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POWER, POVERTY AND INEQUALITY

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Towards a Pedagogy for the Powerful*

Andrea Cornwall

Abstract Development organisations have learnt to talk the talk on ‘gender’. But in many if not most organisations male privilege and patriarchal attitudes and behaviour persist. This article explores techniques that can be used to make visible some of the dynamics of gendered power in organisations, as part of strategies for changing the scene in the everyday work settings in which these dynamics create obstacles for the enjoyment of greater equality and respect. It draws on anthropological and participatory methods borrowed, adapted and developed in a range of contexts, from action research on organisational culture to the delivery of ‘gender training’. Framed by bell hooks’ observation that patriarchy is a pernicious and life-threatening social disease that affects us all, the article offers some reflections on interventions aimed at changing the gender order.

Keywords: power, patriarchy, training, masculinity, gender, change.

Development’s gender equality effort has been targeted at people living economically precarious lives, rather than at changing those who inhabit positions of power and privilege, including many of us who work in and for development organisations. This article shifts the gaze and asks: what can we do to change our own mindsets and bring about change in our own workplaces? In it, I suggest that if we are to make development work more gender equitable, then we need to start with our own lives, and our own contributions to and investments in patriarchy. If we were to begin to acknowledge our own privilege and recognise our agency and responsibility, we would be in a better position to change the games of gendered power that take place all around us in our own institutions. This article is about using structured interventions and strategic opportunities to disrupt everyday organisational life to do that work of making change happen.

Gender training was for many years about frameworks and also, often, about ways of ordering the world that assigned people and things to categories rather than looking at culture, agency and relationships. Gender theory has gone beyond the old binaries: we now have much more nuanced ways of thinking about power. Robert Chambers (pers. comm.)

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has called, after Paulo Freire's (1972) *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, for a 'pedagogy of the non-oppressed'. In this article, I explore what a 'pedagogy for the powerful' might include. To do this, I work with the concept of patriarchy: one that some would see as belonging almost to another era, associating the word with a kind of radical feminism that gets lampooned in the media. But as Jerker Edström (2014) and colleagues demonstrate, it does some very useful work, precisely because it provides us with a way of framing an issue that affects everyone, even those who would seem to benefit most from it.

What makes the word 'patriarchy' so useful is that it describes something that affects people of all genders. It speaks to us all. It describes the embodiment and sustenance of unjust power, the production and maintenance of unfair hierarchies. Men are also its victims. And they also stand to benefit from ending patriarchy. Indeed, bell hooks argues that for men, 'patriarchy is the single most life-threatening social disease assaulting the male body and spirit in our nation' (2004: 17). As such, it is a powerful concept with which to speak about power. All the more pressing, we might imagine, that we find ways to rid our lives and our societies of patriarchy. And yet, she observes:

[M]ost men do not use the word 'patriarchy' in everyday life. Most men never think about patriarchy – what it means, how it is created and sustained. Many men in our nation would not be able to spell the word or pronounce it correctly. The word 'patriarchy' just is not a part of their normal everyday thought or speech. Men who have heard and know the word usually associate it with women's liberation, with feminism, and therefore dismiss it as irrelevant to their own experiences (*ibid.*).

How might we work with the concept of patriarchy to shift power relations? Most men and some women benefit from patriarchy without ever consciously realising it. Like white privilege, patriarchal privilege is often invisible to those who enjoy its benefits. But, as bell hooks points out, most men neither make use of the word 'patriarchy' nor think about what it means, how it affects them and the part they may play – wittingly or unwittingly – in sustaining it. Women too may never think through what it means for their own lives, and the lives of their significant others, let alone the extent to which they may be implicated in reproducing it.

Making patriarchal values, attitudes, practices and social arrangements visible is, then, a first step in raising awareness of its costs as well as the ways in which the short-term benefits it offers men, what Connell (1995) terms the 'patriarchal dividend', wreak longer-term consequences. This process needs to address not only the normative attachments that people may have to particular ways of thinking and doing, but the materiality of power: the structural violence that derives from patriarchal social arrangements, the material inequities that are produced and sustained by patriarchal ideals, beliefs and practices.

This article shares some ideas about how to begin to do this. It builds on experiments in training largely hostile or indifferent civil servants and applied researchers in gender equality in the workplace and the field, and experiences of working with organisations who are keen to address their own internal culture, including a recent experience of working with a small London-based international non-governmental organisation (NGO) to explore questions of masculinity in their everyday working environment.¹ And it grows out of a sense that the tools and pedagogical practices used for gender training are not sufficient to engage men in confronting and transforming their own male privilege, questioning their own contributions to sustaining male supremacy and bringing the hazards of patriarchy into clearer view.

In offering these tools for use in gender training and the university classrooms where those who will play a future role in challenging or sustaining patriarchy in their organisations are trained, my aim is to make a practical contribution to the reflections on power and social change that are the focus of this *IDS Bulletin*.

1 Making visible patriarchal practices of power

One of the leading figures in the Men and Masculinities field, Michael Kimmel, is quoted by Christine Beasley as saying that masculinity is invariably invisible in shaping social relations, shrouded in its constitution as the universal, the neutral: ‘its invisibility bespeaks its privilege’ (Beasley 2008: 86). What may be invisible to a straight white North American man of a certain age, however, is certainly not out of view to the women or indeed to the men of colour or queer men in spaces that such men frequent. What *we* can see is the performativity of particular dominant variants of masculinity coupled with structural power. In many everyday institutional contexts in the UK, for example, utterances that come out of the mouths of white, tall, upper-/middle-class, able-bodied, straight men have perlocutionary effects: that is, because of the structural advantages enjoyed by many such men, their speech acts are in themselves persuasive and authoritative, inspiring people to take notice and to act. These structural power effects reflect and refract societal power structures.

What is needed to make this play of patriarchy and privilege visible to those who cannot otherwise grasp or see it? As Nancy Lindisfarne and I argued in *Dislocating Masculinity* (Cornwall and Lindisfarne 1994), to get to grips with masculinity we need to begin to denaturalise the associations that are often made between men, masculinity and power, and bring into clearer view what is going on in terms of power. Making visible is a first step in this process: brought into view, these dynamics can form the basis for critical analysis. To do this, we need to ask questions. What makes a man a man? Are only men masculine? When a man is told to ‘be a man’, what does this involve and what effects does it have, including on others? What do men have in common, and how are these commonalities articulated and experienced? If a man fails to live up to masculine ideals, what does this mean for how he is seen by other men and by women?

According to Allan Johnson, the author of *The Gender Knot: Unraveling our Patriarchal Legacy*, 'a society is patriarchal to the degree to which it promotes male privilege by being *male dominated, male identified and male centred*' (2005: 5, author's emphasis). Recent work by Jerker Edström (2014) and colleagues takes the concept of patriarchy and seeks to 'undress' it, and lay bare male privilege and structural relations of power. The kinds of methods described in this article can be tools for pursuing this agenda in small ways, in training and in work within organisations. They can be stepping stones to developing alternative visions and changing practices, coupling institutional incentives with the design of strategies for accountability.

How do we do this? The way we experience the world and what catches our gaze depends on our positionality and our conceptual, political and intellectual preoccupations (Campbell 2013). The techniques I draw on in this article offer a way of creating an account of 'what is' that allows others to inspect it, to reflect on how it matches their own version, and to bring into view details that may ordinarily evade them. In this way, these methods can be used to create artefacts that can be shared, reflected on and subjected to critical analysis as part of the pedagogic process. As such, they offer a tool for those who would subvert or disrupt the dominant gender order and provoke people to begin to 'see' what is ordinarily out of view. While recognising that bringing about changes in power relations and structures calls for more than changing the ways in which we see ourselves and our worlds, I am also a passionate believer in the power of critical consciousness-raising as part of broader processes of social change.

In what follows, I identify a number of exercises that can be used to engage people in seeing that which they might otherwise fail to notice. I explore two kinds of techniques: those using simple visual devices to unpack and critically reflect on our assumptions, identities and experiences; and those that explore the dynamics of power in everyday life, whether in a workplace or institutional setting or out on the street, as a way of working on what is needed to shift power relations. They can be used to 'unpick' patriarchal attitudes and behaviour, and to explore at personal, interpersonal and societal levels what sustains, nurtures and disrupts it. This can then become a basis for strategies to counter the pernicious social disease that is patriarchy.

2 Identities

2.1 Deconstructing gender

Anthropological practice consists of a process of making strange that which we take for granted, generally through close description that surfaces the 'rules' that appear to underlie social interaction in any given cultural context. Part of this process is to identify and dismantle our assumptions. We might, for example, take words or concepts that we might think mean the same thing to everyone and look at the variety of ways in which they might be understood. Or we might take some kind of belief or moral value, and look at how we relate to it, and

what differences between our perspectives on it might mean. These principles can be translated into a series of visualisation exercises to use with groups, that begin to make gender visible. I prefer using them as a sequence, but they can be used as standalone exercises.

The first is to take the words ‘man’, ‘masculine’, ‘woman’, ‘feminine’. Split the group into four, give each group one of these words, blue or black marker pens and a large piece of paper, and ask each group to fill the paper with all the associations they have with these words. Sometimes I ask groups to do this without speaking; this can have a democratising effect on the group’s process. But mostly I encourage people to put down what comes into their heads first, then reflect, explore, discuss, add more words, fill up the page. I then give each group a red pen. I ask them to circle *only* those terms that could never be used for the opposite sex/gender. Quickly the groups come to realise that they’re left only with relationship-words and the occasional body part, and even these start to be contested once gender is deconstructed and the conversation moves beyond the gender binary. This is a powerful exercise in uncoupling the kind of associations that may be carried about men’s superior strength or about women being ‘emotional’. It is also a useful exercise with which to begin to address transphobic, homophobic or heteronormative attitudes.

Once we have dislodged some of those associations, the next step is to move on to thinking about where we get our ideas about men and women, and what these ideas do to and for us. Again, use four large sheets of paper, with ‘men should...’, ‘men shouldn’t...’, ‘women should...’ and ‘women shouldn’t...’ written on them. This time put the sheets of paper on the floor. Scatter marker pens around them. Then invite the group to scribble on them any messages they have received about what men and women should or shouldn’t do, positive or negative, from any source – the media, school, parents, religious institutions, work or leisure activities and so on. Quickly the sheets fill up. The process that follows is the nub of this exercise.

I generally begin by asking someone to read out the ‘women shouldn’t...’ list; hearing the injunctions one after the next produces more powerful an effect than simply seeing them. I ask the women: how does this make you feel? Often the answer is angry, restricted, suppressed. Then someone reads the ‘women should...’ list and the story of being limited continues and intensifies. I then ask someone to hold ‘men shouldn’t...’ next to ‘women should’: sometimes, there is a direct mirror image. I ask again: how does this make you feel? And then I ask a woman, if there is one in the group, to read out ‘men should...’. It is a list full of obligation, a heavy-hearted list that regales men with their responsibilities, the things that they are supposed to be competent at, the burdens that they are expected to carry, as well as assumptions about sexual desires and practices that some men may find oppressive rather than sexually exciting, such as always wanting sex and always being able to ‘perform’. Reflect together on the impact of this list on men, beginning with the women and moving onto the men. This prompts people to begin to

recognise the negative effects of patriarchy on men, and to begin to make some of the connections between societal injunctions and the injuries that patriarchy inflicts on men as well as on women.

A last exercise to add to this sequence is to split the group in two, give them a pile of index cards and ask them to generate as many words for types of men and women as they can – any words that come to mind, insults, stereotypes, the lot. In a multicultural group, ask people to explain their words. This can provoke some interesting discussions, as people compare notes and surface stereotypes. Then lay all the cards out on the floor, and get the group to pick out unlikely pairs and think about the power relations between them. This works on a number of levels. It puts paid to a simple narrative of male dominance and female subordination. It helps reveal power dynamics between men, and between women. Examining multiple masculinities is an entry point from which to look at the way in which particular masculine styles come to be aspired to or serve as the benchmarks against which men are taken to task, and the ways in which they come to represent idealised forms of what Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) famously termed 'hegemonic masculinity'. And it also helps make some important points about the diversity of gender expressions and the power of heteronormativity.

2.2 Gender lines

So naturalised are our assumptions about gender and power, that we might fail to recognise the ways in which we have opted for particular gender expressions and identities in our own lives, or the effects that particular experiences have had in shaping our gender. This exercise seeks to provide resources for critical reflection on how we come to be gendered, and combines the elements of visualisation and storytelling that are common to many of the techniques described in this article. It builds on an exercise that is widely used in popular education called Rivers of Life.

Using a large piece of paper, ask participants to create a visual representation of their 'gender journey' through life, starting at birth. This could be imagined as a river, a road, stepping stones representing key incidents or turning points, or simply a line that represents high and low points. Explain that the purpose of the exercise is to reflect on how we became who we are today, and to draw out those experiences that played a part in shaping our gender at different points in our lives. It might be when people came up against a gender boundary: for example, when a girl was stopped from playing football or a boy was prevented from having a doll. It might be when choices were made about gender expression that changed people's social experiences – for example, cutting long hair, wearing or choosing not to wear make-up. Encourage participants to use pictures rather than words; the use of visual symbols offers a way of reaching beyond the verbal into the associations that come with particular images. People always hesitate, worrying about not being able to draw: make it easier for them by showing them an example of your own, with stick figures and roughly drawn images.

As there is so much to be gained from sharing these gender lines, I tend to run this so that people have time to draw – at least 20 minutes – and to reflect on their drawing with a person of their choice, just to create some intimate reflective space before sharing with the group. I tell people at the outset that we will be sharing our pictures, and invite anyone who does not feel comfortable for any reason to feel free to step out of the exercise. There is a range of reasons why people might not feel comfortable doing this exercise, and it is vital that a safe space is created for people to opt out. Something to emphasise in processing the exercise is the power of the choices we make in performing our gender and the power of the constraint that society places on us at different points in our lives. Patriarchy depends on sharply drawn gender lines: many of us have experienced the policing effects of the gender binary, and also the ways in which our own presentations of gender enable us to conform with or contest dominant ideas about what is ‘masculine’ or ‘feminine’. Build on this to explore the power effects of these forms of enforcement and resistance. For those who have not reflected on their gender identity at all, this can be a powerful exercise as it not only surfaces the normative pressures to conform that we all experience, but also what emerge as choices that we make – even if we are not fully aware of it – whether or not to comply with societal expectations of us.

2.3 The wheel of privilege

We might all know that we enjoy privilege by virtue of our race, our class, or our gender – and other dimensions of difference – but naming and reflecting on that privilege, and hearing about the experiences of those who experience discrimination or privileges we don’t have access to, is an important first step towards acknowledging and dismantling some of its effects. Using a simple tool like this wheel of privilege helps open up a conversation about privilege and a space for critical reflection. It is also a good way to introduce the complexities of intersectional difference, and to get beyond simplistic thinking about gender and power.

Start by getting people to list all the privileges that might be enjoyed by people in the room. These may be gender, class, race, age, able-bodiedness, straightness, membership of the dominant religion in that society, fluency in the first language that is the medium for the discussion. Arrive at eight dimensions of difference. Give everyone a piece of A4 paper and ask them to draw a large circle, and to draw lines across the circle that cut it into eight quadrants. Then ask them to draw another circle under the rim of the circle, with enough space to use the gap between the two circles to give each quadrant a label. Demonstrate this on a flip chart, assigning labels to each of the eight quadrants and asking the group to copy the diagram. Explain that they should write in at the centre of the circle those words that best represent the most privileged or powerful position – for example, in the ‘gender’ quadrant, ‘male’ might be at the centre, ‘female’ may be somewhere closer to the rim and ‘transgender’ might be closest to the rim.

Ask them to put a cross on each quadrant that best describes their identity: the further away from the centre their cross is, the less privileged they feel. Then ask them to draw lines joining them up. The closer the lines are to the middle, the more privilege people enjoy. People may never have experienced discrimination, but have also never really reflected on the privilege that has insulated them from this. Ask them to share their wheels with their neighbours and reflect on experiences where they felt excluded or discriminated against, and those in which they felt aware of their privilege. Then put all the wheels on the floor or on a large table, and convene the group to reflect on the exercise. Some may share their own experiences and reactions. Others may make more general observations. Use this as an opportunity to bring the discussion towards exploring the structures and relations of power that sustain privilege, and on the effects that privilege can have on those whose identities place them at the 'rim' of the power wheel.

The way this exercise works is not just by making the personal political. It is also by enabling people to 'see' the effects of any form of exclusion or discrimination on others, even when it may not have been something they themselves have ever experienced. For these and other reasons, it can be a very productive way of provoking reflection on what it might feel like to be excluded or discriminated against on the basis of gender – and for working from there back to thinking about how patriarchal power in institutions works with and reinforces these dynamics.

3 Interactions

3.1 Interaction diagramming

This technique is a simple visualisation of interactions in everyday work encounters involving a number of people of different genders, such as a meeting. It offers the means of making a map of the visible dynamics of power in the room; what it doesn't allow us to 'see' is what happens before and after the meeting, in which the exercise of power may be further consolidated. It is useful not only for understanding power, but also in enabling people to recognise aspects of their behaviour that may be otherwise hidden from them.

To practice this technique, take a piece of paper and sketch out on it a rough map of who is in the room, putting a cross or other symbol for each person. Then every time someone speaks, circle their symbol. Look at who they are directing their speech towards, and draw an arrow in that direction. You might also time their interventions. You can also use different thicknesses of lines or another code to indicate short and long speech acts. Use a symbol to record attempts to speak that were interrupted or aborted. Keep recording these interactions for the duration of the meeting. What you end up with is a schematic map of crosses that gives enough detail for people to recognise themselves, but is not sufficiently precise for them to be so readily identified by others. The result is a diagram that provides a crude device for mapping the occupancy of airtime and the directionality of interaction.

Displaying the diagram after a meeting ends can be a wake-up call to those who might not be aware of the extent to which they took up space, interrupted, failed to engage eye contact and otherwise dominated proceedings. It can be used more overtly to hold people to account, or less directly to display the interactions and gently encourage reflection. I've seen interaction diagrams used as a monitoring device, pinned up each day over the course of a three-day meeting, as a reminder to those in the room to think about who isn't being heard and whose voices dominate. Getting people to record their own interaction diagrams is also a technique that can keep the more dominant or garrulous occupied; and it can in itself act as a prompt to think about the frequency or length of interventions. Repeated use of this technique can, over time, serve as a means of encouraging reflexivity; whether this leads to changes in behaviour is, of course, conditional on the capacity of the individuals involved to act upon what they may be coming to recognise in themselves and others, and is not by any means guaranteed.

3.2 Telling tales

The process of crafting and sharing stories about everyday experiences can be a powerful way to bring into view the exercise of patriarchal privilege in an organisational setting. As such, stories can be used both as a way of cultivating attention, and as a way of generating awareness. Stories written and circulated, collated, broadcast and shared can be a medium through which episodes from institutional life can be narrated from perspectives that the powerful may never have even considered. The trick, of course, is to find a way that they become reading or listening matter. Setting a story-writing task, coupled with close observation, as an activity to complete between training sessions is one way of integrating it into training or other work with organisations on issues of gender and power. The organisation Gender at Work has used this to powerful effect (Rao *et al.* 2015).

I realised through experimenting with storytelling that there was some mileage in other acts of narration. I had emerged from one particularly difficult meeting steaming with annoyance. I turned to one of my closest and most sensitive male colleagues and began sounding off. I recounted the scene of the men in the corner muttering to each other every time a female colleague of ours began speaking and the frequency with which she was interrupted and cut out of the conversation. I bemoaned the tendency of another colleague to roll back into his chair in what I'd come to call 'classic patriarch pose' – hands behind or on top of his head, crotch thrust forward. And I drew his attention to the man who looked away every time there was any whiff of a prospect that he might be called upon to volunteer any of his time for any of the tasks the group needed to get done. He was amazed. He said he just hadn't noticed. But in the very next meeting, it was his intervention that stopped a dominator in his tracks, and that resulted in the glimmer of the beginning of an end to those frequent interruptions.

I narrated another meeting to another sympathetic male colleague, telling him a story that began long before we entered the room and continued

long afterwards, and included sartorial choices and covert pre-meeting phone calls to lobby so that I stood a chance of being heard if only by my points being made by a man. 'You do all this before a meeting?' he said. 'I just turn up.' He went on to comment on never having had the occasion to think about any of this. And then he began to reflect on what it meant to just turn up. I started using these acts of narration as a way of speaking about gender dynamics: not in generalities, but in stories from real life, ideally from shared experience, that could not only highlight the specifics, but also signal what worked – and what didn't – to change the dynamics. One of the practices that has come out of this is the deliberate use of a version of the 'patriarchal echo' to affirm a woman speaker, in a playful reversal of 'Miss Triggs' – the subject of a famous *Punch* cartoon that features a boardroom of men with a single woman, and the chair saying 'That's an excellent point, Miss Triggs. Now would one of the men here like to make it?' I came to deploy this 'echo' as a way to remind the room of the point made by the woman, bouncing it back into the discussion when the woman is otherwise being ignored. I recently read of this technique being used in the White House to 'amplify' the voices of women.

Told as stories, narrated from the perspective of the odd ones out – be they female, trans* or the kind of man who is persistently marginalised because they don't conform to dominant masculine styles – these kinds of episodes can be eye-openers to the men who take for granted the right to speak and be heard in this kind of arena. Reading the power dynamics of the room comes to be a practice that invites acts of resistance from those concerned to change those dynamics. Once men who 'just turn up' begin to realise what is going on in the play of power and privilege in the room, their interventions can help to change the dynamics, even and sometimes especially if it involves simply staying silent.

3.3 Dramatic interventions

Mention the word 'drama' and there is often a nervous current that runs around the room, as people prepare their excuses. 'Role play' is less threatening. 'Making up a little one-minute skit' is another way of putting it. Whatever language fits the setting, there is much that can be done by acting out patriarchal behaviour and looking for points of intervention. Augusto Boal and his Centre for the Theatre of the Oppressed in Rio developed a powerful array of theatre practices, from Forum Theatre to the Rainbow of Desire, to Legislative Theatre. I have used a combination of these practices to work with patriarchy in the workplace, as part of 'gender' and 'equality and diversity' training. It has worked equally well no matter what it is called.

Ask people to form a pair and discuss an experience in the workplace where they saw or experienced problematic patriarchal attitudes or behaviour. This can be in itself an interesting challenge: this exercise works best sequenced after a series of the earlier exercises. Then get them to join up with another pair, share their stories, and make up a version that has some of the elements of their original stories in it and that works as a credible, real-life story but isn't exactly the same

as anyone's individual story. That bit is important. This is not therapy. It's important to spell out the purpose of the exercise: for us to identify and work with some of the 'deep culture' in an organisation, surface it, inspect it, consider strategies for change and think about what we, as individuals and collectively, can do about it.

The small groups then rehearse their skits, and perform them one by one. With some of the skits, there are clear opportunities to intervene and change the action. I ask the actors to run through the skit again and those who are watching to clap if they can see something that can be done differently, stop the action, replace any of the characters and continue. This is sometimes immediately effective, and sometimes quite hilariously ineffective as the other characters continue in role. We then process what happened, including characters responding in role to how the intervention went down, what they were thinking and feeling, and so on. Other skits lend themselves better to considering rules, policies and ways of addressing what is going on through some kind of organisational change, so we spend time reflecting on what might be done. Others still are useful to stop at points in the action and to ask the characters to say what is going on in their heads at that moment, and how what is happening then and there is making them feel.

Processing these small pieces of theatre can generate a rich seam of reflection on the patriarchal dynamics that are so often viscerally part of organisational culture, even in apparently progressive organisations. From here, the discussion can be guided into actions that can be taken – ground-rules, policies, procedures or other forms of institutional intervention that can change the scene. Sequencing from the liminal play-world of drama into strategising for change gives people a set of reference points that can invite a much more inclusive, and deeper, conversation because of what people are able to *see* and *do*.

4 Conclusion

The methods described here are a smattering of ideas, borrowed, invented and adapted from others; there are many other similar activities that can do some of the work of dislodging and denaturalising that which is taken for granted, and that offer people opportunities to inspect their assumptions and the stuff of their everyday lives more closely. Critical reflection of this kind can generate important insights. This is usefully coupled with a process that takes these reflections and locates them within a broader, more structural, analysis of the materialities of privilege and power. The next step is to figure out how having 'undressed' patriarchy (Edström 2014), what is needed if we are to construct for ourselves and our organisations a more inclusive environment in which everyone can expect to be treated with dignity and respect.

This is not to say that the powerful are going to be enthusiastic participants in this process. Unsettling investments in patriarchal privilege calls for men – and also for the women who play a part in

sustaining patriarchy – to step back from a habitus that they may have never really brought into question and that has served to provide them with benefits. This stepping back isn't only about bringing gender into view; it needs to also 'undress' the complexities of intersectional difference, and its entailments. In international development arenas, with all their coloniality, critical reflection on Whiteness is a crucial dimension of this reflection. And there is much else: class privilege, for example, is a very evident part of an industry which recruits so many people from elites, South as well as North. Disability barely even summons lip service in international development. And sexuality continues to be uncomfortable terrain, even as international development's heteronormativity has come into question (Jolly 2011).

Ultimately, change calls for those men – and, by extension, people who are white, elite, able-bodied, straight – who currently enjoy a concentration of privilege, to give up their prerogative and cede space and power to others. By making visible some of the effects of power that sustain inequities, as well as showing how changing the current inequities that are sustained by patriarchal social orders can benefit us all, the seeds can be planted for these changes. Some of this is clearly a zero-sum game. But it is about more than this: it is about opening ourselves up to the possibility that others may see, feel and know very differently. And being open, too, to recognising that through this we might all find ourselves in a better place. For, as bell hooks writes:

If men are to reclaim the essential goodness of male being, if they are to regain the space of openheartedness and emotional expressiveness that is the foundation of well-being, we must envision alternatives to patriarchal masculinity. We must all change (2004: 33).

Notes

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- 1 I am very grateful to Jerker Edström for inviting me to do this work with him, and for the opportunity to try out some of these methods in this setting.

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