40. All of the couples, except one, already had young children together. They live in a medium-sized town and a small town in northern Sweden. In this area most of the church weddings are quite big, while the civil weddings are small and intimate. They are also often held in secret. The situation was the same for those I interviewed.

The interviews were based on themes with open as well as more specific questions. We spoke about the wedding process, from the couple's decision to marry to the time right after the wedding. How had they prepared for the wedding, how did they choose the form of wedding (civil or church wedding), and how had they planned their wedding? After the interviews, I transcribed them, and then analysed the material in two stages. First, I made a vertical analysis that cuts straight through each interview, and then transitioned to a horizontal analysis across all the interviews. In all this, I have followed the four generic requirements of research in the humanities and social sciences: information, consent, confidentiality, and utilization.

A 'proper' wedding – just like in the movies

The narratives of the interviewed men and women make it quite plain that the movies provided inspiration for several of the interviewees' own weddings. One example of this is one of the brides, Carolina. She went up the aisle with her father to meet her husband-to-be, who was waiting by the altar. When Carolina passed her mother and her future mother-in-law in their seats, she gave a rose to each of the two women. According to Carolina, both of these practices—the walk down the aisle with her father, and giving roses—were influenced by various movies. Other interviewed women refer to popular culture in general and mention how different kinds of media, including the Internet and magazines, had influenced their choice of wedding dress, flowers, hairstyles, food, music at the ceremony, and more.

In their narratives of the weddings, the brides and grooms often mention movies as sources of their images of what proper wedding was like. One example is Leif, who married in a civil ceremony. He had never been to a wedding before, and said that the picture he had of weddings was inspired by the movies. The fact that he married in virtual secrecy, instead of in church with a large number of

guests, directly disqualified his wedding from the proper category, at least as the interviewees talk about them. His bride, Lisa, talked about the small civil ceremony as plan B in comparison to a church wedding.

During the interviews, I early noticed that the stories I was told were quite stereotypical, while they were also unique. The experiences of every single individual shaped their particular story, but at the same time the ideas about weddings were largely similar. The interviewees had clear ideas about what it meant to get married properly, or, 'for real' as they said.

How, then, does the image of the proper wedding become visible in these stories? Some of the interviewees were determined to marry 'properly'. The way they marry in the movies. A big church wedding with the bride in the limelight, dressed in a long white dress. Others sought to distance themselves from the big story of what a wedding should be like. But regardless of how they relate to the story of the proper, they all had a common understanding of what that wedding involved: it had been instilled in them at an early age, and was vivid in the minds of the interviewees even in adulthood. Couples who had a Church of Sweden marriage in church were considered by all to have the greatest opportunity of getting married the 'right' way. But what is a proper wedding? Cecilia, who married in church, says:

I'd said that if I do it, it will be for real! We're both confirmed. We don't go to Church that often really, but I think that if I'm going to get married then I want to do it right. In church with the white dress and all the rest. Priest and all. But there is nothing wrong if you want to have a civil wedding, in the town hall or wherever. That is also a solution. But we've never discussed that. It would be in church. Or as I said, I could also marry abroad in that case. But it's not so popular at home if you do it like that. My sister would disown with me if I got married abroad. (ha, ha) So ... No, we've said that if we're going to do it, then we do it in church. For real! (Cecilia)

The Church, the priest, and the white dress are ingredients that Cecilia mentions when she talks about a proper wedding. But there is also a great deal that is implicit in her story. The importance of the presence of close relatives at the wedding becomes particularly apparent when Cecilia jokingly says that her sister would disown her if she married abroad. She also feels that her relatives expect her to marry in church. Like many others who have a church wedding, Cecilia says that a church wedding is an important tradition in her family. From what she said, we understand that a civil wedding is not an option for Cecilia.

The narratives by other interviewees give an overall picture of what a proper wedding is. In addition to the priest, church, white dress and close relatives, these

stories include numerous guests, the groom in morning dress or equivalent attire, the bride carrying flowers and being at her most radiant and beautiful. After the wedding ceremony a three-course dinner is served. This is also the type of wedding that is showed in many movies. Thus marrying 'properly' is not the same as marrying in the way that most people in Sweden do, in a civil wedding. The 'right' wedding, as the interviewees talk about it, is strongly influenced by the public story from the movies and popular culture in general. These weddings are big and beautiful and cost a lot of money; an example of the economization of culture and culturalization of economy that Fornäs (2001) describes. It is also clear that a proper wedding is only possible for some bridal couples; not least because it requires quite a lot of financial as well as social capital.

The beautiful bride, stage centre

The interviewees' stories make it clear that a wedding, to be 'right', requires a 'typical' bride. The narratives of what a bride should look like and how she should act are long and varied for all the participants—both men and women—while the respondents barely say anything at all about the groom. This shows that the expectations on the women are quite high, while the men can have a much more relaxed relationship to the wedding. To be proper, and as in the movies, the woman should be the beautiful main character of the story and the director of the wedding project.

The narrative of the 'typical' bride is a story of a radiant woman in a white dress, with a wedding bouquet and carefully done hair. This story also affects those who do not want to be 'typical brides'. For those who marry in church, it seems essential to live up to expectations, while most women who have a civil wedding say that they want to distance themselves from that image. For a woman that chooses to have a civil wedding it is not proper to be too much like a 'typical' bride, they say. Several brides make clear that they are satisfied with being free *not* to have a big white dress, flowers, and all. However, they are still influenced by the ideals and often justify why they do not want to be a 'typical' bride, as if they needed to defend themselves against it. Lisa, one of the women, also talked of the negative experience of not looking like the beautiful photo models and thus not living up to the ideals that exist for women.

Lisa said that she has spent a lot of time to search for nice dresses, pretty flowers and great looking hairstyles on the Internet, without finding what she was looking for:

Lisa: I've been reading a lot of wedding magazines and websites on the Internet and what have you ... to get some inspiration. I've saved loads

of dresses online. I have gone through the photos now and none of them looks like the one I selected (ha, ha).

Karin: Okay. (ha, ha)

Lisa: So it depends on what suits you. It looks amazing on those models!

Karin: (ha, ha)

Lisa: But I have my tum and it ... No, there will be no good (ha, ha). I've mostly been checking around what they show on the websites. Searched a bit for bridal bouquets. (...) And then there's this hairstyle. It's not that easy. The hairdresser told me to take some pictures with me of what I'd like to have. But there is no photo on Internet that shows the hair the way I want it. (ha, ha) (...) I've been looking through the entire network (ha, ha). It seems that these images are on more extreme hairstyles. (...) I'm not like that. But as naturally as possible. Though still nicely.

Lisa laughs when she talks about her failed attempts to find the right dress and suitable hairstyles on the Internet. The whole situation was becoming comical. It becomes evident in my interview with Lisa that the individual is affected by the discursive power. In vain, Lisa had searched through the 'entire network', only to meet her own alienation. She is no 'dream of the groom', like those described online or in fashion magazines. I laugh with her. It is a laughter of recognition.

According to previous research, the Internet is the first port of call for anyone planning an event of any kind (Åkesson et al. 2008: 43). It has everything and more needed by the individual who wants to choose the 'right' things. Experts tell Lisa what she fits and does not fit in, and serves her pictures of what she should look like to be 'good enough'. According to media scholars, the media often set the agenda for what the individual should think in various issues (Jarlbro 2006). From such a perspective, one can say that Lisa, even if she does not follow the experts' advice, is influenced by the discursive power that the media exerts (Connell 2003: 82). The media make up arbitrary rules for what brides should look like and what they should do to find their dream dress and create their 'perfect' wedding. Online sites offer detailed descriptions of the various cuts and necklines and which types of bodies that fit in the various models. It is signalled to the woman that she is not capable of knowing what she should wear, and she is prompted in the texts to follow the advice given on the sites (Knuts 2006: 70–1; Adeniji 2008: 134). Although Lisa did not choose any of the dresses she had found online, she had been influenced by their advice—and once again, the websites had proved to her that she did not live up to the ideal.

All the time and energy that women spend on their appearance shows how trapped they are in the grip of the discursive power. They know very well that the expectations are that they should be the most beautiful bride on their wedding

day. Joy and agony are mixed in the pursuit of beauty. 'The woman who says that she does not want to be beautiful is lying', said Cecilia on the subject of outward appearance. Cecilia gives this a symbolic expression of the gender relations according to which the term 'woman' stands for a variety of things (Connell 2003: 89), including an expectation that she will be beautiful.

The bride as director

To be 'proper', the bride does not only have to look good, she also takes responsibility for the wedding and makes sure that everything turns out as well as possible. She is the manager of the wedding project; the director of the scene. This also becomes clear in the stories of the interviewed men and women. The women tell long and detailed stories about how the couple had prepared for the wedding, but the stories of the men are more concise and less detailed. This difference does not occur when we are talking about other themes concerning the wedding. Therefore it can be interpreted as a sign that women are generally more involved in the preparation of the wedding than the men are.

In interviews held before the wedding, the women often described in detail how things were to be done, which choices had been made and what remained to do before the wedding. The men often said that they were not familiar with the planning. Several women said they were responsible for the preparation and that they wanted it that way. They said they need to be in control or that they have an interest arranging parties—an interest that their men seem to lack.

I'm probably the most ... well, but, who is controlling the whole thing. My experience is that I'm a little more organized. I suppose I am a little bit more so as a person. I want to have control over the situation and ... maybe a bit too much sometimes though ... I feel that I want to have perfect control of everything and there are a huge amount of details and a lot more than one could have imagined before. We said that we need not do so amazingly fancy with great photography and so on ... just as it should be, but we want it to be authentic. But things pile up anyway. Even if you hadn't imagined it before. I have a whole book of lists and stuff; to-do lists and things like that. No one else is going to organize this party for us so ... I sense that it's me who makes most decisions and have an eye on most things. Then we love to talk about it together, what we think and feel and so on. But a little bit, it's probably me who take the initiative in those talks too. At least I know what's got to be done.
(Carolina)

Carolina is quite secure in her role as the director of the wedding scene, and happy about it too, even though she also mentions that she and her partner talk about

things together, as if she wants it to be more equal. Her husband agrees with this understanding of who ran the wedding project. He laughs when I ask about him sharing the work and makes it clear that it was definitely not for him.

Some women say that they shared the preparations for the wedding. Their husbands, meanwhile, give a very different picture of the division of labour. They describe the woman as director or project manager, and say that she both planned and carried out the preparations. Rickard is one of these men. While Sandra, his partner, says that they have decided things together he has another view of the situation.

Yes, it's Sandra who has been more engaged in the preparations so to speak. She is better at this than I am. I'm bad at following plans, so I'd better keep away from it. I'm bad at planning altogether. (...) I can do it if the decision's been taken. (...) She [Sandra] takes the decisions so I can work from that, so to speak. (Rickard)

Rickard is one of the men who say that his bride gives him orders; seldom do the men come up with initiatives of their own. He feels that he lacks the knowledge of how to make plans. This does not seem to trouble him. It is just the way he is, he says. This is a big difference between the men and women. While this argument is quite common among the men, no woman said that she was bad at planning. Often she seems to be too good at it (as in Carolina's case). With one of the other couples, the bridegroom tried to take responsibility, but his bride did not seem to fully let him do so. She said that she did not like his decisions, and wanted him to change plans because she does not think it will be good enough otherwise.

As mentioned before, the individual narratives become part of the official stories. For example, in the public story, women are responsible for the aesthetics (clothing and adornment) (Knuts 2006). This makes it easy for a woman to say that she is taking responsibility for the wedding preparations, and for the groom that he does not need to take any responsibility. The wedding becomes a parallel world to the everyday quest for equality. The unequal relations between the men and women become visible (Connell 2005). In many cases this happens without the couples even seeming to recognize it.

But the discourse of equality is yet visible in the ambivalent and contradictory traits that several of the interviewees also reveal in their stories. This particularly applies to some of the women, who seem to try to present a picture of the couple as equal in terms of the division of labour. Their men, on the other hand, often have a different understanding; one that is significantly more gender stereotyped. My interpretation is that the women in these cases had difficulties dealing with the different expectations of what it means to be a woman today. Popular culture's gender-stereotyped wedding story stands in sharp contrast to the couple's

everyday quest for equality. In the public story of weddings, the woman is responsible for the project. The bride *is* the wedding. This, I would argue, also affects the image of the brides and grooms, and the wedding project often becomes much more important for the woman than for the man. For a woman to marry is a way to do gender.

Discussion

To conclude, one can say that the public stories of weddings are expressed in the interviewees' narratives in several ways. The interviewed brides and grooms have images of what a proper wedding should be and how the wedding scene should play out. The story of this wedding can be summed up with the words 'just like in the movies'. The movies related to are often Hollywood productions, romantic comedies with standard ending: a big and beautiful wedding in church with a lovely bride stage centre.

The bride both directs and plays the main character in the wedding scene, in the public narrative as well as in the personal one. When marrying, each couple takes part in a play where the unequal power relations between men and women come very much alive again, often without the men and women are even recognizing it. This happens in the rite, which in many ways is understood to be a manifestation of the loving relationship between the man and woman—in a country that is said to be the most equal in the world.

The public narratives are also expressed in the silence of the personal narratives; those things that the brides and grooms do *not* mention when they talk about proper weddings. These silent themes, which are excluded from the image of a proper wedding, are children and small civil weddings. Both themes are very much present in the lives of the interviewees, but they are not part of the image of what a proper wedding should be. Not in the public narratives, and not in the personal ones.

Earlier research shows that children and the concept of family are in focus when couples talk about their motives for marrying (Jarnkvist 2011), but in their image of what a proper wedding is, the children are placed in the shadows. They are actually not mentioned at all. Instead the couple—especially the bride—is in the spotlight. The absence of children in the interviewees' wedding narratives marks the effect that public narratives have on personal narratives. In major Hollywood movies, the marrying couple do not even have any children of their own when they get married. In movies, the children are born around nine months after the wedding. In the lives of the couples who marry in Sweden the reality is different. But that does not seem to affect their image of the 'right' sort of wedding.

The situation is the same when it comes to civil weddings. Since 2006 they are in clear majority. Except from some weddings in bigger cities, civil weddings in

Sweden are most often small and intimate. The kind of wedding that is seldom a theme in public stories. These weddings do not 'sell' and are of no commercial interest. This is probably one of the reasons why they are so much in the shade of the public narrative of weddings.

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Chapter 9

Emotional and aesthetic labour in hospitality

Kristina Zampoukos

On a Saturday evening in mid-October 2009, I entered through the doors to an upmarket hotel in central Stockholm. At the reception, the blonde, light-skinned, Swedish-speaking woman checked me in with a smile on her face. Later that evening, I went downstairs to have dinner at the hotel restaurant. The waiters and waitresses, all light-skinned and in their twenties, were dressed in black with white aprons, a uniform which was further emphasized by the controlled and professional service style. At the table in front of me a group of English-speaking men were talking business. To the right of me an older Italian couple asked a waitress for advice regarding a wine that would go with their salmon trout. The following morning, when leaving my room, I met the Filipina maids in the corridor. As I went into the dining room, I happened to glance into the kitchen where a young African man was washing dishes. Meanwhile, Latin American waiters and waitresses moved quickly back and forth between the dining-room and the kitchen filling up bread baskets, bringing coffee and scrambled eggs, and removing dirty dishes.

Several studies confirm the existence of a social division of labour through which certain bodies (in terms of for instance sex, class and skin colour) are connected to (or excluded from) specific work tasks, skills and spaces within the hotel (Glenn 1992; Sherman; 2007; McNeill 2008; McDowell et al. 2009; Zampoukos & Ioannides 2011). As Hancock and Tyler (2000) has observed, the mere location of attractive women at frontstage areas such as reception desks indicates the interplay between gender, body, and power in work organizations. Obviously, to be employable in hospitality necessitates the employee to have a body and perhaps also the conduct that match the specific work task: some are front-line workers who need to interact with guests, thereby also performing various kinds of emotional labour, whilst others, such as chefs and cleaners, perform their work without direct contact with guests, and thus also without the same requirement to manage emotions.

Occupational categories such as receptionists, chefs, and security guards are coded differently in terms of gender. Working as a receptionist or as a security guard also requires different forms of gendered emotional labour. The receptionist is supposed to be pleasant, social, caring, docile, attentive to the needs of others, and willing to serve the guest. Since the dominating principle in any service encounter is summarized as 'the customer is always right', this also requires some

level of deference on the part of the worker. In security work, to deal with a drunk and disturbing customer requires the worker to keep calm and not to be easily offended. Yet there is little need for the security guard to be docile and deferential. On the contrary, the security guard is expected to be *active*, to *take command*, and to *protect* guests and workers from being harassed. As such the security guard represents a masculinity associated with power and authority, while the receptionist embodies the 'generic' and 'soft' skills associated with femininity (Kerfoot & Korczynski 2005).

Using the concepts of emotional (Hochschild 1983; Wharton 2009; Davidson et al. 2007) and aesthetic (Witz et al. 2003; Nickson & Warhurst 2009) labour, I argue that workers need to discipline their outer and inner selves in order to fit the requirements of the various tasks that are performed in different spaces of the hotel. Overall, the kind of interactive service work that hospitality represents is coded as feminine (Kerfoot & Korczynski 2005) and is strongly connected to the occupational segregation by sex where women have been employed in caring occupations and occupations which, in the words of Nixon (2009: 306), require 'friendly, attractive and "charming" service'. Nevertheless, gender is made explicit through, for instance, stereotyped occupational niches in hospitality, through clothing, differentiated ways of managing customers, and so forth.

The empirical basis of this essay consists of interviews with hospitality workers of various occupational categories, stretching from cleaners to receptionists, including people in managerial positions such as human resources managers, sales managers, hotel managers, and the like. The interviews were conducted in 2011–2013 in three different settings: a leading hotel located in central Stockholm, a hotel in suburb Stockholm belonging to an international chain, and a small hotel in Vemdalen, in the county of Jämtland in the north of Sweden. Apart from the interviews I draw on a few observations that I have made as a working-life researcher studying hospitality, but also as a traveller and guest at a range of hotels.

The emotional and the aesthetic

In many service jobs, interpersonal gestures such as smiling are part of the exchange. Front-of-house staff are obliged, by managing their own feelings, to create a positive emotional state in the person in front of them. The importance of emotional labour is demonstrated by the following quote (translated from Swedish) from one of my interviewees, a female manager of a chain hotel:

To a certain degree, you have to separate the personal from the professional you. On the other hand, you should not exaggerate the separation between the two, because it will harm the service offered, making it less genuine, less personalized. You need to balance the two,

and you also need to find new energy in the successful service encounters in order to avoid emotional exhaustion.

Emotional labour has been defined by Hochschild (1983: 7) as ‘the management of feeling to create a publicly observable facial and bodily display: emotional labour is sold for a wage and therefore has exchange value’. In her groundbreaking study of flight attendants, Hochschild’s concern is first and foremost with emotion management and how employees, notably in occupations involving voice-to voice or face-to face service encounters, shape and direct their feelings in order to align privately felt emotions with normative expectations, or to bring the outward expression of feeling into line with what is the appropriate and expected norm. Hochschild uses the concepts of *deep acting* and *surface acting* to illustrate how feelings are managed. Deep acting refers to the attempt to change what is privately felt in order to match the expected feeling, while surface acting focus on what is publicly displayed. Part of the job is to disguise fatigue and irritation, since that makes the *effort* to perform the work visible and the product—customer contentment—would be harmed. However, Hochschild argues, the urge to perform emotions that are not genuinely felt might lead employees to experience ‘emotive dissonance’ where ‘maintaining a difference between feeling and feigning over the long run leads to strain’ (1983: 90).

In one of the settings, the small hotel in Vemdalen, front-of-house staff were asked about how they deal with ‘tricky’ customers, for instance customers who are drunk and become offensive. The female interviewees all took a quite pragmatic stance and claimed that there was no use in becoming upset if a drunken customer behaves badly—it simply will not solve the problem. Instead their strategy was to persuade the customer—in a gentle but firm way—to leave the bar. They all felt reassured by the possibility of calling the guard if things got out of hand. However, one of the interviewees, a 25-year-old man, admitted that he sometimes was unable to disguise irritation and control his emotions:

There have been times when I have quarreled with drunken customers. If I am stressed out and the music is playing loud, I might raise my voice to a customer who behaves badly. I try to make myself as big as possible when I tell them off.

To persuade or to ‘preen oneself’ represent two strategies used when dealing with misbehaving customers. Although constituting a small sample, it suggests that these strategies are chosen in accordance with gender expectations.

In order to fully appreciate the consequences of emotional labour among employees, we also need to consider what it means to give service, and how the meaning of good service varies depending on the context. ‘To serve’ is generally associated with self-subordination and deference (Sherman 2007; Wharton 2009),

but according to Hall (1993) in her study of restaurants and servicing scripts, what corresponds to 'good service' varies according to the different types of settings as well as female and male workers in these settings. 'Good service', in Halls' study, depends on the type of establishment, the social class of the customer and the 'salience of gender stereotypes'. Upmarket restaurants (or hotels) apply a formal, reserved service style whereas less prestigious restaurants (hotels) prescribe a familial, casual style of service. Hence, the service style at the hotel belonging to the international chain is informal and casual, and aims at making people feel 'at home' and 'among friends', whilst the service style of the leading hotel is quite formal, professional, and 'de luxe', designed for prime ministers, Nobel prize winners, and world-famous artists. In sum, the style of a particular service setting is what regulates both the emotional and the aesthetic labour.

One of my interviewees was a woman with experience from working in leading hotels in both Bangkok and Stockholm. During the interview it became clear that the style of service not only depends on the different types of settings, but also the cultural context. She claimed that giving service in Thailand would differ, for instance, in the way that member of staff approaches a guest. In Thailand, it is considered inappropriate for a waiter or waitress to remain standing in front of a guest who is seated, since that would force the guest to look up to the person serving. The usual conduct is for the waiter or waitress to take a physical position below that of the guest, also signalling deference. In her present position as a waitress in a hotel in Stockholm with similar standards as the one in Bangkok, that kind of deference would seem 'out of the service script'. Instead, deference is required if for instance a guest reacts in a negative way because of her broken Swedish. Even if this happens only on rare occasions, it hurts. However, she—the professional waitress—must back off to avoid further problems in the service delivery.

While Hochschild concentrates on the management of emotions, Witz et al. (2003) turn to the 'fleshy surface' and the concept of aesthetic labour. For them, aesthetic labour is equal to the mobilization, development, and commoditization of embodied 'dispositions'. In essence, embodied dispositions such as 'good looks' and a 'nice voice' becomes mobilized, developed, and commoditized through processes of recruitment, selection, and training. During these processes, bodily attributes are transformed into skills that can be used as to produce a styled service encounter appropriate to the given corporate strategy and branding. Equally, Linda McDowell (2009: 338) claims that 'The social attributes and sexed bodies of employees have moved centre-stage, as growing numbers of employers demand, and customers expect to interact with, aesthetically-pleasing bodies, especially in high status or high value exchanges'. In order to illustrate how aesthetic labour is put into practice in hospitality, I will turn to the leading hotel located in Stockholm

and give a few examples on how the service style and corporate brand is reflected in workers' clothing.

The service style of the leading hotel in Stockholm was described in the words of a male waiter as 'to act without being noticed', which is also the motto of the famous Wallenberg family (in Latin: *Esse, non videri*). In the hotel, which can be described as quite formal, conservative, and upper class, employees wear uniforms. Female employees (receptionists and concierges) wear suits (skirt reaching the knee, a jacket pinched in at the waist) in grey or dark blue, while men belonging to the same occupational category wear suits (trousers and jackets) in the same colours. Waitresses wear dark skirts that end at the knees, and white, gold-buttoned jackets, again pinched at the waist. Waiters wear a similar uniform when it comes to colours. The uniforms serve several purposes. They make it easier to distinguish employees from guests; they underline the distinction between female and male employees; and they also signal the discrete, controlled, and highly professional service style that is part of the hotel brand and aesthetics. In a sense, employees are asked both to do and not do bodies, since their uniforms works as to make distinctions between employee–guest, male–female, receptionist–waitress, and so forth, yet at the same time they are supposed to 'act without being noticed'. Furthermore, in order to act without being noticed, everything from the setting of the table, the arrangement of flowers, and the silver service is meticulously prepared and thought through. Naturally, to act without being noticed means that employees need to control their emotions as well. The female interviewee told me that the evening before the interview she had been serving a Thai minister on visit. Suddenly, she was asked to translate the menu and she could not think of the word for '*röding*' (char). The translation from Swedish to Thai had been overlooked, she was not prepared, she blushed and started to sweat, the tray becoming increasingly heavy as she searched her memory for the correct word. When preparations fail, the acting without being noticed becomes difficult and instead appears the emotional and bodily worker.

Concluding remarks

The crucial point in the creation and delivery of a hospitality service is literally the *interface* between producer and consumer. But that also entails the interconnectedness of the intangible, since a feeling of ease, of well-being, excitement, and so on per definition is embodied. Similarly, the worker is a feeling person with hopes, desires, and worries; a person sensitive also to the mood, needs, desires, and temperament of the person in front of her or him.

Although conceptually distinct, disentangling the emotional from the aesthetic empirically can be difficult. Even Hochschild alludes to their interconnectedness when defining emotional labour as 'the management of feeling to create a publicly

observable *facial* and *bodily* display' (emphasis added). As far as the literature is concerned, emotional labour is performed *on* the self *for* someone else. Emotion *management* is possibly also distinguished by the role that employers and managers play to make sure that employees manifest emotions in accordance with implicit or explicit display rules. Aesthetic labour follows a similar track: the employee works on her or his body and bodily conduct in order to meet the expectations of the customer and employer. In a sense, then, emotional and aesthetic labour blend together; the controlled emotional display becomes part of the aesthetic; and the control of aesthetics is expected to create certain emotions within the customer. Emotional and aesthetic labour are embodied and become gendered and classed in relation to the service setting and the corporate brand, in relation to guests as well as co-workers, and as a consequence of gender and otherwise stereotyped occupational niches that operate in different parts of the hotel(s).

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Chapter 10

Poststructuralism, Marxism, intersectionality, and public-sector labour unrest

Magnus Granberg

The purpose of this essay is to discuss how to carry out an intersectional analysis of public-sector labour unrest. The paper does this by reviewing and discussing some important debates in social theory. It starts out from a discussion of Laclau and Mouffe's post-Marxist version of social movement analysis, proceeds through debates on intersectionality and new feminist materialism to revisit traditional perspectives that still hold sway in social-movement research in general and research on labour unrest in particular.

The literature selected for this discussion was determined by the problems encountered in my research on public-sector labour unrest. Conventionally, this kind of study would discuss research on labour conflict (see Gall 2012 for a recent contribution) and perhaps the major traditions in social movement analysis (for example, McAdam et al. 2001). However, I intend to study labour unrest in terms of subjectivization, especially as it relates to neo-liberalism and to intersectionality. This means that I am interested in how workers understand themselves, their opponents, the public sector, and the social context in which disputes occur. Who constitutes the 'we' of collective action? Gender, class, citizenry, ethnicity, professional group—people belong to many collectivities that potentially affect subjectivization. However, research on labour conflict is a predominantly quantitative enterprise, and mainstream social movement analysis is mainly concerned with instrumental, strategic, and technical aspects of movement activity (Maignashca 2011; Taylor & Whittier 1998) reflecting an enduring gender bias.

In what follows I will discuss particular works from a range of traditions that have influenced research on labour conflict and subjectivization. There once was a time in the history of class, or so it would seem from present retrospective analyses (Holgersson 2011), when the field of research was almost completely Marxian, and class-consciousness was assumed to be an automatic product of capitalism. Poststructuralism marks the end of any standard, accepted identity. Instead, the study of identity/subject *formation* took centre stage. Laclau and Mouffe's was perhaps the most influential poststructuralist critique and revision of Marxism ([1985] 2001). At the same time, feminism was criticized for essentializing the experiences of white, middle-class women, igniting debates on intersectionality (Mulinari and Sandell 1999). Some argue that so-called 'new feminist materialism'

constitutes the centre of feminist theorizing (Alaimo & Hekman 2008). These are the traditions I intend to touch on here.

Poststructuralist critique of Marxism

Laclau and Mouffe (2001, henceforth L&M) depart from the state of Marxism in the late Seventies and early Eighties. The predicaments of Marxism resulted from social developments that could not credibly be subsumed under its determinist framework: for example, the changing composition of the working class and the advent of new social movements. L&M consider contemporary internal modifications of Marxist analysis in this light, such as the 'relative autonomy' afforded to social phenomena and their determination only 'in the last instance' by the economy, but consider them insufficient. Marxism lacks a notion of the social that can comprehend present-day conflicts and movements: social antagonisms develop in fields of discursivity and thus externally to Marxist conceptions of reality (viii–ix). The authors tour Marxist literature in search for the contours of a theory that can account for the discursive, focusing on debates on 'hegemony'. In the first chapter, they trace the origin of the concept in the classical Marxist tradition in an investigation starting from the founding fathers of Marxist orthodoxy, Kautsky and Plekhanov, and some of its discontents, Luxemburg, Lenin, and Bernstein.

Post-war revisions, introduced by Althusser, are also deemed lacking. No break was made with class essentialism that could have unfixed identities and introduced 'the open and politically negotiable character of every identity'. For in reality 'the presence of some objects in others prevents any of their identities from being fixed' (104), relationality prevents the suturing of identities. Instead of a single totalizing rationality, there is a 'field of discursivity' in which exists a 'surplus of meaning' that subverts every concrete discourse as a system of differential entities (111). The plurality of this field subverts the differential meaning imposed by single discourses.

According to L&M, discourses are constituted as attempts to dominate the field, 'to arrest the flow of differences, to construct a centre' (112). This results in partial fixations—nodal points—always partially unfixed by a surplus of meaning which undermines suturing processes, thus creating antagonism and struggle (125). The subversion of old discursive formations corrodes their systems of meaning, displacing them with new series of equivalences and inserting new differentiations. For example, a revolutionary discursive formation comprehends the elements of society as differentiated functions ensuring the rule of colonialism, patriarchy, capitalism, and so on. This negation attempts to superimpose alternative systems of meaning in a reconstitution of the social. If successful, it will establish a new (always unsutured) system of 'relational identities' (142).

Hegemonic struggles shift the frontiers of the social, meaning is continuously altered, the surplus of meaning shrinks and expands in a never-ending 'war of position' (137). L&M thus indicate how the revolution of 1789 and the advent of democratic discourse enabled, by means of its displacement to new areas, the politicisation of a growing series of social relations (152–9). They also indicate how critical positions were usurped by neo-liberalism in the Eighties enabling the consolidation of bourgeois hegemony (169–75).

What is the significance of L&M's theory of hegemony for the study of public-sector labour unrest? To follow their lead, it would seem appropriate first to explore the subject positions from which acts of resistance are launched. It would moreover be essential to identify those nodal points that are centres of semiotic contention. Furthermore, one might ask what features of the societal field of discursivity enable these positions and conflicts. This would point towards the interconnections between workers' subjectivities and neo-liberal (or new public management) discourse. Certainly, other discourses making up the surplus of meaning are potentially important, such as those relating to the earlier universalistic or social-democratic welfare regime.

Intersectionality

It is worth contrasting L&M's perspective with what could lazily be called 'positivism', referring not to beliefs in absolute objectivity, to the verifiability and replicability of good science, or the divide separating observer and observed, but rather to a tendency to consider phenomena as 'sutured' (to use L&M's phrase) or compartmentalized; phenomena are held to be more or less self-identical. Opposed to this position are different kinds of relational ontologies. Russell in the discussion of Hegel in *A History of Western Philosophy* (1946: 757–73) restated Hegel's position, that the definition of a phenomenon consists of its relations to the rest of the world, and criticized it from a practical perspective: from where is science then supposed to start? Similarly, Popper (1962) accused dialectics for embracing contradictions – the co-constitution as well as co-presence of phenomena through their internal relations. The position that Russell and Popper seem to take is incompatible with L&M's universe of hegemonic practices, surpluses of meaning, and unsutured identities. And, crucially, this philosophical issue re-emerges again and again in the subsequent literature, always affirming the relational nature of the world.

Intersectionality studies on the co-existence of multiple forms of power relations and holds that such relations, while analytically distinguishable only exist in conjunction with each other. Ferree (2011: 56) offers the following description:

In such a complex system, gender is not a dimension limited to the organization of reproduction or family, class is not a dimension equated with the economy, and race is not a category reduced to the primacy of

ethnicities, nations and borders, but all of the processes that systematically organize families, economies and nations are co-constructed along with the meanings of gender, race and class that are presented in and reinforced by these institutions separately and together.

A relational ontology is also at work in intersectional research strategies. This is at least how I interpret Knapp's discussion of Adorno's de-reifying strategy of analysing things as 'text of their becoming' (Knapp 2011: 201), read as things that are materialized histories thus including within themselves their relations to other things.

How should an intersectional analysis of labour unrest be carried out? Feminist social-movement research (Taylor and Whittier 1998) has suggested research strategies to find the gendered and gendering character in instances of social conflict. Einwohner et al. (2000) argue that gender can be both an asset and a liability, as it can be mobilized by subordinate groups and mobilized against them. They suggest a typology of ways that a movement tends to be gendered: in its composition, its goals, strategies, identities, and attributions. All these aspects contribute to a wider discursive process, in the shape of a conflict over how issues are 'framed' (see also Ferree 2011). In regards to the later, frames that resonate with pre-existing systems of beliefs and values will be more feasible *ceteris paribus*, and aligning the movement with traditional gender frames may therefore be effective in the short term, but questioning such overarching frames as gendered scripts for public conduct accomplishes more fundamental changes if successful, according to Einwohner et al. (2000). These authors build on the seminal article by Taylor (1999), and many subsequent researchers have followed these basic patterns, using a gender-lens and with a general focus on framing (discursive) processes. It is this that can be seen in the literature on labour conflict and gender.

The literature indicates that labour unrest is at the same time gender-shaping and shaped by gender; there is mutual transformation. Thus, in an analysis of women participating in the Pittsburgh steel strike of 1985, Fonow (1998) shows that, by striking, women violated codes of gender while simultaneously challenging the nature of militancy: they defied efforts to organize the strike along a gendered division of labour and appealed to the community for support while framing the dispute as a matter of community survival. In their study of a strike among day-care workers in Berlin in 1989, Ferree and Roth (1998) also emphasize the co-constitution of gender and class, and the ways in which the specific dynamics of this constitution were vital to the outcome of the conflict. Briskin (2007: 22–6) considers women worker's collective actions as ruptures in established gender and class relations. According to Briskin, it is important to see that even the most instrumental kinds of labour unrest, 'nickel and dime strikes', raise issues of

control over labour processes and thus general issues of power. Briskin draws on the vast literature on women's strikes to show that these actions are not only ruptures in class relations but also in gender relations—at work, in households, in civil society at large. She develops an analytical framework for the intersectional study of labour conflict named 'gendering labor militancy' which begins with the assumption that 'in the course of women's labor militancy, gender is mobilized, resisted and transformed' (2007: 22) and that these processes also shape militancy. Gendered and gendering strife, moreover, occur in the context of work organizations, that is, specific inequality regimes where class divisions are simultaneously racialized and gendered (Acker 2006a, 2006b, 2012).

Thus, an intersectional analysis of public-sector strife would look at how gender is mobilized, resisted, and generally used by workers (as a collective identity forging solidarity for instance) and how it is resisted (maybe as a definition of their labour motivating low pay). It would try to see how these processes impact gender relations and gendered scripts. Does it reproduce or alter traditional notions and practices? Lastly, how does this 'doing of gender' shape militancy, or how is militancy gendered, co-constituting itself along with gendered practices in terms of goals, strategies, and attributions?

New materialism

Different traditions are discerned in the works of Barad, perhaps the most influential writer among the 'feminist materialists' (Alaimo & Hekman 2008; der Tuin 2011; Hird 2004). Poststructuralists see the influence of Deleuze and Guattari, and stress the similarities between the diffractive methodology of Barad, and Haraway (2006), and the rhizome or the lines of flight (Davies 2012). Barad's fusion of discursive or material reality could also be said to have been anticipated by the rejection of the notion of the mental character of discourse in L&M mentioned earlier in this paper. In a general way I would say that Barad develops a 'relational ontology' (Barad in Juelskjær & Schwennessen 2012: 17) that has basic similarities with the perspectives discussed in this essay. The question is what sets this perspective apart from the others, and how it might contribute to an analysis of labour unrest.

While the debate on new feminist materialism appears to have taken off fairly recently, back in the mid-Nineties Barad was lamenting the 'privileging of epistemological issues over ontological ones in the constructivist literature' (1996: 162). This problematic has tended to be interpreted as an assault on feminism for invoking a duality of cultural and material, but it is probably more to the point that Barad was engaged in the old issue of observer and observed, and the ability of science to accurately 'represent' the external world. In discussing Niels Bohr's approach to quantum physics, Barad showed that observers and the means of

observation are internal to what is observed, so that what is observed is not external reality but co-constituted *phenomena*. Instead of a 'Cartesian cut' separating science from the reality it represents, Barad proposes a series of 'agential cuts', which create objects as much as they represent them, while at the same time not regarding objectivity as a delusion—science still generates reliable and communicable knowledge about reproducible 'phenomena' (1996: 186). In a more general way the discussion of the riddles of quantum physics suggested a relational ontology, denying straightforward separability of 'things' as well as temporalities, which Barad since then has developed in a series of writings.

Bohr's findings suggested that 'wholeness' was a pivotal feature of the study of quantum physics (Barad 1996: 170). Since observation was shown to be inherent to the existence of the observed phenomena, this suggested ways to bridge the divide between constructivism and culture, on the one hand, and the world of matter on the other. Materials and their discursive significations are co-constitutive of phenomena—and as such both imbued with agency; since they are inextricably intertwined it is pointless to attribute agency to one realm of the world and passivity to another. But even formulations, such as 'inextricably intertwined', suggest a distorted outlook in Barad's view. We are not dealing with entities that are constituted before their entwining; relations precede the formation of entities, relations are ontologically prior. Hence the word interaction was replaced by 'intra-action' in Barad's terminology (179) and criticism waged against the persistent tendency of thingification, that is, 'the turning of relations into "things" ' (Barad 2003: 812). The later reflects a lingering power of positivism, or at least Cartesian representationalism. Thus the objects of analysis in Barad's approach are *phenomena* or 'ontologically primitive relations', and agential cuts are made to delineate these relations (815). But, what is more, time is also found to be profoundly relational, or rather, non-linear and discontinuous. Barad (2010) shows this by entering into dialogue with Derrida. Generally speaking, the latter's 'hauntology' stipulates that the pasts and futures are constitutive of existing phenomena in the here and now, while in language these are defined by excluding other temporalities and features; these 'others' 'haunt' what thus appears as discrete and self-identical (Derrida 2003). Barad shows that quantum physics indicates that a post-experimental change of conditions alters phenomena (waves, particles) *post festum*. Relationality makes it seem as if the past has been changed; it entangles temporalities making it seem as if the future alters the past while, in fact, it is the word 'event' that is questioned (Barad 2010: 260–1).

There has been some debate about the innovativeness of Barad's framework and of new feminist materialism in general (Ahmed 2008). Barad explicitly considers it an advance on Poststructuralism, and claims to resolve the problem of how discursive practice produces material bodies with which Foucault and Butler

struggled (Barad 2003: 807–11); and the analysis of quantum entanglements proves the existence of Derrida's hauntology (2010: 260). Bearing this in mind, I will look at the contributions the new materialist perspective offers researchers of labour unrest. The judgement is mixed. Firstly, many attributes are obviously not that new. By taking a look at how L&M handle the problem of drawing boundaries, we see that an agential realist method is anticipated: 'limits only exist insofar as a systematic ensemble of differences can be cut out as *totality* with regard to something *beyond* them, and it is only through this cutting out that the totality constitutes itself as formation' (143; original emphasis). And, while the making of *phenomena* or 'ontologically primitive relations' into the objects of analysis is positively a central feature in Barad's theoretical framework as it relates to research practices, I would argue that this is precisely what Marx did – and on the basis of a philosophy of internal relations a good 150 years old, with evident affinities with the 'intra-active' outlook.

A more constructive issue relates to Barad's overcoming of the divide separating matter and agency. I am thus inspired to ask how technologies are constitutive of the agency displayed in collective action. Analysis is encouraged to explore how the introduction of, say, x-ray machinery has influenced the subjectivities of nurses, noted participants in contemporary public-sector labour conflicts (for example, Briskin 2011a, 2011b). It has been argued that this development makes nursing more qualified and consequently deserving of larger salaries as well as participation in decision-making. Following Barad, we might ask if this has changed nurses' subjectivities in such a way as to increase their confidence and agency. Modern hospitals now abound with devices that cannot be operated without the skills of nurses. This increased of educational resources makes them difficult to replace, leaving nurses less vulnerable to redundancy, and hospital management more vulnerable to the collective withdrawal of their labour.

Dialectics

Starting with Engels's codification of his and Marx's writings and consolidation in Second International orthodoxy, towards the end of the nineteenth century Marxism's development was increasingly influenced by positivism (Månsson 1987; Schmidt 1996). Despite the efforts of the Frankfurt School, this trend continued during the first half of the twentieth century, at the same time as Marxism's gradual absorption into academe (Anderson 1979) and its waning connection to workers' movements. In economics, Marxian value theory was amended to correspond to a modern equilibrium model (Freeman & Carchedi 1996). All this amounted to an expulsion of the dialectic that could be seen in the structuralism of the Althusserians alluded to earlier in looking at Laclau and Mouffe. Even with the disintegration of their school, an explicitly non-dialectical Marxism survived in so-

called 'analytical Marxism' (Lebowitz 1988). Because of this development, Poststructuralism at the end of the Seventies almost solely occupied a critical position that was abandoned by Marxism as the later abandoned the dialectic and, in a new twist, turned the dialectic against Marxism. Sweeping generalizations such as these are bound to distort, and for one, some dialectical Marxism (a necessary tautology) was never absorbed into positivism. New strands developed along with social upheaval in the tumultuous Seventies and persistent economic convulsions since that decade strengthened an anti-equilibrium version of Marxian economics (Freeman et al. 2004). It is to these 'dialectical Marxisms' I now turn to explore their relevance to my research topic and to contrast with the theories already outlined, looking at both the philosophical considerations and the possible contours of an analysis of labour unrest based on Marxist dialectics.

Ollman (2003) defines Marx's dialectic as a philosophy of internal relations. The later 'treats the relations in which anything stands as essential parts of what it is, so that a significant change in any of these relations registers as a qualitative change in the system of which it is part' and considers 'relations rather than things as the fundamental building blocks of reality'; moreover, 'in Marx's view such relations are internal to each factor ... they are ontological relations' (ibid: 5, 25). This relational character of the world poses the problem of where to begin analysis, where to make the first cut in Barad's words, and Marx thus applied a method of abstraction that draws a set of provisional boundaries to demarcate objects. Just as Barad (2010), in dialogue with Derrida, stretches the interactive (or as he would have it, intra-active) character of phenomena both horizontally, through space, and vertically, through time, dialectics expands our 'notion of anything to include, as aspects of what it is, both the process by which it has become and the broader interactive context in which it is found' (Ollman 2003: 13):

few would deny that everything in the world is changing at some pace and in one way or another, that history and systemic connections belong to the real world. The problem is how to think adequately about them, how not to distort them, and how to give them the attention and weight they deserve ... Dialectics restructures our thinking about reality by replacing the commonsense notion of 'thing' (as something that has a history and has external connections with other things) with notions of 'process' (which contains its history and possible futures) and 'relation' (which contains as part of what it is its ties with other relations). (Ollman 2003: 13)

I find that in my version of this there are a great many philosophies of internal relations separating a diverse body of social theory from positivism. Even in the structuralism of the Althusserians there is a certain Hegelian kind of dialectic in

which phenomena are reduced to their internal relations with the economy. L&M on the contrary, utilize a very different kind of relational ontology, in which many coexisting discursive formations ensure that all phenomena have multiple sets of internal relations, and thus that their meaning at all times remain unsutured and ambiguous. The same goes for intersectional and new materialist analyses. Clearly, there are significant differences between Marxist and Poststructuralist relational ontologies.

A little on Marxist dialectics. It is important to stress the implications of this aforementioned ontology, especially as it relates to the materiality of discourse and vice versa. As relations do not take material form, that which is vital and real for the dialectician actually does not exist for the positivist. To see this, consider value in Marx's sense, that is, the socially necessary labour time needed to produce commodities, regulating both the relative price movements of single commodities and the aggregate price of all commodities together (Kliman 2007). Socially necessary labour thus depends on the changing pace of technological development, so that when technology improves, production costs and thus prices fall. Socially necessary labour is thus very much real in its effects on economic life, but does not itself take material form; it is a *real abstraction*. This view contrasts sharply with positivist thinking; here there are no Weberian ideal types that are in fact devices (in the sense of something which does not exist, either as an abstraction or in appearance). Real abstractions, on the other hand, are not heuristic devices; Marxism does not attempt to 'represent' reality or to invoke a strict duality of language and world which language describes, such as in ideal types which are 'representations' of 'real' things. Real abstractions are concepts that centre on the dynamics that research seeks to highlight, unlike ideal types that essentialize the things in themselves. Of course, ideal types are made to describe processes (models of bureaucracy or general equilibrium come to mind), but nevertheless are inevitably static since that which is supposed to be explained is stipulated from the outset. Ideal types only 'explain' their ideal states and thus easily become powerful ideological tools, such as the equilibrium models that project images of an infallible market (which does not exist; there are only varying degrees of instability) perfectly congruent with the politics neo-liberalism (Freeman & Carchedi 1996). It is an important achievement of Poststructuralism to develop the concept of ideology in such a way as to illustrate this reality and bias of 'representations'. This surely also goes for Marxist concepts, which have many a time also been transformed into ideological constructs, but it should be noted that Marxism is antithetical to the logocentric representationalism criticized by Derrida (2003), Barad (1996) and other poststructuralists.

It should also be noted how 'ideology' was used in dialectical Marxism, not to designate representations of an already present world (for example, Singer & Weir

2006: 461) but as part and parcel of that world. In the fourth section of the first chapter of *Capital* on the fetishism of commodities, Marx (1969) showed how the linking of disconnected production processes by means of the market conceals human interrelations and relays images of the fantastic self-identical commodity; thus, how modernity represents itself is part of modernity's essence, in this case the market, and entails a compartmentalized ontology obscuring internal relations. In a similar vein, Debord (1987) a century later in *Society of the Spectacle* commented on how the omnipresence of commodities had made explicit ideology superfluous; every commodity is in itself ideological. It is only in crude interpretations that ideology has been depicted as external representation; Marxist dialectics have always considered it immanent.

What then of specific suggestions as to how labour unrest can be analysed dialectically? They indicate the character attributed to Marxist concepts such as 'relations of production', which cannot be reduced to ownership relations or the organization of production processes. Rather, the concept denotes material-discursive practices, which among other things include the subject positions of workers and middle and upper management. As all other phenomena they are considered here as unities in contradiction between social relations and processes (Carchedi 2008a: 496). The contradictory nature of the relations of production makes for the possibility of class-consciousness. It is not simply that the logic of capitalist production relations is contrary to the 'material interests' of workers (this is obviously so), but that the ways workers are subjectivized in these relations are contradictory (L&M would say ambiguous or unsutured) and thus imply their opposite.

What of the contradictory nature of phenomena thought of as change? Change by definition involves the transformation of phenomena into different kinds of phenomena. In other words phenomena are *realized*, actually existing, and *potential*, all at the same time, or they contain within themselves realms of possibilities.⁸ The unity of realized and potential qualities makes change possible—a world of self-identical elements would be static—but also indicate the contradictions inherent in phenomena, since realized phenomena contain the origin of their potentially opposite states. If realized, phenomena are contradictory, because as potentials they are different from themselves, then it is clear that L&M's assessment (2001: 122–7) that the dialectic is a doctrine about the contradictory nature of the real cannot explain antagonism, which is in their view a result of the overflow of meaning and the prevention of unambiguous positivity, is based on semantic differences with this characterization of dialectics. They view contradiction as the

⁸ This and the following sections can only hint at issues dealt with comprehensively in Carchedi 2008a, 2008b.

conceptual opposition between terms. Here contradiction is used to designate the fact that phenomena contain their potential opposites, and antagonism refers to the constant negation of this opposite potential to ensure the reproduction of a certain relation. In this view, contradiction implies antagonism, and the unsutured or ambiguous character of all phenomena do not depend on a surplus of meaning since all phenomena are contradictory, unsutured or whatever, in *every* aspect of their existence. And this, moreover, is probably the reason why L&M's Derridean conception gravitates towards an analysis of political discourse, while the one proposed here gravitates towards an analysis of the practices constitutive of the relations of production. Whereas L&M see the proliferation of progressive political conflicts as a result of the continuous displacement of the democratic logic to new areas of life (class conflict would be its displacement to the realm of economics), the perspective described here is that class struggle, as well as class consciousness, arises in the contradictory nature of the relations of production.

Such an analysis would be performed by examining how workers are explicitly defined, and how these definitions resonate with the practices of work. The specific contradiction in the public-sector subfield of capitalist relations of production arguably lies in the consequences of neo-liberal austerity and restructuring for the identity of professionals and ethos the welfare state (Ancelovici 2011).⁹ This is by no means a novelty. Calhoun (1983) suggested that nineteenth-century artisans had constituted a radical element in the workers' movements because the enlargement of capitalist industry threatened their economic positions. They were deskilled and stripped of their autonomy and status; they lost considerably more than already proletarianized workers, and were more radical. The same could be said to apply to the public-sector professional of today; there might not be a wholesale deskilling, and the strength of communal ties among contemporary public-sector workers are certainly weaker than they were among Calhoun's artisans and peasants, but funding and autonomy are under siege and that this is provoking a worker response. Returning to the fundamentals of this mode of analysis, the ways in which workers are subjectivized in capitalist production is contradictory and contains their opposite: taking the hypothesis of public-sector militancy as a case in point, I would argue that workers who are primarily defined as subordinate and expendable, are at the same time also defined in opposite ways, as autonomous, self-reliant and indispensable. This is the basic philosophical rationale for the possibility of class consciousness, and it is the concrete reason why those groups of workers who attain the most strength as worker-subjects are almost always to be

⁹ Remembering that relations of production are not to be equated with ownership relations, as they are *social* relations, and thus it is no obvious fallacy, although it is disputable, to equate the public sector with such capitalist relations.

found at the forefront of attempts to transform capitalist relations of production into communal ones (Ness & Azzellini 2011).

Lastly, what about determinism and economism? This mode of analysis suggests that, in a way, all phenomena are determined by the relations of production, but are also fundamentally different from the mode of analysis of Althusserianism and positivist Marxism;¹⁰ it states that phenomena are determined, in that some are called into existence as the potential outcome of production (for example, class-consciousness or stocks and derivatives). This is the first sense in which phenomena are determined. In a second sense, even phenomena which are not the direct outcome of production (as conventionally defined) must contribute either to the latter's reproduction or suppression, because they exist in a context of capitalist production relations, and become the latter's conditions of existence when realized. This determination does not fully shape a phenomenon, however; the exact forms phenomena take on depend on all of their internal relations—and this mode of analysis only attempts to gauge their class character. Marxism is simply an exploration of capitalism and the capitalist system's internal relations to other social phenomena. In that sense, it is certainly biased—it illuminates certain social aspects and obscures others—but it does not suggest that the class character of phenomena exhausts all their possible features. Phenomena could in a similar, dialectical manner be analysed in terms of patriarchy, for instance, bringing out still more of their internal relations. Dialectics, in other words, is compatible with intersectional analysis.

Summary

Post-Marxism asks a series of questions. From what subject positions is resistance launched? What features in the field of discursivity make these positions possible? What surplus of meaning generates antagonism? Around which nodal points do conflicts revolve? In this way L&M's perspective tends to connect instances of struggle to general political phenomena; it moves outwards.

Intersectionality, in terms of the analysis of labour unrest, entails an exploration of how, in the course of strife, gender is mobilized, resisted, and transformed—and, in turn, how these processes are co-constituted with labour unrest, so shaping the form it takes.

¹⁰ Structuralism treats structures as crystallized relations (Carchedi 1990, 1987), or a static backdrop, whereas this analysis treats them as an integral part of social practice and an indispensable object of analysis.

New materialism shifts the focus to the material features of subjectivization, and in so doing allows for an understanding of agency and collective power that is closely tied to technology, and knowledge of technology.

Marxist dialectics suggest a focus on the contradictory character of the relations of production; it moves inwards. How are subjects defined as workers and how does this subjectivization resonate with the practices of work? Do workers involved in strife tend to articulate alternative principles for the organization of work?

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Chapter 11

Regional gender contracts and occupational segregation in non-conventional regions

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The aim of this essay is to contribute to the understanding of regional variations of changing gender contracts in the context of employment. Looking particularly to the regions identified as non-conventional two decades ago, we analyse the meaning of being non-conventional. Should those regions be considered as regions in process (moving from a conventional to modern contract), are they stabilized as unconventional as a certain kind of category with their own logic and labour-market structure, or have they perhaps changed in the direction of a more conventional gender contract?

In the last twenty years, Sweden has been held up as a good example of an integrated gender mainstreaming approach focused on structural issues, equality, inclusion, and fairness (King et al. 2008; Daly 2005). This long history of gender-friendly welfare-state policies, in a broad sense, has supported women in taking paid work in the labour market. But, even though Swedish gender policy has been admired, gender equality is far from having been achieved, and several studies demonstrate that an imbalanced gender distribution has existed and continues to exist in the labour market in Sweden (see, for example, Melkas & Anker 2001; Charles 2003; SOU 2005:66). In terms of occupations, hierarchies, and power relations, the mechanisms of segregation in the workplace are changing very slowly. How inequality takes place, to what degree, in what areas of life, and with what effects differ substantially from region to region. Similarly, both women and men possess different opportunities in different places for altering, or coping with, their circumstances.

This essay follows up on the results of a study carried out by the Swedish geographer Gunnel Forsberg (1998) in the late Eighties in which, by mapping regional variations in gender relations, she identified three different gender contracts in different regions in Sweden: conventional, modern, and non-conventional. The conventional gender contract was found in forestry and industrial areas. Typically, in these areas, families made up the social infrastructure, women played a small role in local political life, and the gendered labour-market segregation was high. Typical of the modern gender contract, found in larger cities and especially in the Stockholm region, was a less gendered labour market, public institutions responsible for the social infrastructure, and women fairly integrated into political life. The third, non-conventional contract was found

in three different areas in regions undergoing economic and social transformation where the economic base was traditional but gender relations were more equal.

By looking particularly at the regions identified as non-conventional two decades ago, we explore their status as non-conventional regions today, looking at the changes they have since undergone. The following discussion therefore considers the regional labour-market structure of the actual regions in question, in order to explore regional variations of gender-contract patterns in relation to contexts of employment. The investigation is based on data from Statistics Sweden, taken from the published compilation of all its regional statistics (Statistics Sweden 2011).

Research background

The degree to which the Swedish labour market is gender segregated is well documented. On a national level, forestry and agriculture, along with manufacturing, mining, and health care, are the sectors of the labour market that have had the most pronounced gender-segregated workforce (SOU 2005:66). If this pattern is not changed, it might mean that the greater share these sectors represent in the entire economic structure, the higher the degree of gendered labour-market segregation. For example, the historical and location-specific importance of a particular industry has been shown to have a vast impact on the gender pattern in a region (Walby 1990; Forsberg 1998; McCall 1998). Several studies have explored the spatial effects of labour-market restructuring on gender differences in occupational shifts and the concentration of women's employment in specific occupations and industries (Bagchi-Sen 1995; McCall 1998; Webb 2009). For instance, a larger service sector has been shown to reduce occupational sex segregation, thus helping to equalize the earnings of men and women (Lorence 1992).

Although we are increasingly moving to a knowledge- and service-industry-dominated society, it can be the historical industrial base in a region that is crucial for today's labour market and level of segregation. If the economy used to be built around forestry, mining, or dairy production, then this can be decisive for gender segregation today. Gender segregation is thus both uniform and regionally distinct: uniform in the sense that gender segregation is found everywhere in the Swedish labour market, and regionally distinct in the sense that each region appears to allow different ways for this segregation to take form (Forsberg 2003, 2004). Inspired by the earlier research that has taken the spatial dimension of gender constructions seriously, we emphasize here the importance of analysing the construction of gender contracts at a regional level (Massey 1984; Walby 1997; Forsberg 1998; McDowell 1999).

In this essay, we draw particularly on the framework of gender contract as formulated by the Swedish geographer Gunnel Forsberg. Forsberg (1998, 2001) has empirically developed the theory of local gender contracts in which variations between different geographical areas are visualized. Her studies show that different indicators of gender relations differed significantly between regions, but that gender relations in the labour market, local politics, and family life were of a similar kind (Forsberg 1998). Together these indicators constitute gender contracts, which are understood as informally organized gender relations (Forsberg 1998, 2001). The regions which, in the early 1990s, were identified as regions with non-conventional gender contracts were the two northern regions, Jämtland and Västernorrland, bordering each other in the far north-east of Sweden, and the Baltic island of Gotland (Forsberg 1998). These regions shared a common history of international exchange and trade, and/or were dynamic areas with a substantial tourist sector. In comparison with the national average, they also showed a less sex-segregated labour market, leading positions more available to women, a smaller wage gap, and a reasonable growth of public services (see Forsberg 1998).

In the last ten years, the labour market in Sweden, including Jämtland, Västernorrland, and Gotland, has undergone some structural changes (see Table 1).

Branch of industry	Gotland		Västernorrland		Jämtland		National average	
	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010	2000	2010
Public administration, national defense	8	8	7	7	8	7	6	6
Forestry and agriculture	7	6	2	3	4	5	2	2
Manufacturing and extraction	15	7	17	13	13	8	19	14
Transport, trade and communication	16	17	19	20	16	17	19	21
Care	20	17	20	18	22	20	18	16
Education	9	11	8	10	9	11	8	10
Construction and energy sector	7	9	8	9	7	9	6	8
Service sector	16	22	18	19	19	22	20	22
Other	2	3	1	1	2	1	2	1
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Table 1. Branch of industry in Gotland, Västernorrland and Jämtland and national average 2000 and 2010 (%) (Source: Statistics Sweden 2011)

The most obvious trend is the decline in the manufacturing and mining sector across the board. There are considerable similarities between the three counties,

both in the general distribution of different employment sectors and also in the ways in which they have restructured over the last ten years. The education sector has increased in all three counties, as have the service sector and the transport, trade, and communication sectors, while health care, manufacturing, and extraction have declined. These trends reinforce theories about Sweden as leaving industrial society behind it and moving further and further towards becoming knowledge and service-based society. Noticeably there is similar trend in all counties and the national average with growing service and education sectors. When comparing the three counties, Gotland stands out with an increase in service sector with 6 per cent, compared to 1 per cent in Västernorrland and 3 per cent in Jämtland (Giritli Nygren, Larsson & Olofsdotter 2011).

Västernorrland is the region that differs most of the three, with the smallest population employed in the service sector and the largest in the manufacturing and extraction sectors in 2010. Furthermore, Västernorrland also has the smallest percentage of the population employed in forestry and agriculture in both 2000 and 2010 (Statistics Sweden 2011). Notwithstanding these differences, the three regions seem to have fairly comparable compositions and trends when it comes to branches of industry. A comparison of each region's structural labour-market changes shows a similar distribution between different employment sectors and many similarities regarding the last ten years' structural changes. However, it might be possible to expect Gotland to be moving towards a modern gender contract since Gotland, compared to Västernorrland's and Jämtland's figures, have the largest decrease in manufacturing and extraction, and the highest increase in the service sector.

Method

In this essay, we use the three typical regional gender contracts in Sweden, identified by Forsberg (1998), as lenses with which to examine the directions in which non-conventional regions have developed in the last twenty years, and the extent to which possible changes can be explained by structural changes of the regional labour market. Forsberg uses several statistical indicators collected under three main heads: the level of gender segregation in the local labour market; the level of political participation; and public and private childcare, education and welfare. Since we focus on regional variations of gender contracts in the context of employment, we here emphasize the labour market indicators underlying Forsberg's typology (see Table 2).

Gender contract dimensions/types in relation to labourmarket	Modern	Conventional	Non-conventional
Work and education	Focus on service employment. Low gender segregation More equal wage structure Women are well represented in managerial positions	Focus on manufacturing and or primary sector employment High gender segregation High wage gap Women dominate part time work Low representation of women in leading positions.	Greater focus in manufacturing than primary or service employment Less segregated than national average Less wage gap than national average Women are more well represented in leading positions than national average

Table 2: **Ideal typical gender contracts**

The advantage of using these typical gender contracts is that they constitute a basis for comparison (see, for example, Hekman 1999). To understand how the different local environments evolve dominant forms for vertical and horizontal gender differences, we can define the specific cases based on how they resemble or differ from the typical cases. In order to generate hypotheses and contribute to theoretical constructions, we characterize each case based on how it relates to the ideal types. Of course there is no blanket contract in any one region, and there are different versions among individuals, but a gender contract is dominant in a statistical sense in that it works as an ideal type. This means that it represents extremes that in practice can exist in different and mixed forms.

As the data used in this essay is taken from Statistics Sweden's open access databases, it is therefore to some extent not a perfect fit to the types of Table 11.2. The use of openly available data, as opposed to customized data, generates some methodological problems that need to be addressed. First, availability of data is obviously an issue when one has to rely on open sources. One problem is that the data is not customized to the research question at hand, which in turn means that the optimal indicators to answer the research question at hand may not be readily available; however, we found the data reliable enough to be used as indicators for the types in question. Moreover, Statistic Sweden has a societal and democratic purpose to make relevant statistics readily available, free of charge, for elected officials, government workers, journalists, and private citizens. Our work here will give an indication of just how well such data can serve as a democratic tool in understanding the composition of regional gender contracts.

Gender segregation

Gender segregation in the labour market is well documented (SOU 2005:66), and is one of the four gender contract dimensions. However, numerous studies have shown that gender segregation differs due to regional variations in the gender contracts (Forsberg 1998). In this section we will illustrate the make-up of gender contracts in relation to the labour market, and vertical and horizontal gender equality.

Primary sector and manufacturing

The primary sector is depicted here through the sectors of farming and forestry, and manufacturing and extraction. The broad trend indicates that all three regions, which have previously been characterized as regions with a non-conventional gender contract, seem to be losing their advantage in relative gender segregation in relation to the national average when it comes to manufacturing and extraction. Jämtland was below or approximately equal to the national average in the first half of the 1990s. Approaching 2000, the ratio of men to women working in the manufacturing and extraction sector in Jämtland was steadily increasing, which suggests that the gender segregation is intensified. Västernorrland, on the other hand, has frequently high gender segregation, although with a smaller increase over time compared to Jämtland. Gotland fared best of all the three regions during the 1990s. Entering the 2000s, however, Gotland's relative equality fell fast, going from just above 2.5 men per women to almost 3.5 men per women working in the manufacturing and extraction sector.

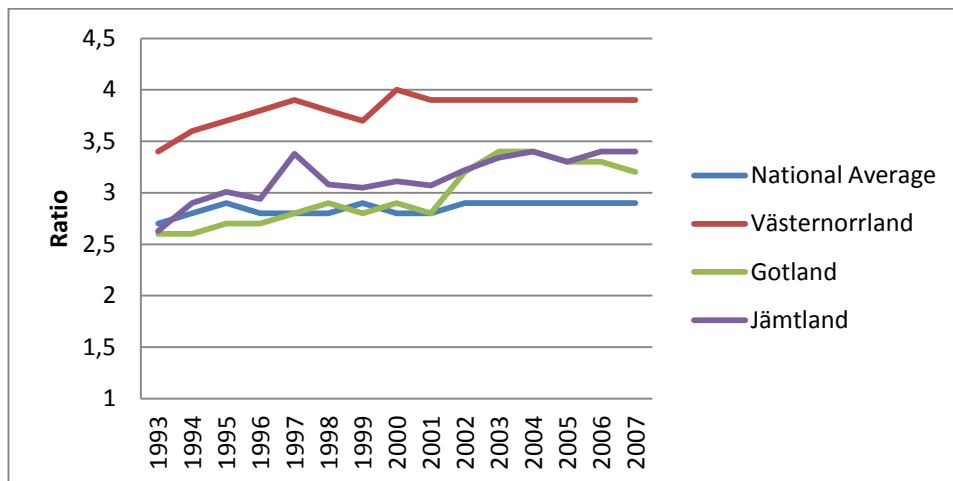


Figure 1. Ratio of men to women employed in manufacturing and extraction in Gotland, Västernorrland, and Jämtland, with national average, 1993-2007. Source: Statistics Sweden 2011.

In farming and forestry, Jämtland shows the greatest inequality, save for the observation that Gotland had the highest gender segregation. Indeed, Gotland has the highest increase in gender segregation during the time span (1993–2007). Gotland trends in a similar fashion to the way it did with manufacturing and extraction, that is, demonstrating low gender segregation in the 1990s, but losing that advantage in the 2000s and in the end showing some of the highest numbers of gender segregation of all the regions. Västernorrland's gender segregation was stable throughout the period, showing no signs of drastically diminishing or increasing gender segregation. Interestingly, none of the regions shows a pattern of falling gender segregation in the primary sector during the period—on the contrary, in most cases the gender segregation increased in the primary sector. The increase in gender segregation in the primary sector is therefore visible in how the regions' trends contrast to the national average, as well as when the regions are compared with one another.

Service sector

When it comes to the service sector, the three regions shows similar patterns. In 1993–2007, women represented between 64 per cent and 67 per cent of the population with some few exceptions. This shows that it can be seen that the gender segregation in this sector was much more stable over time than in the primary sector. Overall, the previously depicted non-conventional character of Västernorrland's, Gotland's and Jämtland's gender contracts seems to be changing towards a more conventional gender contract, at least in the case of gender segregation in the labour market.

The wage gap and employment

The wage gap is an important indicator of gender inequality and the second gender contract dimension. From a national perspective, the wage gap between women and men was reduced during the period between the 1960s and the 1980s, but since then the differences have stabilized somewhat. Some of the differences can partly be explained statistically by the fact that women and men have different educations and working hours, and work in different sectors, yet even excluding this differences, an unexplained wage differential between men and women remains (SOU 2005:66: 161). These differences then vary regionally in accordance with the different types of gender contracts (Forsberg 1998).

A crude estimate is to look at annual salaries in the different regions and their distribution by gender, Gotland consistently has the highest share of total wages paid out to women, spanning between 46 per cent and 47 per cent of total annual income in the region in 2003–2009. Jämtland is a close second, increasing from 43

per cent in 2003 to 45 per cent in 2009. Västernorrland's progression is somewhat lower, varying between 40 per cent and 42 per cent. Another way of displaying inequality is by comparing the proportion of women in employment relative to the total number of women (ages 15–74) in the region. Once again, Gotland fares best of the three regions in 2005–2010, with more than 70 per cent of the women in Gotland employed in 2008. Jämtland's figure is between 60 per cent and 65 per cent, while Västernorrland's a steadily decline from 61 per cent to 56 per cent. In 2010 the share of women in employment out of all women (ages 15–74) was Gotland 65 per cent, Jämtland 61 per cent, and Västernorrland 56 per cent.

Working hours and education

The number of hours worked is also an important indicator when addressing gender inequality. One way of getting a handle on the issue is to look at the differences in hours worked. By this token, Jämtland did best in gender equality in 2005–2010, while Gotland always shows a greater difference than the national average. However, when only observing the number of hours women worked, and not how many they worked in relation to the men, another trend emerges. In Gotland, women worked more than in the other regions, but since men worked even more in comparison; the difference in hours worked by gender remained high.

Educational level is sometimes given as an explanation for the wage gap between men and women. If the educational level can explain away the gender wage gap, then Gotland would be a prime suspect for having highly educated women since it has a relatively high proportion of wages paid out to women compared to men. However, this correlation seems faulty, since Gotland in fact has the lowest share of women who have completed higher education of the three regions. Jämtland and Västernorrland have a similar distribution between a high level and a low level of education. In all three regions, women are more educated than men.

Power and managerial positions

Women in leading positions are also a strong indicator for equality and how the regional gender contract is composed.

When it comes to leading positions in general between 2001 and 2008, Jämtland and Gotland were consistently higher than Västernorrland. Jämtland had the highest ratio of women, varying between 31 per cent and 35 per cent of women in leading positions, followed by Gotland, which varied between 29 per cent and 34 per cent. Västernorrland's variation spanned 26 per cent to 31 per cent.

Turning to top executives, this fell in all regions, as might be expected. However, Gotland continued to have far higher ratios than Västernorrland, while

Jämtland fell below Gotland to a span similar to Västernorrland. Gotland consistently outperformed both Västernorrland and Jämtland when it came to the ratio of women employed as top managers.

Concluding remarks

To conclude, Västernorrland and Jämtland had a higher degree of gender segregation compared to the national average when it came to manufacturing and extraction, while Gotland's relative equality decreased considerably in the last few years. In farming and forestry, the picture is similar: Gotland's gender equality levels have fallen, while Jämtland's and Västernorrland's are generally stable. The service sector shows very small regional differences in all three regions compared to the national average. When it comes to women's wages, Gotland scored significantly higher than the national average and the other regions. This implies that Gotland and Jämtland had a more equal wage structure than Västernorrland and the national average. Furthermore, Gotland had the highest ratio of women in employment. When it comes to education, Gotland had the lowest share of women with higher education. However, Gotland's more equal wage structure could perhaps be explained by the fact that the wages paid to men in Gotland were among the lowest in Sweden relative to the low proportion of women with higher education. This indicates that an equal wage structure does not necessarily mean that women's situation is more equal compared to other regions, and, similarly, that Västernorrland and Jämtland can hardly be said to have a non-conventional gender contract, while Gotland has a more differentiated gender contract.

The three regions that in the early 1990s were identified as 'typical' regions with non-conventional gender contracts (see Forsberg 1998) showed what were then called tendencies towards a weakened conventional gender contract. Today, twenty years later, there is no evidence that non-conventional necessarily means movement towards a more modern gender contract, since all three regions suffered from increased gender segregation over time. Based on our results, it is possible to conclude that regions with a non-conventional gender contract, a contract in transition, are not necessarily developing towards a more typical modern gender contract. It might even be the case that they change direction towards a more conventional gender contract.

Viewing our results in relation to each region's structural labour-market changes suggests that non-conventional gender contracts might be best understood as a category with its own logic and labour-market structure. Together they showed a similar distribution between different employment sectors and a lot of similarities regarding the last ten years of structural changes. Given what Lorence (1992) found, it is surprising that although the manufacturing and extraction sector

had declined and the service sector had increased in all three regions, there were no obvious signs confirming that this reduced the occupational sex segregation, or equalized the earnings, except in Gotland. However, it might be possible to explain Västernorrland's figures compared to Gotland's and Jämtland's by the fact that Västernorrland is the region with the smallest number employed in the service sector and the largest in the manufacturing and extraction sector. This demonstrates that regionally constructed gender contracts as quite resistant structures that do not seem to be affected by the strong gender equality discourse that exists/ed in Sweden. Our results confirm that an imbalanced gender distribution existed, and continues to exist, in the Swedish labour market (see, for example, Melkas & Anker 2001; Charles 2003; SOU 2005:66).

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Chapter 12

The tiring practices of gender mainstreaming: As Sisyphus sisters push new stones, how do we get to mess with the hill?

Angelika Sjöstedt Landén & Gunilla Olofsdotter

It is indeed remarkable how relatively quickly the term gender and the associated understandings of social change and the possibilities of effective individual and institutional agency have gained a comfortable place in the lexicon of social/political science and within the policy making circles, particularly in the realm of governance feminism and gender mainstreaming (Zalewski, 2010:12).

Gender mainstreaming has been a feature of public policy and practice, since the 1990s.. It is therefore rather thoroughly researched by now (see e.g Ritterhofer & Gatrell, 2012; Lavena & Riccuci, 2012; Bacchi & Eveline, 2010). In the beginning of this period, feminist researchers seemed rather enthusiastic in their research although their critique of gender mainstreaming policy as well as practice also could be sharp. One of the longstanding critiques is that gender mainstreaming practices all too often work to reproduce and reinstall hegemonic ideas about sex and gender (see Bacchi & Eveline, 2004). Another problematic issue, from the perspective of feminist scholars, was that gender mainstreaming practices often are used to correct women and treat women as a homogeneous and problematic category. Moreover, women are often expected to take responsibility for gender mainstreaming practices and thereby “letting men off the hook”. These different features intersect with the results that organizational norms seldom are *messed with* and inequalities persist.

Defenders of mainstreaming locate “difference” in women. [...] This position continues to support an ontological view that attaches biological characteristics to human beings, instead of focusing on the politics that privilege some and de-privilege other characteristics. With this ontological position, women continue to be identified as the central problematic in designing policy. [...] The production of women as “different” therefore fails to challenge individualistic premises. [...] the claim to challenge organizational norms is overstated’ (Bacchi & Eveline, 2004:108-109).

Evaluating the impact of the extensive policy about gender mainstreaming, the promises of social transformation does not seem to be realized (Lavena & Riccucci,

2012) and most of the recent feminist research on gender mainstreaming does not look at it as a “hopey- changey thing”. Should feminist scholars spend their research time on things that could promise more hope and change? We take the stand that it would be dangerous if feminist scholars lost interest in gender mainstreaming and turned their backs on researching the ways in which it is conceptualized, implemented and received and reworked. Especially, since gender mainstreaming practices are so strongly intertwined with growing emphasis on neoliberal forms of governance and persist and develop in new forms. In this paper, we give some examples from two Swedish projects of why this is continuously crucial. We also discuss the problems of going forward in this line of research when everything seems to have been said already.

Getting caught in the project trap?

One of the constraints of the transformative potential of gender mainstreaming has been conceptualized as ‘the project trap’ where gender analysis is mostly expected to fit into current programmes and projects instead of contesting organizational and broader social contexts (see Bacchi & Eveline, 2010:131, referring to March, 1999 and Armstrong, 2002). This is something that we as researchers recognize when we have been involved in projects set out to engage with gender mainstreaming. We have currently become involved in two different projects where gender mainstreaming has become a central issue. Both of these projects are located within a public sector context. The activities in the first project finished in 2011 and took place within a Swedish municipality. The second project was initiated by the Swedish government in 2012 and is organized under a particular public agency with the aim to improve work environments for women in public as well as private sector employment. The Swedish welfare state has been under major restructuring since the 1990s, with an intensification of policy for strengthening ‘the work line’ (*arbetslinjen*) (Johnsson, 2010). In the current context, women have become viewed as a particularly problematic group that are extra important to integrate into working life. Long periods of sick-leave in Sweden has been constructed as an acute problem for public economy, labour market and for individuals on sick-leave. It has become a gendered issue in debate and policy, when it has been observed that sick-leave follow different patterns for men and women (SOU 2005). All motivated by statistics that women in public sector employment answer to the largest increase in reporting in sick since the late 1990s and their sick-leave periods are longer than for men (Hammarström and Hensing 2008; Palmer 2005). These assumptions implicates that women are in some way regarded as defect and deviating on the labour market and that female sex is a risk factor in itself (Leijon 2011).

In both of these projects, we have observed how gender mainstreaming and gender analysis became the answer to the 'problem of women' that did not submerge to 'the work line' properly as they were on sick-leave too much. We set out to critically examine the formulation of sick-leave as 'a female problem' framed by enhanced focus on gender mainstreaming forged in EU as well as national legislation and policy. Coming from a context of so called Nordic gender equality, Holli, Magnusson & Rönnblom (2005) encourages attention to be drawn to the productive and constructed character of the gender equality policy such as gender mainstreaming. Furthermore Bacchi and Eveline (2004:111) argue that policy is a 'creative' process that creates subjectivities in certain ways. 'We need to be able to critique the frameworks of meaning that underpin policies and to identify how policies produce particular kinds of subjects' (Bacchi & Eveline, 2004:111). Drawing on this previous research, we formulated two concrete questions that guide the analysis: What kind of subjectivities was created in the projects we studied? And how was "gender" articulated with certain subjectivities? Our methods for analyzing the organization and gendering of subjectivities therefore need to include (1) mapping out how the project was organized. For example how activities were structured and the content of these activities. Our analysis also focus on (2) exploring how language was gendered and articulated within the different project activities. This approach also presupposes continuous problematisation of how and why problems become constructed as problems in policy and official discourse as well as praxis (see Bacchi, 1999).

Mapping project organizations and gendered language

We will in the following give a very brief summary of how the two projects were organized and how a 'gender language' was constructed in these two cases.

Project 1: 'The municipality'

We researched an EU funded project set up to construct a new model for occupational health service in order to reduce sick leave rates among employees within a Swedish municipality. Our main focus was not on policy as such, but rather on how policy was set into practice. We followed the project practices mainly by taking part in activities, conducting interviews with participants and analysing project documents. The activities were divided into programs directed towards leaders, on the one hand, and employees in long term sick-leave, on the other. In all activities, aspects of gender equality and gender mainstreaming should be highlighted, analyzed and problematised. The project was promoted as innovative because 'the gender perspective' was taken extra seriously in all aspects of the programs. The managers responsible of the project clearly stated that they were doing gender mainstreaming as a way of making change happen.

One interesting example about gender-language was the ways in which it was described that gender should be 'integrated' in activities for employees on sick leave on the one hand and leaders on the other hand. The content of the course provided for leaders was expected to contain the following:

Improve knowledge and awareness about gender issues by clarifying and presenting the research within the area and thereby go from the level of 'general opinions' to insight of the difficulties and the structures that sometimes are difficult to detect. (Consultants program outline)

The management program had a clearly academic ambition and expected the participants of the course to question inequalities on a structural and abstract level. The course provided for employees on sick-leave gave other expectations. The course should for example:

Show how men and women are encountered and how this can contribute to health or ill health. (Consultants program outline)

This did not include detecting or problematizing any structural or organizational aspects of gender. We observed how the project was linking people together that were thought to share similar experiences in the separate programs. This organized people into groups of leaders and employees that came to be comprehended as fundamentally different from each other. The creation of groups of 'employees on sick-leave' and 'leaders' demonstrated the division between the groups based on assumptions of separate experiences. This division was not only constructed by the way the project groups were organized, but also through the language about gender and gender knowledge. The ways in which gender should be 'analysed and problematized' differed between the groups.

Project 2: 'The government agency'

We also follow the processes of a national project that work to integrate new work practices within a government agency in Sweden that is responsible for seeing to that all Swedish employers follow work environment legislations. The new work practices should be sensitive for the matters of gender in work environments in order to 'improve women's worklife'. The project includes educating the whole staff at the agency in elementary gender studies, give information about the role of gender in the work environment to all employers that they visit throughout the country and much more. The activities were divided in two tracks: ergonomics and psychosocial work environment. The managers responsible of the project did not say they were doing gender mainstreaming, but the programme included features that commonly occur in gender mainstreaming projects. The project was also linked to an upcoming process that should 'gender mainstream' the whole agency.

Since this is an ongoing project, we will be able to say much more about it in a later stage, but one language-feature that is accessible and also very interesting in the context of this paper is the way in which the project is promoted on the website.

Women now account for the lion part of sickness absence compared to men and have an overall sickness rate that is 45 percent higher than men's. Women report more work-related diseases than men and more women are forced to leave work life early because of ill health. Musculoskeletal disorders are the leading cause of sickness absence due to occupational disease for both men and women. The focus on women's work will consist of the acquisition of knowledge, information, seminars, training of inspectors and national inspection efforts.

This is an example of how a gender language is constructed that motivate the project and makes it legitimate and also articulate certain ways of organizing. It will furthermore be interesting for us to explore the ways in which subjectivity is constructed through language and other organizing principles.

Current findings and further discussion: Mess with the hill!

The claims to challenge organizational norms by talking about gender were unfortunately overstated in the first project: 'The municipality'. Although the project aimed at constructing ways of gender mainstreaming that could subvert current occupational health systems in the project, the 'gender perspective' was itself incorporated in various systems of stratification such as gender and class. As is the case with much gender mainstreaming practices according to Bacchi and Eveline (2004:108-109). We could recognize most of our results from the findings of previous research like getting caught in the 'project trap' of reactive policy and practice and how gender mainstreaming practices were adapted and articulated in varied and contradictory ways that nevertheless left most structural and hegemonic orders in place. Project 2 at 'the government agency' is ongoing, but we believe that it is facing the same kind of challenges. We find ourselves with the peculiar feeling that history is repeating itself, only with different people in a different setting. Although lots of energy become directed toward acquiring the latest research and developing (organizational) knowledge about gender (not particularly women) this seems to be done without really questioning the initial organizing principles that formulated women as the problem in the first place. Benschop & Verloo (2006) have used the metaphor of Sisyphus to describe this problem in gender mainstreaming practices: it never comes down to trying to change the shape of the hill, only the ways in which the stone is being pushed. We need to come up with ways of messing with the hill!

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