**Special Issue: Men Doing In-Equalities Research: Critical Reflections and Analyses from Men in the field.**

**Purpose** – This editorial provides the background to and explains the rationale for, this special issue. The editorial introduces the papers and offers a brief commentary as to the key focus and contribution of each paper.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The terms of reference of this special issue called upon contributors to adopt an *autoenthnographic* stance. Following a *reflexive* approach six male diversity and (In) equalities academics, researchers, scholars reflect on their experiences of ‘doing research’ as men with multiple identities.

**Findings** – The papers offer highly personal, intimate and revealing narratives. Each paper is highly individual and the findings are far from unitary. Authors’ reflections offer useful and interesting findings on a range of issues including reasons for choosing to specialize in diversity and equalities research; the experiences and challenges for men who research gender ;men whose defining identity *seems* not to be gender but rather sexual orientation and/or ethnicity and a call for critical reflections on reflexivity itself. Each paper invites further reflection and analysis.

**Originality/value** – This special issue is valuable in that it engages with issues and topics which can be construed as contentious, complex and politically sensitive. The special issue deviates from more traditional formats involving presentation and discussion of empirical findings; preferring instead to invite individual contributors towards an ‘inward’ and reflective gaze on the intersections of identity and research work.

**Keywords**: Men, Reflexivity, Autoethnography; Masculinities; Gender; Intersectionality.

The idea for this special issue can be traced back to the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Conference in Toulouse, 2012. The initial suggestion came from Regine Bendl, Editor in Chief of this journal. Traditionally, research in the diversity and equalities arena has been perceived as a largely female area of inquiry. In recent years however, a growing number of men have been attracted to and are engaging in equalities research. This purpose of this special issue is to provide an opportunity for men to reflect upon, document and discuss their experiences of engaging in diversity and equality research as a ‘gender minority’. The special issue was also partly inspired by the publication, in *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion- an International Journal* of a highly successful special issue, ‘Being a feminist academic’ (Sang, Joy, Kinge and Sayce, 2012) which provided reflective and personal accounts from female researchers. It was felt that it would be interesting to hear comparable accounts from male researchers recounting their perceptions of how their (male) gender has influenced their research and fieldwork.

We invited contributors to submit papers which discussed their research experiences in the diversity and equalities arena with an implicit focus on the dynamics created by their gender and other *intersectional* influences. As such, we sought critical reflections of the role of the researcher’s gender and (multiple) identities on the epistemological, methodological and fieldwork experience.

We wanted men to be open, thoughtful, reflective and honest. We wanted to hear the experiences of male diversity scholars in terms of exclusion and inclusion? How did they arrive at or come to focus on diversity and equality research? What is it like to be a ‘gender minority’? (as academics and researchers in the diversity and equality discipline) Does gender frame the perception of the researcher? Are some areas ‘out of bounds’ to male researchers? Do men have legitimacy in doing equalities research? How are men ‘doing equalities research’ perceived (for example, by other men)? What are the methodological and epistemological issues men have faced on issues concerning power; power in the research process and in the relationships with participants? How has our male gender conflated with class, age, sexuality and race in the process of fieldwork? Is gender the defining aspect of your identity?

Of course, we were sensitive to the charge of giving (yet more) voice to (yet more) men. Surely, men have their opinions and voice heard ALL the time? As diversity and equality scholars we are aware of the overwhelmingly patriarchal nature of our society and we recognise the tyranny of masculinist organisation cultures. Within academia itself, it is no secret that generations of male academics, researchers and anthropologists have ignored women’s lives (Berliner and Fallen, 2008); university boards continue to be male-dominated (Grove, 2013); there is clear evidence of gender bias, misrecognition and exclusion of women from management positions in academia (Morley, 2013) and women continue to be under-represented in editorial boards of many Management journals thus hindering their ability to attain scholarly recognition whilst also, potentially narrowing the nature and scope of enquiry in Management (Metz and Harzing, 2008).

However, in offering a space for male narrative in this special issue, our intention is to promote male reflexivity on issues of power, privilege, positionality and gender. We feel there is a need for men to reflect on their gender privilege. From a feminist and pro-feminist research perspective, gender is not a *mere* difference, rather it is a relation of domination and subordination; it is this relationship and the male privilege it spawns that needs to be interrogated (Hackett, 2008). As men, we are often accused of overlooking or failing to recognise our male privilege both in our fieldwork and in academia (Berliner and Fallen, 2008). We also see the need for an acknowledgement of, and reflections around intersectional aspects. Intersectionality can result in perceived ‘triple entitlement’ (white, male, heterosexual) or can be more problematic and complex when, for example, (privileged) male gender intersects with sexual orientation and/or ethnicity.

These are complex and contentious issues and involve epistemological and research relevant debates around, on the one hand, the political appropriateness of people who are socially positioned as privileged *vis- à- vis* a group, speaking about that group (Hackett, 2008)and on the other, the need for a new form of emancipation (liberation from the intellectual oppression of received or politically loaded social categories) which argues that you don’t have to be (for example) a woman to write knowingly and insightfully about women (see Shweder, 2008) .

Each paper in this special issue reveals complex and multiple realities, which are far from singular and coherent. As reflexive pieces, they reflect the authors’ personal experiences and perspectives. The process of *reflexivity* can be a useful frame but does not guarantee ‘interrogation’ of identity or privilege. For Shacklock and Smyth (1998) *critical* reflexivity in research is important because it ‘honestly and openly addresses political issues which arise from relations between the researcher and the researched that are implicit to the research agenda and the research methods’....this ‘process of reflexivity is an attempt to identify, do something about, and acknowledge the limitations of the research: it’s location, it’s subjects, it’s process’ (ibid:7).

As guest editor and as a male diversity scholar the process of organising this special issue has caused me personally to reflect on and to ‘come to terms with’ my inherent gender privilege. The process has forced me re-examine everyday actions, thoughts and decisions; for surely even the most mundane actions can be gendered in a manner that can penalise women at the expense of men. Increasingly I feel that most men never reflect on or interrogate their male privilege and most white men never analyse their ethnic privilege.

The papers which touched on intersectionality resonated with me. Speaking in a personal capacity,I would characterise myself as an emerging scholar, my work has always been collaborative and has focused on sexual orientation. From my perspective, doing diversity and equalities research and research on LGBT issues in particular is absorbing, exciting and meaningful. I have encountered wonderful support from colleagues and associates and I have been guided in my journey to and through diversity and equalities by a strong, female and feminist mentor, Fiona Colgan. I have found that there can be repercussions for the man who decides to engage in diversity scholarship. Attitudes of *some* other men (of all ages, ethnicities, backgrounds and religions) can be negative. Intrinsically, my type of research is seen by many other men (though not all) through a gendered, heteronormative, hegemonic masculinist lens.

At times, the normative, hegemonic messages are resoundingly clear: The natural research domain of men should be strategy, leadership, economics, management, quantitative methods, employment relations (preferably the ‘hard stuff’ such as collective bargaining, negotiation and conflict). A short anecdotal story I will share concerns an occasion when I was a member of a validation exercise panel in Singapore. I travelled with a number of academics (all male) from other universities in the U.K. During a social/work evening there was a discussion about each other’s work. One by one, each male academic outlined their area of expertise. All were engaged in worthy and respected traditional disciplines (Economics, Leadership, Industrial Relations). To my shame I could not summon up the courage to say ‘LGBT research’. I was too uncertain what their reaction *might be*, I was too exhausted and did not have the reserves of emotional energy, on that occasion, to explain my interest for diversity and equality especially LGBT equalities. Instead (and for ‘an easy life’) I muttered something about ‘Managing Diversity’. Even that was too much for the assembled audience- after what seemed like an eternity, the awkward silence was broken by one kind gentleman, ‘Oh, that’s nice, Yes, Indeed. Actually my daughter did her thesis on that ‘sort of thing’. Another gazed at me and insisted (three times) that he thought I was “a strategy man”. I don’t know why he thought this; do I ‘look strategic’ or ‘speak strategically’? He was genuinely bemused at my academic and research arena and I felt that he viewed me differently thereafter. I was not seen as serious. I had ‘lost my academic privilege’! This little story may seem mundane and trivial but it is not isolated and variants of this story can be a common feature of male- on- male academic interaction. I also feel that whenever I discuss my research on LGBT issues I am always in a sense ‘coming out’, the politics of which can be complex, tense and exhausting (Colgan et al, 2007).

Speaking to other scholars located in other business school environments there is a shared recognition that as diversity and equalities academics we need to justify and explain the relevance of diversity and equalities work to the serious (manly) business of Management, Leadership and Strategy. It sometimes feels that diversity and equalities is perceived as marginal and not a ‘mainstream’ concern and sexual orientation can often feel like the ‘Cinderella of academic study’..

Another pertinent question concerns the potential impact on formal career paths. Is our chosen discipline career limiting or career enhancing? In the past, well- meaning individuals (predominantly male) have advised me to ‘beef up’ my research portfolio with more emphasis on “international management stuff, general stuff, not diversity and definitely not LGBT stuff”. With this kind of advice, the diversity scholar needs suitable reservoirs of resiliency, dedication and purpose to persevere.

More recently, I have also become conscious that LGBT research does not ‘travel well’. Operating as an academic in emerging market countries and regions heightens the sense that it is (generally) best to ‘keep quiet’ about the true nature of our work. It has become the research that (in some settings) ‘dare not speak its name’. For many men and some women in these settings although my gender is clearly not a problem, my sexuality problematizes my gender (Colgan et al, 2014)

Within this context, I have always found the conferences organised by Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, Gender, Work and Organisation and Work, Employment and Society as welcoming oasis’ of acceptance and collegiality. In such contexts I can explore and enjoy what it means to be a ‘gender minority’.

Before I introduce the papers, I should say that by using male and female terms and categories we are not supporting simple essentialist binaries but are seeking to explore the implications of ‘Naming men as men’ (Collinson and Hearn, 2007)in the fields of equality and diversity taking account of differing social, political and research contexts.

The special issue begins with a unique and fascinating paper, *On Men, organisations and intersectionality: personal, working, political and theoretical reflections (or how organisation studies met profeminism)* by Jeff Hearn- a key academic contributor to the study of ‘men and masculinities’. Jeff Hearn has written prolifically and extensively over a period of almost forty years and this paper provides an open and engaging biographical, reflective account of his journey as a ‘man writing about men and masculinities’. He begins his story in the late 1960’s and discusses the issues that eventually led him towards a dedicated focus on “men’s politics” and critical studies on men and masculinities (an acute awareness of men’s avoidance of, and lack of interest in, childcare or “childwork” was one such issue). The paper offers us some intriguing insights into the consequences (for him) of his decision to study men’s power, in patriarchy, in violence, and in management. In essence, this choice led to a degree of “distance and hostility” from other men. Especially in the early years, before he had accumulated an impressive publication history, his chosen arena resulted in non-recognition (by men) and contributed to barriers placed in the way of his formal career path. In a memorable quote, he remarks “he was and is as a kind of gender traitor”.

He states that from the outset he resolved that the best way to be a pro-feminist was to focus on the critique of men, without re-centring men. For Hearn a key challenge throughout his work is “ how to both name men as men, and at the same time, as a way of avoiding re-centring men, deconstruct and subvert men, and even consider the abolition of ‘men’ as a social category of power”. The paper makes clear the significance of intersectional gender power throughout the research process but makes the point that “despite the obviousness, many or most men researchers seem very reluctant to even begin to name themselves or other men as men, to think about how their being men affects their ‘academic ‘ or ‘research’ analyses”. The paper offers insights into interviewing powerful men, violent men, using one’s “own gender resources, one’s self as a method- to be a different kind of man in different times and places”. Jeff also highlights the particular challenges (and opportunities) of working in the transnational field.

In summary, this paper is a powerful and revealing testimony to a life dedicated to academic study, reading and publishing. It challenges men to “take the problem, power and hegemony of men incredibly seriously” while avoiding any temptation to “separate themselves from situated, embodied lived experience in and outside academia”.

The second paper of this special issue, *Relative Deprivation, Self-Interest and Social Justice: Why I Do Research on In-Equality* by Eddy Ng provides a personal reflection on the primary motives and reasons for engaging with In-Equalities research. Eddy Ng postulates that his desire or motive in focusing on diversity, equality and inclusion research can be partly explained through a reading of the concept of ‘relative deprivation of others’ which is rooted in the theory of relative deprivation (Runciman 1961;1968).The paper details this theory whereby individuals may conceivably develop feelings of relative deprivation when they experience unfair treatment compared to others. Feelings of relative deprivation *on behalf of others* may also develop when an individual perceives that members of *other groups* have been unfairly treated.

Ng highlights certain life events, situations and experiences which help illustrate why this theory is attractive in helping to explain his interest in fairness, equity and social justice. In his early years, growing up in multicultural Malaysia he was acutely aware of the existence of an ethnic ‘pecking order’ or ‘hierarchy’ which saw preferential treatment awarded to some sections of the population at the expense of others. Witnessing occasional examples of deliberate degradation and humiliation of certain ethnic minorities in childhood in multi-cultural Malaysia had a sensitising impact. A family move to Canada, (which can be seen, partly at least as an attempt to escape simmering racial tensions and possible future discrimination) is also significant. As an adult in Canada, he became aware of yet more examples of privilege and related disadvantage- this time in the corporate world. Occupational segregation (vertical and horizontal) and ghettoization (gender, race and disability) appalled him and provided a powerful impetus, determination and resolve to help ‘’change things”, “to make things better’’ through his corporate and academic work on (In)equalities. The paper also cites the ‘rejection-identification’ model whereby stigmatized group members have a heightened sense of perceived discrimination and equity sensitivities (Branscombe, Schmitt and Harvey 1999).

Eddy’s story also highlights the relevance of intersectionality. Despite many identity intersections (ethnic and sexual minority) surely he must acknowledge his ‘male privilege’? The paper outlines how from the author’s perspective it often *feels* that through the intersection of his minority identities, the “gains of his male privilege are eroded” or diluted. Furthermore, the very act of choosing to research on gender and minorities issues in the workplace, and in becoming an ally to feminism- he can be deemed (by other men) to have betrayed and forfeited his right to male privilege.

In our next paper, *Men in context: “Privilege” and reflexivity in academia* the authors Alexander Styhre and Yanne Tienari focus on the salient issues of reflexivity, self-reflexivity, the position of the white, heterosexual male in gender research and the plausibility of men being able to engage in authentic reflexivity . A previous paper (Styhre and Tienari, 2013), which sought to critique reflexivity in organisation and management studies and in particular self-reflexivity through autoethnography, attracted some critical reviews, some of which seemed to question the ability of the authors (seen as ‘marked’ by white, male privilege) to contribute effectively and authentically to a debate on self-reflexivity, “our reflexive exercise remained suspect on account of us being white, heterosexual men”. The authors use *this* paper as an opportunity to not only respond (post-reflection) on those critical reviews but to expand on and further the debate on reflexivity and the role of men in gender studies and (in) equalities research more generally.

Styhre and Tienari agree that men have had and continue to have ample opportunities and multiple avenues where their opinions and their voice can be and are heard- but *not* with regard to gender research. The paper provides interesting observations on the importance and urgency of gender work (they begin their paper with a sobering account of trends towards anti-feminism); support and collegiality within the gender studies community and the role of white, heterosexual men in gender studies. On this latter point the authors offer some personal perspectives, observing that “as tall, burly, white men we do not look like whatever it is that pro- feminists are supposed to look like” and that sometimes the white, male body can be “inscribed by others with certain qualities and potentialities (or lack thereof), be they intellectual, emotional, moral, or sexual”. Such attributing can impede progress towards gender equality which is “only earned through continuous hard work and joint effort”.

Other papers in this special issue allude to situations where male researchers experienced a sense of isolation, distance and hostility from other men due to the fact they have chosen to study and research gender and minority issues (gender betrayers or traitors). This paper draws our attention to situations where male researchers in gender studies can sometimes feel that their authenticity as gender researchers is questioned, is ‘open to debate’, the implausibility that they can truly understand or ‘know’ the issues (gender pretenders).

Styhre and Tienari unpack the concept of reflexivity itself and problematize certain aspects of it noting that it is important to carefully distinguish between reflexivity as an *ideal* and reflexivity as a *practical accomplishment* , in a sense pointing to the gap between the theoretical rhetoric and the practical reality of ‘doing’ self-reflexivity. While not evading the question of reflexivity on the ways in which structural relations of privilege around gender and race form part of one’s positioning, the authors call us to note the (sometimes) pertinent relevance of context, particularly the local context. They ask us to ponder that in order to be reflexive, is it always necessary (or indeed practical or relevant) to include every possible relevant identity marker and they also ask who gets to decide which identity marker is most important to the particular reflective exercise in the particular context. This is a provocative and thoughtful paper written from a perspective which calls us to ‘reflect on reflexivity’ and to reflect on the experiences of men ‘doing’ gender research in a (sometimes) hostile or questioning environment.

The contribution of the next paper, “*Out in the field: Reflecting on the dilemmas of insider status on data collection and conducting interviews with gay men*” by Simon Roberts lies in its discussion of power dynamics between researcher and the researched and the concept of insider, outsider status (emic and etic). Roberts discusses these concepts within the context of a recent qualitative study involving forty-five interviews with gay men, illustrating his arguments by case study references.

Roberts notes that many researcher’s (such as Rumens, 2008 and Ozturk ,2011) have “reflexively expressed the clear benefits of being open about their gay identity and their ‘insider status’ in their studies involving sexual minorities”. The benefits of ‘being an insider’ and sharing a ‘common identity’ is evidenced in the literature but there are also inherent dangers in this approach, dangers which are discussed. Simon himself used his insider status to access respondents and build rapport in his recent study on gay men and identity. On reflection he feels that the “shared experience of ‘coming out’ and the shared personal experiences of managing a gay identity in the workplace facilitated a more open dialogue. However, shared identity only ‘goes so far’ and the paper highlights that although the interviewer and the interviewee might share certain identities (in this case gender and sexual orientation) there remains an array of intersectional differences that cannot be ignored. In terms of his own personal positioning, Roberts points to differences between him (as a gay, male interviewer) and other gay men (as interviewees); differences according to age, occupation, education, life experiences, socio-economic background and so forth- differences which posed their own challenges and which demonstrate the limitations of ‘insider status’.

The paper also addresses power (im)balance in the relationship of the researcher and the researched. Roberts’ points to an underlying assumption that power tends to reside with the researcher. He argues that the reality is more nuanced and complex, marked by fluid intersectional dynamics and interactions which are heavily influenced by context specific circumstances, environmental and socio-cultural characteristics.

The paper by Alain Klarsfeld, *“Doing ‘male’ diversity research in France: a self-reflective account”* is a powerful, personal testimony which highlights the influence of national and cultural contexts; histories; norms and taboos on the nature and scope of diversity research and indeed on individual diversity scholars. The paper explains that, in France, researching diversity and equality in the management discipline is relatively recent. While gender research does have a longer history in this discipline, researching ethnic and religious minority issues is novel and, within a French context, such identity based research can seem fraught with complications and contradictions given traditional attitudes and customs towards religious and ethnic minority identity ‘claiming’.

Alain Klarsfeld offers an enlightening, open and unique insight into the personal dilemmas he faced, as a diversity scholar from an (invisible) ethnic minority background within this context. While his journey to diversity research was (in some respects) accidental he found that as he engaged and more and more with the issues, he was attracted and energised by the debates, the emotions and the potential of such work to contribute to a greater degree of social justice and equality for minorities. From a personal perspective, embedding himself in diversity scholarship allowed him to develop discourse around, and give voice to identities previously silenced (including his own).

Klarsfeld also reflects on being a ‘gender minority’ within the wider field of diversity and equality research and offers some data which demonstrates the numerical minority status of men attached to the Francophone Association for Human Resource Management’s special interest group. He reminds us that for many women, doing research on gender was also “an act of courage and signalled a form of ‘explicit tempered activism’ as management research was largely indifferent- if not hostile- to the very idea of gender-focused research at the time they started their research endeavours”.

A valuable contribution to the special issue this paper reminds that diversity scholarship in itself can suffer from a lack of privilege within academia and certainly within management studies and certain contexts and locations engagement with this research can require high levels of personal investment, bravery and risk. Klarsfeld concludes with the hope that (through this paper) he has moved from being an ‘implicit tempered radical towards being an ‘*explicit* tempered radical’.

The final paper, *“Stop Prancing About”: Boys, Dance and the Reflective Glance* is by a new diversity scholar Mark Edward. The author narrates his personal journey as a young gay man from a working class background who challenged the status quo to pursue a career in dance, education and more recently, research. The article provides a reflexive personal narrative of the inequalities experienced as the author grew up with a keen desire to dance- a desire which was seen as a challenge to hegemonic masculinity within his community and was met with silence and hostility at school. He also offers us some insights into personal experiences which influenced him to become an educator (senior lecturer) and eventually led him to engage in some active research on the issue of boys and dance in secondary schools in the North of England. The paper also offers a brief critique of the literature around long-standing cultural ingrained discrimination experienced by boys who dance. Finally, and importantly, Mark offers a short personal and intimate author reflecting on recent experiences of engaging in research on male dancers in secondary schools, which reveals sensitive intersections around Dance, Masculinity and Sexuality.

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