

Masculinity and Affectedness: An Intersectional Perspective on Gender, Power, and Activism in the Global South

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Abstract: Based on the concept of ‘affectedness’ (or ‘Betroffenheit’, Mies 1978), this article attempts to demonstrate how all participants in research, education, and social activism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are impacted by the lack of a stable social environment, which is seen as the bedrock of scholarship by mainstream Northern theories and scientific methodologies. Researchers, academics and activists – as part of civil society – must deal with this intentional lack of security, social justice and freedom. In it we can recognize a form of elite-produced, and potentially indefinite, postcolonial, systemic liminality. Whether women or men, from the Global South or North, we should consider how the topics we are studying and the conditions under which we work impact us individually and collectively. Inversely, we should determine how our endeavors directly impact the lives and environment of the subjects we are interacting with. Reflection on the impact of affectedness-based research methods in the Middle East, and their application to work with men and masculinities in the region, is the main contribution of this article.

Keywords: masculinity, men, affectedness, Betroffenheit, research.

1. Introduction

Studying masculinity, power, and activism from the perspective of the Global South breaks with an entire set of convenient truths prevalent within the field of gender studies. Both in academia and civil society as a whole, using research to promote social change and relating scholarship to one’s personal-political interests brings with it the suspicion of individual bias and group prejudice. The geopolitics of knowledge concerning men and masculinity “locates the production of theory in the global metropole and treats the periphery essentially as a data source” (Connell 2016: 304). Establishing globally inclusive agendas of theory, and thus cutting “across



the scales of subjectivities, bodies, streets, states, and empires”, which erase masculinity in the Middle East through ahistorical generalizations (Hasso 2018), would profit from the collective effort of all those involved in the creation of the current imbalance. This article is based on my experience in scholarship, teaching, and activism in Lebanon during the last two decades. It is also informed by a similar amount of time spent as a graduate student, social science field researcher, and participant in the nascent men’s movement in Austria. While building on this academic, personal, and political experience in the Global South and North, I will introduce an innovative approach to theory that takes the postcolonial liminality of the Middle East into consideration. Based on the concept of ‘affectedness’ (or ‘Betroffenheit’, Mies 1978), the attempt will be made to demonstrate how all participants in research, education, and social activism in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are impacted by the lack of a stable social environment, which is seen as the bedrock of scholarship by mainstream Northern theories and scientific methodologies. Citing Bennet (2008: 7) Connell maintains that “a stable environment cannot be assumed for research in postcolonial conditions where ‘relative chaos, gross economic disparities, displacement, uncertainty and surprise’ are the norm not the exception” (2016: 305). According to Beresford, Berry and Mann, the political elites in Africa maintain a state of ‘productive liminality’, thus “suspended (potentially indefinitely) in a status ‘betwixt and between’ mass violence, authoritarianism, and democracy” (2018: 1231). In the case of Lebanon, Carpi claims that the concept of “state liminality rather captures the structural peculiarity of the Lebanese state’s agency and violent presence, made of repressive and neglectful politics” (2019: 83). Researchers, academics and activists – as part of civil society – must deal with this intentional lack of security, social justice and freedom. In it we can recognize a form of elite-produced, and potentially indefinite, postcolonial, systemic liminality. Whether women or men, from the Global South or North, we should consider how the topics we are studying and the conditions under which we work impact us individually and collectively. Inversely, we should determine how our endeavors directly impact the lives and environment of the subjects we are interacting with. According to Maria Mies (1978), this reciprocal way of thinking is called ‘affectedness’. Reflection on the impact of affectedness-based research methods in the Middle East, and their application to work with men and masculinities in the region, is the main contribution of this article. It can help discover how gender roles are directly impacted by purposeful and sustainable manifestations of instable elite power and liminal stability. This can assist in laying the foundation for intentional

and collective forms of collaborative resistance, bringing together those involved in the research process in our region and thus provide the solidarity needed to move together from awareness to action.

Dealing with gender is dealing with change. Can and should the study of men and masculinities continue to be an inherently critical field of research, in accordance with its initial rootedness in critical women's, gender and feminist studies, dating as far back as the 1970s (Hearn 2019: 55-56)? The attempt will be made here to illustrate the advantages to both men and women of a continued promotion of this close-knit relationship. Following the trajectory of developments within feminist theory and praxis as described by Hearn, how can "Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) – assuming, of course, that they are critical, are diverse, ontologically, epistemologically, and politically (*ibidem*: 54)" – become increasingly "more geographically widespread, more dispersed, more comparative, international, transnational, postcolonial, decolonializing, globally 'Southern', global, globalized, and globalizing" (Connell 2008: 57); in a word, more genuinely intersectional?

The personal is political! This well-established feminist adage was attributed in 1969 to Carol Hanisch, who further stated, reflecting on the situation in the late 1960s: "One of the first things we discover in these groups is that personal problems are political problems. There are no personal solutions at this time. There is only collective action for a collective solution" (Hanisch 2006). Based on this legacy of academic partisanship and social activism, how can CSMM achieve the same collective political goals? By which means can men in the field of gender studies bring together the strands of intersectionality, personal involvement and a reflexive approach to one's own privilege within globally sexist power structures? How can we simultaneously create and promote skills, tools, and results which serve the overall goals of emancipation and social equality in Southern and semi-peripheral regions as diverse as the Balkans, Southern Africa, South Asia, Latin America, China and the Middle East?

Combining the personal, the political and the academic has long been one of the strengths of women in the fields of women's, gender and feminist studies, for which many men in neighboring disciplines have envied them. Although "men's studies is not an accurate corollary to women's studies, since women's studies made both women *and* gender visible" (Hearn & Kimmel 2006: 5), the collectivist approach and gender solidarity – as described by Hanisch above – have become an

integral part of CSMM and the larger men's movement during the last few decades. In the following pages, I will follow both the trajectory of men's and masculinity studies as a unique field of research, but will also relate it to my personal journey in this discipline, which began in the late 1960s and early 1970s as a high school student sensitive to the shifting perceptions of gender, sexuality, 'race', social class, disabilities, and the natural environment. This academic and personal 'Bildungsroman' will trace the coming of age of an entire discipline as well as the very modest role that this author played in it, first in the Global North as a student and activist scholar, and later in the Global South as a university professor, civil society organizer, husband and father.

Together with a diversity of scholarly and political insights, personal experiences, and anecdotal episodes along the path of CSMM during the last half a century, I intend to offer impulses of a theoretical and methodological nature, as mentioned above. Based on the work of the German and Austrian pioneer feminist thinkers and researchers, Maria Mies, Claudia von Werlhof and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen, the concept of 'Betroffenheit' (often translated as either affectedness, subjectivity, or reflexivity) as a research asset will play a central role in this article (Mies 1978; von Werlhof et al 1983). I will illustrate how feminist research methods, rooted in 'affectedness and concern' (Betroffenheit und Parteilichkeit), have impacted my work with indigenous and immigrant minorities, refugees, men and boys with disabilities, Alpine mine workers and affirmative/positive action officers in companies in various European Union (EU) countries, before moving to the Middle East in 1999. I will then show how this experience was utilized during the last two decades in fields including media literacy skills for Lebanese youth, gender and violent extremism, forced migration and refugees in the MENA region, the father-friendly workplace, genocide and intergenerational trauma, gender-based violence (GBV) education and awareness raising, gender and Orientalism, faith-based social justice movements and humanitarian and development aid in the Middle East. Taken together, these topics offer a rich resource for analysis of intersectionality in action.

Finally, the term intersectionality has a long history rooted in the emancipatory movements around the world. Prior to the coining of the term by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 (Perlman 2018), the issue of cross-cutting cleavages in society along lines of social class, 'race', gender, religion, linguistic group or regional affiliation had been described as a stabilizing force by Seymour Martin Lipset in *Political Man* (1960) and Georg Simmel in *Conflict and the Web of Group-Affiliations*

(1922) and *Sociology* (1908). Within the labor movement, however, the tendency for social cleavages to cut both ways was recognized early on by such prominent leaders as August Bebel in the Socialist classic *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (1879). Building on this longstanding tradition, the modern concept of intersectionality strives to take the divisive potential of cross-cutting cleavages into consideration while at the same time recognizing how mutual respect for diversity is in reality a prerequisite for solidarity and reciprocity amongst those fighting for a better world. Not only for feminists, but also other historical emancipatory movements, such as organized labor, the ‘cripple movement’ (autonomous disability rights), LGBTQ, the civil rights movement, and the Greens, can profit from the integration of the conflicts and tension resulting from the cleavages within society as a whole. In following, an analysis of the positive nature of conflict for social progress will be linked to the theory of affectedness, as well as the concept of intersectionality, in order to illustrate how CSMM can bring researchers and the researched, teachers and students, together for a common cause.

2. Introducing Affectedness and its Significance for CSMM

Standpoint theory has played a key role in the last several decades within the larger field of gender studies, and CSMM in particular. Establishing clarity on its methodological role will be important, prior to linking it to the concept and praxis of affectedness. The question I will raise at the outset of this section is linked to the epistemological alternatives presented by two of the early pioneers of the study of men and masculinities, Jeff Hearn and Michael Kimmel, namely “what is the relation between those studying men and the men studied” and more importantly “who is doing the studying, with what prior knowledge, and with what positionality” (2006: 11)? According to Hearn and Kimmel, mainstream social science research on men is still primarily based on the empiricist epistemology according to which all “knowledge is a product of human learning, based on human perception” (*ibidem*: 11) and can be objectively tested within the tradition of scientific positivism. According to Hearn, this professionalization of men’s and masculinities studies has meant that it is “arguably in many parts of the ‘global North’ more separated from activism” (2019: 56). Much emphasis will be placed here on the criticism of positivism and the assumption that science can actually be objective, from both the perspective of ‘Southern Theory’ (Connell 2008; Connell 2016) as well as within the context of the Global South, and in Lebanon in particular.

Offering an alternative to the purportedly objective and hard science approach proscribed by the mainstream empiricists, the mythopoetics of the ‘deep masculinity’ tradition, which can be found in Robert Bly’s *Iron John* (1990), but also in the work of Sam Keen (1991) or Richard Rohr (1992), is rooted in the rationalist epistemology. Accordingly, “ideas exist independently of experience, in some way derived from the structure of the human mind or existing independently of the mind” (Hearn & Kimmel 2006: 11). I bring up this perspective at the outset of this article because *Iron John: A book about men* not only played a foundational role in my own understanding of the men’s movement, but can potentially offer men in the Global South, and the Middle East North Africa (MENA) region in particular, a useful bridge between personal, cultural, economic, and political emancipation. The mythopoetic approach will be dealt with in more detail below in connection to its significance for the spiritual traditions within the men’s movement and the key role that religion and personal faith can play on the path to individual and collective emancipation in the MENA.

In order to deal with the complexities of the global spectrum of gender studies, and to take an intersectional perspective into consideration, Hearn and Kimmel defer ultimately to the ‘Standpoint Traditions’, which see knowledge as being shaped by social position. “In this view, the positioning of the author in relation to the topic of men, as a personal, epistemological, and indeed geopolitical relation, shapes the object of research and the topic of men and masculinities in a variety of ways” (2006: 12). As indicated above, standpoint theory will be juxtaposed to the feminist concept of ‘affectedness’ in order to establish a baseline for further reflections on the link between myself as an author and the various topics in the field of men’s and masculinities studies on which I have worked.

The study of men and masculinity has been notoriously skewed when it comes to the MENA region (Adibi 2006; Amer 2011; El Feki 2018; Hasso 2018). When dealing with responses to security, freedom and social justice from a gendered perspective, the social positioning of each actor needs to be taken into consideration. The embeddedness of the individual researcher, as both an academic and activist, in power relationships and protracted networks of privilege, plays a significant role when dealing with the study of topics and individual research subjects. Participants should be aware that being studied, or merely observed, impacts of behavior or possibly even the character of the subjects. This principle has conventionally been termed ‘reactivity’. Inversely, the research process, and ultimately the results of any given project, will feed back to the researchers

and affect their understanding of the project and themselves. This process is even more severe when the researcher, the topic, and the research subjects are linked to each other. Examples of this are the early work done by Mies on sexual violence and exploitation (1978) or by Bennholdt-Thomsen, Mies and von Werlhof on female work in the Global South (1983). Do the concepts of ‘affectedness and concern’, as developed by Mies, lead to superior results? Ultimately the question should be raised as to whether the standpoint approach enables a more scientifically robust and rigorous understanding of an all-encompassing human perspective. Much has been written about feminism as a scientific theory. In order to deal with the specific issues at hand, the question will be raised; does a purposeful use and awareness of one’s own masculinity similarly impact the quality of research? Inversely, is gender-neutral research more objective and less biased, or is it actually lacking insight and thus ultimately ‘bad science’? Can scientific research of any nature ever be ‘gender neutral’? As a rule, feminist theory would say no. I would argue that this also applies to CSMM.

By describing a selection of real life experiences below, I hope to enable the reader to better understanding the link between reactivity and affectedness and reflect on how the topics and individuals we are working with are related to our personal lives, hopes and aspirations. Mies describes this back and forth between the researcher and the researched, between reactivity and affectedness, as ‘reflexivity’. Women and men, migrants, refugees and host communities, members of minority groups, people with disabilities, and many others can utilize the insights they gain through reflexivity to identify with the experiences in their respective fields of research. Although the concept of reactivity is generally accepted in the social sciences – linked to the concept of ‘contamination’ of research objects or fields of endeavor, (Levin 2005; Monahan & Fisher 2010; Hastie 2017) – affectedness and reflexivity are not. Mies admits that this is not without cause and warns against three erroneous conclusions which are often drawn from the concept of affectedness. These weaknesses, which give the theory and praxis of affectedness a bad reputation are: 1) that reflexivity leads to total identification, i.e. that only women can study women, only workers can study workers, etc; 2) that the identification process is moralistic, leading to pity instead of solidarity; 3) that the existing tensions, power disparities, and conflicts between the researchers and their ‘objects’ are “ignored and therefore cannot be employed productively, i.e. used for the liberation of women” and other groups struggling for emancipation and against subjugation (Mies 1991: 69).

As opposed to the methodological weakness of ‘total identification’, proper reflexivity on the part of researchers, according to Mies, leads to ‘partial identification’ with those being researched. Scholars share in the struggles of the women, minorities, workers, or refugees they are studying. They are not identical, not one and the same. This form of activist scholarship is indeed the foundation for a theory and praxis of ‘affectedness and concern’. The concept of ‘Othering’ is linked to the second weakness in the application of affectedness theory. Transforming other races, genders, or citizens of other countries into objects of pity is a close neighbor to hostile Othering, which is better developed in the literature. Sympathetic Othering objectifies the victims of discrimination and exploitation and thereby relegates them to the position of recipients of empathy, paternalistic largess, and condescending development aid. Accordingly, researchers and those being researched are indeed incapable of becoming co-combatants, sharing the same struggles and goals for emancipation. With respect to the third weakness described by Mies, ‘affectedness and concern’ should encourage and enable victims to first rebel against the victim status which has been imposed on them by society; secondly to search for the root causes of this situation; and finally to move on from awareness to action. It also provides the researcher with the tools to comprehend the similarities and distinctions between the statuses of the two sides of this scholarly endeavor. Power relationships become transparent, common ground evident, and solidarity possible (Mies 1991: 80-81; El Helou 2020).

3. Activist Scholarship - Bridging the Divide between Mitteleuropa and the Middle East

Feminist work has always been particularly concerned with the relationship between *research* and *activism*. Although many would struggle to be completely clear about when they were definitively engaged in the one activity and when in the other, the legacies and contemporary realities of privilege (of class, of race, of ethnicity, for example) continue to live out across definitions of roles, identities, and the value of feminist work (Bennett 2008: 2-3).

This section is dedicated to providing a selection of brief examples in which activist scholarship, intersectionality, and CSMM are interlinked. By dealing with a total of 13 individual cases from 1981 to 2019 the ‘Bildungsroman’ of the men’s movement will be compared to my own journey from the United States, to Austria and finally to Lebanon.

Growing up and becoming politicized in the 1960s and 1970s meant being confronted with a multiplicity of liberation and social justice movements (Sensenig 2019). In the United States, the most salient of these were the African-American civil rights and the Latino farmworkers movements, the women's rights and feminist movements, the gay rights movement, and the anti-Vietnam War movement; all converging in the late 1960s. This was followed by the first environmentalist Earth Day events in 1970, the Attica Prison Uprising in 1971 and US-sponsored coup in Chile in 1973. Combined, these diverse events and upheavals made evident how interlinked issues of social class, gender, sexuality, 'race', imperialism and environmental destruction were. Although disability rights campaigns existed during the Great Depression of the 1930s, focusing on the right to work, and after World War II, focusing on the rights of veterans, the linking up of disability rights with the other emancipation movements in the late 60s, along with the anger of the Vietnam War veterans returning home to a disinterested nation, helped bring the issue of people with disabilities into the progressive-populist 'Rainbow Coalition' of the 70s and 80s.

Although without access to the terms and concepts now associated with intersectionality, young males during this period were uniquely affected by a multiplicity of overlapping identity related factors; if by no other issue (e.g. 'race', disability, social class, sexual orientation) then by the looming threat of being drafted into the US military and sent to fight in Vietnam. The feeling of vulnerability and impending doom related to the US war in Indochina was a unique experience of my generation. Being confronted, as an adolescent male approaching sexual maturity, with a radical feminist movement, both in the streets of major American cities and in the high school classroom, was another. Developments in Western Europe followed a similar trajectory. Although initially the minority rights agenda was somewhat less developed (*Uremović 1994*), identity related issues such as gender, sexual orientation, and social class, as well as the already pervasive ecology and anti-war movements, were strong. Significantly, because of the dominant role played by partisan politics in Europe, as opposed to the United States, not only the social justice, but also the women's and feminist movements had close ties to the Social Democrats and Communists.

Autonomous Women's Movement: An assumption shared by most scholars and activists in the Global North is that, if not all, at least some of our pressing social, economic, cultural, and environmental problems can be resolved in our lifetime. This is not the case in the Global South.

The relevance of this difference for CSMM will be highlighted below. In following, significant steps in the trajectory of men's awareness and masculinities studies during the last half century will be juxtaposed with events in my life as an academic and social activist. Having moved to Austria to pursue a MA in German literature at the Universität Salzburg in 1975, the prevalence of leftist partisan politics on the university level was immediately evident. This not only impacted the work of the budding women's movement, but also other issues like Third World solidarity and the ecology movement. Within the Austrian political spectrum, the first step towards autonomy on the part of the feminist movement was to distinguish themselves institutionally from the party organizations set up by the Socialists and Communists in Austria, i.e. the SPÖ and KPÖ. A second significant step was to work independently of leftist and profeminist men, in order promote awareness raising and develop strategies on their own, free of both partisan and male domination. Personally, the first second wave feminist, Autonomous Women's 8th of March Demonstration, in the city of Salzburg in 1981, was a bit of a turning point. The activist male students and professors at the university, who had supported the demonstration from the outset, were requested to not join in the march – rather abruptly on the day of the demonstration – thus setting the stage for a distinct women's movement in a very graphic manner. In the following years, this distinction was dealt with in both personal-political and rigorously academic discourse, based on the concept of 'sexual difference' (*Cavarero 1989*), which presented additional challenges to men struggling to transcend the essentialism inherent in patriarchal society. Although not essentialist in nature, difference feminism assumes that there are uniquely female characteristics, which need to be developed and respected in their own right. Inversely, men need to be aware of their uniquely male characteristics and free them from the sexist privilege which has contaminated them over the last millennia. As some profeminist men, including myself, were considering the validity of 'sexual difference', as opposed to the more traditional leftist approach to gender equality rooted in Marxism, the mythopoetic men's movement was already underway. This turn to spirituality helped many men search for the ancient traditions of nurturing masculinity in order to make them accessible to modern society. They will be dealt with in a following section.

History and Her-story from Below: The 'personal is political' takes on a unique meaning when applied to political science, and other social sciences such as history, sociology, communication studies, or geography. Starting in the 1960s and 1970s, feminists, gays and lesbians, people with disabilities, minorities and formerly colonized peoples around the world

turned to oral history and other qualitative research methods (Lindqvist 1978) in order to discover their own traditions. This happened both with the institutional support of government and universities, or on the grassroots level. The history from below movement dates back to massive US government funding for the American Federal Writers Project (FWP) history workers during the late 1930s and early 1940s. Progressive-populist in nature, it collected the histories of ‘normal people’, including former slaves, survivors of the Great Depression, union organizers, women activists, immigrants and other groups till then deemed unworthy of historical research. The first taped oral history collections were carried out with Holocaust survivors in 1946 in Europe by David Pablo Boder of the Illinois Institute of Technology. Today massive oral history collections exist throughout the world. While working on my PhD thesis on the US labor policy in occupied Austria between 1945-1950 (Sensenig 1987), I studied the oral history collections of American union organizers active in post WWII Europe and carried out several oral history interviews with Austrian and US ‘labor diplomats’ still alive at the time. Though studying the topic from a profeminist and pro-peace perspective, I was not yet aware of the CSMM work already being carried out at the same period. Doing research on the original Cold War of the 1940s and 1950s during the peak of the ‘Second Cold War’ in the 1980s, prior to the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union, had a unique male twist. I was not only acutely aware of the historical masculinist foreign policy parallels, but also realized the value of information gleaned from archives and libraries to undermine the cultural hegemony of the entrenched patriarchal power structures propping up the Military Industrial Complex at the time. Resulting from work on alternative research methodologies, I would later help found the *Archiv- und Bibliothekshilfe (ABH e.V.)*, a coalition of leftist, feminist, pacifist and environmentalist archives and libraries in the German speaking world (Germany, Austria, Switzerland, South Tyrol) and the Netherlands, located at the ‘Ferien- und Bildungszentrum Salecina’ in Maloja Switzerland in 1986.

Gender and Material Culture: Analogous to the feminist, gay and lesbian, minorities and labor history archival movements, specialized CSMM collections, such as the ‘Changing Men Collection’ at Michigan State University in East Lansing, were initiated in the early 1990s. Prior to that, many older collections began to focus on gender issues, including the study of resistance to fascism, early industrialization and urbanization, and the gendered nature of career paths. One example of this, on the local and regional level, was the Ludwig-Boltzmann-Institute for Labor History (*Geschichte der Arbeiterbewegung*)/Karl-Steinöcher Foundation, where I worked in the

photo archives and oral history collection from 1985-2000. Focusing on all forms of material culture expressing the living conditions of industrial workers, immigrants and indigenous minorities, such as Roma and Jews, this collection was also part of the regional culture movement, which attempted to provide a counter-hegemonic voice in opposition to the dominate patriarchal and pro-corporate educational and media landscape.

Industrial History's Gender Dilemma:

There is that great proverb—that until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. That did not come to me until much later. Once I realized that, I had to be a writer. I had to be that historian. It's not one man's job. It's not one person's job. But it is something we have to do, so that the story of the hunt will also reflect the agony, the travail—the bravery, even, of the lions (Chinua Achebe, Paris Review 1994).

By the 1980s, industrial and labor history had begun to mainstream gender issues. Considering it's anchoring in 19th century traditions of social justice and the promotion of women's rights within the Social Democratic, Communist, and Anarchist movements, this discipline was open to new social movements, on the one hand, and still steeped in the patriarchy of fin de siècle cultural conservatism, on the other. The first step in the direction of gender equality in progressive historiography was to create free spaces in which women could carry out research according to their own designs, which led to a tendency to ghettoize gendered research. The process of gender mainstreaming labor history meant that all related issues were being reassessed according to their implications for the lives of women and men. Finally, the inclusion of CSMM broke the traditional mold in that it overcame the concept of a generic human approach to history, which merely needed to be augmented by a women's perspective. In essence, gender mainstreaming assumes a male dominated major historical flow or narrative into which female tributaries are granted access. Focusing on men in the workplace, on technological advancements, or on labor struggles from a male perspective promotes the idea that masculinity is a gender too. A survey history of 800 years of high altitude metal mining in the Italian Alps, carried out at the above mentioned Boltzmann Institute/Steinöcher Foundation in 1987-1989 in cooperation with the Institut für Alltagskultur (IAK – Institute for Day-to-Day Culture), attempted to combine both the difference feminism and gender mainstreaming perspectives. Funded by the German language educational office of the left-wing Italian labor federation CGIL/AGB, it used an intersectional approach dealing with linguistic

and cultural diversity, gender, social class, post-colonialism and environmental concerns and included a collection of oral histories of retired mine workers. This work was carried out in connection with the emphasis at IAK on the social, cultural, and economic transformation of Alpine industrial and mining regions. The final IAK publication – *Bergbau in Südtirol* [Mining in South Tyrol] (Sensenig 1990) – combined a dedicated chapter on women in the mining industry with a mainstreaming approach to gender-related issues in all other chapters. What we failed to do at the time was to specifically deal with the masculinity-mining nexus within these Alpine regions in transition, which was indeed a significant lost opportunity. The loss of traditionally ‘manly’ occupations, such as high-altitude mining and metal working, had a distinct effect on the local societies we studied, which we neglected to take into consideration.

Mainstreaming the Mythopoetic: Robert Bly’s *Iron John* (1990) was published in German translation in 1991 as ‘Eisenhans’, referring to the original Brothers Grimm fairytale (number 136), ‘Der Eisenhans’ first collected and published in its current form in 1850. Bly’s book quickly reached the same level of popularity, and notoriety, in the German speaking world that it had previously enjoyed with its English-speaking audience. Coming on the heels of the collapse of the Soviet Union, the mythopoetic movement offered hope to many who were reeling from the apparent loss of a socialist – and thus a personal – perspective in the foreseeable future. An American friend gave me a copy of *Iron John* in 1992 while visiting family in Thüringen in the former German Democratic Republic. Although an atheist at the time, I was intrigued by the potential of this book to help establish a masculinity-based approach to research and praxis in my fields of social science. Many male colleagues, with whom I shared the book, and who were already working in the profeminist tradition, were not concerned by the animosity in Central Europe towards Bly’s spirituality, rejecting this approach ourselves out of principle. We were, however, surprised by the largely negative assessment of his concept of nurturing masculinity, which we discovered within the feminist and profeminist scholarly and activist community in Salzburg. In a preliminary attempt to deal with both issues simultaneously, the late Melchior Schneider, a colleague from the field of critical psychoanalysis, and I read *Iron John* together in both English and German, discussing what his book meant for use individually as men and collectively as scholars, activists, and practitioners in the field of communications analysis. This highly personal deliberation process was based on the role model of women’s self-awareness groups which we had experienced within our own circle of counter culture friends in Salzburg.

The results of this three month long discussion were presented at a public debate in the library of the WERKSTATT für Gesellschafts- und Psychoanalyse, a research center and think tank focusing on social criticism and progressive change from a psychoanalytical and leftist perspective. Although the audience was initially hostile to the mythopoetic movement and spirituality in general – and Bly’s Iron John in particular – the manner in which we as presenters linked the personal to the political, and the potential for positive masculinity in their own lives, laid the foundation for a constructive debate. More significantly, this kick-off of the nascent men’s movement in Salzburg changed the perspective of many individual male researchers, teachers, and activists towards their own gendered identity and the role it should play in our future work.

Is Disability a Gender?: The intersectionality linking the issue of disabilities to social class, gender, ‘race’, and sexual orientation became evident as of 1976 when *the UN General Assembly proclaimed 1981 as the International Year of Disabled Persons*. In the German speaking world, the ‘Cripple Tribunal’ [*Krüppeltribunal*] in Dortmund in 1981 was the spark that initiated a rethinking of the relationship between people with disabilities and those without, throughout all areas of society. Calling themselves ‘cripples’ – analogous to similar uses of derogatory terms by gays and lesbians, Afro-Americans, and feminists – in order to make a point about the use of language to promote social exclusion, disabilities activists began a heated debate about the role of ‘non-cripples’ in their movement. Similar to the issue of the role of men vis-à-vis feminism, the cripple movement encouraged people without disabilities to become aware of the assumed hegemonic normality of their mainstream status in society. In the area of gender, they were particularly adamant in challenging the presumed lack of sexuality on the part of men and women with disabilities in the media and on the institutional level. Founded in 1981, the above mentioned Institut für Alltagskultur began working on the issue of disabilities as of the late 1980s and early 1990s under the leadership of the South Tyrolean gender expert, Erika Pircher, and in cooperation with the late Swiss disabilities and gender scholar, trainer, and therapist, Aiha Zemp (Beutler 2015; Zemp 2015). At first peripherally involved in research on disabilities and access to the labor market in the early 90s, I was able to follow first-hand the introduction of the intersection between gender, disabilities, and social class in Austria within the community of activist scholarship. As in the case of the mining industry mentioned above, men and masculinities were not yet considered with the same scholarly rigor as were women and femininity (Pircher & Sensenig 1993). This issue would be dealt with more adequately in later years upon the insistence of the cripple movement itself,

with the support of the Minister of Women's Affairs in Vienna, Johanna Dohnal. The discussion on how to integrate 'Betroffenheit' [affectedness] in applied and activist social science research was still in its early stages, especially with respect to CSMM.

Europe's Guest Worker Problem: Following the global economic recession sparked by the oil crisis in 1973, Western European countries shifted from an aggressive and proactive recruitment of foreign workers to an attempted radical reduction of their numbers within the labor market. As the so called 'guest workers' refused to go and circumvented the new European closed border policies through the use of family unification, migrant labor in Europe became a 'problem.' Non-EU and non-European guest workers from Spain, Greece, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, South Asia, North Africa, and the Caribbean were transformed from welcome contributors to Europe's reconstruction and ensuing 'economic miracle' to a threat to the security and wellbeing of the continent. The vilification of foreigners along the lines of the new national and regional 'Fortress Europe' policies did not transfer well into municipal politics, considering that in many cities throughout Western Europe guest worker communities made up a quarter, a third, or in some cases over half of the local population. In countries in which access to citizenship at the time was relatively easy, based on the 'jus soli', or citizenship according to place of birth approach, immigrants could be integrated into local politics by obtaining a new (or second) nationality. Countries with restrictive citizenship policies, based on *ius sanguinis* (or 'right of blood') approach, limited access to naturalization to children with at least one parent of the local nationality. The right of blood was practiced throughout Central Europe, thus excluding guest workers from access to local decision making processes in areas of immediate concern to their daily lives such as employment, education, housing, transportation, health care or the environment. As a response, many German cities set up immigrants councils (AusländerInnenbeirat) in order to allow their Southern and Eastern Mediterranean immigrant minorities to integrate into society on the municipal level.

The AusländerInnenbeirat movement spread from Germany to Austria and Switzerland in the late 1980s and early 1990s. A first feasibility study for Austria was carried out at the *Boltzmann Institute/Steinöcher Foundation* during this period and submitted to the city of Salzburg in 1994 (Avakian et al 1994). By the early 1990s intersectionality within the research community had become widespread, although the term was not yet commonly used. The Salzburg immigrants

council project dealt with cross-cutting identity issues related to ethnicity, citizenship, religion, social class, and gender. It placed the discussion on minority rights and the systemic exclusion of Turks, Kurds and Southern Slavs in the context of Austria's National Socialist legacy and the impact that fascist and racist ideologies still had on the social, economic, and cultural policies in the country. Furthermore, this project developed its own unique approach to the overlap between intersectionality and affectedness, based on the work done at the time by predominantly German and Austrian feminists, but also North American women's studies in the field of non-sexist research methods (Eichler 1988, Miller & Swift 1988, Häberlin et al 1991). Research tools were developed specifically to deal with the 'Betroffenheit' of the ethnically diverse research team, which was made up of students and professors, men and women, and most importantly Austrian, Iranian, Southern Slav, and Turkish researchers. In following I translated an excerpt from the study, published in the Austrian Journal for Political Science (ÖGPW), which will illustrate the innovative nature of the research tools at the time.

“Seen from the perspective of the established social sciences community, this ‘realization project’ was an unusual combination of research, policy development, and organizational implementation. The participants in the project factored in their scientific, social, and emotional affectedness by carrying out, recording, and transcribing regularly scheduled structured group discussions on issues related to their approach to the topic in general (Amott 1991; Bannerji 1991; Caraway 1991; Hügel 1993), as well as their professional and political expectations with respect to the project (Cavarero 1989; Eichler 1988; Häberlin et al 1991; Miller 1988). The drafting and implementation of this self-reflexive segment of the study was based on the work of ethno-gendered research, as well as feminist studies. Raymond Lee’s ‘Doing Research on Sensitive Topics’ served as a practical introduction to the topic of reflexivity” (Sensenig 1994: 334).

One aspect within the spectrum of intersectionality, however, did lead to a severe conflict within the research team and threatened the success of the project. In order to deal with the important role of religious institutions within the guest worker communities in Austria, a political scientist from the Universität Salzburg and leading functionary of the Austrian 'Katholische Männerbewegung' [Catholic Men's Movement] was integrated into the leadership of the research team. As the head of the overall project, I had also hoped to reflect on the potential role the mythopoetic approach to male leadership could play within the Southern Slav, Turkish and Kurdish guest worker communities in Salzburg. Instead of opening up the project to include issues

of spirituality, male identity, and the potentially positive role that progressive Christianity and nurturing masculinity could play in promoting cultural diversity, this perhaps somewhat clumsy attempt at faith-based inclusion led to a rebellion within the students in the research team. Although we were forced to remove the issue of religion from the mix in order to save the project, this experience brought with it one important ‘lesson learned’ for my future work in the Middle East. As in the cases of Turkey and former Yugoslavia, dealing with issues related to religious communities and faith traditions in the Levant, within the context of applied social science research, requires the full participation of all those affected. Forcing issues like masculinity or spirituality onto a project based on the perceived hegemonic ‘better knowledge’ of the team leadership can often boomerang in very unpredictable ways.

Talking about Male Survivors: Work on masculinity, sexual violence, and support for survivors of GBV has traditionally placed men and boys in the role of perpetrators and seen women and girls as victims. With respect to women and girls with disabilities, this assumption has proven to be correct. A study carried out by the GenderLink Diversity Centre (GLDC) in Salzburg in 1996 determined that the majority of women and girls with disabilities in Austrian institutions (64%) had experienced GBV, primarily at the hands of male perpetrators. “This means that women with disabilities demonstrate a higher exposure rate to sexual violence than women without disabilities.” Of equal if not greater significance is the fact that “the third largest offender group is made up of the male residents of the homes for people with disabilities. Until now this fact has not been reflected in the scientific literature on the subject” (Zemp et al 1997). With the support of the above-mentioned Austrian Minister of Women’s Affairs, Johanna Dohnal, a follow up study was carried out in 1997 to survey the exposure of men and boys with disabilities to GBV (*ibidem*). As a participant in this project, I experienced for the first time how the intersection between gender, disabilities, ethnicity, social class and sexual orientation can be integrated, taking affectedness into consideration. Under the leadership of the late ‘cripple activist’ Aiha Zemp, who was herself a survivor of systemic GBV in an institution for children with disabilities in Switzerland, the surveyors were trained to better understand what it means to live with disabilities and to survive sexual violence and exploitation. Each team of interviewers was made up of a man and women, none of which had disabilities or direct and sustained personal experience with GBV. As a staff member of the GLDC I was not only involved in the research process, but also participated in the dissemination and application of the project results. This experience would prove significant

following my move to Lebanon in 1999, especially with respect to the further development and application of affectedness theory in the Middle East, as described below.

Working Fathers, the Dutch Connection: Work-life balance and diversity management had become key objectives of many organizations, both in the public and private sectors, by the late 1980s. Within the English-speaking world at the time, these policies were expanded to include the interests of working fathers. By the mid-1990s, and with the support of the Austrian Ministry for Women's Affairs, 'Vereinbarkeit von Beruf und Familie' [reconciliation of career and family] policies were targeting both women and men in government, industry, and civil society. The GLDC carried out a series of three projects titled 'Managing E-Quality' during the second half of the 90s focusing on the father-friendly workplace in general, and the interests of working fathers in leadership position in particular. This work involved employers in Austria, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, and the UK. By 1999 we also began to expand these activities into the Middle East through various awareness-raising and training activities, primarily in cooperation with the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World (IWSAW) at the Lebanese American University (LAU). Working with the Dutch vocational health expert and 'father-friendly' policies activist, Peter Buijs (1995), we developed a variety of proposals, which were partially implemented in Lebanon (Pircher & Sensenig-Dabbous 2000; El Helou & Sensenig 2016).

Bridging the North-South Media Divide: The violent, Al Qaeda led attacks against the World Trade Center in New York City in 1993 and again on 11 September 2001 (9/11), followed by the attacks on a commuter train in Madrid in 2004 and the London underground in 2005, brought the issue of 'dysfunctional Oriental masculinity' to the forefront. Having moved from Austria to Lebanon in 1999, I began teaching cultural studies at the Lebanese American University in the academic year 2000-2001, thus straddling the events of 9/11 during my first year of work in Beirut. At the end of 2001, the GLDC office in Beirut and the Secours Populaire Français drafted and developed the concept for an awareness raising project, with the support of the European Social Action Network (ESAN) in Lille, in order to help adults, youth and children deal with the xenophobic, racist, and *Islamophobic* fallout from the wave of violence carried out primarily by Arabs and Muslims in the what was then still referred to as 'the West'. Titled 'watching the media: a media literacy toolkit against discrimination' (Perkins et al 2004), this project was a direct

response to stereotyping and ‘Othering’ of the Global South by the cultural elites in the Global North. It dealt specifically with media products targeting children and teenagers and, as an EU funded project, included teams from Austria, France, Germany, and the UK. Through the GLDC, a team was also set up with local funding in Lebanon. The development and application of the intersectional approach, affectedness theory, and CSMM had progressed significantly by this time period (2001-2004). By integrating a Lebanese team, made of up high school and university students, into youth teams from four EU countries, various levels of diversity were taken into consideration. The adult and youth participants were of Muslim, Christian, and non-confessional/secularist background. The principal of gender parity was generally maintained in all five countries. The teams from Europe included large numbers of working-class youth from both immigrant and non-immigrant backgrounds. Most importantly, the material generated for the toolkit was collected by the five youth teams from the local video, audio and print media, as well as examples of historical and current stereotyping of Arabs and Muslims from school books, art collections, theater and architecture from their respective countries. The teams were gender-balanced, however the male role is significant here. European and Lebanese boys and young men worked together, over a period of three years, with experienced male journalists, academics and social activists on gendered stereotypes of Arab and Muslim masculinity in their respective countries. This was an important first step for many of the participants in developing a unique, intentional, and profeminist male voice of their own.

‘Male Terror’ and the Impotence of the Arab State: Following the terrorist attacks in New York on 9/11, the debate on violent extremism focused on victims in the Global North. This gradually shifted during the almost two decades since 2001 to include survivors and perpetrators in the Global South. According to Paul Amer, interest and interpretation has shifted away from issues related to political economy and criticism of neo-liberal market mechanisms. Today “(m)oralized, criminalized, racialized, colonized masculinities in the Middle East are some of the most popular subjects of modern geopolitical hypervisibility” (2011: 40). In order to better deal with the ‘dysfunctional Oriental male’, foreign donors in the MENA region and the oppressive and the exploitative Arab state reorient “around the monitoring of failed fathers and the restoration of what are seen as responsible patriarchal behaviors, feeding the notion that the region is hungry for authoritarian father-figures—be they military officers or religious leaders” (*ibidem*: 41). As mentioned at the outset of this article, however, the failure of the Arab state to deliver on its

paternalistic responsibilities can also be by design. According to Carpi, power elites in the MENA region provide and withhold access to resources and services in response to their subjects' willingness to submit to the pervasive patron-client relationship (2019: 85). As a reaction to the ongoing discussion on the use of violence and terror as a political tool, the January 2005 State of Peace Conference in Burg Schlaining, Austria brought together scholars from around the German speaking world to debate the question: "Is Terrorism the War of the Poor?" (Tuschl 2005) and inversely, "Is war the terrorism of the rich?" (Ustinov 2003). Reflecting on my personal experience in Lebanon since 1999, I attempted to demonstrate – along the lines of the liminality debate described above – that terrorism is prevalent on various levels, i.e. between the Global North and South, between the corrupt Arab elites and their subjects, and most significantly, between men and women within societies in the MENA region. In "Gender Mainstreaming Terrorism" I made the argument – based on my observations and theoretical reflections over a period of five years in the Middle East, that hegemonic masculinity was a form of terror which permeated Arab society, stabilizing relationships within families and between power elites and their subjects (Sensenig-Dabbous 2005). Following the 2005 assassination of Lebanese Prime Minister Rafic Hariri and the ensuing war with Israel in 2006, we were able to test these assumptions empirically through a series of field studies during the war in Lebanon and the political crises in 2007-2008 (Sensenig-Dabbous 2007; Hourani & Sensenig-Dabbous 2007). Of relevance for this study is the conclusion that whereas Lebanese men do have a high degree of masculine 'bravado' with respect to their ability to weather the storm in the Middle East, they also are willing to sacrifice their own personal safety in order to secure the wellbeing of their families. They are acutely aware that security cannot be expected from the authoritarian state, which they see as more of a threat than a source of hope.

What's Faith Got to Do with It?: As described above in the section on immigrants councils, the use of an intersectional approach and affectedness theory when dealing with personal faith and religion can often boomerang. Based on the originally feminist concept of 'Betroffenheit', first steps have been made to analyze religiosity in the MENA region by factoring in Mies' concept of 'affectedness and concern'. Mainstreaming the issue of gender, when studying the Middle East, has become a well-established default mode. Scholars and activists alike are aware that their respective masculinities or femininities impact the people and topics they interact with. In the last 15 years, foundational work has been carried out within the context of the Philadelphia based 'Metanexus: Science and Religion' network to apply this approach to the personal faith and/or

world views of researchers as well. The Metanexus Lebanon group, based at LAU and Notre Dame University (NDU), has published preliminary work on affectedness as a research tool in the social sciences (Sensenig-Dabbous 2006). With respect to the overlap of gender and religion/faith, preparations are now being carried out to integrate the legacy of the historical Christian men's movement (Castellini 2005; Gelfer 2008) into the MENA context in order to develop research tools suitable for the study of religion, gender and social justice in the Arab world today (Chikri & Sensenig 2018). Various scholars in Lebanon have described the affectedness approach to faith and politics as a methodological missing link of sorts.

One Hundred Years of Silence: With the 100th year commemoration of the Ottoman Genocide of its non-Muslim minorities in 2015 rapidly approaching, a broad spectrum of rigorous research and activist scholarship was initiated in the decade leading up to the centennial. Starting in 2010, the 'Zeytoun Musa Dagh Project' at NDU and Haigazian University in Beirut worked with young, fourth generation Armenian survivors to deal with their communities' intergenerational trauma, which had been covered up by 100 years of silence. Working with the Syrian-American trauma specialist Ani Kalayjian of the New York-based Meaningful World Humanitarian Outreach Program, the project integrated an oral history project, outreach with the Armenians community in Lebanon, series of dialogue sessions among fourth generation survivors in Caux Switzerland, and most importantly an annual history hike in the Hatay district of Turkey as of 2013. Using the mythopoetic approach, much emphasis was placed on a gendered understanding of intergenerational trauma. In following an excerpt from the article "The Musa Dagh History Hike: Truth-Telling, Dialogue and Thanatourism" will be presented, dealing with the preliminary results of the project.

Applying 'affectedness' to the History Hike has meant that everyone involved is encouraged to be aware of their expectations going into the project and how it has affected them at the end of each respective hike. It also allows Armenian and non-Armenian hikers, as well as the organizers and young participants, to speak openly about their feelings, level of knowledge about the Genocide, and the impact of the hike on their willingness to follow up on the experience upon their return home (Sensenig-Dabbous 2016: 232).

4. Conclusion

During a recent ‘Funding Leadership and Opportunities for Women’ (FLOW 2016-2020) conference in Beirut, organized by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Gender, Communications and Global Mobility Studies (GCGM) unit at NDU, I had the opportunity to reflect on the issues presented above. During a one-hour workshop we discussed the trajectory of intersectionality and the usefulness of the theory of affectedness. The participants came from a large variety of Dutch funded projects, dealing with issues of gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, poverty, conflicts rooted in religion and world view, as well as social class and overall underdevelopment. Whereas intersectionality has now entered the methodological mainstream and thus is integrated into most project assessments and funding requests, affectedness theory has not. As a heterosexual, middle class, Christian male university professor, socialized in the Global North, with no disabilities and no direct experience with GBV or severe political oppression, I was asked what ‘Betroffenheit’ and ‘Parteilichkeit’ (affectedness and concern) meant for me. The easy response would have been to refer to Maria Mies’ concept of ‘partial identification’, described above, and be done with it. This ‘academic’ answer would not have carried much weight with practitioners facing thorny issues – and often thereby regularly exposed to threats of violence – from countries as diverse as Afghanistan, Guatemala, Iraq, Mongolia or Vietnam. In order to better explain the power of the concept of reflexivity as emancipatory praxis, I dealt with my personal struggles, as a young activist scholar at the beginning of my career, trying to work ‘normally’ with gays and lesbians and people with disabilities on projects related to our mutual emancipation.

In conclusion I would like to return to Frances Hasso’s insistence that good “scholarship cuts across the scales of subjectivities, bodies, streets, states, and empires” (2018). While working on this article I discussed with her via email the need to challenge hegemonic concepts of ‘scalability’ (Tsing 2012) along patriarchal lines based on the colonial legacies which still dominates our respective disciplines. If we are to stand a chance of overcoming the biased and oppressive categories which are the bedrock of the scientific approach to the Global South, we must factor in our subjectivity as scholars and activist who, at the very least, enjoy the privileges of higher education and access to the resources available through our work with universities and NGOs, still linked to the unfair and skewed “geopolitics of knowledge” referred to at the outset of this article (Connell 2016: 304).

I wish to close on a personal note. The following quotes from a historical and fictional figure make the point better than I can about the daunting nature of the challenges before us. This character, despite his rootedness in the very imperialist project described by Connell, did his best, as a child of his times, to avoid and alternatively, to potentially undermine the most negative consequences Western and masculine hegemony. His story is the subject of much contention. However, as a young scholar I was intrigued and inspired by his heroic, and admittedly very masculinist adventures, in the Middle East immediately prior to the outbreak of World War II. The historical *English Patient*, László Ede Almásy (or Graf Ladislaus Eduard von Almásy, as he often referred to himself) had little to do in real life with the literary and cinematic Orientalist Hungarian explorer, immortalized in the 1990s. The novel and movie by the same name did, however, get it right in one respect. Ironically, fictional Almásy and his fellow cartographers from various European imperial backgrounds longed for a world which was not desecrated by “boundaries drawn on maps with the names of powerful men” (Minghella 1996: 172). Confronted with the implications of their research in the Western Desert of Egypt for the ensuing war between the Third Reich and the British Empire, the real Almásy wrote in the autobiographical account of his travels: "Now, that I observe the lines that I have drawn on the maps once merely blank spaces, I am convinced that my tire tracks have not desecrated these previously untouched territories, that I have not violated it by unveiling the mysteries kept secret for thousands of years" (Almásy 1997: 198). In reality would seem that he failed in this endeavor (Sensenig-Dabbous 2004: 174). Much remains to be done, both in the Global North and Global South, to cut across the lines drawn on our maps, our bodies and our minds and establish a global community of value based on merit and solidarity.

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