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To cite this article: Michael Flood & Bob Pease (2005) Undoing Men's Privilege and Advancing Gender Equality in Public Sector Institutions, *Policy and Society*, 24:4, 119-138, DOI: [10.1016/S1449-4035\(05\)70123-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1449-4035(05)70123-5)

To link to this article: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1449-4035\(05\)70123-5](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1449-4035(05)70123-5)



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Published online: 03 Mar 2017.



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# Undoing Men's Privilege and Advancing Gender Equality in Public Sector Institutions

*Michael Flood and Bob Pease*

## **Abstract**

Discrimination against women in public sector organisations has been the focus of considerable research in recent years. While much of this literature acknowledges the structural basis of gender inequality, strategies for change are often focused on anti-discrimination policies, equal employment opportunities and diversity management. Discriminatory behaviour is often individualised in these interventions and the larger systems of dominance and subordination are ignored. The flipside of gender discrimination, we argue, is the privileging of men. The lack of critical interrogation of men's privilege allows men to reinforce their dominance. In this paper we offer an account of gender inequalities and injustices in public sector institutions in terms of privilege. The paper draws on critical scholarship on men and masculinities and an emergent scholarship on men's involvement in the gender relations of workplaces and organisations, to offer both a general account of privilege and an application of this framework to the arena of public sector institutions and workplaces in general.

## **Introduction: Discrimination or Privilege**

Many writers on gender inequality in public sector organisations (Mills and Tancred 1992; Hearn 1992; Alvesson and Billing 1997) demonstrate the structural and institutional dimensions of gender inequality and their embodiment in organisational culture and policies. Such approaches emphasise the importance of locating gender inequality within the context of collective arrangements. However, many of these theorists do not explore adequately the responsibility of members of privileged groups for maintaining these social arrangements. Perhaps they consider this perpetuation of privilege to be self-evident. But it is this very self-evidence that itself lessens in part the responsibility that members of such groups have to challenge these unequal arrangements.

One concept that would seem to provide a basis for holding privileged groups responsible is that of discrimination, whether this be in the form of class, race, sexuality, age or gender discrimination. There has certainly been an explosion of literature dealing with the experiences of

discrimination. However, while much of this literature acknowledges the structural basis of discrimination, discrimination is usually represented in terms of personal attitudes and prejudices. Thus one uses terms like “racist” and “sexist” to describe people who discriminate against others. Such terms focus on the behaviour of individuals and ignore the wider context in which discrimination takes place. Rather than identifying the ways in which the individual’s behaviour is socially reinforced and normalised, in these interpretations we tend to blame the individual for being prejudiced (Wildman and Davis 2000). In this way these descriptions often hide the flipside of discrimination, which is privilege and how it is institutionally produced and supported.

A new vocabulary is needed to understand the ways in which men as a group benefit from gender inequality. The concept of privilege is a more useful way to name male dominance than the concepts of discrimination, women’s disadvantage or diversity. Over ten years ago, Eveline (1994) asked why there was no demand for men to justify their “advantage”. She noted that while men’s advantage was assumed in feminist analysis, it did not become “rhetorical figure of speech”(Eveline 1994, 129). While there has been considerable literature since then, most notably by Hearn and Collinson, in naming men as men in organisational analysis (Collinson and Hearn 1994), gendering managers as men (Collinson and Hearn 1996) and analysing hegemonic masculinity and multiple masculinities in organisations (Hearn and Collinson 2006), few writers have used the language of privilege and advantage to analyse men’s resistance to gender equality. Our paper endeavours to make a contribution to that endeavour.

Our focus on men’s privilege is buttressed by a broader recognition of the need to address men’s roles in gender relations. At the analytical level a full understanding of the processes and practices of gender in public sector institutions depends on scholarly investigation of men and masculinities. This is because gender inequality is in part a problem of men – of men’s practices and relations (Flood 2004). Instrumentally, it is important to recognise that some men already are playing positive roles in fostering equitable gender relations, and such roles must be supported and extended. In addition, excluding men from work towards gender justice has significant costs. It perpetuates women’s sole responsibility for addressing gender inequities, it

may provoke male hostility and retaliation, and it does not address the gendered interactions and relationships through which power relations are organised. Finally, involving men has important benefits. Male inclusion can increase men's responsibility for change, foster men's sense of investment in the benefits of gender equality, engage men directly in reconstructing their identities and gender relations, and encourage political sensitivity to the ways in which some men experience forms of harm in current social relations (Chant and Gutman 2000, 26-28).

While there is a pervasive association between men, power, and authority in work and organisations, this has been neglected in mainstream texts on organisations, management, and leadership (Collinson and Hearn 2005, 293). Many of these texts are implicit accounts of men, yet conventional management theory has had very little to say regarding the conspicuous interrelationships between management and men (Whitehead 2002, 129). However, there is now a growing body of scholarship on men's involvement in the gender relations of workplaces and organisations. This builds on key insights of the critical scholarship on men and masculinities, feminist work on gender, work and organisations, and critical engagement with mainstream scholarship on work, organisations, and management. A scholarly field focused on "gendered organisations" or "gender, work, and organisations" began to emerge in the early 1980s (Martin and Collinson 2002). It documents that men and masculinities are integral to the production and maintenance of gender inequalities in workplaces and organisations (and, indeed, also integral to the potential production of gender equality). Unjust gender relations are maintained by individual men's sexist and gendered practices, masculine workplace cultures, men's monopolies over decision-making and leadership, and powerful constructions of masculinity and male identity.

We take as our starting place that the analytical focus needs to be on gender relations rather than on the categories of men and women (Connell 1987). This analytical focus is clear in our emphasis throughout on process and practices. The argument develops in three stages. First, we elaborate and characterise the concept of privilege, illustrating its utility for understanding gender inequalities in public sector institutions. Next, we clarify the processes involved in *doing* privilege. Finally, given that gender relations intersect with other forms of social differ-

ence and inequality, we introduce intersectionality theory as a useful intervention in the *undoing* of privilege.

### **Characterising Privilege: Invisibility, Normalisation, Entitlement**

Privilege can be defined as “systematically conferred advantages individuals enjoy by virtue of their membership in dominant groups with access to resources and institutional power that are beyond the common advantages of marginalised citizens” (Bailey 1998, 109). Individuals come to possess such benefits by virtue of their prescribed membership in a particular group, whether constructed by race or religion, clan or tribe, class or gender (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, 32). In other words, the groups you belong to are more likely to make you privileged than your individual abilities. The concept of privilege in relation to men overlaps with Connell’s (1987) concepts of patriarchal dividend and hegemonic masculinity and the language of male dominance. However, we find privilege a more useful concept for analysing the intersections of privilege and penalty in men’s and women’s lives.

Distinguishing between “earned strength and unearned power conferred systematically”, McIntosh (1992) identified forty-six advantages available to her as a white person that were not available to people of colour under racism, in effect an “invisible knapsack” of privilege. Schacht (2003) has constructed a similar list of the ways in which he as a man is privileged: he has a better chance of getting a job than a woman; the majority of news reports he reads will be about the accomplishments of men; he can rely on his wife doing most of the housework; he feels safe from sexual harassment and sexual assault in public places; and so on.

Most privilege is not recognised as such by those who have it. In fact, “one of the functions of privilege is to structure the world so that mechanisms of privileges are invisible – in the sense that they are unexamined – to those who benefit from them” (Bailey 1998, 112). Members of privileged groups often either do not understand what others mean when they refer to them as privileged, or tend to become angry and defensive (Johnson 2001). Because privilege does not necessarily bring happiness and fulfilment, this will sometimes also be used to deny the existence of privilege.

An Australian study of perceptions of the composition of company boards illustrates the invisibility of privilege. Women represent only 3.4 per cent of the board members of publicly-listed companies in Australia (Sheridan and Milgate 2003, 147-148). A survey among board members found that 53 per cent of male members felt that the composition of company boards was appropriate. Perhaps unsurprisingly, only 30 per cent of female members agreed. In these contexts, many men occupying positions of privilege and power do not question the gender status quo, take as given their right to be in such positions, and do not recognise the gendered processes that privilege men (such as the requirement for board membership that one have previous experience in senior management positions, something men are more likely to have).

Members of privileged groups have an “unmarked status” (Rosenblum and Travis 1996, 142). As a consequence, members of privileged groups are unlikely to be aware of how others may not have access to the benefits that they receive and thus they are unlikely to be able to acknowledge the experiences of those who are marginalised. By simply exercising their prerogatives in everyday life, they can easily ignore how others are denied the same opportunities.

Thus, while some men are willing to acknowledge that women are disadvantaged and discriminated against, they are less willing to recognise that they are correspondingly privileged. It is easy to recognise blatant sexism or racism when someone puts another person down because of their gender or their race. But it is much harder to recognise how in everyday interactions one may reinforce dominance simply because of one's membership, by birth or circumstance, of a dominant group.

A second characteristic of privilege is that it is normalised. Privileged lives become the model for idealised human relations, the dominant norm. Perry (2001, 192) notes that “white, thin male young heterosexual Christian and financially secure” people come to embody what it means to be normal. Through the positioning of self and other, various forms of difference are devalued because they are seen as inferior, weak or subordinate in relation to the normal, which is presented as superior, strong and dominant. As Perry (2001, 192) notes, “racism, sexism, and homophobia are all predicated upon such negative valu-

ations of difference". The normalisation of privilege means that the characteristics of the dominant group become the basis for measuring success and failure. Because the privileged are regarded as "normal" and because the norm is unmarked, they are less likely to be studied or researched as members of particular populations, and are often positioned instead as representative of all humanity. "Gender", for example, becomes a code word for women and "race" refers to people of colour. Hearn and Collinson (2006) have noted that, when men are gendered in organisational analysis, the emphasis tends to be on subordinated masculinities, such as those of gay men.

Part of the process of exploring dominant identities is to question how and why they appear normal, "to lay open ... their dependency on power relations and to particularise them" (Tillner 1997, 3). Perhaps, as Tillner (1997, 3) suggests, it may be useful to represent non-dominant identities as "normal" and to identify dominant identities as "particular" as a way of subverting the tendency for dominant groups to always position themselves as "the universal". For example, the naming of straight white economically powerful men as a particular group of men will make it more difficult for them to universalise their human experience. Admittedly this strategy involves contradictions since it simultaneously names such categories *and* tries to deconstruct them (Collinson and Hearn 1994, 97).

In relation to institutions and workplaces, the normalisation of men's privilege is evident in the first instance in powerful gendered constructions of occupation. Various occupations are coded as intrinsically male: they are assumed to be held and practised by men, and deviations from this are marked as "other". For example, in everyday conversation one hears of "doctors", implicitly male, and "woman doctors", marked by their not being "[male] doctors". Constructions of appropriate occupational roles for men and women are embedded too in the cultures of workplaces themselves, thus sustaining gendered divisions of labour. For example, as part of their resistance to women's entry to the Western Australia Police Service, some male police officers assert that "the public's mental image of a police officer is male" (Eveline and Harwood 2003, 111).

The normalisation of privilege is evident in cultural and organisational understandings of men's monopoly of the upper echelons of

public sector institutions. Powerful interrelationships between hegemonic constructions of masculinity and hegemonic constructions of management and leadership produce a taken-for-granted association between maleness and organisational power. There is a two-way relationship between the many symbolic expressions of the authority and status of managers and of the authority and status of men (Collinson and Hearn 2005, 297). While many female managers in male-dominated organisations must assume contradictory roles of (feminine) gender and (masculine) organisational being, male managers often find that management offers a powerful validation of masculine identity in expressing many of the qualities of successful manhood (Whitehead 2002, 132). In this sense, it is useful to see professional practice “as a form of ontological validation of the ‘masculine/managerial’ subject, a way of being (a man) that strengthens rather than weakens men’s ability to exercise power as professionals and as men” (Whitehead 2002, 136).

Deeply masculine images and assumptions are embedded in the contemporary rhetoric of leadership development, of “heroic”, “visionary”, and “charismatic” leaders. (Collinson and Hearn 2005, 298). Writing on the British public sector, Hopton (1999) argues that both the “new managerialism” and traditional militarism maintain and celebrate traditional masculinist values. Gendered assumptions underpin managerial practices in all their dimensions, from performance appraisals and “human resources management” to corporate strategy (Whitehead 2002, 129). Associations between organisational power and masculinity are embodied also in the size and position of offices, furniture, “power-dressing” work clothing, and other aspects of everyday organisational life.

Recent changes in tertiary education in the UK provide a case study of the ways in which associations between management and masculinity enable men’s promotion and women’s marginalisation. Leonard (1998) describes the development throughout the 1990s of a culture of “new managerialism” in the tertiary education sector, associated with New Right discourses and a wider economic and political process of marketisation. The emphasis on “efficiency”, “product quality”, and educational “consumers” has meant that management, marketing, finances, and premises are considered priority issues. Managers are required

to possess new knowledges and forms of cultural capital (to do with finances and marketing for example). However, these new knowledges are often perceived as masculine. They are knowledges that draw on specific constructions of masculinity, such as the aggressive and even sexualised masculinity of “hard finance” (Leonard 1998, 74-75) and are more likely to be held by men. Managers are seen to need to be highly task-oriented and controlling, and to work long hours at the expense of any domestic involvements. While such changes have been contested and resisted, they also allow men to claim organisational authority, naturalising male dominance, and marginalising women. In such cases, certain “valid” skills and privileged knowledges come to speak to a dominant form of masculinity, a condition that results in maintaining women’s exclusion from the realm of “the professional” and from similar powerful positions in the public sphere (Whitehead 2002, 135). While contemporary discourses of management show some emphasis on stereotypically feminine qualities of participation, democracy, and an orientation towards groups and relations, Australian research among senior executives finds that constructions of “feminine” management can simply reinforce gender divisions and that there are still powerful structural and discursive barriers to women’s participation in management (Chesterman et al. 2005).

A third aspect of privilege is that privileged groups have a sense of entitlement to the privileges they enjoy. As Rosenblum and Travis (1996, 141) state: “The sense of entitlement that one has a right to be respected, acknowledged, protected and rewarded – is so much taken for granted by those of us in non-stigmatised statuses, that they are often shocked and angered when it is denied them”.

Clearly, those in dominant groups will be more likely than those in subordinate groups to argue that existing inequalities are legitimate or natural. It is often seen as understandable that privileged groups will further their own interests with little concern for the implications for others. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) formulate the notion of “social dominance orientation” to explain why people value hierarchy and non-egalitarian relations between people. People develop an “orientation towards social dominance” by virtue of the power and status of their primary group, and dominant groups act in their own self-interests more than subordinate groups do. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) argue that

this social dominance orientation is largely a product of membership within dominant groups.

One example of gendered entitlement concerns sexual harassment. It is a routine finding in sexual harassment research that where men see harmless fun or normal gendered interaction, women see harassment. Examining men's workplace "girl watching", Quinn (2002) argues that men's refusal to see their behaviour as harassing is the outcome of the production of masculine identities based on the objectification of women and diminished empathy for them. In this sense, gender differences in interpretation "may stem more from acts of ignoring than states of ignorance" (Quinn 2002, 397).

Another example of entitlement concerns pay. Women tend to pay themselves less than men pay themselves for the same work, and this "depressed entitlement" among women can be reinterpreted as "elevated entitlement" among men (Pelham and Hetts 2001). Similarly, a range of studies find that men expect more pay than women, view higher levels of pay as fair pay for their work, and request higher salaries in negotiations (Barron 2003).

This perceived entitlement is one aspect of the internalised domination experienced by members of dominant groups. Pheterson (1986, 147) defines internalised domination as "the incorporation and acceptance by individuals within a dominant group of prejudices against others". The concept of internalised domination may explain in part why members of privileged groups may reinforce the oppression of others without considering themselves as being oppressive. Taking this further, Tillner (1997, 2) defines dominance "as a form of identity practice that constructs a difference which legitimises dominance and grants the agent of dominance the illusion of a superior identity". In this process, the identities of others are invalidated. Thus, dominance is socially constructed and psychically internalised. To challenge dominant identities, members of privileged groups must explore different models of identity and construct subjectivities that are not based on domination and subordination.

## **Doing Privilege: Privilege as Structured Action**

The above characterisation of the processes of privileging illustrates the importance of focusing on the "doing" of gender rather than

thinking of gender as a characteristic of a person. It is in part through the processes of “accomplishing” gender, race, and other forms of difference that social dominance in public sector organisations is reproduced. That is, people live their lives trying to attain certain valued aspirations associated with these statuses. Thus, rather than seeing the concepts of race, gender and class as reified categories, we should be more interested in the processes of gendering, racialising and classing. Race, gender and class constitute “ongoing methodical and situated accomplishments” (Fenstermaker and West 2002, 75), in which people’s everyday conduct legitimates and maintains wider social divisions. Talking specifically about men, for example, Messerschmidt (2000, 53) argues that masculinity is “what men do under specific constraints and varying degrees of power”. Indeed, work is a key site in which male workers and managers accomplish masculinity (Sinclair 2000).

Messerschmidt (2000) develops the concept of “structured action” to capture both people’s agentic negotiations, interpretations and construction of social situations and relations, and the ways in which these are constrained by social structures. This idea moves past the common tendency to describe micro and macro forces in dichotomous terms, with the suggestion that either men or structures are responsible for the problem. It recognises that, while social structure is reproduced by the widespread and continual actions of individuals, it also “produces subjects”. Individuals do not simply produce gender, race and class in a vacuum. Rather, they are reproduced and constrained by institutional settings, such as families, workplaces and the state. There are thus limits to people’s ability to enact different expressions of their multiple identities. One of the main implications of this analysis is the need to investigate privilege at interactional, cultural and structural levels at the same time as exploring the intersections of privilege with oppression.

How then do men “do dominance” in public sector institutions and workplaces? They employ a variety of strategies to resist women’s entry into their workplaces and institutions, or to maintain the subordination of those women already there. An initial practice is often to try to prevent women’s entry. Historically, this has been accomplished through formal barriers to women’s employment, such as discrimi-

natory laws and institutional policies, union rules, and so on. While such formal measures (at least in their bluntest forms) are no longer available, a range of other informal, interpersonal measures may be used in resisting women's entry. Focusing on a police academy in the south-eastern USA, Prokos and Padavic (2002) give examples of male superiors and co-workers using unduly harsh treatment of women, offensive profanity, anti-women remarks, demeaning terms of address, sexual innuendo, and sexual harassment. In the Western Australia Police Service, many men verbally attack and sexually slander women who receive promotions or training, ridicule and deride women face-to-face and to male colleagues, make constant sexist comments to female officers regarding their workplace roles, and belittle women who complain of sexual harassment, bullying, or poor attitudes (Eveline and Harwood 2003, 100-104). Perpetrators of such behaviour are condoned, escape penalty, and receive promotions. Such efforts by men result in the maintenance and entrenchment of male privilege. At the same time, particularly in male-dominated settings, men who do not go along with dominant masculine norms of hostility towards female workers and superiors themselves may be targeted for abuse (Eveline and Harwood 2003, 101).

Women's exclusion from and subordination in workplaces and institutions is also sustained through men's collective social relations. Analysing men's networks generates greater understanding of the interactional, discursive, and structural processes involved in gender inequality in workplaces and organisations (Tallberg 2003, 20). Male workers may maintain sex-based job segregation, male bonding, and male-focused networking by emphasising sex boundaries in friendship and group relations (Pease 2002, 103-104). They may exclude women from informal work-related networks (Miller 2004, 51). They may give greater acknowledgement of each others' presence than of women, in effect telling women that they are unimportant (Martin 2003, 359). In occupational and professional training, they may create exclusively male in-groups by using male-as-generic language, excluding female staff from classroom examples, excluding women from bonding experiences and indeed, refusing to speak to women altogether (Prokos and Padavic 2002, 442-446). In an American study among large, for-profit organisations, Martin (2003) notes that men held themselves account-

able particularly to other men. They were invested in and pursued other men's attention, company, and approval, enacting homoemotional and even homoerotic bonds.

While gender inequalities and hegemonic constructions of masculinity can be constituted by women's absence from workplaces and institutions, they can be constituted also by women's presence. Men may use women's presence to construct masculinities and men's privilege in several ways. First, they may use women to define masculinity by what it is not. This involves establishing a collective identity not only by emphasising commonalities but by marking difference (Prokos and Padavic 2002, 441). Men may mark gender difference both by creating differences and by emphasising existing ones. This can be done through processes of male bonding and exclusion, but also through occupational training and socialisation. In their study of police academy training, Prokos and Padavic (2002, 451) describe a "hidden curriculum", teaching recruits that gender differences are large and supersede other differences between people, that women are rarely strong like men, and that those women who are strong are "unfeminine". In short, occupational cultures and socialisation may teach men and women alike that women are different and inferior.

Women's presence can also be used to raise men's status. In the study by Prokos and Padavic (2002, 452-453), male officers and trainers denigrated and objectified women and positioned women only as victims or as objects of sexual fantasy or ridicule. By so doing they imparted the implicit lesson that male recruits do not need to treat women in positions of power or authority with the same respect or seriousness they grant to men. Finally, male employees may use women's presence to confirm the masculine character of the job by showing that women are unfit for it (Prokos and Padavic 2002, 443).

At the same time, men may experience their social relations in mixed-sex and predominantly female work settings as very positive (Bird 2003, 582-583). In mixed-sex and more sex-integrated workplaces, men tend to get along with and receive affective support from women workers and may benefit from the deference and support shown to them by female co-workers, particularly when the women are occupationally subordinate to them. On the other hand, men report lower levels of satisfaction and greater role ambiguity when women are their

equals or superiors (Bird 2003, 582-583).

## **Undoing Privilege: Traitorous Identities and Intersectional Theory**

How can men's privilege be undone? There is now a wide-ranging articulation of the role of men and boys in progress towards gender equality. This includes activist and policy-oriented frameworks offered for example by a UN Expert Group (2003), Kaufman (2003), and Greig et al. (2000), and scholarly investigations of men's relation to feminism, exploring questions of epistemology and political practice, including recent texts by Digby (1998), Gardiner (2002) and Pease (2000; 2002). We focus here on one key question: what would motivate men to challenge their own positions of power? Given that most members of privileged groups appear to actively defend their privileged positions, what likelihood is there that they might form alliances with oppressed groups? What would encourage them to do so? Harding (1995) argues that standpoint theory can offer an explanation of how members of dominant groups can develop knowledge that serves the interests of subordinate groups. In this view, it is possible for members of dominant groups to develop the capacity to see themselves from the perspective of those in subordinated groups. Dominant groups do not necessarily form a homogeneous network of shared interests. Thus, it is possible for members of dominant groups to challenge the taken-for-granted self-interests of their own group.

Bailey's (2000) argument that members of dominant groups can develop what she calls "traitorous identities" adds support to this position. She distinguishes between those who are unaware of their privilege and those who have a critical consciousness of their privilege. Traitors are thus those who refuse to reproduce their privilege and who challenge the worldviews to which dominant groups are expected to adhere. These dominant group members are able to identify with the experiences of oppressed groups. So from this premise, while it is difficult for members of privileged groups to critically appraise their own position, it is not impossible.

The process of developing a traitorous identity involves learning to see the world through the experiences of the oppressed. This may not be fully possible but members of dominant groups can make a

choice about accepting or rejecting their part in the establishment. Perhaps one of the most damaging aspects of privilege is the privilege of doing nothing or of not speaking out about injustice. Privileged group members can decide to ignore the struggles of the oppressed. They have what Wildman and Davis (2000, 659) call “the privilege of silence”, which may be one of the greatest abuses of privilege.

In order to adopt traitorous social locations and identities, those whose lives are constructed at the centre of the social order must learn about these lives by starting their thoughts from the perspective of lives at the margins (Harding 1991, 269). There are important resources in the lives of dominant group members for such a shift. The conditions of men’s lives include diversities, contradictions, ambiguities and absences through which these possibilities may be opened up. Men who are subject to silences and misnamings, because of their social location as gay or bisexual, working-class, “non-white” or disabled for example may be able to find points of contact with the feminist standpoints of women. Members of the category “men” in general may be able to find such points of contact with women’s experiences of domination, via critical reflection on their *own* subjection to domination — not as an “oppressed” group, but as an aspect of the power relations between and among men themselves, relations which are central to the operations of patriarchy (Morgan 1992, 196-197). This is not meant to suggest that men’s and women’s experiences are the same, or that one must have experience of *some* kind of oppression in order to generate traitorous analyses (Harding 1991, 290), or that the experience of marginality automatically leads to empathy with other oppressed communities (Frankenberg 1993, 20). But it is to suggest that there are possibilities for communication and dialogue between women and men. Temporary experiences of “otherness” may also contribute to men’s ability to develop an anti-patriarchal standpoint. Such experiences come about when men are located in an immediate social context in which they are made “other”, and the original and oppressed “Other” becomes in a sense the norm (for example, through sheer force of numbers), problematising men’s identities and locations (Stanley and Wise 1990, 33).

Such an intersectional analysis of privilege makes clear that almost everyone experiences both privilege and subordination. Black feminist

criticisms of white feminism draw attention to the fact that while white women are oppressed by their gender positioning, they also receive privileges through their whiteness. Similarly, while working-class men are oppressed in class relations, they still receive forms of gender privilege. This recognition extends and complicates the earlier characterisation of privilege. For example, while men's privileged lives are normalised, multiple forms of social difference shape both unities among and differences between men (Hearn and Collinson 1994). Particular men may receive or practise forms of privilege in some social contexts and/or in relation to some social divisions, while lacking these in other contexts. This means too that the language of "privileged groups" can exaggerate the homogeneity of its membership.

In this context it is important to recognise that men do not share uniformly in the benefits of gender inequality. In the first place, men also occupy *other* social locations associated with disadvantage and oppression, or with advantage and privilege. While men's domination of paid work and political power is a key source of male privilege over women, it also involves costs for men in general and for some men in particular. The bluntest example of this concerns occupational injuries and deaths. Male employees comprised 90.5 per cent of those suffering work-related traumatic fatalities in Australia between 1989 and 1992 (NOHSC 1998, 7). Males comprised 69 to 72 per cent of employees involved in accepted workers' compensation cases which resulted in a fatality or disability (permanent or temporary) between 1996 and 2002 (NOHSC 2003, 3). Among men who are killed at work, the vast majority are in blue-collar or working-class occupations, yet these fatalities are not reducible simply to class. It is also the case that the occupations with the highest levels of physical danger to their employees are dominated by men. From an international perspective, Jackson (1999) argues that among adult labourers and landless workers in South Asia it is men whose physical and nutritional wellbeing is most compromised by work. While women's work is arduous, in general men are more likely to take up the especially effort-intensive tasks. If we include physical effort in measures of work, labour-based gender inequalities are less stark and it is clear that some men experience gendered vulnerabilities (Jackson 1999, 95-98). On the other hand, there are forms of "work" such as prostitution which are dominated by and particularly dangerous

to women (Farley 2004).

Furthermore, hegemonic constructions of masculinity can impose constraints on men's management of the emotional and interpersonal dimensions of participation in work and public activity. Boyle (2002) offers a case study of an organisation where men perform considerable amounts of emotional labour, as ambulance officers providing pre-hospital emergency care and transportation. The male officers are expected to be caring, empathetic, and compassionate in their "frontstage" interactions with patients, but in the "backstage" spaces inhabited by co-workers, supervisors, and non-frontline staff they are expected to be cynical and nonchalant. There are tensions between the men's performance of emotional labour, central to the work of the organisation, and a militarised and managerial culture based on masculine norms of stoicism and emotional inexpressiveness. More generally, while the masculine cultures of much management and organisational life are built on male privilege, they also involve tensions for men. Collinson and Hearn (2005) note that men's orientations to competitive progress up through organisations also make achieving dominance more difficult and increase the symbolic and material insecurities of workplace participation. Men's subjective investments in individualised projects of career progress and achievement work to validate masculine identity, and are reinforced by the material rewards (wages, perks, and job security) and symbolic rewards (status, reputation, and identity) of success (Collinson and Hearn 2005, 303). At the same time, in the context of redundancies and career bottlenecks, these investments take their toll. Men engage in increasingly intense workplace competition, their health and relationships may suffer, and they may continue to live with job insecurity (Collinson and Hearn 2005, 303-4).

Noting the insecurities and health risks associated with some men's workplace involvements should not blind us to the privileges also involved. However, an awareness of the intersections among forms of dominance and subordination usefully reduces the binary opposition between men and women as homogenous oppositional groups. It also allows us to identify possible resources for grounding "traitorous identities" among some men.

In this paper we have argued that naming and critically interrogating men's privilege, in the context of an intersectional analysis, provides a

valuable framework for work towards gender equality in public sector organisations. From these insights we can develop practical proposals for reform. Most obviously, they provide a basis for designing training programmes for men at different levels of the organisational hierarchy. These programmes should include content that examines how men's gender interests are socially constructed and psychically embedded, critique the routine accomplishment and reproduction of privilege, and identify and encourage gender egalitarian orientations, identities and relations.

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