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The Creation of Hegemonic Masculinity in the Working Class in Malmö

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Abstract

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Problems/background: This paper revolves around understanding how hegemonic masculinity is created. It aims to develop theoretical tools to further understand masculinity and class.

Objective: The objective of the thesis is to understand how hegemonic masculinity is discursively created in four interviews and archive material. Developing the theoretical tool of class composition is an important aim of the paper.

Summary: This thesis investigates the creation of hegemonic masculinities within the working class in Malmö. Coupled with a Marxist postoperaist analysis it locates the creation of hegemonic masculinity through a discursive strategy. Interviews and archive material from the Family Right's Bureau in Malmö, an agency handling custody cases, together form the material for the paper. Masculinity is analysed as a biopower concept and as fixed between positions of class, ethnicity and gender.

Conclusion/result: The thesis shows how hegemonic masculinity is created through a position of power on the labour market that is entwined with gender and ethnicity. Hegemonic masculinity is supported by biopolitics to make up how it is the normal and the norm. It further concludes that the class composition concept must be expanded to integrate class and ethnicity.

Keywords: Masculinity, working class, postoperaism, Malmö, hegemonic masculinity, men, postfordism

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1. Introduction

This paper grew slowly out of ideas that concentrated on the relation of gender to class. This line of thinking led to the idea that masculinities ought to change along with changes in the material life in the working class. At first my research question was “How are masculinities reconfigured in the working class in postfordism?” This question would be changed through my research process. While it is theoretically believable that there are major changes in masculinities in the working class due to the economic transitions from fordism to postfordism my research has not found any.

The problematic this paper instead deals with concerns how hegemonic masculinity is expressed in a number of interviews and coupled with archive material from a municipal organization in the working class city of Malmö. Through the use of the Marxist school postoperaism I develop the concept of class composition when related to gender and ethnicity.

Though class and gender (and ethnicity) are common to theorise together the specifics this paper brings up appears to be relatively unexplored by researchers. Postoperaism, a strand of thinking hailing from Italy and merging with French poststructuralism, has rarely touched on the topic of masculinity. Similarly, masculinities studies that concern the contemporary working class in the centre nations of capitalism is also lacking.

This paper follows the outline of an introduction which includes the abstract, the introduction and a brief overview of the city of Malmö and my research question. This is then followed by method and methodology chapter. Within it the main two empirical sources are presented, archive studies and life story interviews. This includes practical considerations, such as issues with gaining access or the makeup of archives, as well as method. The method of discourse analysis is introduced separately.

My ethics section is presented under a separate headline where a discussion on how to handle ethically sensitive material is held. This is then followed by the theory section. This includes a discussion on Marxism and class, closely followed by one of the main theoretical concepts for this paper; class composition. Following that the concept of postfordism and biopower is

introduced with a discussion on the relation between understandings of contemporary Marxism and Foucault's concept of biopolitics.

Connell and masculinity is also part of the theory section which is linked to forms of masculinities. Masculinity is the second central theoretical concept of this paper. Racialization and ethnicity-theory is then discussed and the chapter is followed by a brief presentation on the historical 'model worker' concept. Ontology and epistemology are the last two pieces of the theory section where precise epistemological and ontological standpoints are presented.

The analysis follows specific themes which are developed. These are: *Housework*, where considerations on gendered housework and gender equality as related to the same is discussed. *Violence in the home*, which concerns material from the archives and the gendering of violence. *Parenting and childhood* where upbringing, childhood and views on participatory fatherhood are discussed. *Interactions with state institutions* which relates to differences between masculinities in relation to state biopolitics and unemployment in particular. *Workers collectives* where collectives in workplaces experienced by interviewees is analysed. *Unions* and how they are understood in the material. *Conflict management*, a theme where approaches to handling conflicts in and outside of work and possibilities and resources to do the same are analysed. *Relations to work and working* which investigates the role of the ideology of work for masculinities. The last theme is *gender relations and equality* which is discussed in the lens of biopolitics and modern Swedish equality debates as well as the international concept of crisis of masculinity.

Lastly, the conclusion brings together the discussion in the analysis to present my findings and answer the research questions.

1.1. Malmö

Malmö is Sweden's third largest city and lies in the southernmost region, Skåne. It is a classical workers city which after being hit by an economic crisis in the 90's attempted the transition of a fordist city to postfordist. That is to say, Malmö has opened a college and attempted to compete in a regional market of cities to attract investment and business. This is

a typical strategy for similar working class cities in postfordism, a process described by social geographers¹.

Malmö is a city of about 300 000 inhabitants and overall contains a sizeable working class population. It carries a reputation as a violent city in contemporary Sweden due to crime-related shootings, rioting and other crime and unrest. To what extent this is a media construction is another matter. Malmö is for these reasons a given arena to research masculinities in the working class. It is also quite practical due to my ease of travel there, a personal social network and familiarity with the city.

1.2. Research question

My research question is now “*How is hegemonic masculinity in the working class created in the Family Right’s Bureau archives and the four interviews of this paper?*” Creation here relates to how this concept is socially created by subjects and institutions.

I have a secondary research question, aimed at developing postoperaist class composition theory. This is “*How can gender and ethnicity fit into the class composition concept?*”

For this purpose I have conducted interviews and studied archive material from the Family Right’s Bureau in Malmö. I use a discursive strategy to understand this hegemonic creation.

1.3. Previous research

Though the field of masculinity studies was developed as interlocked with studies on the working class there has been a surprising lack of in-depth theorising on working class men. R.W Connell’s *Masculinities*² has been of the central books of masculinity theorising and discusses class and capitalism to a great extent. That work has been of central importance to this paper. Connell’s theory is discussed at greater length further in the paper.

¹ One such study is A L Hansen, *Space Wars and the New Urban Imperialism*, print@soc.lu.se, Lund 2006, see particularly pp. 57 and p. 72-73

²R W Connell *Masculinities*, 2nd edition, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles 2005

Previous to Connell the work of Paul Willis on class in schools in the British 70's, *Learning to Labour, How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*³, uses a Marxist gender theory before masculinity theory was conceived of as such. Willis focuses on non-conformist groups of young men, or "lads" and suggests that their "anti-social" activities are part of a form of training to enter into the industrial working class. Later Linda McDowell has written a paper following Willis' concepts for the 2000's. McDowell's paper "Masculine discourses and dissonances: strutting 'lads', protest masculinity, and domestic respectability"⁴ is one of the few works on working class masculinities in modern Europe that I have been able to find. Her paper is also part of a contemporary discussion concerning boys and young men's failing in schools in England and how that relates to (anti)social unrest.

In more modern scholarly works there are few books that relate to the subject, particularly when considering Sweden in general and Malmö in particular. Paula Mulinari's work on Hotel and Restaurant Workers in Malmö can be mentioned, even if her focus is on femininities rather than masculinity. However, her work remains important due to her considerations of gender, class and ethnicity inside of the working class in Malmö. In her PhD *Fantasies of Power* she explores the meaning of labour for gender, sexuality and racialization processes.⁵

A book which touches on the issue which I am investigating but, once more, does not focus primarily on the interests at hand is Holter's *Can Men Do It? Men and Gender Equality – the Nordic Experience*⁶ which considers the development of gender equality in the Nordic context. The book explores different themes relating to work life, parenting, violence and masculinities and gives a comprehensive overview of qualitative and quantitative research.

Many basic textbooks concerning masculinities touch on the issue of class or work but often in an undeveloped form where the class theory is unspecified. This taken together means that

³ P E Willis, *Learning to Labour: How Working Class Kids Get Working Class Jobs*, Saxon House, England 1979

⁴ L McDowell, "Masculine Discourses and Dissonances: Strutting 'Lads', Protest Masculinity, and Domestic Respectability," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* vol. 20, 2002 pp. 97-119

⁵ P Mulinari, *Maktens Fantasier & Servicearbetets Praktik: Arbetsvillkor inom Hotell- och Restaurangbranschen i Malmö*, Linköping University, Linköping 2007

⁶ Ø G Holter, *Can Men Do It? Men And Gender Equality – The Nordic Experience*, Akaprint a/s, Århus, 2003

there is a lack of previous research that combines Marxism and masculinity theory when looking at the working class.

Dealing with operaist and postoperaist scholarship presents a different form of issue. Operaism was to a great deal preoccupied with studies in factories and in neighbourhoods of the working class. However, this discussion is unavailable to a non-Italian audience due to the lack of translations. Steve Wright is perhaps the most prominent academic to have put together an overall history of the discussions and developments of Italian operaism.⁷ It is clear through that and other sources that operaism rarely dealt with gender and when it did it was typically as women, not as men and masculinities. A similar form of 'blind spot' to masculinity studies lack on debates on class exists in operaism then.

In its later development as postoperaism gender is more common as a reference to the debate of new subjectivities within the work of Andrea Righi for example. However, this discussion as well as that of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri are quite theoretical and deal very little with actual analysis or methodology. Instead, these works concern the relations between biopolitics, capitalism, class composition and feminism as frames of analysis.⁸ These concepts are discussed further in the theory section.

This taken together means that there is a lack of systematic theorisation and analysis of working class masculinities in the fields I have reviewed and located this study within.

2. Method

During my work I have used two distinct methods to work with two sets of material. One has been unstructured interviews with four respondents and the other has been a discursive strategy in working with the archive material. Above all I have used a phenomenological approach in understanding and analysing data. Phenomenology is a sociological tradition which emphasises the subject life-world experiences of subjects and the active co-creation of

⁷ S Wright, *Storming Heaven: Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*, Pluto Press, London 2002, p. 4

⁸ A Righi, *Biopolitics and Social Change in Italy: From Gramsci to Pasolini to Negri*, St Martin's Press, New York 2011

social life by its participants. Understanding humans as active subjects, involved in interpreting the world through practical action is a mainstay of phenomenological scholarship. Phenomenology's strength lies in the ability to grasp and understand subjects and subjectivity, but it is constantly under threat of losing generalizable results through this focus.⁹ Phenomenology serves then as an overall umbrella to categorize this paper and the difficulties of grappling with relativism is further discussed in the sections below.

2.1. Archive studies

The archives I have been studying are from 1990 until present day in Malmö's Family Right's Bureau. The Family Right's Bureau (henceforth the FRB) is a municipal organization that handles custody cases, domestic issues, adoptions and similar matters. The reason why the FRB archives were chosen was both due to the lack of information in other folders of social services but also the extent of the information that its files contained. I investigated police protocols for court cases but due to the difficulties of finding suitable cases this line of investigation was dropped. I have investigated *Arbetsdomstolen* which is the Swedish court of labour disputes but their material was also lacking with only a few cases of labour disputes in the court being from Malmö. *Socialtjänsten*, social services in Malmö, and *socialnämnden* (the committee of social issues) were the last institutions I finally discarded due to the limited nature of their protocols. These protocols merely included vote tallies and no background on particular cases.

The FRB files were retrieved from 1990-1999 from Malmö city archives and later material (1999 to 2012) was retrieved from the Bureau itself. A typical folder can range from five pages to over a hundred. These folders include all correspondence in a specific case from the start to finish. This includes calls to meetings and requests for communication. Typically they include a court protocol which requests an investigation from the FRB in a custody case. This investigation is then performed. It might, but doesn't always, include letters from both respective parties. Letters from lawyers are also included as are requests for other parties (psychologists, institutions or others) to give their professional say in a matter. The archives are very similar between the ones from the early 1990's until 2012 with the main difference being that the folders are slowly growing in size overall. This might be because digitalised

⁹ M Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide, For Small-Scale Social Research Projects*, 4th edition, Open University Press, Maidenhead 2010 p. 93-96

systems are easier to add to than type-written ones. There is no reason to believe that there is any difference in kind between these thicker volumes and slimmer ones from the 90's, however.

Martyn Denscombe suggests several important points (written in italics below) to consider when evaluating written sources (beyond the authenticity of the document which is clear in this case). The *purpose* of the document is twofold. The FRB investigation serves as a basis for a court to make a ruling. The entirety of each folder serves the purpose of gathering all relevant data of a closed case for future reference for use of the state. *Who wrote the document* is once more split. A social secretary for the FRB has written the investigation, a clerk at the court writes protocol and private correspondence or legal attorneys write their own letters. The material uses *first hand accounts* very rarely. Denscombe emphasises that the researcher must carefully reflect on whether the researcher has used a critical eye towards the text. As my interest is in the description of masculinities I have carefully attempted to trace how masculinity is expressed in the archives. I believe that this has been successful overall and that there are few reasons to believe that the material would be skewed.¹⁰

I have read a sum of above a hundred FRB folders in total. For these I have had to attain a special permit to access the files. More on this will be discussed in the ethics section.

Finally it might be added that the vast majority of couples involved in these disputes are the typical heteronormative family ensemble. In one case in one of the later folders there has been a same-sex couple. In no instances have there been other family organizations described.

2.1.1. Sample choice

I followed the parameters of analysing class that is detailed in the section called "Marxism and class" in the theory section of this paper. This is a purposive sampling to focus my empirical material to my theoretical considerations.¹¹ Fortunately this has not caused any major issues with sample choice. The vast majority of people who appear in the archives are clearly workers. In a few cases I have discarded men who have not been part of the working

¹⁰ Denscombe, p. 222

¹¹ K O'Reilly, *Key Concepts In Ethnography*, SAGE Publications, Thousand Oaks 2009 p. 196-197

class. There are instances of people moving between social classes. If this is relevant I have made a special mention of the fact in the text.

I have concentrated my study on men due to lack of time and space. Studying only men does mean that I have discarded the one same-sex lesbian couple. While there is something to be said for investigating women's experiences of masculinities it is not the focus of my research and including it would have taken me too far away from the focus of my thesis.

2.2. Interviews

I have conducted four sets of interviews with four different men. I have used a form of unstructured interview due to its nature as being open to developing thoughts and strands of thinking as well as picking up new information from each interview to use in subsequent ones. The interviews were first meant to be life story interviews, but due to limited time with the life story interviews taking place over several long sessions with each participant, they cannot be considered as such.¹² These interviews have lasted for about an hour and a half and due to their nature as intended for life story work they have typically followed a form of chronological order in the sequence of questions. I have found and gained access to these individuals through asking friends and associates if they know suitable candidates to be interviewed. This method has been overall successful in presenting overall themes and "getting the ball rolling."¹³

During my interviews I found that involving myself in the interviews gave better interviews. My own experiences as a worker could be brought in to ask questions concerning labour processes and working life. This form of involvement within the interview process is an important part of feminist ethnographies, which I am inspired by.¹⁴ A form of solidarity and open communication between the interviewer and the interviewees gives more meaningful answers than rote questions might. This approach is also shared by operaist Marxism, albeit in a more activist sense, where the 'workers investigation' method has been popular. In short, workers investigation is a method carried out by activists and intellectuals within factories or residential areas meant to both investigate the actual practices of the working class but also to

¹² Denscombe, p. 83

¹³ Denscombe, p. 175

¹⁴ O'Reilly, p. 67

perform interventions through the style of questions asked which often related directly to exploitation.¹⁵ While I have not attempted to intervene politically in my work this double inspiration from feminism and operaist Marxism has given me grounding in how I view and approach the interview process.

2.2.1. Interviewees

The following are my interviewees. They are all born in Sweden and are considered ethnically Swedish.

Jonas is a 30-year old hailing from the middle parts of Skåne who has lived in Malmö for 6-7 years. His mother was a housewife and his father a municipal janitor. He has worked in handling goods in warehouses for rural or garden labour for most of his work life. He is single and lives alone.

Lars is the oldest of the group, having just retired, and is in his middle 60's. He originally hails from the middle parts of Skåne much like Jonas and comes out of a working class family where both parents worked. He worked for a few decades in the construction business (since the late 60's) until an injury falling off a roof required him to retrain as a programmer working on setting up intranets and similar network connection tasks for municipal organisations. He is the father of Martin and has been married for decades.

Martin is also around 30 and is born in Malmö. Martin has been a construction worker for most of his adult life and prepared for that trade through a high school education. Later he began to work in different parts of the construction trade outside of building houses. He lives with his girlfriend and is in the process of moving back into Malmö proper again from suburbs. Martin (being the son of Lars) is a child of a construction worker and an academically trained care worker.

Thomas is a 25 year old who comes out of Skåne's south-western region. He differs from the others in that his social background is from the middle strata of society but he has later been

¹⁵ S Wright, *Storming Heaven*, p. 22-25

proletarianised. First working as a temporary care worker and now entering a trade school to become a painter of houses. Thomas lives with his girlfriend.

2.3. Discourse analysis

Through my use of discourse analysis I analyse both interviews and the archive material. Particularly, I am informed by critical discourse analysis (CDA), particularly in the vein of Chouliaraki and Fairclough. As they put it:

It is an important characteristic of the economic, social and cultural changes of late modernity that they exist as discourses as well as processes taking place outside discourse, and that the processes that are taken place outside discourse are substantively shaped by these discourses. For example, 'flexible accumulation' as a new economic form has been 'talked into being' in the substantial literature on the new capitalism (...) as well as being put into practice through practical changes in organisations. Harvey (1990) disputes the claim that 'flexibility' is just a discourse – and an ideology. But although, as he argues, flexibility is an organizational reality, and so the discourse of the new capitalism is in that sense extra-discursively grounded, nevertheless the discourse shapes and reshapes the organisational reality and is thus socially constitutive [...]¹⁶

CDA follows in the vein of my theoretical and ontological positions as it analyses the world as entering a postfordist era and builds its analysis of discourse on this background. Furthermore, CDA is inspired by Donna Haraway's concept of situated knowledge's¹⁷ (more on this below in the epistemology section) and is connected to Haraway's theory as a project of avoiding ontological relativism.¹⁸ See my further discussion on Haraway and situated knowledge's in the epistemology section.

Chouliaraki and Fairclough critique Mouffe and Laclau for their lack of attention to a real world and to their insistence of the social world's radical contingency. Their critique is that the social world is not as open and flexible as Mouffe and Laclau claim and that the formation of discourses is a slower and less open process than in Mouffe and Laclau's theory. However, Chouliaraki and Fairclough attempt to integrate this method into critical discourse analysis'

¹⁶ L Chouliaraki & N Fairclough, *Discourse In Late Modernity: Rethinking Critical Discourse Analysis*, Edingburgh, University Press, Edingburgh 2005, p. 4

¹⁷ D Haraway 'Situating Knowledge: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective', *Feminist Studies*, Vol 14, No. 3 Autumn 1988, pp. 575-599, p. 575-576

¹⁸ Chouliaraki & Fairclough, p. 92

conception of a non-discursive reality that interacts with the discursive.¹⁹ It is in this vein that the method is used in this paper as well.

The term ideology is a discursive construction which is defined as:

Ideologies are constructions of practices from particular perspectives (and in that sense 'one-sided') which 'iron out' the contradictions, dilemmas and antagonisms of practices in ways which accord with the interests and projects of domination.²⁰

Ideology as a term is then divorced from the everyday understanding of the term. When there has been a need to differentiate the two I have used the term "political ideology" for ideologies such as socialism, liberalism and feminism.

2.4. Creating Themes and Mixing Material

The themes of my paper have been created through a dialectical process between theory, method and empirical material. In doing research I have been doing coding in both the interviews and in the archive material. In many instances I have found commonalities which have not been described by my theory and which have led me to include or develop other theoretical strands than the ones I began with. This is the case of much of theories on ethnicity and race. There have been instances where commonalities that go beyond the scope of the research question and theoretical framework in which case I have had to discard these themes.²¹

Mixing two different forms of data in this manner has been successful due to the relative ease of coding and working dialectically between theory and method. Working with the archive material has opened up possibilities for new understandings when juxtaposed against the elements that appear within the interviews and vice versa. The archives dealing with issues relating to violence, alcoholism and child abuse is unavailable in the interviews. This often relates to the fact that the archives often relate to a less respectable working class and that the interviews were related to individuals who relate to themselves as more respectable. It might,

¹⁹ Chouliaraki & Fairclough, p. 124

²⁰ Chouliaraki & Fairclough, p. 26

²¹ Denscombe, p. 284-286

of course, also relate to my interviewees being secretive about any such matters they might have personal experience of.

Beyond theoretical developments empirical findings within both sets of material has led me to new questions to pose against the other material. Any success this paper has had is due to working with this dualism of material.

2.5. Epistemology

The commitment to an existence of a non-discursive reality does not by itself suggest that human beings are capable of insight about this world by themselves. However, following in the line of thinking from Donna Haraway's aim for objectivity for gender research I embrace the idea that we can reach knowledge concerning the natural world. Haraway champions the idea that it is necessary for feminist researchers to defend the idea of objectivity:

This gaze signifies the un-marked positions of Man and White, one of the many nasty tones of the word "objectivity" to feminist ears in scientific and technological, late-industrialism militarized, racist, and male-dominant societies (...). I would like a doctrine of embodied objectivity that accommodates paradoxical and critical feminist science projects: Feminist objectivity means quite simply situated knowledge's.²²

Situated knowledge's are an epistemological position which tackles issues where leanings towards positivism have tended to obscure social facts through what Haraway calls "the God Trick", a gaze from nowhere which masks it's own partialness by appearing to be entirely neutral, a god-like view from nowhere. Hsiang-Ann Lao puts Haraway's project in these terms:

Haraway's (1991) notion of situated knowledge can be applied to position people in the process of knowledge generation so as to provide an epistemological and theoretical framework for participation. [...] There are three major themes in Haraway's account of situated knowledge as a feminist objectivity: (a) accountability; (b) positioning, and (c) partiality (Bhavnani, 1993). Situated knowledge claims are based on people's lives, the location, and the specific. Situated knowledge anchors on positioning and generates accountability and partiality. Haraway was "arguing for politics and epistemologies of location, positioning, and situating, where partiality and not universality is the condition of

²² Haraway, p. 8

being heard to make rational knowledge claims. These are claims on people's lives,' instead of claims "from above, from nowhere, from simplicity" (Haraway, 1991, p. 195). Haraway further stated that partiality is the feminist hopes for objectivity, local possibility, and situated knowledge. The very notion of being objective is to be partial, specific, and particular. Objective views can only come from the location. To be objective is not to be neutral or value free, but rather be value-laden—the value of being accountable, situated, responsible, and partial. All forms of objectivity are embodied and situated in some ways. Any unlocatable knowledge claims are irresponsible knowledge claims.²³

This position has been critiqued both inside and outside of feminist research for both being too relativistic and for being too objectivist. However, Haraway's point of disclosing the researchers' standpoint, but also of taking into account the standpoint of those being studied is a strategy to avoid both relativist and positivist problems.²⁴

In the interests of following Haraway's point of situating the researcher it should be mentioned that the author is also situated in the white, male working class originally. This background has both allowed an easier access to the field and a position that has made knowledge production both easier and more difficult. It has been more difficult in making things that are commonplace and taken for granted as objects for research. However, personal experience with labour and Swedish industrial working class culture has given other possibilities for understanding at the same time. Research has then been a process of both coming closer to and further away from the object of research.

A view of knowledge production and research as having a different qualitative form in comparison to everyday reasoning informs this work. That is to say, it is a difference in degrees but not kind that separates the form of reasoning which is done in academia to, say, an everyday kitchen-table discussion. This difference is supported by Haraway's points about the researcher as accountable, open about hir positioning in society and the acceptance of partiality.

²³ H-A Liao, 'Toward An Epistemology of Participatory Communication: A Feminist Perspective' *Howard Journal of Communications*, Vol 17, no. 2, 2006, pp. 101-118, p. 103-104

²⁴ Haraway, p. 589

3. Ethics

All research entails ethical obligations for the researcher in his relation both to the field and to the people who are interviewed or studied. During the entire research process ethical considerations have cropped up. This primarily relates to many of the stories within the FRB files which are filled with violence, family secrets, abuse of a sexual nature and poverty. A different form of challenge was present in meeting my respondents in interviews, which also required determining what would constitute an ethical stance in asking questions and relating to the material.

In my research I follow the guidelines of the Swedish Research Council and their ethical rules. All of my interviewees are anonymous and have been informed that they can see my research before the final edit so that they can see that they have been quoted and translated in the correct spirit of what they have said. To access the FRB files, both from the bureau itself and in Malmö city archives I have signed documents which regulate both the anonymity of people in the archives and requires that I handle the data so that it remains only in my possession. I have taken particular care that no quote or information in this paper will be of the nature that it might reveal the identity of anyone. This has had the effect of lessening the amount of quotes that are derived from the archives.

For feminists these implications of research are at the heart of the research process. Feminist ethnographers often work with areas that are sensitive in nature. Violence, whether sexualised or not, gendered power relations and situations of exploitation are typical areas of investigations for feminist researchers. I believe that a basic sense of solidarity with both my interviewees but also with people whose files I have read are a must and that nurturing social relations based on solidarity is necessary²⁵.

²⁵ O'Reilly, p. 67

4. Theory

4.1. Marxism and class

Marxist theory builds on the conception that human history is the history of class struggle.²⁶ Marxism has a long history within different social sciences and contains within itself many different strands of thinking and interpretation. For Marxists society is divided into two classes, the class that owns the means of production (companies and so on) and the one that sells its labour power to survive. Between these groups exists middle layers of society, what I call middle strata or the petty bourgeoisie. Class is then not based on cultural values, or on trade or academic education. Class is a dynamic relation of power, based on exploitation of labour.²⁷ It is possible to move between classes, making class journeys upwards or being proletarianised throughout one's life. Being working class is based on the amount of influence a given worker has over his work. This definition of class is different from what Erik Olin Wright defines as "gradational" definitions, which is based on income, culture or "common positions within a status hierarchy."²⁸

Feminist researchers have critiqued notions of class based on families as shrouding relations of power within households and ignoring women's class positions in favour of their husbands.²⁹ I am thus defining class on an individual basis rather than a strategy of analysing class based on family.

4.1.1. Class composition

Class composition is a central tool for my understanding of class. The concept derives from the Italian operaist (which translates to 'workerist') school of thought, also called autonomous Marxism or autonomism. Class composition is a tool to understand material factions within the working class. The background of class composition is derived from a discussion from Mario Tronti who wrote *Lenin in England*, a groundbreaking text for operaism that broke

²⁶ A Negri, *Books for Burning: Between Civil War and Democracy in the 1970s Italy*, Verso, New York, 2005 p. 14-15

²⁷ E O Wright, *Class Structure and Income Determination*, Academic Press, inc, London, p. 14-15

²⁸ E O Wright, *Class Structure* p. 6

²⁹ M Ferree, & E. Hall 1996, 'Rethinking Stratification From a Feminist Perspective: Gender, Race, and Class In Mainstream Textbooks' *American Sociological Review*, vol 61, no. 6, pp. 929-950

away from the dominating understanding of class and capital as subjects acting on the working class as an object.³⁰ Instead, operaism focused on the self-activity of the working class and argued that it was the struggles of the working class which moved history forward. Operaists turned this idea on its head and argued that capitalism is defensive and that the proletariat is the subject which acts on capitalism.³¹

With this view of the working class as agents in history researchers and activists in Italy in the 60's and forward began to research the working class in its concrete form through sociological inquiry. The first of these inquiries was posed by Alquati to a car manufacturers union investigating the FIAT car factories and soon found:

[...] the exploitation of the workforce had been intensified with the parcellisation of labour, followed after 1953 by the introduction of radically new forms of machinery which required little or not training to operate. By these means, management had been able to change the composition of its employees radically, first deskilling or marginalising its old core of professional workers, then introducing a mass of inexperienced youths to staff the expanded production lines.³²

The investigation further related these differences between young and old workers, professional and non-professional to different relations to work, to the unions, to political parties and to internal cultures. This is a prime example of class composition theory. The technical composition consists of a given strata of the working class' technical skills, needs for subsistence, means of life and wages while the political composition of its forms of struggle and organisation. For the workers within the FIAT factory the political composition differed between the professional and older workers whose interests were expressed through the union and the younger, non-professional workers whose interests were not expressed by the traditional organisations of labour.

Capitalism answers working class struggles through decomposition of the class composition. In the 1970's production was dominated by a fordist means of production. That is to say, by large-scale factories with workers predominantly male with high wages, employment for life, an expanding welfare state and the nuclear family as an economical unit. Working class struggles in the 1970's across the geographical centre of capitalism (Japan, the US, Western Europe) became successful enough as to lessen profits and even threaten capitalism itself. The

³⁰ S Wright, *Storming Heaven*, p. 64

³¹ S Wright, *Storming Heaven*, p. 37

³² S Wright, *Storming Heaven*, p. 47

decomposition of fordist labour and the fordist class composition brought about postfordist labour according to operaist theorists. Postfordism is characterised by flexible work and de-industrialisation with factories moving to the periphery of capitalism (the rest of the world outside of the centre).³³ However, capitalism can never destroy the working class; it would mean destroying the ability to produce value and profit. After processes of decomposition recomposition occurs where a new class composition with a new technical and political composition of the class is formed. New struggles are initiated, new organisations and means of organising are found. This is then followed by another cycle of struggles and new decomposition, recomposition and finally composition of the proletariat.³⁴

4.2. Postfordism and biopower

With the advent of postfordism operaist theorists met with French poststructural thinking to develop a new strand of thought that would be called postoperaism. Merging operaist theories of class composition with Foucault's thoughts on biopower created new forms of reasoning about capitalism and class.

Biopolitics is a Foucauldian concept which Andrea Righi explains:

Biopolitics grows out of a specific bundle of social problems that involve, but are not limited to, the control and power over population. Michel Foucault, the inventor of the term, developed the concept in connection to governmentality, or the art of governance as the conceptualization of a technique. [...] biopower is thus framed within the limits of a disciplinary society making use of classical apparatuses of state control "such as the ratio of birth and death, the rate of reproduction, the fertility of the population and so on. Therein, urban planning, demography, statistics, welfare systems as well as institutions like psychiatric hospitals and police are all technologies developed to govern the population from above."³⁵

Biopolitics is furthermore connected to a production of subjectivities. That is to say, subjects are not merely one-way recipients of commands in a top-down process. Rather, subjects are created and formed through a wide range of institutions. Individuals then become subjects within fields of power where they actively reproduce these same systems of power. In the

³³ Righi, p. 151

³⁴ S Wright, *Storming Heaven* p. 49

³⁵ Righi, p. 2-3

society present society this is dominated by capitalism. For my analysis this means a focus on viewing workers as actively co-producing capitalism not merely through the production of surplus value but actively engaging in capitalist ideologies. To conclude, I follow Righi in defining biopolitics as state production of subjectivities through specific practices and disciplinary power which polices border between the deviant and the normal.³⁶

The most famous postoperaist thinkers are Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt who, through their trilogy of *Empire*, present a conception of a new class composition that they call the Multitude. The Multitude is a diverse character which is differently positioned in their writing, but the central components are immaterial labour and a diverse, multiple creations of subjectivities in opposition to capitalism.³⁷ With this figure of class composition Negri and Hardt claim:

In a previous era the category of the proletariat centered on and was at times effectively subsumed under the *industrial working class*, whose paradigmatic figure was the male mass factory worker. (...) Today that working class has all but disappeared from view. It has not ceased to exist, but it has been displaced from its privileged position in the capitalist economy and its hegemonic position in the class composition of the proletariat.³⁸

This radical claim appears to lack a direct empirical justification however. This question will be further discussed in the paper.

Some theorists have called postfordism a feminisation of labour, as opposite to the masculine form of fordism and connected this development to uncertainties and struggles surrounding masculinities.³⁹

4.3. Connell and Masculinity

Gender theory is an overarching theory that spans every subject of the humanities and social sciences. It contains many different positions and understandings of the world, the nature of

³⁶ Righi, p. 158

³⁷ M Hardt & A. Negri, *Empire*, First Harvard University Press, Cambridge Massachusetts, 2000 p. 53 and p. 256

³⁸ Hardt & Negri, p. 52-53

³⁹ C & M M a G *Men and Masculinities: Theory, Research and Social Practice*, Open University Press, Philadelphia, 2003, p. 25-27

gender, and society. Raewyn Connell's book *Masculinities* is the prime source of my gender theory and background.

In Judith Butler's classical book *Gender Trouble*⁴⁰ the idea that gender is not an essence, that there is no firm grounding for being a man or a woman is presented. What is male and female is a social construction for Butler and any attempts to draw a line between the biological and the social will necessarily create metaphysical essentialism. Gender is constantly policed and controlled through everyday actions and institutionalised power:

The notion that there might be a "truth" of sex, as Foucault ironically terms it, is produced precisely through the regulatory practices that generate coherent identities through the matrix of coherent gender norms.⁴¹

While I accept this understanding of gender as lacking an essential category a classical critique of this position is that bodies do matter for feminist and gender researchers. Pregnancy, violence, diseases, childhood and death are all of importance to understand the nature of our social reality. In this vein, human beings "embody the logic of social structures and transform them into possibilities of their own lives."⁴² Gender is one social structure which humans embody in everyday life.

Masculinity then is defined as an inherently social and historical concept. It is relational, above all to femininities but also to different forms of masculinity within itself (see the discussion below).⁴³

4.3.1. Forms of masculinities

The concept of hegemony, deriving from Antonio Gramsci's analysis of class relations, refers to the cultural dynamic by which a group claims and sustains a leading position in social life.⁴⁴

⁴⁰ J Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, Routledge, London, 1999

⁴¹ Butler, p. 23

⁴² H Rydström, *Embodying Morality: Growing up in Rural Northern Vietnam*, University of Hawai'i Press, Honolulu, 2003, p. 27

⁴³ Connell, p. 43

⁴⁴ Connell, p. 77

For Connell this term is used in relation to men who are successful and exalted in all of society. That is to say, the jet set businessman is the hegemonic form of masculinity in contemporary societies in the global north. Connell does however mention that it is in application that the term hegemonic masculinity gains its value.⁴⁵ There is not *a* working class masculinity or one fixed hegemonic form of masculinity;

It is, rather, the masculinity that occupies the hegemonic position in a given pattern of gender relations, a position always contestable.⁴⁶

It is in this sense that I am using hegemonic masculinity to analyse masculinities within the working class. Another analysis that might focus on all classes or focused more on relations between men and women might place hegemonic masculinity differently. However, I use this analysis of masculinities as entirely *within* the working class in Malmö and use Connell's theory as a pragmatic tool for understanding society.

Connell uses the terms subordinate, complicit and marginalised masculinities to map out other forms of relations for masculinities that relate to hegemonic positions. Marginalised masculinities are exemplified by working class men in relation to the bourgeoisie notions of hegemonic masculinity, or that of black masculinities within an American context. Complicit masculinities give up parts of the hegemonic position through personal negotiation with institutions, spouses or others. Finally, subordinate masculinities are masculinities that Connell exemplifies not only with gay men but also with other men who are stigmatised for being effeminate in one way or the other.⁴⁷

In my analysis I use the term hegemonic masculinity and marginalised masculinities primarily. Hegemonic masculinity is that which dominate the male working class and to which all else must relate. Marginalised masculinities are different, multiple working class masculinities that do not fit into the hegemonic image and which are oppressed and culturally excluded. Complicit masculinities and subordinate ones rarely fit into my analysis but are mentioned specifically in how they are used when they are relevant.

⁴⁵ Connell, p. 81

⁴⁶ Connell, p. 76

⁴⁷ Connell, p. 79-81

4.4. Racialisation and ethnicity

Feminist researchers have long called attention to the necessity of including theories of racialisation and ethnicity as part of gender research. Proponents of including explicit theories on ethnicity (and class) have pointed to the strengths of theoretical depth and empirical understanding that this correction provides.⁴⁸

The specific ways in which this is done has however created some controversy. In her article ‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color’ Kimberle Crenshaw presented an intersectional theory.⁴⁹ She used the metaphor of an intersection where the roads “Gender”, “Class”, “Race” but also “Colonialism” and others all intersected and crashed together. While this position of attempting to understand the interrelations of gender, class and ethnicity was powerful Butler delivered a convincing critique of the position. She highlights that the “etcetera” that follows lists of categories from intersectional analysts never seems to be complete, no matter how many adjectives are added.⁵⁰ This critique shows fundamental flaws in this way of thinking about the interrelation of categories and the ontology of the social world.

Another way of understanding the interrelation between different forms of power relations has been put forward by Anne McClintock:

I argue that race, gender, and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other; nor can they be simply yoked together retrospectively like armatures of Lego. Rather, they come into existence *in and through* relation to each other - if in contradictory and conflictual ways. In this sense, gender, race, and class, can be called articulated categories.⁵¹

I am following McClintock in using articulated categories rather than an intersectional approach. Particularly this relates how a racialised Other is created as linked together with labour in modern capitalism. Ethnicity is often one way of expressing class, such as in the investigations of Diana Mulinari and Anders Neergard on racialised union activists in Sweden

⁴⁸ For example Connell, p. 73

⁴⁹ K Crenshaw, ‘Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color’, *Stanford Law Review*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (Jul., 1991), pp. 1241-1299

⁵⁰ Butler, p. 182-183

⁵¹ A McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*, Routledge, London, 1995, p 5

who's "blackhead" (*svartskalle*) identity is a pan-ethnic, racialised articulation of class.⁵² Similarly my project of understanding hegemonic masculinity attempts to understand the gendered expression of masculinity through class.

4.5. The model worker

The concept of the model worker (*den skötsamme arbetaren*, sometimes translated as the 'steady worker') is important enough to merit its inclusion within the theoretical framework. In Swedish labour history the model worker is associated with a Social Democratic project of state building. The model worker is a historical, hegemonic form of worker who's focused on sobriety, organization, reform and negotiation and cleanliness. The model worker is a conception of moral good within the reformist labour movement. The model worker is also clearly male and heterosexual. In this thesis I use the concept to connect the historical background of dominating groups of workers with creations of hegemonic masculinity today⁵³.

4.6. Ontology

Ontological commitments order every research and study. What exists in the world and the interrelation between all existing things is central for a researcher's ability to describe and study. There is a difference between committing to an ontology of the social world and an ontology of the physical. While many poststructuralist thinkers reject that there is a 'true reality' they may at the same time subscribe to a position where there exists a particular social ontology with categories such as race and class dominates social reality⁵⁴.

Marxism builds on the idea that there is a real, physical world which affects the realm of the social even if human beings are ignorant about it. Labour changes the way society is organised, it changes the bodies of those who do the labour and it forms new social relations. Without commitment to a real world many of these themes would be impossible to access or

⁵² D Mulinari & A Neergard, "'Black skull' consciousness: the new Swedish working class," *Race & Class*, Vol 46, No 3, January 2005, pp. 55-72

⁵³ R Ambjörnsson, *Den skötsamme arbetaren*, 2nd edition Carlssons Bokförlag Stockholm, 1995, p. 72, p. 95

⁵⁴ Chouliaraki & Fairclough, p. 91

theorise. Likewise issues that have been at the heart of feminist research and activism such as contraception would be difficult to understand without a materialist conception of reality.⁵⁵

For a social ontology Connell's quote "Gender is a way in which social practice is ordered"⁵⁶ is important. The social world is onto-formative by human beings, that is to say, being is something that is produced through everyday practice and in turn organises these practices.⁵⁷ These ontologies do not exist by themselves in some entirely contingent state but are rather formed through long historical processes and dynamics of power. As Judith Butler has pointed out, gender is one of these daily practices, it that is done in everyday life rather than a static, constricting concept.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place* p. 228

⁵⁶ Connell, p. 71

⁵⁷ Connell, p. 65

⁵⁸ Butler, p. 173

5. Analysis

5.1. Housework

Housework has become a central component of contemporary feminist thinking. In the autonomist tradition Italian operaism merged with feminist considerations to develop an understanding of housework as being labour just as much as industrial production was. Italian operaist feminists carefully researched housework through Marxist categories and found that capitalism required housewives labour to function.⁵⁹ Housework is therefore a central place for feminist and postoperaist critiques and studies. In Sweden, Carin Holmberg has done research on couples that strive for equality and their view of and division of housework. In her book *Det kallas kärlek*⁶⁰ (“It’s called love”) her studies find that deep inequalities in housework still abound, even among couples striving for equality.

In my interviews and research in the archives this same idea of equality in the home pervades. Thomas says “I think we’re equal, with the weight (of greater deal of labour) on me.” Lars also claims that his housework is equally divided, but his son Martin will in a later interview claim that the household he grew up in was dominated by his mother in amount of domestic labour.

Martin further explains his own situation where he says that he and his girlfriend share domestic work. However, he soon adds that she is mostly in the home as of now due to working part time or because of longer periods of unemployment. This is echoed in several of the FRB files. Here the division of domestic work based on gender is interestingly put forward. The gendering of domestic work is occluded due to what appears to be individual circumstances for each woman, that is to say, staying in the home due to more precarious forms of labour.

This is then a naturalisation where gender becomes invisible in the actual practices of life. Holmberg argues that this invisibility is typical of gender ideologies when actual actions are

⁵⁹ Lotta Femminista ‘Introduction to the Debate’ in *Italian Feminist Thought: A Reader*, ed P Bono & S Kemp, p. 261-262

⁶⁰ C Holmberg, *Det kallas kärlek: En Socialpsykologisk Studie Om Kvinnors Underordning och Mäns Överordning Bland Unga Jämställda Par*, Norhaven A/S, Danmark, 2009

personalised.⁶¹ Furthermore my interviewees appeared to be unable to view their own gendered position in the household. Masculinity is the norm, it is unmarked and invisible, while everything else is created as the Other as relative to hegemonic masculinity through this process of naturalization.

The view on housework that the interviews and archives expressed is feminist-oriented in its gender equality aims. However, it is also heteronormative in the sense that it builds on the dichotomy of men and women in a nuclear family organisation of the household. This view on equality is tied to second-wave feminism and its successes within the Swedish welfare state.⁶² It is built on a conception that men and women are dichotomous, a position critiqued by Judith Butler as recreating essential, inherent traits in men and women.⁶³

Furthermore, in the FRB archives, housework serves to demarcate parents in a normative fashion. There are both squabbles about the father not doing his part of the housework in relationships and also to dirt and filth in the homes of both parents during the investigation process. The FRB does unannounced house calls in which they investigate the household status. Cleanliness is a mark of being a good parent. The FRB also searches for others features that might have cropped up in accusations during these investigations such as large amounts of open beer cans or lack of food for the child. Having a dirty house appears to suggest also being a bad parent and thus risking not gaining custody. For a male working class parent this means being considered a bad father and through that marginalised in one's masculinity. See the topic on upbringing and childhood for a further discussion on this.

In studies on the Swedish working class being clean and proper is an important feature for the model worker. It is part of a dichotomy where the model worker is clean, diplomacy and reform-oriented, collectivist and controlled in contrast to the dirty, uncontrollable, selfish and conflict-oriented⁶⁴. The model worker here is the historical model from which the modern hegemonic masculine worker develops in contrast to others. The contrasting ways of the interviewees contra the investigations of the FRB into people's homes suggests that housework is a dividing line in how they are creating marginalised and hegemonic masculinities.

⁶¹ Holmberg, p. 191

⁶² Holter, p. 37

⁶³ Butler, p. 43

⁶⁴ Ambjörnsson, p. 75, p. 92

5.2. Violence in the home

Violence in the home has historically been a key feature of gender research since at least the advent of second-wave feminism in the late 60's and 70's. Feminist research and activism have been important in implementing special laws against violence in the home as well as special government agencies or semi-state organizations to aid women who are subjects of violence⁶⁵. Gender researchers have focused on violence as a central component of masculinities, linking it to men's domination over women but also to achieving power over other men.⁶⁶

Violence is a common feature within the archives of the FRB and is often an important point within its investigations. Violence occurs not just between men assaulting women, but also women assaulting men and both women and men attacking children regardless of gender. However, the specific ways in which violence is understood is deeply gendered.

A major cause of violence which is shared by both genders is alcohol and drugs. Alcohol and drugs are linked, both in the interviews and in the archive material, with the other themes explored within this paper, and also general economic misery. Alcoholism and drug addiction is not just a cause of violence but can also be intertwined with an individual's other personal and social problems. This is a process that is similar to the issue of alcohol for the model worker where alcohol was not the main issue, but rather its social effects.⁶⁷ Stress is another common factor that is presented as producing violence for both men and women which in turn is related both to issues of handling children, to unemployment but also to stress at work.

Gendering of violence occurs in three different specific areas in which men and women are described differently in the archives. This is done both by perpetrators of violence as well as the victims of it. When giving information to the FRB, or when the FRB retrieves such information from police or court protocols, the affected people engage in a specific discourse on gendered violence. Custody-seeking parents use lawyers to write reports to the FRB which

⁶⁵ J Hearn, 'Men, Fathers and the State' in B Hobson (ed.) *Making Men Into Fathers: Men, Masculinities And The Social Politics Of Fatherhood*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002 p. 258-259

⁶⁶ See for example Beynon, p. 79; Haywood & Ghail, p. 109; Holter, p. 58-61

⁶⁷ Ambjörnsson, p. 75

use a language that is far removed from everyday speech. This is revealed by the difference that can be seen in the 90's and early 2000's files between personal, often hand-written letters and typed out letters that use a legal discourse. It is similar in personal emails from the later 2000's in comparisons with the formal wording of legal counsels correspondence. This legal discourse shapes ways of speaking about violence and gender. However, similar sorts of engagement with this discourse can be found in more informal letters as well.

The first difference between men and women's violence is jealousy. Many relations are reported as working fine after breaking up and custody is a small issue. However, as the woman begins to see new love interests harassment and violence from the man is sparked. The same violence or threat of violence does not seem to appear when it is the man in question meeting a new partner. The one case that contradicts this fact is a woman who has begun to harass her ex-husband and his new girlfriend.

The second difference is a psychological dimension. Women's violence and harassment of their ex-husbands and boyfriends is related to various psychological syndromes and illnesses. These are reported in interviews by both men and women and used both as a form of negotiation concerning the implication of one's own actions and as an accusation. "She's crazy" some men claim in the archives, implying that psychological issues make the woman in question unfit to receive custody. In response, some women's defence relies on the fact that they are getting psychological help or medicine which will make further actions of violence improbable.

The third is a description of men's rage and violence where the cause appears to be that it lies in men's nature. "He's got a temper" is a phrase repeated in the FRB archives when women describe their ex-husbands/boyfriends. It is something that is a part of men, an essential trait of their nature which demands no more explanation than that. Beynon calls this form of anger "expressive violence" and links it to class issues where working class men use violence as a tool to achieve power.⁶⁸

The second and third gendered causes are related. When violence occurs that is not due to stress or alcohol and drug problems the search for causes to violence finds different reasons.

⁶⁸ Beynon, p. 81-82

Men are simply in themselves violent (contrary to women), there has to be then an explanation for women's violence. Psychological explanations abound instead where mental issues are explained as the cause for women's violence, and through that implying that 'normal' women don't engage in violence.

Violence is thus inherently tied to masculinities. However, the particular uses of and ways in which violence is used is important. Using physical violence, particularly against women or children, is at odds with the discursive creation of the hegemonic worker's masculinity, it being related to self-control and coupled with a gender-aware equality ideology.⁶⁹ Of course, in many cases men might in every way be a part of this discourse at work and in public life but in private engage in violence in the home. When these acts of violence come out in public it can radically change the individual position of a person within the structure of masculinity.

Negotiations on masculinities concerning violence in the home are done through a process of either denial or confession. During many occasions common ways to grapple accusations are to explain that a physical coercion got out of hand, the child was supposed to be held still and the person didn't mean to cause harm or just outright denial. Negotiation is then handled around specifics in detailing what constitutes violence or not. Confession has a specific place in clearing moral debt. State agencies such as the FRB, but also others such as the courts, place a great emphasis on truth and submission to the agencies in question. This is done through being compelled by signing documents or swearing oaths to testify to speak the truth.

I argue that in the cases when these acts of violence come out which is described in the investigation process there is a renegotiation of the masculinities of specific workers. Their defences, such as speaking of stress, unemployment, poverty, drugs, alcohol and so on are used to hang onto hegemonic positions of masculinity. Promises of bettering oneself and making sacrifices on a personal level (giving up drinking, going into rehab, promising to always look after one's children well, never hit anyone again) can save the person in question from losing his hegemonic position in the power structure of the masculine working class. This might be considered as marginalised masculinities if they lose the negotiations or as complicit masculinities should they be able to negotiate and give up different things in order to maintain something of their past social position.

⁶⁹ Holter, p. 59-60

5.3. Parenting and upbringing

Lars grew up in a working class family and went straight, without prior education, into the construction business. Lars' describes his boyhood actions quite differently from the "lads" in Willis', who's engagement with non-conformism, violence and misogyny boys is not as present in his life.⁷⁰ Lars experiences are rather shaped by his membership in a working class culture dominated by the model worker as a moral ideal.

Lars describes a growing need for technical expertise in working class professions and his son Martin agrees with him. The need for longer education, in contrast to when Lars' first entered construction sites in the 60's, has changed the way the working class is brought up and what possibilities are available to it.

Martin, when asked about groups in his high school, mentions that young workers who come late to class, who don't care about their work, engage in violence, come to work late or skip school (which are similar to Willis' "lads") do not make it into the construction trade. Martin explains how many people who went to his construction program in high school dropped off because it was impossible for them to enter into the habits demanded of them. When asked about whom these workers are he says they are "People from Rosengård", a working class, racialised area in Malmö. Martin makes it clear that he blames segregation and parents who lack jobs of their own because of racism for this lack of ability to enter into the trade. As Lars has pointed out postfordist economies functions through a greater degree of skill and schooling.⁷¹ This requires greater educational institutions that also serve to weed out unwanted groups. In this sense upbringing and education forms the masculinities of young workers. The manner in which Martin describes this group is divorced from the way in which he himself lives his masculinity in everyday life. Though he clearly expresses solidarity this solidarity also shows his distance from these people. His own social norms and values are implicitly something that others should strive for. Martin is then engaged in creating the division between the hegemonic masculinity and the marginalised.

⁷⁰ Willis, *Learning to Labour*, p. 43, p. 11-12

⁷¹ T D Rutherford, 'From 'Sitting by Nellie' to the Classroom Factory? The Restructuring of Skills, Recruitment and Training in a South Wales Motor Components Plant', *International Journal Of Urban & Regional Research*, Vol 18, No 3, 1994, pp. 470-472

Linda McDowell attempts to retrace Paul Willis' work in modern day England. McDowell paints a complex picture of marginalised working class masculinities that attempt to deal with both changes within the economy and possibilities for work, as well as attempts to achieve domestic respectability.⁷² In comparison to McDowell's study my investigation relates several key points that differ. None of the interviewees have been involved in the same sort of activities that McDowell specifies as typical.

Jonas subscribes to a personal desire for diplomacy in personal relations; however, he has indulged in quite a bit of pranks and practical jokes in and out of workplaces and school. The idea of the strong and proud model worker is complicated by his actions, rather than just being a part of a fixed, firm historical figure it is rather a fluid concept which individuals move in and out of.

Fatherhood has also been analysed as a central component of masculinities. Helena Bergman and Barbara Hobson ties fatherhood, masculinity and class together:

The system of enforcing male breadwinning responsibility resonated in the male working-class ideology of "the steady worker." This ideology was taken up by reform-minded workers in order to distance themselves from the ways of rough unorganized workers. Policies which defined citizen norms, such as orderliness and independence, were filtered through the ideals of the organized working class, such as steadiness, propriety and responsibility – ideals that sought to make men into breadwinner fathers.⁷³

This historical development is reaffirmed by my research. In the FRB archives working class fathers are differentiated depending on their approach to fatherhood. A good father is active and interested in his children. He takes them out on trips, makes sure that they are well fed and that their interests in games or sports are met. Fatherhood also ties in with my housework theme in that a good father takes special care to have a clean and hygienic house and makes sure that the personal hygiene of his children is also up to standard. Fathers who are unable to provide sufficient interest in their children by not showing up on time to pick them up from school or by showing a lack of interest in their child's interests are deemed as bad parents. Bergman and Hobson links this development of a participatory fatherhood with top-down

⁷² McDowell, 'Masculine Discourses and Dissonances', pp. 115-116

⁷³ H Bergman & B Hobson, 'Compulsory Fatherhood: The Coding of Fatherhood In the Swedish Welfare State' in *Making Men Into Fathers: Men, Masculinities And The Social Politics Of Fatherhood*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2002 p. 95

government programs to boost gender equality in the 70's in Sweden. This program was championed by ads depicting famous body-builder men holding children close to reach working class men who were assumed to consider participatory fatherhood unmanly.⁷⁴

Other research on fatherhood and class in Sweden is Plantin's paper 'Different Classes, Different Fathers' where he mentions that 'middle class' (see my discussion on class in the theory section and the confusion surrounding the term "middle class"⁷⁵) fathers in Sweden see fatherhood as self-realization. This would be in contrast to working class men who perceive fatherhood as a biological destiny⁷⁶. This view, however, does not appear to be the case in either of my two sources of data. The interviews give no sense of this clear sense of destiny for working class men. Rather, they differ wildly in their views of fatherhood. For Jonas it might be conceivable if he ever "finds the right person" for example. The archives strengthen this picture; they also do not give a sense that ideas of fatherhood as biological fate are related to class.

We can however see that fatherhood is tied to the idea of the model (what Bergman and Hobson translates to 'steady worker'). As Bergman and Hobson puts it

Thus, the importance of the early Swedish welfare state in constructing legal and economic fatherhood was coupled to other hegemonic ideologies in the Social Democratic project.⁷⁷

The hegemonic masculinity in workers in Malmö comes out of this historical background. The way in which the upbringing of children is handled by men is then a central feature of constructing masculinities. It is both an activity of hegemonic masculine workers and also at the same time a production of state agencies like the FRB which regulate and evaluate fatherhood and thus also masculinities.

⁷⁴ Bergman & Hobson, p. 107

⁷⁵ It should be mentioned that Plantin also cites this issue as a possible weakness for his study, see p. 107

⁷⁶ Plantin, p. 106-107

⁷⁷ Bergman & Hobson, p. 106

5.4. Interactions with state institutions

This theme only details state institutions outside of educational institutions which are presented in the theme of workplace collectives.

In the FRB files all of the state interactions that the parties seeking custody have been engaged in are carefully reported. Police registers from both convictions in court and open investigations are always requested from the police and presented in the file. Social services interactions with a person are likewise always also included. These are implicitly a judge of character in the FRB:s attempts to understand if someone is a suitable custodian of a child or not. Used both as a defence of one's own character and as part of an attack against the other parent, interactions with the state are commonplace and used to demarcate the respectable and hegemonic from the deviant.

The interviewees have very little interaction with the state agencies. Martin explains that he has merely been to the unemployment office for a few short months. The others have similar experiences where they have only rarely and briefly been in contact with the state and often felt that the process was relatively easy. For a few of them close relations like girlfriends have had a more long-lasting connection to unemployment offices. Martin scoffs at the tips taught at the unemployment office.

You're not supposed to call on a Monday because then the manager is just in, and not on a Friday because then they're just thinking of the weekend. I mean, that's ridiculous, if they need someone they'll hire you whatever day it is.

In this quote we can see both his disdain for postfordist management of unemployment and Martin's personal distance from state interactions that concern other workers. This highlights the differences that set Martin and his position in the labour market apart from other factions of the working class who work under more precarious circumstances.⁷⁸

Material relating to issues of unemployment abounds in the FRB archive. Unemployment is not entirely negative; several people mention how their unemployment gives them more time

⁷⁸ Righi, p. 157

to spend with their child. However, unemployment also has other aspects. "I'm no unemployed migrant", one man says in his correspondence with the FRB. This quote highlights how class is articulated through ethnicity, expressed through the words "unemployed migrant." Belonging to this group carries negative connotations. Unemployment is expressed both as suggesting something about the character of a person and is related to having debts, to alcoholism and general poverty.

None of my interviewees have been unemployed for long periods at a time. Lars recalls how during the 60's he attempted to prolong his own unemployment to get some time off between jobs. He'd go into jobs that the unemployment office sent him to and be rude so that he would still get unemployment benefits for seeking the job but never have a chance of getting it. While his humorous story is tied to the stronger position of fordist labourers in the late 60's Jonas and Martin do not appear to have problems with employment in this day and age. Thomas has been unemployed to a greater extent. His choice of entering trade school was motivated in part due to avoiding unemployment in the precarious sectors of labour he was previously engaged in. Thomas is then clearly navigating socially within the working class to enter the same group as Jonas, Martin and Lars.

The ease which my respondents have both avoided state institutions and when necessary dealt with them under a limited time leaves them without any stigma or other problems. State agencies interact with state subjects when these subjects are not acting within the frameworks that the state sees as desirable. The FRB always attempts to reconcile the parties in their custody cases. It is when this is not possible that the investigation continues. The hegemonic position is to remain a free, unhindered subject that requires little aid or intervention from state agencies. While they do not lose their position we can consider the attempts for men to struggle within the state agencies for respectable positions as complicit masculinities. That is to say, men who are able to retain some status can neither be considered hegemonic nor marginalised but rather complicit; having to negotiate to retain a favourable position within the structure of masculinities.

My respondents appear to be unknowing of their own position in a gendered class structure as related to interactions with the state. Neither do they take note of gender and ethnicity in this context of unemployment, except when it is present as feminised or non-white. They are

unable to spot the relatively privileged position that their fraction of the class composition in contemporary Sweden occupies. Lars says in his interview that “I don’t think I’ve ever been unemployed for more than a few weeks.” This is quite different from their stories about their girlfriends and from the material of the FRB archives where unemployment and relations to social services take up a great deal of space for women, flexible labourers, and racialised groups of workers. Their hegemonic masculinity is interlinked with their material position of high wages and low unemployment, in short, their class composition. It is also clear that the gender and ethnicity of hegemonic masculinity cannot be discounted from the composition of their faction of the working class. Being Swedish and male divides the hegemonic position from the Other and the state’s biopolitics serves to demarcate this division that takes place in relation to society as a whole but specifically to the labour market.⁷⁹ The state disciplines and regulates workers that are not part of the hegemonic group: for male workers these workers belong to marginalised masculinities.⁸⁰

As feminist researchers have pointed out universalist positions are always marked by social categories and often mask a position of men.⁸¹ In a similar fashion, operaist theory has analysed how specific factions of workers in a given class composition associated with full-time employment and tied to the state dominate the labour movement.⁸² Hegemonic masculinity is then not just a position within masculinity in the working class but is also articulated through a privileged position of ethnicity (white/european) and gender (male). These facts appear to contradict the view of Hardt & Negri and their claims that the classical male industrial worker has lost their position of hegemony within the workers collective.⁸³

5.5. Workers collectives

My interviewees describe a particular way of life in their workplaces. This is exemplified through terms such as those used in Lars’ description of differences between different places he’s worked at:

⁷⁹ Connell, p. 85

⁸⁰ Connell, p. 75 and p. 100

⁸¹ For one such example, see the operaist feminist group Lotta Femminista, p. 261-262

⁸² S Wright, *Storming Heaven*, p. 128-130

⁸³ Hardt & Negri, p. 56

It was a lot more direct on the construction site, there you'd say what you thought and felt. You didn't think if you hurt anyone's feelings or so. In other places they were more delicate. Among the teachers I think that was the case. Even though they had the same situation I thought there was a lot of intrigue, a fucking lot of meetings and decisions and [...] Nothing like really happened. Just meeting after meeting and that. But in those elder care centers [...]. with nurses and nursing assistants who were working there. I don't think it was like that there. Even though there were only women, there was some smack talk. But it often came to an eruption and then they'd get in a fight for real (Laughter) but it wasn't as if they were going around hiding it like the teachers.

This quote highlights how Lars' views differences of class and gender in the workplace. The female workers still retain the same propensity for directness in the end, while the teachers (belonging to middle strata in the class system) intrigue is far from Lars' liking. For Martin this "directness" (as he calls it) at work is also a cornerstone of workplace collectives.

The construction site's job steward (*lagbas*), elected by the workplace (including non-unionised workers) serves as the coordinator for the workplace collective. The job steward speaks for the entire workplace collective in their relations to management. Martin explains how attempts to regulate and organise the labour process by the employers needs to be accepted by the steward. "It's often the job steward who pushes people on when the shop floor manager tries to (push people to work, my note)." he says. In this quote we can trace how Martin has experienced workers control of the labour process, but also the integration and disciplining of the work force by workers themselves when top-down capitalist control fails to function.⁸⁴

Jonas has experienced different sorts of workplace collectives, both those which were stronger and those which were weaker and more dysfunctional. Labouring for a short time at a municipal job he experienced workplace bullying directed towards one of his workmates. He describes the situation at that workplace as one where no-one spoke to anyone else and where no jokes were exchanged except for in private between him and a workplace mentor he found. It seems clear then that the social world of workplaces even in regards to similar age, ethnicity, class and gender can be quite different due to internal dynamics and the history of interaction in that site of work. Jonas non-confrontational approach is one way of handling these relations and navigating social space.

⁸⁴ S Wright, *Storming Heaven* p. 111

In Jonas current employment the situation is quite different. The workplace collective plays a wide variety of games in their site of work. Footballs made from rolled together tape are used for improvised football games, pranks are pulled between fellow workers and other forms of playing are common. Operaist theorising around these specific forms of actions on workplaces see them as forms of informal organization as workers break the monotony of labour, this is as a form of solidarity in breaking of rules in a superficially harmless process. Operaists have accentuated how this process is important in constituting internal solidarity in resisting and struggling in the workplace.⁸⁵ There is also a wide gap between the actual actions of Jonas and his self-image as a worker. While Jonas expresses some form of guilt or self-critique in his role as a worker the unresolved conflict between actions and ideology of work remains.

For Jonas his work as a temporary worker in his workplace meant that he “Really was the best worker there.” But “When I became a full-time employee I told some of my workmates jokingly ‘Now I’m full-time employed, now I can stop working!’” He could after receiving his full-time contract access the workers collective more fully and share in the collective strategising of day-to-day handling of managers and shop floor politics. Entering into a stronger workplace collective is thus bound together with forms of employment. Jonas now however believes that he is a worse worker due to his waning work ethic. It is meaningful that even as he gives up practicing a good work ethic he still considers it important.

Martin attempts to pull apprentices into the workplace collectives through becoming a mentor and passes on knowledge and class culture. Martin has worked with one and the same apprentice for years and the two have followed each other along from workplace to workplace. He expresses how he enjoys both teaching the trade but also the need for unionising and what rights one has at work. In doing this, Martin is then involved in a process of reproducing his faction of the working class political composition. That is to say, he teaches morals, attitudes and organisation. This is in turn connected to masculinity and to many of the themes brought up in this paper.

⁸⁵ Kämpa Tillsammans, *Tillsammans: Gemenskap Och Klasskamp På Samhällsfabrikens Golv*, Norhaven a/s, Danmark, 2009, p. 45-46

This division between temporary, flexible sorts of workers and the full-time employees is described in a similar way by Thomas's description of his work in day-care centres. Other forms of divisions between labourers exist too, however.

Sexism in the workplace is treated by my informants as mostly a thing of the past. Martin says that he's never "...noticed a degrading tone towards women, but on the other hand there's racism, that there is." Thomas however recalls a story from one of his female teachers who used to work as a painter about how she was called "little lady" (*lilla gumman*) by elder workers in her sites of employment. All my respondents believe that gender equality is slowly improving in workplaces and connects sexism to the past. This standpoint has been critiqued by Holter for serving as an ideology that covers up actual, present issues of gender.⁸⁶

The construction sector contains a large number of foreign workers and Martin describes racism towards these individuals. This also relates to issues of communication where language difference is a problem. Martin goes on to say: "They know they don't have the same conditions as us. It's just like they're a bit ashamed, because what they're doing is dumping wages." Racialised differences are then one of the ways in which the hegemonic position of workers is created. Though Martin attempts to unionise foreign workers too he remains in a position of power towards these groups. This division, based on ethnicity, articulates different formations of class where class is clearly racialised. That is to say, hegemonic masculinity is here created in the contrast to the racialised Other. Ethnicity is in this context formed in relation to an Other who's specific geographical background is less important. Martin never mentions exactly where "foreign labour power" comes from. Racialising the Other is not tied to a specific geographical location in this instance but rather follows Neergard and Diana Mulinari's point of a pan-ethnic racialised working class identity in contemporary Sweden.⁸⁷ This position of power for white, Swedish labourers is shaped both through masculinities and whiteness but also through his economical strength and security in comparison to foreign labourers. Lower wages and a more uncertain form of employment coupled with issues of language which makes organisation and formation of workers collectives between both Swedish and non-Swedish workers divide these groups into different factions of class. The dominant faction of well-paid and securely employed Swedish

⁸⁶ Holter, p. 128

⁸⁷ D Mulinari & A Neergard, p. 64

labourers takes the position of hegemonic masculinity and the racialised foreign worker the marginalised.

5.6. Unions

In autonomist theory unions have long been understood as not the classical instruments of workers power but as forms of capitalist control. Union's cooperation with management and employers both on local and national levels and their role in disciplining workers is important to autonomist theory.⁸⁸

Unions hold up a special place in the interviews. Lars lay out a historical background for how he views the development of the unions. He recalls how in the early 60's there would be regular checks on payment of union fee's (called *bokmönstring*) where union activists would make sure that everyone had paid their membership fees. Those who hadn't were forced to pay or be thrown out of the workplace. Lars explains how some people who did not pay just made a mistake, but some were simply quite poor and could not afford the fees. Payment, however, remained mandatory even for these workers. Lars describes a historical situation where unionism had a more active part in everyday life. Meetings of the unions were well-attended and functioned as a social gathering space as well as formal and informal organization. Good and bad employers were discussed, new sites where work were available was made public and so on. This changed slowly but surely in the end of the 60's due to what he connects to a developing bureaucratisation of the unions. This period also overlaps with the decline of fordism and into postfordism when the industrial working class is declining in the west along with its institutionalised power.⁸⁹

Unions are clearly related to full-time employment in the interviews with unionising closely tied with different forms of employment. This discussion is related to the discussion within the formation of workplace collectives theme and the entrance into workers collectives along with full employment. Both Thomas and Jonas were never unionised as temporary workers but Jonas shares a story similar to stories told both by Martin and Lars that an elder worker simply told him to become a member the day he became a full-time employee. Thomas, when asked, explains that he is sure he'll join the union once he also becomes employed full-time.

⁸⁸ Negri, p. 257

⁸⁹ Righi, p. 140, p. 143

Martin, having joined the union after they visited his high school when he was a teenager, has been unionised ever since (and is now in his early 30's). Martin has been a union president for a local union for five years and is engaged at present in organizing his new, unorganised workplace. "I think it's my duty to organize all workers." Martin's branch of employment in the construction sector has a high level of unionising, "almost everyone" he says. He explains how it is almost entirely male and Swedish.

The hegemonic position in masculinities is created then both as a result of material and organizational processes. This is between specific forms of employment, particularly that between full-time employees (in a 'fordist' fashion) in relation to that of flexible labourers. This is described by Paula Mulinari in her PhD dissertation *Maktens fantasier*⁹⁰ ("Fantasies of Power") which describes how the often racialised and female hotel and restaurant workers in Malmö, suffering from flexible and precarious forms of labour, experience unions. Their experiences are quite different than from my respondents. For the Hotel and Restaurant branch of the Swedish confederation of trade unions, unionising appears to be harder and less effective than for the construction branch. They also experience a less clear relation to their unions, often feeling as if they are not represented by them. This is related to issues of ethnicity and gender where union members who are part of these categories do not feel their experiences of work to be considered by the unions. It also relates to bureaucracy and the union's weakness in comparison to the employers.⁹¹ Martin and Lars engagement with unionising is tied together with their masculinity and differs from the description of the Hotel and Restaurant Workers. Jonas and Thomas however, while believing unionising to be good, are more non-committal and appear to share the stories from the H&R workers of feeling a distance to the unions.

This further complicates relating ethnicity and gender to class composition and disrupts the schema of political and technical class composition. Where would class and gender fit into such a model? In the above examples they appear to bridge both terms and be integral parts of expressing both political composition and being part of the technical composition of class. This suggests then that the division between political and technical might be better handled as a pragmatic division for research rather than reflecting an actual, ontological truth.

⁹¹ P Mulinari, *Maktens Fantasier* p. 271-272

5.7. Conflict management

Handling conflict through negotiation and cooperation is a main part both of the Swedish model and also in the history of the model worker. Rather than engage in industrial action or other collective mass actions the dominating strategy of the Swedish labour movement after the Second World War has been one of conflict management through negotiation. With this dominating form of handling social conflict being tied to the masculinities of the model worker it is important to investigate the creation of masculinities through it.⁹²

Conflicts occur both in relation to managers and/or companies but also within the workers collectives. Jonas has experienced both, as he recalls in his interview. His first site of employment at a garden centre was bought by a foreign company and the staff was laid off. He recalls the story with a shrug, and describes a situation where the workers collective was unable to resist, even with their shop floor manager on their side. The collective was quite small and did not exhibit the same cohesion as the workers collectives described by Martin below. Yet, Jonas was not defeated. Being laid off for him meant also new possibilities and is described by him as a change in life, a sort of kick-in-the-butt for him to develop in his life. It is easy to imagine lay-offs and cutbacks in the drama of the labour movement, periods of great sadness and defeat. Yet, it might just as well be a boon to individuals who have the personal resources to find new work.

Jonas would experience further conflicts in his other employment situations. As a temporary worker he experienced workplace bullying within the workers collective against an ex-drug addict who was driven back into addiction and was consequently fired. This form of structuring a group at a workplace through social control and by way of rumour-spreading and bullying has been investigated by operaist theorists examining how workers have used it towards managers and employers.⁹³ However, as in Martin's example, this strategy can also be used to push out unwanted elements, identified as such on the basis of hegemonic and marginalised masculinities, within workplace collectives. The case Martin describes is related to the subject of alcohol and drugs and specifically to the placement of drug addicts outside of

⁹² Kämpa Tillsammans, p. 234-235

⁹³ Kämpa Tillsammans, p. 56

the position of hegemonic masculinity. In this case bullying functions as a policing of masculine social borders in workplace collectives.

Martin has, in contrast to Jonas, been involved in more direct conflicts with managers and employers. A wage conflict broke out on one construction site he was working on and as he was the job steward he was tasked with organising the conflict against the employers, something he says he took particular care to do carefully and well with the support of the workers collective. After returning from vacation their collective found a “foreign work force” at their workplace and their wage demands still unmet. Martin and the other workers decided to quit. They left one worker who was retiring and one who was an apprentice at the time due to the consequences for retirement or further career these two would personally face if they also quit. It is of interest to both view the relation between the ethnically Swedish workers and the foreign workers (their nationality was never mentioned in the interview). It appears they were not able to involve this group of workers within their conflict, a division between ethnicities of workers that has been highlighted by other research on labour conflicts.⁹⁴ Ethnicity mediated through language is part of managing this conflict. It places workers in different factions through different class compositions where language barriers to joint organisation are tied to geography (wanting to eventually go back to the home country) and precarious forms of labour.

Leaving the construction site Martin would find himself and the other workers blacklisted. He was told of this fact by a manager at another company, who hired him even though they were forbidden to do so due to a need for them to have a concrete worker at their construction site. The ability to manage a conflict on the micro scale, such as quitting a job, is related to the hegemonic masculine faction’s technical composition on a macro scale. That is to say, because of their technical skill as workers, their position on the labour market and organisational and cultural cohesion these workers are able to successfully struggle. In Martin’s case, this struggle is carefully strategized and maintained within certain limits. It follows the above description of diplomacy and negotiation, even if in this case the negotiation failed. Here, the hegemonic creation of masculinities is closely tied to class composition through the structure of the labour market in which gender and ethnicity constitutes essential parts. Similarly, racialization processes have been described in the

⁹⁴ S Wright, *Storming Heaven* p. 133

workplace collective theme. Gender is linked similarly in the dominance of men as making up the class fraction that remains in a similar situation as classically fordist workers with an economical position that provides them with resources to struggle in specific ways. The specific cultures of forming collectives and developing formal and informal means of struggle and handling conflict are gendered through the position of their class fraction being dominated by men. Here then is another example of how class composition theory must take into account gender and ethnicity when doing research and analysing class composition.

5.8. Relations to work and working

“I’ve always considered work to be good” Thomas says when asked about how he views labour and working. My other respondents share in the same sentiment. “Work created man” Lars mentions. This way of viewing work as morally good is closely connected to a Lutheran work ethics historically expressed through the model worker in the Swedish labour movement. It should be noted that the expression around work is philosophical rather than produced in everyday speech. It marks the fact that work has a special place within the moral philosophy Thomas and Lars.

A main theoretical cornerstone of operaist and postoperaist theory has been a critique of work. Work in operaism is understood as always being capitalist work. It always produces value for capitalism and capital. This interpretation is quite different from (and hostile to) other socialist and Marxist interpretations of work, particularly in their Nordic and Social Democratic strands of thinking. Labour for these strands of thinking is often seen in the same manner as my respondents do: as something that is morally good and inherent to humankind. This analysis of labour is typically coupled with a view of the working class as in itself productive and good, contra the unproductive and useless bourgeoisie who do not actually contribute to society.⁹⁵ It is not inconceivable that my respondents ideology of work is in part inherited from these classical labour movements thoughts on work.

As operaists have shown however, work is a specific ideology of capitalism; expressed by unions and parties as the ideology of work functions to legitimate exploitation from state businesses and compliance to class compromises carried out by labour leaders⁹⁶. The view of

⁹⁵ Negri, p. 12

⁹⁶ Negri, p 14, p. 75

labour and employment found in the FRB archives strengthens this thesis. Working and having access to work, something that is also discussed vis-à-vis unemployment in the headline ‘interaction with state agencies’ is considered something that is good for the working class fathers seeking custody in their archives. Those who for one reason or another lack a connection to labour are connected to other social issues that are described in this thesis such as poverty, alcoholism and a lack of engagement in housework. Through these different factors a marginalised form of masculinity is created in the ideology of work,

In this sense identity and other relations with the idea of work are forms of biopolitics. Subjects are created by and policed through institutions throughout society. This includes the background of the workers movement, composed of parties and unions. This also relates to state institutions such as the FRB. In the quotes by Thomas and Lars we can see these subjects desire to work and thus also the desire capitalist work. The hegemonic form of masculinity is formed through this desire to work as a form of biopolitics. Their relative position of power compared to a precarious class composition of workers, as is laid out under the headlines of unions and interactions with the state, supports this ideology.⁹⁷ To maintain and construct this position this view of work is important. Connell understands masculinity as a collective concept where membership in a group imbues the individual with his masculinity⁹⁸. It is unlikely that Lars would be able to maintain the material position of having a ready access to work and a high wage without also the individual desire to work. This moral attitude to work is part of being a group member, along with the previously explored themes of sobriety and propriety. In comparison to Martin’s explanation of “people from Rosengård” who could not make it through trade school this is rather the opposite.

5.9. Gender relations and equality

In discussions on family and children the discourse on male and female role models or parenting is built on the idea that men and women are opposite and complementary, related to one another as binary opposites.⁹⁹ Interestingly this is done through a gender equality discourse in the vein of classical second wave feminism. Being non-gender equal is brought up in the archives as linked to a racialised Other, most often with Muslims or those of Arab

⁹⁷ Righi, p. 3

⁹⁸ Connell, p. 107

⁹⁹ Butler, p. 25

descent. This is not done by the FRB but rather by the parents as an accusation (most typically from the female parent). There are a few instances of an accused party defending themselves against the allegation, claiming that they're no backwards religious Muslims. The fact that they are defending themselves *within* the discourse of Muslims as linked to religiously based sexism strengthens the idea that there is a distinct view on the Muslim as the racialised, sexist Other.

Thomas explains how he during his work in a preschool, and before that during his time in high school where he was educated for care work, his tasks and the way in which people viewed him would be decided by his gender. He would be asked to do all heavy lifting in the preschool and lauded for being "good with kids" at his high school. He experienced this as being seen as different from the women workers around him due to his gender. This is one of the few instances where masculinity is clearly discussed as a gendered in the interviews. It is in discussing this work that Thomas brings up the fact that he believes that it is better if there are both male and female preschool teachers. When asked why he replies that it is better for children to have both male and female role models, because children require "both sides." Here Thomas is expressing something which teeters on the edge of both gender equality discourse and gender essentialism. On the one hand abolishing gendered work and on the other expressing the idea that women and men have essential properties which are required to be learned by children in their growing up process.

Questions about masculinities positioned the interviewees in complex ways. When asked about masculinity Jonas and Martin gave guarded answers, appearing to believe that the questions were negatively charged. These questions appeared to be an accusation, particularly in the light of the ideology of gender equality described above where men are pointed out as the powerful contra women who lack power and are victims of men.

Issues on gender relations and equality on a political level are often related by my interviewees to personal experiences. When asked what improvements can be made for equality Thomas explains how he thinks it is important to have more resources for day care centres and preschools. Martin brings up issues of pay discrimination when he relates the discussion to his workmates. "Everyone is against pay discrimination at my job." The most pressing issues are then both experienced personally and also mediated through other

associated individuals. This is done through a long line of constructing the gender equality ideology that is produced in Sweden.¹⁰⁰ That is to say, an ideology that might not always be reflected in everyday life but which on a discursive level creates normality, goals and hegemony. It is tied to state biopolitics and is fuelled by semi-state institutions such as unions. This ideology is a part of forming hegemonic masculinity. It is tied together with the other themes of this paper such as dividing housework equally and never using violence in close relations.

In much literature outside of the Nordic countries relating to masculinities a core concept is the “crisis of masculinities.”¹⁰¹ This crisis describes is a concept which describes how men in the western world turn towards reactionary politics in a situation where they risk losing their previous power in both the household and in politics. Furthermore, postfordist reorganization of the economy has pushed out most classically male industrial jobs and left the male breadwinner role increasingly empty¹⁰². The crisis of masculinity is attached to both personal feelings of bitterness and resentment towards women in general and towards feminism in particular¹⁰³.

While it is possible that this crisis exists within workers in Malmö it was not traceable in the material. Political worries (and hopes) rather relates to classically leftist-leaning ideas such as the deterioration of the welfare state and increasing class differences rather than to a loss of patriarchal power. This is also supported by research by Holter.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ Holter, p. 99

¹⁰¹ Beynon, p. 75-76

¹⁰² Beynon, p. 77

¹⁰³ S Faludi, *Stiffed* Random House London, 1999, p. 9

¹⁰⁴ Holter, p. 129 and p. 144

6. Conclusion

I began this paper with two research questions. “*How is hegemonic masculinity in the working class created in the Family Right’s Bureau archives and the four interviews of this paper?*” and “*How can gender and ethnicity fit into the class composition concept?*”

Through the paper I have distinguished a number of significant points relating to these two questions. By using two different sets of material and coding themes to be analysed through both of these together I have used discourse analysis in order to answer the research questions. Through using postoperaist and feminist theory I have investigated the complex relation between state biopolitics, subjectivity as well as class, gender and ethnicity.

I have moved between the two sets of material and used them as complementary to one another where the archive material has often expressed a view from or towards marginalised masculinities and the interviewees have been identified as hegemonic.

6.1. The Creation of Hegemonic Masculinity

Masculinity is in a constant process of rearticulation, of creation. In the interviews and in the archives the relation to other masculinities as well as women and racialised groups has cropped up time and time again in cases relating to the themes of unemployment, state agencies and conflict management to mention a few. Creation of hegemonic masculinity is thus something that happens in relation to the Other. This relation to the Other is expressed in different ways, for example through solidarity with other groups but also as hostility. The mention of being an “unemployed migrant” expresses the opposite of solidarity, yet, they are both constitutive of the same process.

Through the paper I have traced the significance of the historical concept of the model worker as a backdrop to how the material is expressed. I have showcased the attempts to grapple with and negotiate around questions of sobriety and propriety which are expressed with and through hegemonic masculinity. For example, in the question of violence in the home there are attempts to negotiate around actions such as violence against family members which in

turn can decide individual's movement to complicit or marginalised masculinities away from hegemonic positions.

My interviewees express masculinity as something which is lived and embodied and which forms an important part of navigating social space. This is less evident in the archives, perhaps due to their different form of material. Masculinity can articulate class or ethnicity, and vice versa. Masculinity can both be something which is apparent at certain moments and entirely occluded at others. Masculinity appears here as always in relation to other categories, particularly class, and relates to creating cultures around conflicts and struggles and how these should be organised and waged.

Furthermore, the importance of biopolitics has become evident through the relation between state agencies and the interviewees as well as through the archives. The individual stories interrogated through both sets of material are shaped by state biopolitics. This is for example evident in questions on participatory fatherhood where state campaigns have fostered a specific understanding of what being a good father is. Biopolitics serves both to inform specific subjectivities and also to create and police boundaries, which are then also reinforced and used freely and actively by people themselves.

In discussions on masculinity the concept of crisis of masculinity has been raised. Through the material I have gone through I have found little to no evidence to suggest that the crisis exists in my material. Rather, the manner in which many of my interviewees are concerned about gender as well as other dynamics of power in the social world expresses a classically leftist position, often informed by Swedish gender equality policies. These policies take the form of biopolitics in that they also divide people according to moral standards. This relates to being a good, participatory father and to not being a sexist racialised Other. This serves as one of the ways in which hegemonic masculinities are divorced from marginalised ones.

Masculinity is part of articulating class, and vice versa. Masculinity concepts are then a vital part of organisation, struggle and mediation of conflicts in daily life, in the work place and in the home. It is both a resource and an embodiment of particular strategies and attitudes. It is something which is lived by individuals.

Taken together the findings of this paper problematize Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's argument that the classically industrial worker has lost its hegemony within the proletariat. Rather, in this instance, the connections between hegemonic masculinity and class composition suggest that respectability and hegemony is unchanged. Moral values and social status remains with the historical model of the model worker. Working hard, being Swedish/white, being male, living in a good heterosexual relationship, not being unemployed, not being violent, disorderly or drunk still favours this type of worker against others in the material I have worked with.

6.2. Gender, Ethnicity and Class

Through the paper I have discussed the concept of class composition and it's relation to gender and ethnicity. Class composition is a powerful tool to understand nuances within class and the development of class in late capitalism. In this paper I have shown how hegemonic masculinity is clearly tied to class composition. This relates to both above examples of mediating conflict and struggle, but also to differences within vital themes such as unemployment and relation to state agencies where differences between interviewees, the archive material and other research (such as that of P. Mulinari) highlights masculinity and class factions.

Class composition articulates masculinity (and gender overall) in its various forms (hegemonic, marginalised, etc.) as well as ethnicity. The distinction between political and technical composition has been shown in the paper as problematic when related to gender and ethnicity as parts of composing and articulating class. It is difficult to incorporate ethnicity and gender within the schema as they are related to both technical and political composition. Gender can be a part of articulating class organisation and struggle, but it can also be a part of understanding why some groups have lower wages, different working conditions and different modes of work. However, if political and technical composition is handled not as an ontological fact of social reality but rather as a pragmatic sociological tool for understanding class then the concept can still be retained to include an analysis based on articulated categories of gender and ethnicity. Gender and ethnicity can then be placed in both categories, overlapping and encompassing both and articulating them differently in specific situations

and places.

6.3. Concluding Remarks

The discussions within this paper offer some new prospects for future research. The field of masculinity studies as well as that of studies on class can be informed by the use of the class composition concept, coupled with articulated categories of gender and ethnicity. Being a relatively unexplored field this opens up for the possibility to do both quantitative and qualitative empirical research or to develop theoretical models further. Hegemonic and marginalised masculinities as concepts used within the working class, particularly in the Nordic countries, can be further explored and tested to attempt to generalise or contradict the findings within this paper. Moreover, analysis on different and multiple marginalised masculinities could be explored with relation to the idea of a crisis of masculinities, to housework or to unemployment. The field in general is both inspired by similar studies on the working class but remains open due to new theoretical avenues and material developments within capitalism which offers a vast range of possibilities for scholars.

Therefore, in short hegemonic masculinity is created in the material of this paper in relation to the Other in terms of other masculinities, to women and to the racialised Other. It is tied together with economic power and status – class composition - and built on the historical conception of the model worker. Furthermore, biopolitics is tied closely to masculinities and polices borders between hegemonic and marginalised. Masculinities is part of individuals navigation of the social world which they are actively involved in producing.

7. References

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