Being male in female spaces: Perceptions of masculinity amongst male social work students on a qualifying course

Introduction

Social work, it has been argued, may represent a non-traditional occupation for men in the UK and US (Williams 1993; 1995; Christie 2001; Phillips and Cree, 2014). Current figures from the previous English regulatory body for social work, the General Social Care Council (GSCC), indicates there is a lack of men in the profession (23%) and even fewer male students on courses (13.6%) (GSCC 2010a, b), although Furness (2012) notes the anomaly of the years 2009-10, which saw a small rise of male students. This paucity of men in social work in general is replicated in the US, where the proportion of male MSW graduates has decreased from 43% in 1960 to 15% in 2000 (Schilling et al. 2008). Canada 19.7% against an overall employment average of 52.7%

http://www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/qc/job_futures/statistics/4152.shtml.
Australian bachelor graduates under 25 yrs – 7.7% males against overall graduate figure of 37.7% http://www.graduatecareers.com.au/social-work-bachelor-graduates-under-25/.

Although the context of social work and welfare services are distinct between countries, social policies influencing social work, its meanings, ideologies and practices resonate across them (Philpott, 1998; Parker, 2012). This numerical asymmetry unsettles the status and gendered association of social work, its

meanings for society, and questions of care, nurture and emotional support, alongside questions concerning the slippery and layered concept of masculinities in contemporary society.

After reviewing the place of men and masculinities within social work scholarship, this paper explores the perceptions and interpretations of masculinities of past and present male undergraduate students at a UK university - vibrating between positions of marginalisation and privilege – and some of the ways in which male students perceived they are construed in social work education and practice. It builds upon our previous work (Parker & Ashencaen Crabtree, 2012) and some of the implications for the ways in which we understand masculinities in the context of care are developed.

Men and masculinities in social work

There is a dearth of men and masculinities research in social work, which when discussed engenders contention (Christie 1998; Pease, 2011). There is a growing literature concerning men as fathers (Strug & Wilmore-Scheffer 2003; Featherstone 2009; Shapiro & Krysik 2010), recognising the 'invisibility' of males when planning or delivering services but often leaving this uncritiqued in respect of gender relations. Much work focuses on child protection (Gillingham 2006; Scourfield 2006a; Parent et al. 2007; Strega et al. 2008; Berger et al. 2009; Brown et al. 2009), often relating to men's engagement in the process (Huebner et al.

2008; Bellamy 2009) and also links to domestic violence by men to women (Holt 2003; Smith & Randall 2006; Hancock & Sui 2009). Although not necessarily related to fathers, male victims of domestic violence are acknowledged to a lesser degree (Tsui et al. 2010), as is the hitherto ignored topic of male elder abuse (Penhale & Parker 2000; Kosberg 2009). Problems arising from incarceration (Al Gharaibeh 2008), which may be linked to ethnicity (Balthazar & King 2001), are recognised. Fathers' involvement with children in itself is considered (Perry 2009; Castillo & Fenzl-Crossman 2010) with growing concern for relationship building and therapeutic support (Jones & Neil-Urban 2003; Sieber 2008; Trahan & Cheung 2008; Jones et al. 2010; Karpetis 2010). Foster fathers have been studied (Wilson et al. 2007), as have birth fathers in situations of adoption (Clapton 2007). Child support policy and payment also features in the literature, especially reflecting welfare tensions across age and ethnicity in the US (Laakso 2000; Curran 2003; Wiemann et al. 2006; Pruett et al. 2009; English et al. 2009), and class (Plantin 2007; Montgomery et al., 2011). The literature relating to HIV/AIDS, including men who have sex with men and sex work, is growing (Padilla et al. 2008; Wheeler 2009; Duran et al. 2010). Such discussions are additionally associated with injecting and other substance-use (Duran et al. 2010; Browne et al. 2011).

Social work writing about men often focuses on issues of sexuality with considerable attention given to homosexuality and attitudes towards gay men in social work (Newman et al. 2002; Brownlee et al. 2005; Green 2005; Foreman &

Quinlan 2008; Swank & Raiz 2010a, 2010b). Importantly, Kosberg (2002) highlights the social work focus on women and gay men often leads to the exclusion of heterosexual males – not a homogeneous group – who when portrayed are often shown in a negatively biased way. The marginalisation of heterosexual males, according to Kosberg, may create difficulties when social workers practise with them because of uncritically assumed stereotypes. Hicks (2008) calls for a more nuanced theorising of sexuality that recognises diversity, where it is possible to deploy his arguments to re-legitimise heterosexual masculinities in the context of diversity.

Moriarty & Murray (2007) note the low numbers of men entering social work education, commenting that this reflects the relatively low average salary for men. Despite greater recognition of the 'double shift' responsibilities of working women with family responsibilities, Perry &Cree (2003) observe that men continue to represent the main wage-earner in heterosexual families; and thus, potentially perceive greater financial ramifications attached to the choice of employment pathways. A further possible deterrent to entering social work is its supposed lowly status, in comparison to other professions, leading to men 'drifting' into social work, rather than actively selecting these domains as a career (Christie 2006; McLean 2003), and suggesting a gendered approach to occupational choice and perception. Moreover, Mclean (2003) adds that social work may also generate a sense of failure in participants, suggesting that apparent encroachment into

perceived gendered occupations is likely to carry very different meanings across the sexes   Low male participation figures stand against a background where the 'professional' standing of social work and its position within the social sciences is still somewhat contested (Shaw et al., 2006).

Christie (1998) examined Williams' (1993; 1995) thesis that social work constituted a non-traditional male occupation. He identifies six reasons why social work can be seen as a non-traditional occupation including the majority of social workers being women, and this being unlikely to change as the majority of students are also women. Social work is gendered in its practices with most clients being women or children, men being ignored, excluded from view (Edwards, 1998; Phillips and Cree, 2014). Social work, characterised as a caring profession, may require specifically gendered practices and relationship approaches and men in such a profession may be construed as gay (Christie 1998). The focus on anti-discriminatory practice and feminist theory contributes to the notion of non-traditional occupation, as does social work's location in the intermediate zone between the public and private; the spaces in which men traditionally have less experience in negotiating.

The usefulness of the concept of non-traditional occupation, however, is challenged. Employment has changed over the years (Christie 1998, 2001, 2006; McLean 2003), although occupational gender segregation, irrespective of factors of inequality, has been relatively high in affluent industrialised nations. Such

segregation may often be interpreted as forming the vertical axis of segregation associated with inequalities in employment, rather than also being subject to horizontal analysis measuring only the extent of occupational differences (Blackburn et al. 2002). Nevertheless the search for employment has undergone a morphological shift with occupations being less associated with particular genders but rather related to wider assumptions of men's role in the employment market (Christie 2006). Furness (2012) hypothesises that an uncertain labour market contrasted with the career prospects in social work and the social work bursary attached to qualifying courses may have been the cause for a rise in male applicants in 2009. This, however, fails to explain why such a trend has not continued nor was seen post-fee rises in 2006.

McPhail (2004) challenges the notion that social work is a 'female-dominated profession', arguing that the majority of social work content is male-dominated; developed and led by men and addressing masculine issues; nurturing is but one part of the role. This suggests that social work is far more complex than binary gendered arguments, especially those based on simple metrics imply. Perhaps the term 'female majority profession' resolves some of the problems associated with the concept of 'female-dominated profession' (Warde 2009), although McPhail, writing in the US context, would see social work as male-dominated in which pay differentials are in favour of men, recruitment campaigns have targeted men,

'professionalization' is seen as a strategy for de-feminising social work, and that men take gender privilege with them into the profession.

It is commonly argued that the typical career paths of men and women entering social work tend to sharply diverge (Christie 2006; McLean 2003; Perry & Cree 2003; Scourfield & Coffey 2002, Taylor 1994). Cree (2000) notes that male social work students in her study expected to be promoted in the workplace more rapidly than female peers, although viewed themselves as having qualities that were not stereotypically male. Commensurately, McPhail (2004), in reference to Williams (1995), notes the phenomenon of the career male's 'glass elevator' in the profession, as opposed to career female's 'glass ceiling'. In turn, Lazzari et al. (2009) comment that men still garner the greater privileges in the profession than female counterparts, compensating, perhaps, for the questioning of the motives of men wishing to enter the strongholds of such a quintessentially 'caring' and femininised profession (Gillingham 2006; Cree 2000; Peel 2007).

In 'traditional female' occupations such as social work, men are regarded as employing such strategies as developing specialist positions and roles and contrive higher status positions, such as management or stepping into academia (Christie, 1998). Men are disproportionally represented in academic social work compared to their numbers in professional practice, with women academics representing 60%

(representing the highest rate across the social sciences) (Scourfield & Maxwell 2012).

Such strategies are commensurate with familiar feminist-informed views regarding the patriarchal maintenance of overarching control of women by men (Stanley & Wise, 1993), regardless of the fragmentation of feminist meta-narratives into diverse 'feminisms' (Pettman, 1992: 150). However, there is a wider picture. Men are said to use various strategies in social work to achieve both vertical and horizontal gender segregation. Using this as evidence of a gendered approach to non-traditional occupation may imply social workers have more power than they actually have in negotiating their jobs and roles (Christie 1998), and it may not be gender specific. It also assumes coherence in gender and professional identities (Christie 2006).

McLean (2003) notes variance among male employees in the broader area of social care, including social work. Ethnicity and gender are examined in this analysis, where White men represent a dominant group and with Black and minority ethnic (BME) men representing a marginalised minority. Although more White men were represented in management than BME men, these are still a minority group with many more men represented below management level than within it, regardless of ethnicity (McLean 2003).

Lewis (2004) explored the interactions of class and gender on the career path of practitioners within the helping professions. This Australian study echoes others suggesting gendered career pathways. There were differences across the genders in terms of class, men tending to identify with working class roots and women with middle class origins. This has implications for theorising gender in social work but introduces a class variable that may also be important when assessing particular choices and trajectories in career.

Christie (2006) explains men's presence in social work in terms of career motivation and choice, drawing on conceptions of the male social worker as the 'hero' (heroic-man-of action) or 'gentle-man' by female colleagues. However, these concepts appear to refer to sexual orientation, as much as conduct, in that the 'gentle-man' icon is particularly applied to those perceived as gay men and not merely those viewed as chivalrous men, and where perceived 'niceness' is equated with 'gentleness', 'softness' - effeminacy. These perceptions become more questionable given Perry & Cree's (2003, p. 381) observation that 'sexist and homophobic attitudes exist side-by-side in social work settings. The heroic 'man of action', by contrast with the 'gentle-man' icon, is viewed as dynamic and macho; and is accordingly willing to be used by female colleagues as 'protector' in potentially hostile encounters with service users (Christie 2006). Resonating with Christie's (2006) account of how male social workers are classified by their female colleagues, Hicks (2008) considers how sexuality is constructed in social work

discourses focusing on gay and lesbian sexualities, but from a 'heteronormative' essentialist position (Hicks 2008: 133). Additionally, Cree (2000) offers some valuable insights into how close family relationships with parents, particularly mothers, provide the incentive propelling men into an unconventional career in social work.

It is also important to recognise that gender constructions may be localised and built on specifically, situated gender practices. Scourfield (2006b) examines this within social work teams in Wales but posits that localised gender construction can be more generalised, but where 'pejorative discourses of client masculinity are in fact dominant in child care teams' (Scourfield & Coffey 2002: 323). These feminist-derived discourses echo second-wave feminist arguments, particularly radical feminist views typified by Brownmiller (1975) and Herman (1981). These relate to the 'myth' that all men are potential abusers of women and children, that one type of abuse leads to another, and that abuse of children, particularly sexual abuse, is commonplace (McLean 2003: 50; Scourfield & Coffey 2002; Gillingham 2006); and, where the latter form of abuse, requires particular targeted attention (Bifulco & Moran 1998). Accordingly, children are viewed as at risk of violent men *and* patriarchy, where these terms appear synonymously as a concept and practice (Scourfield 2001; Scourfield & Coffey 2002). Yet, Christie's (1998) 'heroic-man-of-action', a conceptualisation fundamentally grounded in patriarchal notions of masculinity, is portrayed as both potentially aggressive but *equally* as

the protector of women and children. Perceptively embodied in male practitioners they are expected to be open to being used in this capacity (Scourfield 2001; Cree 2000).

A further discourse prevalent in social work offices, as identified by Scourfield (2001) is that of the redundant nature of men, who are seen to contribute little to the families of clients. This view of men echoes the much publicised notion of modern man in crisis: structurally unemployed, failing at school, his biological role as father replaced by artificial insemination techniques, his role as breadwinner undermined by 'feminist' wage-earning women or his powerful, patriarchal rival: the Welfare State. Scourfield (2006a) recounts the comments of a female social worker moving seamlessly from a nostalgic account of tough colliers in the Welsh mining industry, to contemporary, chronically unemployed, probable child abusers.

Social work scrutiny, supported by adoption of certain stances in feminist theorisation, is therefore directed away from working with men, as incorrigible: bestial and violent, or irredeemably irrelevant or absent (Scourfield 2001); or where men as a gender are pathologised as fearful of intimacy, isolated and hostile (Lloyd & Degenhardt 2005). The professional 'gaze' continues to be sharply focused on women service users and their children by social workers; where feminism has failed to overturn the perpetuation of a traditional gendered discourse, where child abuse by women is rare, unnatural and monstrous, in comparison with the ease and

ubiquity of such criminal tendencies in men (Scourfield 2001). Kosberg (2002)

reinforces the case that heterosexual men who do not fall in the category of

'abusers or absent fathers' are neglected by social work, and social work literature,

despite their greater propensity to suicide, homelessness, work-related injuries and

illnesses, morbidity and mortality, and where males are the predominant victims of

violence. Kosberg also notes a professional indifference to men's emotional needs

in terms of divorce issues, bereavement, and care of dependents. Finally, Venter

(2011) argues that the 'hidden' care by fathers of chronically-ill children in health

settings remains unacknowledged by health and social care providers.

Warde's (2009) study of recently graduated Hispanic and African-American males

indicated that respondents believed they brought an alternative perspective as males

to the work that would strengthen the profession. Men in social work education, as

a discrete focus, are not well represented. Cree (2000, p. 65) describes a personal

journey that took her from choosing to be distanced from men professionally to a

volte-face in recognising the importance of engaging with men in order to both

'challenge' and 'support them'. The approach Lloyd & Degenhardt (2000: 51) take

towards challenging men appears to be a direct one, modelled on anti-racist

training, in which male students and staff need to be confronted with their

'phallocentric views of the world'. They acknowledge the discomfort this is likely

to generate in male students (who are also by necessity minoritised and

subordinated by student-staff power differentials) and consequently the need to

work with women students to prevent them unwittingly falling into the 'sympathy trap, which absolves men from taking responsibility for the behaviour of their gender' Lloyd & Degenhardt (2000, p. 58). Furness (2012) notes the disproportionate UK rate of failure among male social work students on qualifying courses, particularly BME students. Noting essentialist discourses that militate against men being viewed as 'natural carers', practices and attitudes associated with stances derived from hegemonic masculinity (Connell (1995) are argued to impact upon student learning and blamed for this failure rate (Furness 2012: 485). The importance of feminist thinking as promoting gender equality is stressed by Phillips (2007).

Finally, it has been observed in research literature that male academics appear to be more active in terms of research and output in the social sciences, Schucan Bird's (2011) analysis of the lower rates of publication among women social scientists compared to men, resonates with earlier American studies noting a disparity in research activities and outputs between male and female social work academics (Fox & Faver 1985; Hunter & Shannon 1987). These may be associated with vertical, inequitable segregatory factors in the academy, the over-identification with an educator role to the detriment of building a robust research profile, as well as personal constraints relating to family commitments. In reference to social work education, Shaw et al. (2006: 231) refer to a 'social work research deficit model', where the traditional recruitment of practitioners as educators in the UK has created

constraints in terms of generating research activity and output that feed into evidence-based pedagogy. MacIntyre & Paul (2012) also comment on the reduced research capacity among social work academics; although encouragingly Scourfield & Maxwell, 2010) note rising numbers of doctorates among social work academics across the sexes. Furthermore, male academics appear to rely less heavily on 'experiential learning methods' grounded in feminist pedagogy (Bryson & Bennet-Anyikwa, 2003) than female colleagues, as these are regarded by some as 'anti-intellectual' pedagogic devices (Lloyd & Degenhardt 2000). Although, as Tower & Gray (2005) note, educators are likely to feel more comfortable with pedagogic styles that adhere to their own gendered assumptions.

Methods

The study formed part of a wider exploration of social work education (see Parker, 2010). This part of the study posited the research question: how do male students experience social work education as males? To answer this question, we collected the narratives of past and present male students using a semi-structured protocol to encourage story-telling and elicit further information (Miller, 2000; Riessman, 2004). The rationale for using a narrative approach was to gain perceptions and understandings rather than linear histories of student experiences. The protocol derived from specific narratives relating to gender perspectives that were collected in an early part of the exploration (Parker 2010), reflecting the concerns of some male students around pedagogy, differential treatment and entrenched gender

stereotypes. Eliciting student narratives provided a fluid approach to gaining more authentic perceptions and experiences, allowing participant direction around core topics.

 An invitation to participate in interviews was sent to all male social work students at one English university in their final year of study (n=10, 20.80% of the cohort) and to those graduating the previous year and now in their first year of practice (n=5, 14.70% of the cohort). Potential interviewees were given general information about numbers of men in social work education and social work practice and comments made by the (then) professional regulatory body, the GSCC (GSCC, 2010b). They were informed that interviews would concern their perceptions of being male students on a social work programme.

A small purposive sample of seven participants (46.66% of those contacted) agreed to an in-depth interview, whilst a further student who could had left the country responded via email to a range of questions. The sample comprised three final-year students and five former students in their first year in practice who participated as part of an on-going study concerning practice education. Two students were from Black and Minority Ethnic groups, the remainder being White British or White Other. Ages ranged from early twenties to late-thirties. All had completed their undergraduate studies at the same university in the South of England. Face-to-face rather than telephone interviews were held to assist in picking up interpersonal

nuances and to help in probing further, although it was recognised that the sensitivity of the discussion may have been assisted by the degree of distance afforded by telephone interviews. The email response followed the protocol for the interviews but structured this more around core questions. Whilst the responses to the email questionnaire offered valuable confirmatory data to the interviews, it was not in the same breadth and depth as the interviews and data were used only to complement the more extensive narratives.

There were a range of ethical issues raised in this research. Informants were invited to give informed consent to the interviews, having the research and purposes described. The limits of informed consent were discussed with participants in respect of interviews straying into areas not anticipated at the outset, but the narrative interview and the use of data for publication purposes was explained (Bryman 2012). Participants were advised they were free to withdraw at any time and that participation or otherwise and whatever they articulated in the interviews had no consequences for the current students' programmes and former students had already qualified, with the caveat that declared abuses of other people may need to be taken further. The limits of confidentiality and the impact on research and data quality are well-rehearsed (Burman et al. 2001; Westmarland 2001). In this study, no difficult situations arose, but it is important to note that stating caveats and limits allows participants to exercise control of narrative data provided. We are unable to know whether data was provided 'economically' or other perceptions

hidden, but the narratives reflect what participants were willing to share at that time. Here the names of participants have been anonymised but their age range and ethnicity are indicated in relation to verbatim quotations used.

The interviewer was male and well-known to respondents as part of the academic team for their qualifying programme. In two of the interviews with former students a female academic, also known to the participants, was present, and engaged with the interview. It had been anticipated that the interviews were undertaken jointly, but this was not possible owing to unforeseen commitments. Socially desirable responses are possible given the relationship of interviewer to interviewees, and it may be conjectured that the presence of a female researcher in two of the interviewers could have lent itself further to such. This said, we discerned no clear differences in those interviews. Accounting for power relations in research raises issues that need to be taken into account. Despite the unequal power balance in this research, participants elected to participate or otherwise and were provided with opportunities to withdraw and assurances that involvement would have no bearing on their programme of study. Following Murphy & Dingwall (2007), we would suggest that these measures gave back some of the power to the interviewees. However, recognition of the potential for bias is taken into account in terms of the interview process, transcribing and analysis – although both researchers (male and female) were involved in the latter process to address some of the questions arising.

There were other limitations to this research in terms of the small sample size, the single institution used and the geographical focus.

Data from the interviews were audio-recorded with the permission of interviewees and subsequently transcribed and a thematic analysis of the interviews was produced after a preliminary individual reading and coding against a framework developed from core topic areas in the interviews (Ritchie et al. 2003). This was followed by refining and testing of the codes and emerging categories or themes (Miles & Huberman 1994; Lofland & Lofland, 1995) and repetitions and contradictions were identified (Ryan & Bernard 2003). The themes and sub-themes were considered against the literature and findings from previous research concerning masculinities and social work. Originally, it was anticipated that preliminary analyses would be returned to individual interviewees for comment and review. This was not possible given that some respondents had left the area and could not be contacted. Whilst the emerging data was shared with those remaining in contact with the authors, we did not seek formal revision not having access to all participants.

Findings

Funnelled into a feminised pedagogy

The claim that social work content is male-dominated (McPhail 2004) is contradicted by the findings of this particular study where feminised experiential

pedagogy, in addition to a heavy focus on anti-discriminatory/anti-oppressive practice is threaded throughout the curriculum (Lloyd & Degenhardt 2000; Phillips and Cree, 2014). Respondents discerned a typical 'male' or 'female' teaching style (Bryson & Bennet-Anyikwa 2003), which in the former case was considered to be complementary to their own learning styles as men. By contrast, and in keeping with the point made by Tower & Gray (2005) regarding preferences of gendered pedagogic styles, the expectations attached to a feminised pedagogy were regarded as unfamiliar, ambiguous and loaded with the assumptions of a gender normative interactional style that disadvantaged men.

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'We're told it's easier for a woman to reflect and talk about her feelings than a man. I've been told by my practice teacher that it's harder for a man to reflect as women are more in touch with their feelings.'

Thus, where females are assumed to be inherently fluent in the vernacular of feeling framed as self-awareness, men by comparison need to acquire this ability by exposure to the emotive linguists among their peers and tutors. Consequently, they are required to shed any protective inhibitions that insulate them from this process.

'Carl' (White Other, early twenties)

'I found it difficult at first to develop reflective practice but as I became familiar with models of reflection and became used to identifying thoughts and feelings around events and encounters I found analysing easier. As a

male there is perhaps a perception in society that we should not share

feelings and emotions with others.'

In the following narrative, the respondent draws out subtle distinctions in the terms

'experiential' and 'reflection'. Both are viewed as essentially dynamic and goal-

orientated where experiential may denote past action and reflection denotes future

action.

'Mahmood' (Black, mid-thirties)

'I am a more experiential than reflective person. There was a great

emphasis on reflection and that's not easy. Men do not necessarily reflect a

lot. It's not entirely natural to me. I tend to use a problem-solving way to

work through issues. Reflection is harder. Reflection to me represents the

development of an action plan to do things differently next time. It needs to

be action-focused.'

Small group work was viewed as a particularly feminine pedagogic form, in

keeping with Lloyd & Degenhardt's (2000) observation. By contrast, as indicated

in the following account, male-style pedagogical approaches are depicted as

information-bearing, robust, direct, and potentially less emotionally intrusive.

'Carl' (White Other, early twenties)

'Class settings were negative for me. We kept talking about how we were

feeling in small groups. I don't mind too much talking about my emotions

but it could get a little tiresome…Male lecturers are more traditional – you

could ask questions and they didn't have as much group work. They

concentrated more on the subject matter. In terms of my experiences, I

prefer the more traditional lecture style. I enjoyed the debating as well.

More my preference, lectures - more comfortable.'

The techno-instrumentalist-rational approach of perceived 'masculine' pedagogy

was also noted in the practice context of fieldwork, which appears saturated with

the performative constructions of gender that students must negotiate, as indicated

in this account:

'Mahmood' (Black, mid-thirties)

'The differences in authority, body language and the female air of the office

all had a bearing on the placement. The men just generally talked about

their work, they focused on the work itself, not other things. The male

social worker on the team helped by providing information and explaining

the work from his experiences. He was quite technical in his explanation

and approach and that suited me perfectly.'

Social work students are required to meet both library-based academic assessments

as well as assignments relating to fieldwork practice in an intensive curriculum that

is tightly regulated by the GSCC. The commensurate pressures on all students are

therefore high. However, one male student believed that there was a prevailing

expectation that male students could cope with academic stress better than female

peers, an assumption resonant with masculine hegemonic traits that he also shared.

'Andy' (White British, early thirties)

'I feel that perhaps there was more of an expectation of me to learn

processes, procedures, theory and practice in classroom and on placement

quicker and easier than females on the course. And that I would require less

support and guidance. I also recognise that as a male student aged 30 my

expectation of myself were very high as well. That as a male I should be

able to handle stress better than my fellow female students…that I should

be able to handle the pressures of presentations and essay deadlines as

well.'

Reflexive pedagogy in the form of reflection has become central to the assessment

of social work students in connection with their experiences of field placements.

The purpose of this learning exercise is to enable students to identify their

assumptions and to analyse motives that ultimately led to the enacted performance

in the social work arena (Ruch 2005). In keeping with a gendered discourse that

privileges the internalised, subjective experience over that of the performative,

action-based experience (Bryson & Bennet-Anyikwa 2003), students who are

perceived as having failed to provide evidence of sufficient self-awareness can and

do fail assessments (Parker 2010). The process of being assessed (where the

ramifications of potential failure impacts heavily on the personal and professional

spheres) becomes particularly threatening where gender is foregrounded in terms of

status pertaining to dominance and minoritisation; and especially so when set in the context of higher male student failure rates (Furness 2012).

> 'Joshua' (White British, late twenties)
>
> 'I was the only male and only male being assessed by all females. There was a certain gossipy nature amongst the assessment team but if a male had been involved would there have been such friendships between them when things went awry? I don't know.'

In relation to the profession's educational reliance on reflective assessments Ixer (1999) points out that a rigorous assessment criterion has yet to be established in the academy. The lack of such criteria may therefore severely disadvantage those students who seem less convincing in demonstrating this intangible ability to the satisfaction of assessors who are engaged in effectively subjective evaluation. In the following narrative a male student describes how an assessed reflection was felt to be a traumatic excoriating process of aggressive, gender-based victimisation,

> 'Joshua' (White British, late twenties)
>
> 'In terms of reflective practice and writing reflectively as a consequence on my placement experience I find it almost impossible now because of the last situation. This has almost ruined an area of personal progression. The placement presentations were full of people making mistakes – it was a whole process of improving but now it's a nightmare for me. I have to pick safe areas and scenarios so people will not turn my reflections into a witch-

hunt. It would have been interesting if a man was in that situation looking at my reflection at that time - would this have been different? You'd really think people would think it all through. I now give people something much less juicy and therefore not as good for my development as before.'

Negative views of men

A number of respondents expressed unease at the perception of gender boundaries delineating large areas of social work as off-limits to them as men. This carried the risk of male students becoming less aware and skilled than female peers for whom such restrictions were far less likely to apply.

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'Gender-related stereotypical views of the public that social work is a job carried out by women. That women are perceived to be more caring and better suited to caring roles. Being unable to work with some female service users because of the difference in gender alone. This may leave me with a gap in my knowledge of issues, such as domestic violence.'

The wider domain of social work intervention with families is one that is almost exclusively focuses on mothers and children (Kosberg 2002). Fathers may come under the gaze of social work normally when they are viewed as representing a risk to the integrity of the family, where paternity, but rarely maternity, represents a qualified inclusion to the family unit (Gillingham 2006; McLean 2003).

Correspondingly, male social workers are likely to be held at a distance from conducting social work intervention with families as less appropriate to the task than female colleagues.

'Amir' (Asian, early thirties)

'As a man I am worried if I am working with children… I am worried that probably I will do the wrong thing and being [an] international student I am worried about the culture [differences]. *We* [refers to native region] are very 'touchy' [imitates patting and pinching a small child's cheek] and that's saying "hello" and caring but here you can't do it. Probably that stops men from coming into that area.'

'Mahmood' (Black, mid-thirties)

'In general, most men think it is a feminist career and not a man's job. Most of my friends see working with children and families as a woman's job. That assumption keeps things how they are: there are less men.'

Yet, negative associations of men and masculinity can be far more overt than this gentler arms-length policy towards male social workers. In keeping with social work discourses prevalent in the profession pertaining to masculinity (Scourfield 2006b; Scourfield & Coffey 2002), male students were conscious of being heavily tainted with the stigma of being potential abusers of women and children through guilt by association (McLean 2003),

'Dave' (White British, late thirties)

'The other thing concerned a crass statement made by one of the outspoken women students only two or three months into the course – every man with a penis is a potential rapist. It made me thing about things, this overt statement. I felt crushed by it. Then six or seven months ago working with a 15-year-old male who had been raped. I started thinking further about power and cycles of abuse and violence. I began then to question myself as a man. I realised I am not responsible for what other men do…Having thought that others may well see me in that way – wow! Bias and judgements are important.'

'Carl' (White Other, early twenties)

'I have had no negative experiences with academic staff. The group dynamics about students was different though. What you study is geared towards women and can be a little male-bashing in tone. There was a bit of animosity against men from the other students: "men are all bastards" - usually in context but sometimes quite extreme – sometimes this came up in lectures – men are violent, potential rapists, you know.'

Accordingly, a sense of exclusion and rejection was experienced by respondents through the articulation of radical feminist views in the classroom among peers with whom otherwise they were expected to engage in small group, reflective

exercises. The articulation of 'ground-rules' for such exercises are common academic practice, and seek to encourage a high-trust 'safe' learning environment among students and staff. It is, however, an exercise that may be alienating if it does not support the voicing of alternative (minority) interpretations of social work 'givens', such as the presumption of clear gendered roles of culpability as played out in domestic violence (Tsui et al. 2010).

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'I imagine some of the male perspectives might be different to women, for example, in domestic violence – this is a very emotional area evident in all areas of practice. If you bring up the idea of a man being abused, as well this is not accepted. Men are always seen as perpetrators and not victims.'

Social work education aims at fostering a critical and 'challenging' faculty among students commensurate with the professional advocacy role of social workers. Yet male respondents did not appear able to overtly challenge these pejorative attitudes. Instead, their association with abuse and violence was both accepted and relinquished.

'Andy' (White British, early thirties)

'You can feel undervalued by strong feminist views. Social justice is pivotal but I did wonder about the radical outspoken views – it was a struggle and this mainly within the student group. It made me do more reading around these areas'.

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'There are so many different instances of what it is to be a male on the course. It's something I think about a lot – gender – there are so few men, and it's an area of work dominated by females, femininity and feminine ideologies – this shaped social work. My mother is a strong feminist so I've been aware of these issues for many years.'

Constructing the 'New Man'

The process of acculturation into the cadre of the feminised profession of social work duly represents a difficult transition for male students in particular. Men entering social work are regarded with a level of suspicion, as noted in the literature, and by some respondents in this study (Lazarri et al. 2009). Consequently, they may need to go further than female counterparts in proving that their motivation and commitment is pure rather than self-interested, where entering social work is not merely a strategy for accelerated promotion (Cree 2000; McPhail 2004; Lazzari et al. 2009; Williams 1993, 1995).

'Andy' (White British, early thirties)

'One suggested "you're going to be a manager one day". But this is not the case for me. There was the assumption that social workers who are male do it as a gateway to becoming managers. I see myself as more caring and

nurturing and enjoying people contact. Income is not important so long as I have enough. I suppose I'm a minority within a minority group'.

'Joe' (White British, mid-twenties)

'I remember my first shadowing experience. The field workers said to me "you are only in social work to be a manager because you are a man"'.

In the value-laden purview of the profession male social workers must show evidence of conforming to prevailing ideologies, which the respondents in this study tended to regard as exclusionary of male perspectives and needs. This is outwardly achieved through acquiring and enacting the ritualised and accepted forms of learning and conduct that demonstrate compliance to the new professional identity. Although female inspiration, such as 'Luke's' 'strong feminist' mother may have inspired male novitiates in the first place (Cree 2000) male role models are seen as important to this process in charting the way to negotiate these challenging demands, where gender solidarity appears more important than ethnic identity, as these comments indicate,

'Mahmood' (Black, mid-thirties)

'It makes a difference. Seeing a male lecturer gives respect and a role model. This is a very important balance, more so than having staff from

other ethnic backgrounds, because lecturers should have cultural understanding.'

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'Two things stuck in my experience. Firstly, being part of a minority group and it made me think as a White British male what would the experience of a Black [male] student be – my friend on the course…There was a strength in having minority status and by the end of the course I'd gained a good sense of belonging to the group.'

A male role model serves to ameliorate the conspicuous gender-bias present in the classroom and placement setting, providing emotional support where the needs of male social workers are deemed unmet through gender-minoritisation (Kosberg 2000).

'Carl' (White Other, early twenties)

'One staff member ran a male group which was really helpful…it focused on AOP [anti-oppressive practice]and helped us to think about minority oppression and power and the ease with which power can be misused. It helped us to think of the importance as male to promote male role models. This has an advantage in working with male service users – personal stuff is easier with a man.'

The male role model therefore serves to create a new and synthetic male who remains a male but has emerged to this point through a dialectic relationship with the feminine. Ambiguities may remain present in relation to gay men, new men and second-class or unworthy men (Perry & Cree 2003) in keeping with an adherence to masculine hegemonic essentialist constructions that are assumed and rejected in social work contexts (Furness 2012). Nonetheless, arguably, the power of the guide and of the supplicant is important here in determining outcome, reflecting different traditions, ludically enacted through placement and classroom learning. Thus the social work education process creates a liminal journey of ritual debasement and desexing until, stripped of his social status, the new man emerges as a 'social worker': a man who is reflective, emotionally intelligent as defined by women in pedagogical and practice terms, if not as McPhail (2004) indicates, by those males 'controlling' social work education.

Pronouncement of purity through success

Respondents indicated a high level of awareness of their minority status and the need to prove themselves as worthy to wear the professional, tribal mantle. The quest before them lies in submission to subordination in terms of gendered-minoritisation in the student group, and more crucially in terms of formal evaluation by predominantly female professional assessors. These tests could be perceived as gruelling and subject to gendered humiliation.

'Joe' (White British, mid-twenties)

'I did have a sexist practice teacher for the whole of the first placement but I tried hard to get on with her. I received a joke email about men sent by her and let people know about it. I was told it just a joke. The practice teacher was a very powerful person. Imagine if that had been a man about a woman! I wasn't happy but I did not get anywhere. You can't really challenge women's oppression [of men] because of 100 years of the feminist movement behind them – it doesn't work. My tutor at university acknowledged it was wrong but said I just had to deal with it. I have a feeling that in a different situation the fight may have been stronger.'

The recourse to complaint on the grounds of sexist oppression, which under other circumstances was perceived as clearly open to a female student, was understood by this respondent to be invalid in the case of male students. The ability to cope gracefully with crude essentialist assumptions becomes one of the tests of the male initiate that he must pass through to be prounounced pure and therefore worthy. The submission demanded of male initiates is commensurate with the 'gentle-man' feminised icon. Paradoxically, male social workers would equally be expected to challenge oppressive attitudes and practices to others in their man-of-action role (Christie 2006).

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'There is the perception for a man to be "good" has to go against everything that men stand for. All these negative images about men in social work I try to fight. Is being the same as everyone else meaning that you have to become like a woman?!'

The following account was offered by one respondent who had survived a bruising assessment process of conflicting opinions about his competency to practice – a most serious indictment.

'Joshua' (White British, late twenties)

'I could talk forever about my placement and reflective practice. Because of the situation I experienced, and not acknowledging I had OCD [obsessive compulsive disorder], people can make assumptions about you from that. My placement, as a male, probably had no difficulties but I was the only male and only male being assessed by all females.

The rite of passage towards qualified status necessitates adopting certain characteristics and behaviours in the forging of an embodied identity, where conduct, communication and even physical postures are noted.

'Mahmood' (Black, mid-thirties)

'My body language was different, the way I folded my arms, puffed out my chest was male. This was pointed out by the practitioner I was with.'

All social work students must learn to construct an acceptable script in their communications with social work educators in the classroom and on placement, where the correct 'newspeak' must be learned in order to avoid damning accusations relating to their values and their skills.

>'Joshua' (White British, late twenties)

>'Social workers can be very pompous. Some people, my God! In the voluntary sector we didn't have to deal with this political correctness. I think now social work is one of the most judgemental professions – it sounds awful but it is. Some of the people who go into social work, predominantly female, are driven by power and it's frightening. I've seen this in a scenario with a male at work - people become tongue-tied and worried about saying something politically incorrect, such as is it 'wheelchair bound' or 'wheel chair dependent'? You can't say things like 'wandering' but 'walking without purpose'. Assessments become so long. A 'walking-frame' not a 'zimmer-frame' - it's crazy and makes the whole thing more oppressive - all the stupid words we have to use!'

The metamorphosis of the male initiate into the new synthetic social work man demands the shedding of old constructions of self, including the relinquishing of patriarchal prerogatives viewed as antithetical to the new identity. The paradox here, however, is that gendered assumptions regarding masculinity remain useful in social work, although equally the pathological attributions of masculinity are more

prominently displayed in the profession, thereby belittling and marginalising the contribution of men (Scourfield 2001; Scourfield & Coffey 2002).

'Luke' (White British, mid-thirties)

'Talking to people who use services I had to break down the construct of being male. It is harder if domestic violence is involved but I've worked with it, but I've also been given cases of violent men. It is important to practice in all areas here.'

However, the granulation of the former identity also serves to create new insights into masculinity, where respondent resistance to the privileging of feminised ideologies was noted. This was particularly the case where these fed into punitive, pejorative attitudes towards men and masculinity.

'Andy' (White British, early thirties)

'There's a need to move from men as negative to positive role models. Unless we acknowledge this we are almost creating a negative loop. Men as negative and never being told we can be positive. We need, like race, to acknowledge there are good and bad everywhere. Men on the course need to stand up and so not all men are negative!'

Moreover, this resistance in some cases rewarded male students by generating greater awareness of the virtues of symbolic, hegemonic masculinity, as protector/defender, authority figure and role model; and how these could and should be put at the service of the profession, which would be all the poorer without it (Warde 2009).

'Dave' (White British, late thirties)

'It was challenging as a male and made me think about masculinity and maleness in a way I'd never have thought about. It made me feel very proud. I also don't see why I should shy away from telling people what I do.'

'Carl' (White Other, early twenties)

'There is a sense of belief that social work in the main is done with females and there needs to be older males, young males, fathers, integrated into the programme content….Social work is about both genders, for instance, on a mental health unit working with young men's mental health….By omission, men are excluded from the course content and it is important to get the gender balance.'

Thus the marginalised needs of men in general (beyond the particular social work focus on sexual diversities) is brought more clearly into view, where the male initiate embarks on the liminal journey where conformity to the new identity will require him to relinquish patriarchy and redefine his masculinity. However, a contradiction is raised: by accepting the peripheral position of men in social work ideology, the resulting vacuum becomes more apparent and pressing.

Concluding discussion

Male social work students in the UK traverse a path towards pronouncements of success by negotiating the gendered contradictions and paradoxes of the liminal journey that constitutes social work education. Men and masculinity are regularly homogenised when viewed through the social work lens as abusive or inadequate. This is the case whether in the context of practice or pedagogically, and is often justified on the basis of men's presumed and unquestioned status as oppressor of hegemonic gender status.

In order to comply with these feminist-inspired ideologies within the confines of the 'righteous' i.e. social work, the male social worker must assume distance from that which is assumed to constitute 'men'. This is constituted by a particular view or perspective; yet through seeking association with the assumptions of the feminine aspects of social work, male novitiates desire to move through the rituals of de-sexing. A powerful contradiction becomes apparent in this process, however. Male practitioners despite being expected to divest themselves of stereotypical, negated male characteristics remain unable to practice on equal terms with female colleagues. Thus they continue to be regarded as unsuited, owing to their sex, to those social work aspects of care and nurture, particularly work with children children, who are viewed as at risk from such unnatural intervention. Yet, at the same time men in social work are equally expected to demonstrate the dynamic, heroic aspects of stereotypical maleness in managing stressful pressures better than

female peers, and being expected to manfully and automatically cope well with the risk of violence in the workplace (Christie 1998, 2006).

Thus successful male students become purified and acceptable to the profession, which it is assumed has feminised characteristics. The implications of this are profound for our understanding of males in this care role; and in terms of understanding of care; and those relating to gender-power relations and hierarchies that may serve to illuminate the worrying situation of the decline in male social work applicants and the higher attrition rates among male students. The paradox being that while liminality may be resolved by the construction of a new synthetic masculine identity, the experience of minoritisation and exclusion of male social work students in the classroom and in practice may also engender a raised politico-ideological consciousness of their own gender and its different but equal potential to that of women practitioners (Wardle 2009), together with their own needs, as students, practice novices, neo-journeymen and ultimately, as men.

References

Al Gharaibeh, F. (2008) 'The effects upon children of the imprisonment of their fathers: a social work perspective', *International Social Work*, 51, 2, 233-246.

Balthazar, M. and King, M. (2001) 'The loss of the protective effects of relationships of incarcerated African American men: Implications for social work', *Journal of African American Men*, 6, 1, 31-32.

Bellamy, J. (2009) 'A national study of male involvement among families in contact with the child welfare system', *Child Maltreatment*, 14, 3, 255-262.

Berger, L., Paxson, C. and Waldfogel, J. (2009) 'Mothers, men, and child protective services involvement', *Child Maltreatment*, 14, 3, 263-276.

Bifulco, A. and Moran, P. (1998) *Wednesday's Child*. Routledge: London.

Brown, L., Callahan, M., Strega, S., Walmsley, C. and Dominelli, L. (2009) 'Manufacturing ghost fathers: the paradox of father presence and absence in child welfare', *Child and Family Social Work*, 14, 1, 25-34.

Brownlee, K., Sprakes, A., Saini, M., O'Hare, R., Kortes-Miller, K. and Graham, J. (2005) 'Heterosexism among social work students', *Social Work Education*, 24, 5, 485-494.

Brownmiller, R. S. (1975) *Against Our Will*. New York: Random House.

Bryman, A. (2012) *Social Research Methods* 4th edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bryson, B.J. and Bennet-Anyikwa, V.A. (2003) 'The teaching and learning experience: deconstructing and creating space using a feminist pedagogy', *Race, Gender & Class*, 10, 2, 131-146.

Burman, M., Batchelor, S. and Brown, J. (2001) Researching girls and violence: facing the dilemmas of fieldwork, *British Journal of Criminology*, 41, 3, 443-459.

Castillo, J. and Fenzl-Crossman, A. (2010) 'The relationship between non-marital fathers' social networks and social capital and father involvement', *Child and Family Social Work*, 15, 1, 66-76.

Christie, A. (1998) 'Is social work a non-traditional occupation for men?', *British Journal of Social Work*, 28, 4, 491-510.

Christie, A. (ed.) (2001) *Men and Social Work: Theories and practices*, Basingstoke: Palgrave.

Christie, A. (2002) 'Men as social workers in the UK: Professional locations and gendering global discourses of welfare' in Pease B. and Pringle K. (Eds.) *Changing Men's Practices in a Globalized World*, London: Zed Books.

Christie, A. (2006) 'Negotiating the uncomfortable intersections between gender and professional identities in social work', *Critical Social Policy,* 26, 2, 390-411.

Clapton, G. (2007) 'The Experiences and Needs of Birth Fathers in Adoption: What We Know Now and Some Practice Implications', *Practice*, 19, 1, 61-71.

Cooper, R., MacMaster, S. and Rasch, R. (2010) 'Racial differences in retention in residential substance abuse treatment: the impact on African American men', *Research on Social Work Practice*, 20, 2, 183-190.

Connell, R. W. (1995) Masculinities, Cambridge, Polity Press.

Cree, V.E. (2000) 'Why do men care?' in Cavanagh, K. and Cree, V.E., (Eds.) *Working with Men: Feminism & social work.* London: Routledge.

Curran, L. (2003) 'Social work and fathers: child support and fathering', *Social Work*, 48, 2, 219-227.

Duran, D., Usman, H., Beltrami, J., Alvarez, M., Valleroy, L. and Lyles, C. (2010) 'HIV counselling and testing among Hispanics at CDC-funded sites in the United States, 2007', *American Journal of Public Health*, 100, S1, S152-S158.

Edwards, J. (1998) Screening out men. Or 'has mum changed he washing powder recently? *Men, Gender Divisions and Welfare in* Popay, , J., Hearn, J. and Edward, J. (Eds). Routledge: London.

Edwards, J., Bryant, S and Clark, T. (2008) 'African American female social work educators in predominantly white schools of social work: strategies for thriving', *Journal of African American Studies,* 12, 1, 37-49.

English, D., Brummel, S. and Martens, P. (2009) 'Fatherhood in the child welfare system: evaluation of a pilot project to improve father involvement', *Journal of Public Child Welfare,* 3, 3, 213-234.

Featherstone, B. (2009) *Contemporary Fathering: Theory, Policy and Practice*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Foreman, M. and Quinlan, M. (2008) 'Increasing social work students' awareness of heterosexism and homophobia – a partnership between a community gay health project and a school of social work', *Social Work Education*, 27, 2, 152-158.

Fox, M.F. and Faver, C.A. (1985) 'Men, women and publication productivity: patterns among social work academics', *Sociological Quarterly*, 26, 4, 537-549.

Furness, S. (2012) 'Gender at work: characteristics of 'failing' social work students', *British Journal of Social Work*, 42, 3, 480-499. Advance Access doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcr079.

Gillingham, P. (2006) 'Male social workers in child and family welfare: new directions for research', *Social Work,* 51, 1, 83-85.

Green, R. (2005) 'The use of bidimensional scales to assess social workers' attitudes toward lesbians and gay men', *Social Work Research*, 29, 1, 57-60.

GSCC (2008) *Raising the Standards of Social Work Education 2007*-08, <http://www.gscc.org.uk/cmsFiles/Publications/GSCC_Raising_Standards_SW_Education_07-08_Report.pdf >, accessed 19th November 2010.

GSCC (2010a) *General Social Care Council Annual Report and Accounts 2009-10,* <http://www.gscc.org.uk/cmsFiles/Publications/Reports%20and%20Plans/Annual_Report_and_Accounts_2009-10.pdf> , accessed 19th November 2010.

GSCC (2010b) *Raising the Standards of Social Work Education 2009-10*, London: GSCC.

Hancock, T. and Siu, K. (2009) 'Culturally sensitive intervention with domestically violent Latino immigrant men', *Journal of Family Violence*, 24, 2,123-132.

Herman, J.L. (2000, 1981) *Father-Daughter Incest*. Boston: Harvard University Press.

Hicks, S. (2008) 'What does social work desire*?' Social Work Education*, 27, 2, 131-137.

Holt, S. (2003) 'Child protection social work and men's abuse of women: an Irish study', *Child and Family Social Work*, 8, 1, 53-65.

Huebner, R., Werner, M. Hartwig, S., White, S. and Shewa, D. (2008) 'Engaging fathers: needs and satisfaction in child protective services', *Administration in Social Work,* 32, 2, 87-103.

Ixer, G. (1999) 'There's no such thing as reflection', *British Journal of Social Work.* 29, 6, 513-27.

Jones, B. and Neil-Urban, S. (2003) 'Father to father: focus groups of fathers of children with cancer', *Social Work in Health Care*, 37, 1, 41-61.

Jones, B., Pelletier, W., Decker, C., Barczyk, A. and Dungan, S. (2010) 'Fathers of children with cancer: a descriptive synthesis of the literature', *Social Work in Health Care*, 49, 5, 458-493.

Karpetis, G. (2010) 'Psychodynamic clinical social work practice with parents in child and adolescent mental health services: a case study on the role of the father', *Journal of Social Work Practice*, 24, 2, 155-170.

Kosberg, J. (2002) 'Heterosexual males: A group forgotten by the profession of social work', *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 29, 3, 51-70.

Kosberg, J. (2009) 'The abuse of older men: implications for social work', *Australian Social Work*, 62, 2, 202-215.

Laakso, J. (2000) 'Child support policy: Some critical issues and the implications for social work', *Social Work*, 45, 4, 367-370.

Lazzari, M.M., Colarossi, L., and Collins, K.S. (2009) 'Feminists in social work: Where have all the leaders gone?' *Affilia,* 24, 348-359.

Lewis, I. (2004) 'Gender and professional identity: a qualitative study of social workers practising as counsellors and psychotherapists', *Australian Social Work*, 57, 4, 394-407.

Lloyd, S. and Degenhardt, D. (2000) 'Challenges in working with male social work students', in Cavanagh, K. and Cree, V.E. (Eds.) *Working with Men: Feminism & social work.* London: Routledge.

Lofland, J. and Lofland, L. (1995) *Analyzing Social Settings: A guide to qualitative observation and analysis*, 3rd edition, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

McLean, J. (2003) 'Men as minority: Men employed in statutory social care work', *Journal of Social Work*, 3, 1, 45-68.

McIntyre, G. and Paul, S. (2012) 'Teaching Research in Social Work: Capacity and Challenge', *British Journal of Social Work*, Advance Access 10.1093/bjsw/bcs010

McPhail, B.A. (2004) 'Setting the record straight: social work is not a female-dominated profession', *Social Work*, 49, 2, 323-326.

McPhail, B.A. (2008) 'Re-gendering the social work curriculum: New realities and complexities', *Journal of Social Work Education*, 44, 2, 33-52.

Miller, R.L. *Researching Life Stories and Family Histories*, London: Sage. (2000)

Miles, B.M. and Huberman, A.M. (1994) *Qualitative data Analysis: An expanded sourcebook*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Montgomery, P., Brown, S. and Forchuk, C. (2011) 'Social determinants of health and health outcomes in men and fathers with mental health issues', *Social Work in Mental Health*, 9, 2, 73-91.

Moriarty, J. and Murray, J. (2007) 'Who wants to be a social worker? Using routine published data to identify trends in the numbers of people applying for and completing social work programmes in England', *British Journal of Social Work*, 37, 4, 715-733.

Murphy, E. and R. Dingwall (2007) 'Informed Consent, Anticipatory Regulation and Ethnographic Practice', *Social Science and Medicine* 65, 1, 2223-34

Newman, B., Dannenfelser, P. and Benishek, L. (2002) 'Assessing beginning social work and counseling students' acceptance of lesbians and gay men', *Journal of Social Work Education,* 38, 2, 273-288.

Padilla M., Castellanos, D., Guilamo-Ramos, V., Sanchez-Marte, L. and Soriano, M. (2008) 'Stigma, social inequality, and HIV risk disclosure among Dominican male sex workers', *Social Science and Medicine*, 67, 3, 380-388.

Parent, C., Saint-Jacques, M-C., Beaudry, M. and Robitaille, C. (2007) 'Stepfather involvement in social interventions made by youth protection services in stepfamilies', *Child and Family Social Work*,12, 3, 229-238.

Parker, J. (2010) 'When things go wrong! Placement disruption and termination: Power and student perspectives', *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 3, 983-999.

Parker, J., & Crabtree, S. (2012). Fish need bicycles: An exploration of the perceptions of male social work students on a qualifying course. British Journal of Social Work. Advanced Access Published July 20, 2012 online: http://bjsw.oxfordjournals.org.ezproxy2.library.usyd.edu.au/content/early/2012/07/ 19/bjsw.bcs117.full.pdfflhtml?sid.15bd7967-ccc9-4e98-8813-289eb61af8b8

Pease, B. (2011). Men in social work: Challenging or reproducing an unequal gender regime? Affilia, 26, 406–418.

Peel, M. (2007) 'Male social workers and the anxieties of women's authority: Boston and Minneapolis, 1920-1940', *The Journal of Men's Studies*, 15, 3, 282-294.

Penhale, B. and Parker, J., 2000. 'Men and elder abuse'. in *Men and Violence against Women.* Strasbourg, France: Palais de l'Europe.

Perry, A. (2009) 'The influence of the extended family in the involvement of non-resident African American fathers', *Journal of Family Social* Work, 12, 3, 211-226.

Perry, R.W. and Cree, V.E. (2003) 'The changing gender profile of applicants to qualifying social work training in the UK', *Social Work Education*, 22, 4, 375-84.

Pettman, J (1992) *Living on the margins: Racism, Sexism and Feminism in Australia*. Australia: Allen & Unwin.

Phillips, R. (2007). The place of feminism in contemporary social work education in Australia. *Advances in Social Work and Welfare Education*, 9, 54–68.

Phillips, R. & Cree, V.E. (2014): What does the 'Fourth Wave' Mean for Teaching Feminism in Twenty-First Century Social Work? *Social Work Education: The International Journal* Advanced Access Published Feb 2014 online http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2014.885007 DOI: 10.1080/02615479.2014.885007

Philpott, J. (1998) Lessons from America: workfare and Labour's New Deal In *,* L. M. Mead. &Deacon, A. (Eds.) *Welfare to Work: Lessons from America,* IEA Health and Welfare Unit: London.

Plantin, L. (2007) 'Different classes, different fathers?' *Community, Work and Family*, 10, 1, 93-110.

Pruett, M., Cowan, C., Cowan, P. and Pruett, K. (2009) 'Lessons learned from the supporting father involvement study: a cross-cultural preventive intervention for low-income families with young children', *Journal of Social Service Research*, 35, 2, 163-179.

Riesmann, C.K. (2004) 'Narrative interviewing' in Lewis-Beck, M.S. A. Bryman and T.F. Liao (eds) *The Sage Encyclopaedia of Social Science Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Ritchie, J., Spencer, L. and O'Connor, W. (2003) 'Carrying out qualitative analysis' in Ritchie, J. and Lewis, J. (Eds) *Qualitative Research Practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, London: Sage.

Ryan, G.W. and Bernard, H.R. (2003) Techniques to identify themes, *Field Methods*, 15, 1, 85-109.

Ruch, G. (2005) 'Relationship-based practice and reflective practice: holistic approaches to contemporary child care social work', *Child and Family Social Work,* 10, 2, 111-123.

Satterley, B. (2007) 'The intention and reflection model of self disclosure: social work education for student identity management in gay men', *Journal of Social Work Education*, 43, 2, 187-204.

Shapiro, A. and Krysik, J. (2010) 'Finding fathers in social work research and practice', *Journal of Social Work Values and Ethics*, 7, 1, 1-8.

Shaw, I.F., Arksey, H. and Mullender, A. (2006) 'Recognizing social work', *British Journal of Social Work*, 36, (2), 227-246.

Schilling, R., Morrish, J. and Liu, G. (2008) 'Demographic trends in social work over a quarter-century in an increasingly female profession', *Social Work*, 53, 2, 103-114.

Schucan Bird, K. (2011) 'Do women publish fewer journal articles than men? Sex differences in publication productivity in the social sciences', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 32, 6, 921-937.

Scourfield, J.B. (2001) 'Constructing men in child protection work', *Men and Masculinities*, 4, 1, 70-89.

Scourfield, J.B. (2006a) 'The challenge of emerging fathers in the child protection process', *Critical Social Policy,* 26, 2, 440-449.

Scourfield, J.B. (2006b) 'Placing gender in social work: the local and national dimensions of gender relations', *Social Work Education*, 25, 7, 665-679.

Scourfield, J.B. and Coffey, A. (2002) 'Understanding gendered practice in child protection', *Qualitative Social Work*, 1, 3, 319-340.

SCcourfield, J. and Maxwell, N. (2010) 'Social work doctoral students in the UK: A web-based survey and search of the index to theses', *British Journal of Social Work*, 40, 4, 548-566.

Sieber, D. (2008) 'Engaging absent fathers in the treatment of children', *Clinical Social Work Journal*, 36, 4, 333-340.

Smith, M. and Randall, E. (2007) 'Batterer intervention programme: The victim's hope in ending the abuse and maintaining the relationship', *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, 28, 9, 1045-1063.

Stanley, S. and Wise, L. (1993) *Breaking Out Again: Feminist ontology and epistemology*. Routledge: London

Strega, S., Fleet, C., Brown, L., Dominelli, L., Callahan, M. and Walmersley, C. (2008) 'Connecting father absence and mother blame in child welfare policies and practice', *Children and Youth Services Review*, 30, 7, 705-716.

Strug, D. and Wilmore-Scheffer, R. 2003. 'Fathers in the Social Work literature: policy and practice implications', *Families in Society*, 84, 4, 503-511.

Swank, E. and Raiz, L. (2010a) 'Attitudes towards gays and lesbians among undergraduate social work students', *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, 25, 1, 19-29.

Swank, E. and Raiz, L. (2010b) 'Predicting the support of same-sex relationship rights among social work students', *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Social Services*, 22, 1/2, 149-164.

Taylor, C. (1994) 'Is gender inequality in social work management relevant to social work students?' *British Journal of Social Work*, 24, 2, 157-172.

Tower, L.E. and Gray, S.W. (2005) 'Us your teaching inclusive of women? A study of feminist pedagogy in the social work classroom', *Arete*, 29, 1, 1-16.

Trahan, M. & Cheung, M. (2008) 'Fathers and traumatized youth: key variables of gender, emotion, and recovery needs', *Journal of Child and Adolescent Trauma*, 1, 3, 207-223.

Tsui, V., Cheung, M. and Leung, P. (2010) 'Help-seeking among male victims of partner abuse: men's hard times', *Journal of Community Psychology*, 38, 6, 769-780.

Venter, K. (2011) 'Fathers 'care' too: The impact of family relationships on the experience of work for parents of disabled children', Sociological Research Online, 16, 3. <http:www.socresonline.org.uk/16/3/1.html.10.5153/sro.241>

Warde, B. (2009) 'Why social work, and what does the future hold? The narratives of recently graduated Hispanic and African-American male BSW and MSW students', *Journal of Ethnic and Cultural Diversity on Social Work*, 18, 1/2, 129-145.

Westmarland, L. (2001) 'Blowing the whistle on police violence: Ethics, research and ethnography' , *British Journal of Criminology*, 41, 4, 523-535.

Wheeler, D. (2009) 'Mounting a social work response to the worsening HIV epidemic in Black communities', *Health and Social Work*, 34, 2, 156-159.

Wiemann, C., Agurcia, C., Rickert, V., Berenson, A. and Volk, R. (2006) 'Absent fathers as providers: Race/ethnic differences in support for adolescent mothers', *Child and Adolescent Social Work*, 23, 5/6, 617-634.

Williams, C.L. (ed.) (1993) *Doing 'Women's Work': Men in non-traditional occupations*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Williams, C.L. (1995) *Still a Man's World: Men who do women's work.* Berkeley, CA.: University of California Press.

Wilson, K., Fyson, R. and Newstone, S. (2007) 'Foster fathers: their experiences and contributions to fostering', *Child and Family Social Work*, 12, 1, 22-31.

Zunz, S.J. (1991) 'Gender-related issues in the career development of social work managers', *Affilia*, 6, 1, 39-52.