

Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality

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Edited by

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CHAPTER ONE

MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY

MICHAEL FLOOD

Our world is a deeply unequal one. Systemic inequalities which disadvantage women and advantage men are visible around the globe. Whether one looks at political power and authority, economic resources and decision-making, sexual and family relations, or media and culture, one finds gender inequalities. These are sustained in part by constructions of masculinity—by the cultural meanings associated with being a man, the practices which men adopt, and the collective and institutional organisation of men’s lives and relations.

Yet these inequalities are not fixed in stone. Women’s movements and feminism have mounted a sustained challenge to local and global gender inequalities, with important successes in undermining the pervasiveness and acceptability of women’s subordination. This is not some rosy story of steady progress towards a gender-egalitarian world. While some forms of gender inequality have lessened, others have worsened, under the influence of transnational neoliberal forces, aggressively patriarchal religious movements, and other dynamics.

One significant shift in the ways in which efforts to build gender equality are articulated and enacted has been an increasing emphasis on the role of men. Men’s roles in establishing gender equality are now squarely on the public agenda. This emphasis is visible in programming, policy, public advocacy, and popular debate. When yet another incident of ‘men behaving badly’ takes place somewhere in the world—when a group of men sexually assault a woman, when the male CEO of a company defends the absence of women from the company’s leadership, when a high-profile male athlete beats his partner, when some dimension of gender inequalities is exposed or expressed—then social media routinely include calls for men to take action to end gender inequalities. Gender-conscious initiatives and interventions focused on men and boys have proliferated, particularly in relation to violence prevention, sexual and

reproductive health, parenting, and education but also in other domains. The last decade has seen the growth of national and global interventions and campaigns, initiatives by international agencies, and scholarly assessments of their impact and significance.

The book *Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality* brings together key discussions and evaluations of this field. Based in part on a conference held in Australia in November 2012, the collection highlights the leading edges of both theory and practice. Chapters by internationally recognised scholars close the gap between contemporary scholarship on men and gender, on the one hand, and practical interventions on the other. Alongside these, other contributors explore the promise and problems of engaging men in building gender equality in relation to such areas as violence, health, fathering, and work. The book's contents have a global reach. Some chapters offer frameworks and insights applicable to work regarding men and gender across the globe, while other chapters present case studies from particular countries or regions. The book is intended to be of interest to a wide range of researchers, advocates, educators, professionals, and others from universities, governments, local and international organisations, and community agencies. It offers a timely examination of an area of policy, programming, and research which is growing rapidly.

Naming 'men' as a social problem

How is it that men's and boys' roles in progress towards gender equality are now the subject of such attention? This is the outcome of over four decades of social change. The women's movements and feminism have offered a wide-ranging critique of the attitudes, practices and cultures among men which sustain gender inequality. There have been disruptions to and contestations of the social organisation of gender in at least four realms. In power relations, the legitimacy of men's domination has weakened dramatically, in particular under the influence of global feminism. Production relations in capitalist countries have undergone fundamental changes, with shifts in divisions of paid labour and the decline of traditionally male areas of primary industry. There have been important shifts in sexual relations, in particular with the emergence and stabilisation of lesbian and gay sexualities as public alternatives to heterosexuality (Connell 1995, 84-85). In the wake of these, other sexual identities and communities have proliferated and the specifically homophobic construction of manhood has weakened, at least in some contexts. Cultural representations of manhood are changing too, with

constructions of the involved father and the ‘metrosexual’ emerging in Western countries in the 1980s and 1990s and further shifts in the new millennium. Of course, shifts in gender relations are not necessarily positive, and there is no inevitable progression towards gender equality.

The last four decades have been marked by an increasingly visible public debate regarding men and masculinities. Beginning in the 1980s and 1990s in advanced capitalist countries and increasingly in other countries, men have been interrogated “as a sex, in a way until recently reserved for women — as a problem” (Segal 1993). This is not the first time in history such periods of intensified scrutiny of men and gender have taken place, and there are other times and places where it has been confidently declared that men are ‘in crisis’. Such claims are visible now as well. To take two prominent examples, the cover story in the US publication *The Atlantic* in 2010 declared “The End of Men”. That same year, the periodical *Newsweek* (again in the USA) ran a cover story titled, “Man Up? The Traditional Male is an Endangered Species. It’s Time to Rethink Masculinity.” While such media reporting marks a sometimes progressive and feminist-informed scrutiny of men and gender in popular culture, in many ways systemic patterns of male privilege remain entrenched.

Men themselves have shown a variety of responses to these shifts in gender relations. Men’s collective and public responses include both active support for feminism and efforts to shore up male privilege. Small groups and networks of men across the globe, often in collaboration with women, are engaged in public efforts in support of gender equality, and men’s anti-violence activism is the most visible and well-developed aspect of such efforts (Flood 2004a). On the other hand, ‘men’s rights’ and ‘fathers’ rights’ groups are engaged in an energetic defence of patriarchal masculinity and men’s power, particularly in families (Flood 2004b). As we note in more detail below, men show uneven and equivocal support for the feminist goal of gender equality, and there is a great deal of variation in this support across countries and between particular groups of men.

Why involve men?

There is a powerful impetus for involving men in work on gender equality. One simple way of framing this is the notion that ‘men are both part of the problem and part of the solution’. While this may minimise the genuine challenges of men’s engagement in anti-patriarchal struggles, there is little doubt that gender injustice will only cease when men join with women to put an end to it. Many men’s attitudes and behaviours will

need to change in order for gender equality to be achieved. Many men participate in sexist practices and the maintenance of unjust gender relations, men often play a crucial role as ‘gatekeepers’ of the current gender order and as decision makers and community leaders, and patterns of gender injustice are tied to social constructions of masculinity and male identity. Men may limit women’s agency—limiting women’s control over resources, ability to move freely, ability to make decisions about family formation, freedom from violence, and ability to have a voice in society—both directly, through face-to-face interactions with and control over women in households and elsewhere, and indirectly, as decision-makers and leaders (Fleming *et al.* 2013, 11-12).

Agendas of gender equality have been widely seen as the concerns of women and not men. It was women, of course, who placed gender issues on the public agenda. The logic goes that, given that it is women who are disadvantaged by gender inequality, it is women who have a claim for redress, and thus gender issues are of no concern to men. However, this logic can no longer be sustained, for as Connell (2003, 3) notes: ‘Men and boys are *unavoidably* involved in gender issues.’ Gender long has been seen to refer only to women, reflecting men’s position as the dominant, unmarked gender category. Yet men, like women, are gendered.

Including men in gender equality work is necessary because gender inequality is intimately tied to men’s practices and identities, men’s participation in complex and diverse gender relations, and masculine discourses and culture. Fostering gender equality requires change in these same arenas, of men’s lives and relations. At the same time, involving men in efforts towards gender equality runs the risk of reinforcing men’s existing power and jeopardising resources and funding directed at women (Kaufman 2003, 5). The goal of promoting gender justice must be central.

The agenda of engaging men in gender issues is not novel because of whom it addresses, but how. Men have long been the target of public policy efforts—as workers and bosses, as husbands and fathers, as perpetrators or survivors of crime, as patients, and so on. But men have been largely treated as generic and ungendered human beings, representatives of all humanity, and the specifically gendered character of men’s lives and relations has been ignored or taken for granted. This has perpetuated masculine norms and gender inequalities. The agenda of engaging men is novel because it addresses men *as men* — as gendered beings who participate in gender relations.

While growing policy interest in men and gender issues often has feminist motivations, it also is fuelled by non-feminist or even anti-feminist motivations. These include the misguided perception that claims

regarding gender equality are exaggerated, men are disadvantaged or indeed worse off than women, or even that women now have found their way while men are in 'crisis' or the victims of over-zealous feminist vilification. Anti-feminist men's rights and fathers' rights groups have had successes in propagating such beliefs. More widely, governments may be sympathetic to simplistic notions of male disadvantage, especially as there are areas of social life such as health and secondary schooling in which some boys and men suffer. This makes it all the more necessary that we ensure that gender equality remains the guiding principle of any engagement in 'men's issues'. Governments certainly should address areas of male pain, but not at the expense of women.

Men show both support for, and resistance to, gender equality. Including men in gender work ideally involves the recognition of this diversity, and the adoption of different strategies in responding to resistance while mobilising and building on support. Many men receive formal and informal benefits from gender inequalities, including material rewards and interpersonal power. At the same time, men also pay significant costs, particularly to their emotional and physical health. More widely, men can be and are motivated by interests other than those associated with gender privilege. There are important resources in men's lives for the construction of gender-equitable masculinities and forms of selfhood, such as men's concerns for children, intimacies with women, and ethical and political commitments. Thus, while men ought to change, it is also in men's interests to change. There is a moral imperative that men give up their unjust share of power, and men themselves will benefit from advancing towards gender equality.

There are further reasons why efforts at gender reform should address men, to do with both the detrimental effects of male exclusion and the positive effects of male inclusion. First, the longstanding equation of 'gender' with women potentially marginalises women and women's struggles (Kaufman 2003, 3). In the field of development for example, leaving men out of efforts towards gender equality can provoke male hostility and retaliation, arising out of both exclusion and more general anxieties among men (Chant and Guttman 2000, 25; Lang 2003, 9). Focusing only on women, in relation to such issues as economic participation, credit, or sexual and reproductive health, can leave women with yet more work to do and thus intensify gender inequalities. Failing to engage and change men can mean that women still have to deal with unsympathetic men and patriarchal power relations, and can leave women with sole responsibility for sexual health, family nutrition, and so on (Chant and Guttman 2000, 26).

Including men in grassroots work on gender equality has important benefits. Given that many women already interact with men on a daily basis in their households and public lives, involving men can make interventions more relevant and workable (Chant and Guttman 2000, 26). Male inclusion increases men's responsibility for change. Explicitly addressing men can increase men's belief that they too will gain from gender equality and can engage men directly in the renegotiation of gender relations. Male inclusion can speak to many men's sense of anxiety and fear as 'traditional' masculinities are undermined. Men's suffering (such as men's growing burden of illness or social and economic marginalisation among young, poor men) is worth addressing in its own right, and in terms of its potential impact on women (Chant and Guttman 2000, 26-28).

None of this means that women's groups and gender-related programming must include men. There continue to be reasons why 'women's space', women-only and women-focused programs are vital: to support those who are most disadvantaged by pervasive gender inequalities; to maintain women's solidarity and leadership; and to foster women's consciousness-raising and collective empowerment. Nor should growing attention to male involvement threaten resources for women and women's programs.

In reflecting on the need to incorporate men in gender-related work, it is worth remembering that a policy concern with women and with gender equality remains marginal or even non-existent in many countries. Even in countries where governments have adopted policies and institutional structures that are supportive of women, only rarely has gender equality been integrated into the depth and breadth of government policies and processes. The same goes for many local decision-making bodies, community organisations, and international agencies. In the field of development for example, there is little evidence that a concern with women, let alone with gender, has been integrated into programs and planning among development agencies, bureaucracies, funding agencies, or governments (Chant and Guttman 2000, 2,14). Despite four decades of effort, actual development work has continued to marginalise women and women's concerns. This also means that 'male-inclusive' gender initiatives are relatively undeveloped.

There are both good and bad reasons for the ongoing absence of men-as-men in gender policy and programming. Given the persistence of widespread gender inequalities which disadvantage women, and the limited availability of resources for gender-related work, there are good reasons for continuing to focus on women (Chant and Guttman 2000, 16-19). In the field of development for example, there are understandable

fears as to what may happen if men are invited in, in the context of a history of grassroots examples where women have lost out, men have taken over, and women-oriented projects have been diluted or subverted (Chant and Guttman 2000, 19). Women may be hesitant to share a realm which has been historically a place of sanctuary for women (Lang 2003, 3). The patriarchal organisational structures and cultures of development organisations, and governments, inhibit attention to men's roles in gender equality (Lang 2003, 2-3). Women's sectors often are weak, marginalised, under-funded, and have had little impact on mainstream developmental policies, programs and processes (Chant and Guttman 2000, 21). In this context:

Men may feel threatened by women's challenge to male entitlements, they may feel that gender has nothing to do with them, they are less likely to recognise gender relations as unequal, or may avoid raising gender issues for fear of disapproval and ridicule (Chant and Guttman 2000, 21-22).

Men may also feel that as men they have been seen as 'all the same', and may resent approaches that are tactless or overly negative. Overall, as Chant and Guttman conclude (2000, 23), there might be more willingness to include men in gender-related work if women had been given an equal place and say in policy in general and if worldwide gender inequalities had lessened. Nevertheless, including men will be critical to the successful creation of gender equality.

How should men be included in gender-related work? The bottom line of course is that any incorporation of men and men's gendered issues into practice and policy should further the feminist goal of gender equality. There is the danger that in speaking to men's concerns, interests and problems, the impetus for justice for women will be weakened and slide into anti-feminist backlash (Connell 2003, 10). Yet gender equality initiatives must include an engagement with men and masculinities if they are to be effective. Thus the rationale of gender equality must be kept central.

Beyond the overarching principle of gender equality, there are further elements to any effective and beneficial strategy of male inclusion. One is that funding for work with men and boys should not be at the expense of funding for gender equality work with women and girls (Expert Group 2003, 14). Another is that work with men should be done in partnership with women. Partnerships with women and women's groups enable men to learn from existing efforts and scholarship rather than 'reinventing the wheel'. They lessen the risk that men will collude in or be complicit with dominant and oppressive forms of masculinity. And they are a powerful

and practical demonstration of men's and women's shared interest in democratic and peaceful gender relations. Another element is that rather than having separate and parallel policies for women and men, we should adopt integrated gender policies which address the relations between women and men (Expert Group 2003, 13). Organisations and agencies themselves must also model gender equality, addressing their own policies, staff and organisational culture (Lang 2003, 1). This should include reflection by male staff on their own experience, privilege, and gendered practice.

Contemporary work with men

There are at least four dimensions to contemporary work engaging men in building gender equality: (1) activism and advocacy; (2) local programs and interventions among men and boys; (3) national and international policy commitments; and (4) research and scholarship.

Small numbers of men have become public advocates for gender equality. Men develop powerful commitments to gender equality through various paths: close relations with particular women, relationships with relatives or friends or others who modelled non-traditional gender roles, involvements in other political or ethical activities and networks, membership of peer groups or workplaces with more gender-equitable norms, university study, and a host of other experiences (Flood 2005b). Some profeminist men take part in men's groups focused on stopping violence against women, others advocate for gender equity in their schools, and others work for change in their workplaces and institutions (Flood 2005a). Men's organised support for gender equality dates at least as far back as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, with men's groups advocating for women's right to vote or suffrage in the context of the first wave of the women's movements.

The late twentieth century saw the intensified re-emergence of men's groups and networks advocating in support of feminism. Anti-sexist men's groups emerged in the United States of America, Canada, Great Britain, Australia and elsewhere in the wake of the development of second wave feminism in the late 1960s. The numbers and organisational strength of profeminist men's advocacy has ebbed and flowed since, as a recent anthology documents (Okun 2014). However, longstanding national organisations such as the National Organization of Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) in the USA now have been joined by major international networks such as MenEngage, a global alliance of NGOs and UN agencies seeking to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality. As this book

itself reflects, one of the most significant focuses of men's profeminist activism is men's violence against women. There is a small body of research among men involved in anti-violence and gender equality advocacy. This finds that male activists do develop anti-patriarchal identities and practices in the course of their advocacy, and that at the same time patriarchal privileges shape both how male activists behave and how they are received (Flood 2014).

Pro-feminist men's advocacy is growing in both complexity and sophistication. In the first decades of the twenty-first century, a feminist critique of an uncritical or excessive focus on men's roles in building gender equality became increasingly visible. Various commentators have expressed concern regarding the marginalisation of women's voices, an uncritical fawning over male celebrities who make statements in support of feminism, and other troubling patterns. Pro-feminist men's groups exist within a wider field of 'ally politics', in which members of privileged groups seek to undermine that same privilege. Thus white people take up anti-racist politics, heterosexuals advocate on behalf of same-sex rights, and so on. There are increasingly sophisticated discussions in social media and elsewhere about appropriate and inappropriate ways for feminist men to advocate on behalf of feminism.

Profeminist activism involves men as the direct *agents* of change, themselves acting in the name of feminism and gender equality. Overlapping with this, a second form of work regarding men and gender equality involves men as the *objects* of change, as the participants in or audiences to various types of interventions. Across the globe, a wide variety of initiatives focused on or inclusive of men or boys and aimed at building gender equality are proliferating, in such fields as men's violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, and fatherhood and families.

Interventions among men have used a variety of strategies, from community education to social marketing to community mobilisation to policy change. However, face-to-face community education programs among groups of boys and young men, or mixed-sex groups, of relatively short duration, and in schools, have been one of the most widely used strategies. For example, in relation to violence prevention, a recent systematic review of interventions for preventing boys' and men's sexual violence, focusing on high-quality studies addressing adolescent boys and young men aged 12 to 19, found 65 relevant studies. Of these studies, 85% took place in high-income countries and 90% in schools settings, and one-third comprised only a single session typically of an hour's duration (Ricardo *et al.* 2011). Another, more recent review offers a systematic

assessment of gender-transformative interventions aimed at heterosexually active men and intended to have an impact on HIV/STI outcomes, violence perpetration, sexual risk behaviour, or norms and attitudes related to gender equity (Dworkin *et al.* 2013). Of the 15 studies which met this review's criteria, the most common intervention design, involving 12 of the interventions, comprised small group learning and discussion, with five of these also incorporating a community-level component such as social marketing (Dworkin *et al.* 2013, 2847).

In the violence prevention field and probably in other fields as well, work with boys or men often is a subset of a much wider body of work addressing males and females. In Ricardo *et al.*'s review, two-thirds of the 65 studies involved both male and female participants. Similarly, in an earlier systematic review of sexual assault prevention programs, based on English-language evaluation publications over 1990-2003, Morrison *et al.* (2004) reported that nine of the 59 studies focused on all-male groups rather than mixed-sex or all-female groups. In addition, existing work with men around the globe often is undertaken by organisations with a broader focus rather than by dedicated men-focused organisations. For example, a global survey of men's anti-violence work found that at least in terms of numbers of organisations, most of this work is being done by organisations with a wider agenda involving sexual violence prevention, batterer intervention, domestic violence service provision, and so on (Kimball *et al.* 2012).

The 'engaging men' field is marked by several trends. First, there is increased regional and global networking, including new international networks and events. A global alliance of non-governmental agencies and United Nations agencies seeking to engage boys and men to achieve gender equality, called MenEngage, began in 2004. The first *Global Symposium on Engaging Men and Boys in Achieving Gender Equality* was held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 2009, and a second *MenEngage Global Symposium* took place in New Delhi, India, in November 2014. Second, there is increasing diversity in prevention strategies. Community education strategies are now increasingly complemented by efforts to engage and mobilise communities, change organisational practices, and influence policies and legislation. Third, there has been an expansion in the domains of social life or social practice through which men are engaged in building gender equality. While many programs address men's roles in relation to violence against women, sexual and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS, others now engage men in relation to new practices such as parenting (as fathers and as intimate partners) and prostitution or sex work (as the male clients of sex workers). Some also now engage men in existing strategies

focused on women. For example, while women's economic empowerment is a longstanding strategy in development work, some recent initiatives now engage husbands and fathers in this as well, in order to foster more equitable household decision-making, increased couple communication and decreased couple conflict, and higher income gains for families (Peacock and Barker 2012). Fourth, there is increasing methodological sophistication in the impact of programs and interventions. Fifth, there is an increasing emphasis on 'scaling up', that is, on the need to address the social and structural determinants of gender inequalities (Flood *et al.* 2010). This includes the intensification of efforts to integrate gender work with men into laws, policies and national plans regarding HIV/AIDS, gender-based violence, health, and parenting (Peacock and Barker 2012).

Work with men has undergone conceptual developments in the last decade, and this is a further significant shift. There is greater attention to how diversities in men's lives, including issues of poverty, racism, migration, food insecurity, and violence, complicate the conceptualisation, implementation, and prioritisation of engaging men in prevention. There is increased awareness of the challenges of involving members of a privileged social group in examining and undermining their own privilege (Casey *et al.* 2013). There is an increased consensus that work with men should be 'gender-transformative'—oriented towards transforming gender roles and promoting more gender-equitable relationships between men and women, with evidence that this approach is more effective than others (World Health Organisation 2007). There is disquiet regarding whether 'work with men' sometimes has ceased to be the strategy and has become the goal, perceived as an end in itself rather than as one means of pursuing gender equality.

The legitimacy of and institutional support for these first two dimensions of work with men have been bolstered by endorsements by governments and international agencies. Beginning in the mid-1990s, men's role in progress towards gender equality was the subject of growing international commitments and activity. In the Beijing Declaration, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, governments expressed their determination to encourage men to participate fully in all actions towards gender equality. This was reaffirmed and extended in the follow-up meeting in 2000. The theme "the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality" was adopted, among other themes, for the forty-eighth session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in March 2004, New York. Part of the preparation for this undertaken by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) was an Expert Group Meeting, held in

Brazil in October 2003, to which I was fortunate enough to contribute. The role of men and boys has also been affirmed by other intergovernmental fora, including the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Programme of Action of the World Summit on Social Development (1995) and its review (2000), the twenty-sixth special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (2001), the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in 2009, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Action Framework on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV (2009), and the UNAIDS Operational Plan for Action Framework (2009). In addition, various national governments now emphasise in their plans of action the need to engage men in violence prevention.

National and international agencies' attention to the agenda of engaging men in building gender equality also is evident in their support for meetings, manuals, and other infrastructure. In relation to men's roles in violence prevention for example, in the last decade international agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), Save The Children, the United Nations International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), and UNIFEM all have released reports and manuals and held workshops and meetings focused on engaging men. These complement similar products by national organisations such as the Family Violence Prevention Fund (USA), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, EngenderHealth (South Africa), and Instituto Promundo (Brazil).

The fourth dimension of contemporary work engaging men in building gender equality is research and scholarship. We can imagine this scholarship in terms of three concentric circles. At the centre are evaluations of the actual impact of particular interventions among men and boys, including a relatively small number of scholarly studies with rigorous experimental designs and a much greater number in both scholarly and 'grey' literature with other methodologies. This body of work also is subject to increasing systematic assessment, with at least three notable reviews (World Health Organization 2007; IPPF 2010; Dworkin *et al.* 2013). Surrounding these are academic and activist commentaries and reflection on the field. And wider still is the rapidly expanding body of scholarship on men and masculinities more generally.

The actual body of evidence attesting to the efficacy of work with men is relatively small, and limited in methodological terms. In Dworkin *et al.*'s (2013) review of gender-transformative interventions aimed at heterosexually active men for example, few of the programs or

interventions identified were randomised control or randomised cluster trials. Of the 15 programs, one third involved quasi-experimental designs using comparison groups and pre- and post-tests, and another third used pre- and post-tests but no comparison group. Programs are rarely supported for enough time to produce an impact and assess outcomes. Few studies use rigorous longitudinal designs or comparison groups or report on measures of intervention fidelity (Dworkin *et al.* 2013, 2847). While there is debate over the methodological criteria and epistemological assumptions which should guide assessment of the effectiveness of efforts to engage men in building gender equality, there is no doubt that we need to know what works to make change and what does not.

Men's support for gender equality

In order to engage men in building gender equality, we must first know something about their existing involvements in gender. There is an increasingly rich body of data on the patterns and dynamics of masculinities on which to draw here. Particularly in making historical and cross-national comparisons of men's involvements in gender, however, one useful marker is their attitudes towards gender itself.

Attitudes are not the only, nor necessarily the most important, dimension of gender. Men's actual practices, their relations with others, and collective and institutional orderings of gender are at least as important. There are complex and bi-directional relationships between attitudes and behaviour (Pease and Flood 2008). Still, attitudes are related to practices: a wide range of studies link men's adherence to traditional gender role ideologies and their involvement in practices such as the perpetration of violence against women, avoidance of household labour, unsafe sex, and neglect of their health. In addition, there is both international and longitudinal data on men's gender attitudes. They therefore provide a valuable gauge of men's relations to gender equality. So, to what extent are men supportive of gender equality?

In many countries, men's attitudes towards gender equality show four patterns. First, most men are supportive, in broad terms, of gender equality. Second, there is a gender gap, with lower levels of support for gender equality among men than women. Third, young men tend to have better attitudes towards gender equality than older men, although progress is uneven. Fourth, men's attitudes towards gender equality vary according to other factors including race and ethnicity, education, and region.

There is widespread agreement among men in countries such as Australia with broad principles of gender equality. Most men, like most

women, take for granted that women and men are equal, should have the same rights and responsibilities, and women should be treated fairly and justly in the distribution of benefits and responsibilities. This is evident in recent national surveys of community attitudes in Australia (VicHealth 2009, 66). International data is similar. One recent, useful source of data on men's attitudes and practices related to gender is the International Men and Gender Equality Survey or IMAGES, a quantitative household survey carried out with over 8,000 men and 3,500 women aged 18-59 in 2009-2010. A report on the findings from Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda notes that men in all the countries, with the exception of India, were generally supportive of gender equality, with 87 to 90 percent saying that "men do not lose out when women's rights are promoted" (Barker *et al.* 2011, 9). However, this support can be only superficial or tokenistic. When asked if they supported quotas and other concrete affirmative action policies for women to increase their participation in politics, education and the workplace, men's support dropped to the range of 40-74 percent. Men's reactions to efforts to advance women's rights and gender equality can be ambivalent, with both positive and defensive or resistant responses (Dworkin *et al.* 2012).

Men in some countries are far more supportive of gender equality than men in others. There are radical disparities in men's gender-related attitudes and practices across countries. Focusing still on attitudes, the IMAGES data shows that men from India and Rwanda had far more gender-inequitable attitudes than men in the other countries surveyed. For example, while only 10 percent of men in Brazil agreed that "Changing diapers [nappies], giving kids a bath and feeding kids are mother's responsibility", 61 percent of men in Rwanda agreed, as did 86 percent of men in India. While only eight percent of men in Mexico agreed that "To be a man, you need to be tough," this statement was supported by close to half of men in Brazil and Chile and 86 percent of men in India (Barker *et al.* 2011, 19). There are wide variations in men's attitudes regarding women's roles and responsibilities, including in relation to practices such as cooking and cleaning and avoiding pregnancy (Fleming *et al.* 2013). This survey also documents substantial disparities in men's actual practices, whether their involvements in household labour and parenting or in the perpetration of violence or other practices.

To the extent that men have a general attitudinal support for gender equality, like that among women, this support reflects the success of the women's movements in establishing norms of gender equality. However, this does not mean that men support or identify themselves with feminism. Instead, most are ignorant of or hostile to feminism, and many have been

influenced by popular stereotypes of feminism as ‘man-hating’. Men’s discomfort about or hostility towards feminism is fuelled by many of the same factors as women’s, but also above all by feminism’s challenge to sexism and male power and the unease and defensiveness this can generate.

There is a persistent gender gap in attitudes towards gender equality. Men consistently show less support than women for women’s and men’s equal treatment and access to resources. This gender gap is evident across age groups. For example, in a 2001 Australian survey of over 5,000 young people aged 12 to 20, 37 per cent of young men aged 12 to 20 but only 12 per cent of young women agreed that “Men should take control in relationships and be head of the household”, while 25 per cent of males but only 14 per cent of females agreed that “Girls prefer a guy to be in charge of the relationship” (NCP 2001, 74). In a multi-country study among school and university students in Australia, Canada, China, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, USA, South Korea, and Japan, there was a consistent gender gap in attitudes towards sharing housework, a pregnant woman’s right to choose an abortion, the acceptability of pornography, and the relevance of feminism (Bulbeck 2003).

Boys and young men typically have better attitudes to gender equality than older generations of men. Survey data from the US for example shows that both women’s and men’s attitudes towards gender equality have improved over the past 30 years, although men’s have changed more slowly and as a result the gap between women’s and men’s attitudes has widened (Ciabattari 2001, 574-575). Improvement in men’s attitudes reflects two processes. First, as individual males’ attitudes improve, the attitudes of cohorts of men improve over time. Second, younger generations of men have less conservative attitudes than older generations. American men have become less conservative about women’s roles since 1970s, both because younger generations are less conservative and because all cohorts have become less conservative over time. For example, in the 1970s 34 per cent of pre-baby boom men (born 1925 to 1944) agreed that “Women should run their homes and leave running the country to men”, but by the 1990s this had declined to 20 per cent, and only 12 per cent of post-baby boom men (born 1965 to 1980) agreed (Ciabattari 2001, 583). Other international data from the IMAGES survey echoes such patterns, with younger men generally more supportive of gender equality (Barker *et al.* 2011). Boys and young men have more progressive attitudes to gender because they are growing up in the wake and presence of feminism and other social changes.

The relationship between age and gender attitudes, however, is uneven.

The IMAGES survey of men in Brazil, Chile, Croatia, India, Mexico, and Rwanda found mixed trends. While in some countries younger men showed more equitable views, in other countries men over the age of 50 were more equitable than their younger counterparts (Barker *et al.* 2011, 20). Among young males, some studies find that younger boys have worse attitudes than young men. For example, the Australian survey of 5,000 youth aged 12 to 20 found that younger boys aged 12 to 14 showed *higher* support for violence-supportive attitudes than older boys (NCP 2001, 75-95).

Men's support for gender equality also varies depending on what dimension of gender equality is at stake. Looking at changes in attitudes over the past 30 years in countries such as the US, there has been more progress on some issues such as women's participation in paid work than on others such as interpersonal violence (Ciabattari 2001, 576). Recent surveys in Bosnia, Brazil, Chile, Croatia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), India, Mexico, and Rwanda find that most men have broad attitudinal support for gender equality, including women's fair treatment in education and the workplace, but there is less universal support for shared divisions of household labour and shared decision-making (Fleming *et al.* 2013, 47).

Finally, men's attitudes towards gender equality vary according to other forms of social difference and inequality including race and ethnicity, education, and region. This is not surprising given that men's involvements in gender are shaped by the gender relations of their local contexts and communities. These vary markedly in Australia for example: some communities are characterised by strong norms of gender equality, while others are characterised by conservative gender norms of male dominance and female subordination. Even in a single community or context, there is diversity in men's peer cultures and groups (Flood and Pease 2009). Globally, education has significant, although not universal, associations with attitudes towards gender. The IMAGES surveys in eight countries showed positive associations between level of education in the country and support for gender equality in six of these countries, but not for Brazil and India (Fleming *et al.* 2013, 47). Cross-national data from the IMAGES survey documented that men with higher educational attainment and married men had more equitable attitudes, while unmarried men had the least equitable attitudes. This suggests that men's attitudes towards gender also are shaped by their intimate relations, with men who live and negotiate with female intimate partners perhaps (but not inevitably) becoming more gender-equitable in their attitudes. Other, earlier evidence suggests that men's attitudes towards women's roles vary by economic

situation, family context, socialisation experience, religious and political ideologies, race/ethnicity, and regional and historical contexts (Ciabattari 2001).

These patterns in men's attitudinal support for or resistance to gender equality are only one dimension of men's involvements in gender. Men's attitudes have a complex relationship to their practices. Men may respect the women in their lives, but not challenge the broader power structures in society which favour men (Fleming *et al.* 2013, 15). Many men are complicit with the current patriarchal gender order, and their support for gender equality is only partial, superficial, or felt only in relation to the women and girls in their own lives. While many men are reconciled to idea that women should have equal access to education and employment, the proportions of men who *practise* gender-equitable behaviour in their own lives is far less, and even less is the proportion of men who will intervene when other men behave in sexist or violent ways. Men's gendered practices may be contradictory, in that some "try to protect their women (wives, mothers, daughters) from gender discrimination while simultaneously defending their own masculine privilege" (Ciabattari 2001, 576).

The book *Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality* showcases some of the best international thinking and practice regarding men's roles in sustaining gender inequalities and their potential roles in transforming these. We turn now to an outline of the book's contents.

The book

Part I of *Engaging Men in Building Gender Equality* sets the scene with key explorations of the relationships between theory and practice in the field of engaging men in building gender equality. Three influential theorists and advocates raise complementary questions about the ways in which men and masculinities are understood, the need for male advocates for an end to gender inequality to address their own complicity with institutionalized male power, and the value of more structural understandings of the constraints to gender equality.

Jeff Hearn begins by examining the changing ways in which "men" as a gendered category has been framed over the last 40 years. His chapter explores the complex relations between the diverse politics of men's gender-conscious activism, the development of explicitly gendered policy-making on men, and the establishment of the sub-field of critical studies on men and masculinities. In these arenas a crucial issue is to what extent and in what ways practices and theories of, on and around men and

masculinities are critical, or not, and how they relate to wider feminist and gender debates and theorising. The chapter draws on extensive transnational research on men and masculinities over many years, including the 18-country collection, *Men and Masculinities Around the World* (Ruspini *et al.*), as well as more specific studies on Finland, Sweden, UK and the European Union.

As masculinity studies has grown and as men have been seen as having a key role to play in promoting gender equality and challenging men's violence, some key feminist insights about the dynamics of men's gender privilege and men's location within gendered hierarchies have been neglected. It is the premise of Bob Pease's chapter that to engage men in building gender equality, we have to disengage them from the structures and processes of patriarchy. Such a project requires that men acknowledge their complicity in relation to the wider culture that supports men's violence. For men to recognise their complicity, they must face the contribution they make to causal influences that perpetuate violence against women. This necessitates a framework of shared responsibility for the ongoing injustices against women. Consequently, profeminist men must examine their gendered practices and their complicity with the reproduction of institutionalized male power before they can effectively advance gender equality.

The next chapter, by Jerker Edström, argues that the way forward in engaging men on masculinities and gender equality must involve moving beyond the homogenised and individualised framings in gender and development discourse, or reformed gender roles, to think politically in more structural–yet dynamic–ways about patriarchy. Recognising key contributions by feminist thinkers, on the marginalisation of women's voices, discrimination against and the subordination of women, or the very idea of deep structures of constraint to gender equality, this chapter sets out a framework for 'undressing patriarchy' in four dimensions. Drawing on a range of writers in feminism, masculinities studies and on power, four dimensions are proposed as: 'Male centeredness' (in a cultural or representational dimension), 'Male privilege' (in a material and institutional dimension), 'Male supremacy' (in an ideological or political dimension) and 'Male order' (in an epistemological dimension). Whilst the first three are more familiar, male order is proposed as a key sub-structural source of constraint to gender equality. Edström argues that it provides the deep-level syntax of patriarchal knowledge-power, with an underlying and divisive binary operating-code, resulting in an active obfuscation of alternative constructions of sense and meaning. After laying out this framework, the chapter briefly considers how each dimension has started

to become addressed, or not, in development discourse on the role of men and boys and concludes with reflection on some possible implications and challenges ahead.

Part II of the book focuses on one of the most significant and well-developed areas of work engaging men in building gender equality, focused on men's violence against women. It begins with Stephen Fisher's critical assessment of the frameworks and approaches which often underpin efforts to involve men in violence prevention. Fisher argues that much work presented as 'engaging men in violence prevention' is ideologically undermining of the work of feminist women's rights organisations. In response, he outlines principles for training men to become allies for the women's movements. The book then moves to discussion of particular projects which are of interest. Two of the six chapters in this section document important initiatives in Bangladesh and Indonesia focused on men's roles in preventing and reducing men's violence against women, in chapters by Abu Sufian and Nur Hasyim respectively.

Abu Sufian's chapter describes the Engaging Men Initiative (EMI) project developed by CARE over 2010-2013 in the north east of Bangladesh. This project, oriented towards women's empowerment and gender equality, is an innovative initiative engaging men into a women's empowerment program among ultra-poor target groups and in a remote and difficult area which is relatively conservative, poor, and has a high prevalence of violence against women.

Nur Hasyim's chapter discusses initiatives to engage men and boys in ending violence against women in Nusa Tenggara Indonesia. It describes strategies of engaging men in the movement for ending violence against women which had been applied in the region and explores the outcomes generated by the strategies. Hasyim argues that given the multifaceted factors which influence violence against women, strategies that address those factors are inevitable. Furthermore, feminist principles are needed to guide those strategies in building a non-violent and equal society. Even though the initiative shows evidence of change, there are many challenges in generating meaningful outcomes.

The next two chapters highlight the ways in which feminist-informed examinations of men and masculinities generate valuable insights regarding violence against women and indeed violence against men. While Veronica Oxman Vega's chapter focuses on homicides against women and girls on the border of Mexico and the United States, Sara Meger's chapter focuses on sexual violence against men in the context of armed conflicts.

Ciudad Juarez at the border of Mexico and the United States has

become emblematic due to the large number of homicides of women and girls, or ‘femicides’, that have taken place in the city during the last twenty years. For the Sydney Action Group for Juarez (SAGJ), this gendered violence raises hard questions about why it happens and what to do to confront it. Veronica Oxman Vega looks at the context of socio economic and political changes that have generated a particular type of violent masculinity which can lead men to commit homicide against women, thus creating a gender abyss. In Mexico, this reality poses great challenges not just for women but also to all levels of society. In fact femicide is a phenomenon which appears to be increasing in other regions of the world and therefore requires a systemic approach. At the same time, policy making needs to consider not only taking measures to empower women and girls, but also innovative measures to free boys and men from this violent type of masculinity.

Dominant narratives in international relations and security treat sexual violence in conflict as an exceptional form of gender-based violence, perpetrated primarily against women and girls. Due to underreporting and a programmatic bias of focusing only on women, the sexual violence experienced by men in many contemporary conflicts has been largely overlooked in both policy formation and academic analysis. Sara Meger’s chapter seeks to understand the occurrence of sexual violence against men and boys in armed conflict by positioning it within (and against) the current feminist discourse on wartime sexual violence. The perpetration of sexual violence against men and boys demonstrates the materiality of sexual violence in conflict and its instrumentality in providing economic, political, and social opportunity to men who would otherwise be marginalised in the formal global economy. This function is served regardless of the sex of the victim(s).

The final chapter in this section broadens the focus to the ways in which the politics of gender equality are enmeshed with other political commitments. An existing attachment to other political objectives may provide the basis for men’s cooperation with feminist politics or establish barriers to men’s involvement. David Duriesmith’s chapter explores the relationship between colonialism and gender politics through the lives of twelve Acehnese men. The respondent’s perceptions of gender equality were influenced by their engagement with colonial resistance. For some of the men interviewed their commitment to resisting colonialism in Aceh opened trajectories towards egalitarian practices. The perception that outside cultural forces had corrupted Aceh provided a justification for greater equality. For others their opposition to equality was justified by appealing to ‘authentic’ Acehnese culture. This chapter suggests that using