

# 'Just Men Doing Crime' (and Criminology)

Jeff Hearn explores the implications for criminology of some of the main issues raised in Critical Studies of Men.

The history of crime has very largely been a history of men, as perpetrators, lawmakers, law enforcers and analysts. Often, in a different way, victims too. Though men or 'males' have been on the criminological agenda for a long time, this has usually been through an implicit, biologically-based sex role approach. Indeed politicians, policy makers and criminologists have generally been woefully slow in naming crime as largely men's business, and the 'man question' as a central concern.

In 1994 Newburn and Stanko's edited collection *'Just Boys Doing Business': Men, Masculinities and Crime* was published. This was a landmark, in the UK at least, in making men and masculinities an explicit object of attention in criminology. It built on considerable earlier work, most obviously: feminist criminology; general, broadly pro-feminist, critical studies on men; and a smaller amount of critical studies specifically focusing on men and crime. In the book the editors went as far as to say that, "The most significant fact about crime is that it is almost always committed by men." In *CJM* in 1995, Betsy Stanko highlighted such issues as men's domination of offending, prisoners as men, male bonding and 'machismo' in police culture, and gendering of male-on-male victimisation. I shall not repeat discussion of those issues, but briefly review some recent general issues brought to the foreground in Critical Studies on Men (CSM), and consider their implications for crime and criminology.

## Macro, micro, meso approaches

Let us begin with the place of men at the societal level, within patriarchy or patriarchies. Concepts of patriarchy, patriarchies and patriarchal relations focus on men in terms of not only interpersonal but also structural relations, and the ways different groups of men may act as power blocs, with their own, sometimes contradictory, interests. Patriarchies are historically diverse and differentiated forms of societal organisation, not a single, universal, monolithic form. Crime, men's crime, and its control, usually by institutions dominated by men, are thus part of the operation of societal patriarchy, albeit with contradictory interests between and amongst men (Messerschmidt 1986).

A second, very different focus has been on individual men and the social construction of masculine subjectivities. There has been a large growth in ethnographies of men or men's activities and investigations of the construction of local masculine subjectivities and indeed sexualities. Within criminology, this approach has been developed by Tony Jefferson, sometimes working with Wendy Hollway, on the construction of masculine subjectivity within discourse and yet with specific, ambiguous psychodynamic investments. The convicted boxer Mike Tyson has been used as a detailed case study (1998). Yet, while subjectivity and sexuality may be individually experienced, they simultaneously operate transindividually, in structured discourses and social structures. Dominant male heterosexuality and (hetero)sexual narratives often coexist with homosociality, even homosexual subtexts. Such contradictions may assist understanding the socially

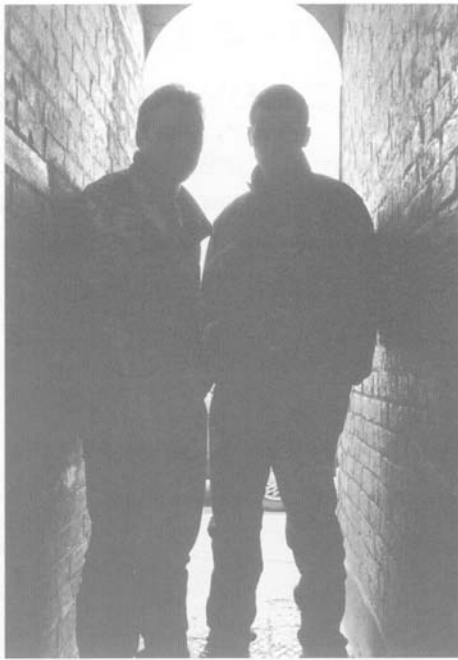
constructed subjectivity of sexually violent men, and dominant forms of men's sexualities and men's violences more generally.

A third area of debate has been on difference, multiplicity and pluralising of masculinity to masculinities. This focus has recognised both power relations between men and women and power relations between men and masculinities, including hegemonic, complicit, subordinated, marginalised, resistant masculinities. There are parallel concerns with analyses of both unities and differences between men and between masculinities, defined by age, class, race, sexuality etc, and mirroring the diversification of patriarchal arenas. In criminology, the most important work of this kind is by James Messerschmidt (1993, 1997, 2000), interrogating different connections of masculinities, crime and violence, via structured individual and collective action, doing gender as practical accomplishment, and life histories. He is thus very critical (2004) of Jefferson's psychodynamic, discursive approach, seeing it as far too narrow. There is growing debate on the very concept of masculinities, its limitations, confusions in usage, and historical and poststructuralist critiques. Talking precisely of men's specific individual/collective practices in and around crime, or men's identities or discourses thereabouts, is preferable to the gloss 'masculinities'.

## Some trends

In CSM a number of trends can be noted, here I mention three: globalisation, focused interventions, mapping connections. First, while most studies on men have been in individual nation-states, attention is increasingly directed to men in relation to globalisation and transnationalisation (Pease and Pringle, 2001). While the concept of global patriarchies is not unproblematic, the impact of global change on patriarchal relations, including the transnationalisation of men's crime, is clear. A transnational focus means that various kinds of 'men of the world', both criminal and policing, need to be identified, along with those men involved in, say, military breaking of international law (as by US and UK), war crimes, and rape in war. Transnational perspectives are particularly highlighted by the increasing importance of the sex trade and information and communications technologies, including global image production (Hearn and Parkin 2001). In 1997 there were about 22,000 porn websites; in 2003 there are about 300,000; child porn websites have increased 1280% in the 5 years 1996 to 2001. This raises huge questions around men transnationally: in organised crime, as buyers of sex, as virtual pornographers, and so on. Interestingly, the 1999 Swedish law criminalising the buying of sex is now being considered by the Finnish government.

Next, the growing concern with the development of focused policy interventions and professional practice in relation to men, influenced by feminism/profeminism, is clearly directly relevant to CJS policy. This is increasingly preoccupying international organisations such as the Council of Europe. One example across Europe is the increasing popularity of and debate on men's programmes for men who have been violent to women. These remain controversial in terms of underlying philosophy, methods



of change and resource basis. There has been a developing critique of approaches that are narrowly psychological or focused on anger management, and instead a move towards those based on power and control models, that are pro-feminist in orientation. International evidence on their effectiveness and cost effectiveness remains mixed, however; Europe-wide evaluation research is now in process.

A third trend is towards mapping connections. For the last three years, the European Research Network on Men in Europe has been mapping the state of knowledge on men in 10 countries (<http://www.cromenet.org>). The Network has been very concerned with analysing connections between men in power and with access to institutional resources, and the social exclusion of some men. Men who are relatively lacking in societal power may still use interpersonal and local power and/or may resist such greater powers, sometimes through crime, violence, drugs and risk behaviour, used as resources for 'doing gender'. Another strong theme of the Network's activity has been the intersections between different parts of men's lives, even when appearing separate, such as between men's violence and men's health. Similarly, DeKeseredy and Schwartz (2002) have connected men's economic exclusion, peer support and violence to women. There are dangers in separating men's crime (and criminology) off from other parts of men's lives; one way violence is reproduced, as in 'domestic violence', is by separating it off from the rest of social life (Hearn 1998).

### Academia and actions

A final focus of concern in CSM is on men in academia, research and educational institutions more generally. These are after all large, powerful institutions, usually dominated by men, as professors, managers and administrators. Richard Collier has done important work both on criminology as a discipline (1998a) and on men in law schools (1998b). Nic Groombridge (1997)

has examined how criminology is as much or more about academic gendering (e.g. 'youthful masculinities' and 'the criminal as 'bad young brother') as crime or criminals. Criminology may even contribute to reproducing crime by separating it off from the rest of social life. Criminology has its own male-dominated history of men behaving badly within it: as traditional patriarchal men, younger aggressive 'radical' men or authoritarian academic managers. Even though all self-respecting men criminologists now (following the BJC 1996 issue) need to know a bit about men, it is unlikely they will assist in developing feminist/pro-feminist criminology unless they themselves change to become pro-feminist, not only in written word but also in deed. This includes giving much more attention to conduct and dignity at work; while stalking is criminalised, it is time to bring workplace bullying into the purview of criminology, in both theory and practice.

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