

CHAPTER 2

BRINGING VIOLENCE 'BACK HOME': GENDER SOCIALISATION AND THE TRANSMISSION OF VIOLENCE THROUGH TIME AND SPACE

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Introduction

It has always surprised me how contemporary studies of violence recognise 'private (or domestic) violence' as a serious phenomenon¹ but rarely address the possibility of connections between violence in private and public spaces, or the specific contribution gender socialisation processes make to the reproduction of violences in and between those spaces and over time. Most violent acts are carried out by young men between the age of 15 and 44 on young men between the age of 15 and 44, including self-directed violence; men commit much more violence than women do - homicides, suicides and even 'accidental' violence, such as road crashes (WHO 2002). But also:

historically and cross culturally, they make war. Men are soldiers and, as politicians and generals, those who instigate and lead the fighting. Men also engage in extreme violence: they are (mainly) the concentration camp guards, the SS, those who perpetrate genocide, mass ethnic rape, pogroms, torture, and the murder of children and old people. (Chodorow 2002: 252)

Women are implicated in violence also in numerous ways, as perpetrators as well as victims, and this certainly merits explanation; but the scale of their participation is much less than that of men (see Box 2.1). At the very least this suggests that there are valid reasons for differentiating by gender not only in explaining violence but also in addressing it. And gender is a relational variable which exists cross-culturally in all socialisation spaces where the different forms of violence are exercised.

¹ John Keane (1996), for instance, makes no specific reference to gender, although he does make some references to violence against women. An important collection of anthropological texts on violence (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004) is powerful on violence on women, and the idea of a 'violence continuum' from the everyday to the political is a key theme, but there is relatively little analysis of acts of violence from a gender perspective which differentiates between men and women as perpetrators of those acts.

Given the persistent blight of violence in human society, it is remarkable how relatively little attention is given to its gendered components. There are many studies pioneered by Freud on the human instinct for aggression, which often indirectly refer to gender through parental and paternal relationships. But as one exploration of the psychodynamics of extreme violence with particular attention to men and masculinity expressed it:

I have found it impossible to rethink Civilization and its Discontents directly in relation to gender...We find an asymmetry in which psychoanalytic writing notices dynamics found predominantly in women (for Freud, narcissism and masochism), whereas dynamics that predominantly characterize men (aggression) are discussed in generic human terms...psychoanalytic books about masculinity barely mention aggression except to suggest that it can be positive and normal, and they never discuss masculine violence. (Chodorow 2002: 251)

Feminists have deconstructed patriarchy, women's oppression and exclusion, and made visible male violence against women; more recently an emerging field of masculinity studies has begun to unpack and analyse the varied patterns of male identity formation. However, the argument that violence has a gender dimension rooted in gender socialisation that might transmit and reproduce violence through time and space is surprisingly rare in mainstream discussion of violence.

There are many good reasons for this. In the first place, the sight of men committing acts of violence, either sanctioned violence as members of state institutions of coercion, or illegal social, criminal and political violences, has been conventionalised (Wagner 1993) and thereby rendered un-noteworthy. It is such a normal component of the representation of violence in literature, film, television, as well as in real life, that the gender of those who commit violent acts rarely elicits comment. Shock is produced only when we see women committing the violence, as we did in the torture images

Box 2.1: Violence and the gender divide

According to the World Health Organization's 2002 *World Report on Violence and Health*, in the year 2000 an estimated 815,000 people died by suicide, 520,000 by homicide and 310,000 as a direct result of war-related injuries (2002: 10). 'Males accounted for 77% of all homicides and had rates that were more than three times those of females (13.6 and 4.0 respectively, per 100,000)' (2002:10). Sixty per cent of suicides occurred among males, over half among those aged 15-44. The highest rates of homicide in the world are found among males aged 15-29 years (19.4 per 100,000), followed closely by males aged 30-44 years (18.7 per 100,000). Suicide rates are also higher among males than females: 18.9 per 100,000 as against 10.6 per 100,000. 'Every year, violence leads to approximately 1.6 million deaths. Violence is among the leading causes of death for people aged 15-44 years, accounting for 14% of male deaths and 7% of female deaths' (WHO 2004: Foreword). 'Forty-70% of female murder victims are killed by their husband or boyfriend' (WHO 2002: 93), unlike in the case of male murders. A study in the United States, for example, found that only four per cent of men murdered between 1976 and 1996 were killed by their wives, ex-wives or girlfriends; in Australia, the figure was 8.6 per cent between 1989 and 1996. While there is evidence from industrialised countries that women engage in 'common couple violence', a relatively moderate form of relationship violence, 'there are few indications that women subject men to the same type of severe and escalating violence frequently seen in clinical samples of battered women' (WHO 2002: 94).

Findings from international studies conducted since 1980 show a mean lifetime prevalence of childhood sexual victimisation of 20 per cent among women and of between five and ten per cent among men (WHO 2002: 64). 'Sexual abusers of children, in the cases of both female and male victims, are predominantly men in many countries. Studies have consistently shown that in the case of female victims of sexual abuse, over 90% of the perpetrators are men, and in the case of male victims, between 63% and 86% of the perpetrators are men (2002:67). In 2004 the WHO/World Bank *World Report on Road Traffic Injury Prevention* also pointed out that young men are more likely to have a road accident than women of the same age.



Colombian boys playing © Paul Smith/Panos Pictures

of Abu Graib prison in Iraq in 2004; and the attention to the role of Lyndie England, a US army reservist, and her subsequent punishment, exemplifies this shock factor.

The kind of violence we recognise is another obfuscating dimension of the character of violence and in particular its gendered character. Pierre Bourdieu sought to explain what he termed 'misrecognition' through the way 'the dominated apply categories constructed from the point of view of the dominant to the relations of domination, thus making them appear as natural' (Bourdieu 2001: 34). Through the durable effects that the resulting social order creates, society does not recognise certain forms of violence and its effects. Emotional trauma from systematic humiliation can leave an imprint on the body as much as physical violence and be expressed through, for example, trembling, blushing, clumsiness. This is what he calls 'gentle and often invisible' violence or 'symbolic violence', of which male domination is the primary example.

Society has tended to develop categories of violence and even hierarchies of violence that legitimise and delegitimise different forms of violence. Some would

privilege the condemnation of state torture of political activists over child abuse in the home; some would deny that atrocities committed by state armies could be compared to the violence of street gangs. 'Depending on one's political-economic position in the world (dis)order, particular acts of violence may be perceived as "depraved" or "glorious"' (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 2). These hierarchies of violence play out in different ways in distinct social, cultural and historical contexts, and the struggle to secure the universal condemnation of violence against women is emblematic of how most societies have put that particular form of violence very low on the hierarchy of recognised violences. A study of violence in two neighbourhoods of post-war El Salvador expresses this well:

It would be erroneous to suggest that there is little public awareness of the problems of 'private' violence. Individuals in the communities all agreed that domestic violence was widespread... Nevertheless, its effects appear to be minimized in comparison to the effects of other expressions of violence of a more 'public' nature, by a tacit acceptance of its perceived normality. Margarita

(32 years old, La Vía) reasoned that it was wrong for a man to hit a woman, 'except in cases of infidelity', binding notions of appropriate behaviour for women with acceptable violence. Alfonso (18 years old, La Vía) concluded that his experiences of violence as a child (including repeated physical and psychological abuse) were 'neither good nor bad, just normal'...He spoke openly about beating his partner yet, at the same time, he was critical of a local gang that had broken into his house and beaten her because '...women can't handle [violence]'. This differentiation between his use of violence against his partner and the gang's is important, and goes to the core of gendered power relations. The glaring discrepancy in his interpretation of the two acts raises huge questions about the accepted use of force, by whom and toward whom. (Hume 2004: 66)

However, there are other reasons why social constructions of masculinity remain a relatively underplayed variable in our understandings of violence. These are to do with analytical problems that arise from trying to focus differentially on the role of men and women with respect to violence. One is the sheer complexity of making correlations and weighting variables in explaining particular violences. For example, why should gender matter more than any other variable? If an injustice has been done and there is a violent response, what does it matter whether it is a man or woman who carries out the violence or is a victim of it? Another problem is that some see the *act* of violence as the main issue, while others will include *passive support* for the act of violence. The latter might include women much more than the former. There is also the danger of generalising across so many different forms of violence and appearing to reduce explanations to one factor, namely, gender, when violence is multi-causal. There is a risk of scaling up from particular kinds of explanations, for example, those at the psycho-social level, to all aspects of society and culture. Many fear accusations of gender essentialism (women are peaceful, men are warlike) when evidence clearly shows that not all men are violent and some women are. As a result of these serious difficulties, the analysis of violence often treats it as something external to us (that is, the *explaining human subject*) and gender is mostly discussed in relationship to violence against women (the *violence-receiving object*) rather than in terms of who is carrying out the violence (the *violent-acting*

subject). Violence is seen as a tragedy of the human condition or a result of our structural inequalities, for example, rather than as behaviour and attitudes which are constructed, internalised and reproduced at the same time as we all learn what it is to be a 'woman' or a 'man' within our different societies.

This chapter is not about violence against women, serious though this is. Nor is it about the role of women as perpetrators of violence. I am certainly not arguing that women cannot be violent or do not perform violent acts; there is ample evidence of this, but so far it is much less than for men². Nor am I offering an explanation for all violences. I am arguing, however, that the fact that men commit more acts of violence than women is a question we should explore. My aim in this chapter is to bring violence 'back home' and to discuss the *relationship and mutually interacting character* between gendered socialisation in private and public spaces and all violence. I want to argue that gendered forms of socialisation and gendered constructions of space continue to produce and reproduce the relational dynamics which embed and perpetuate violence in our human societies. These socialisation processes increase the risks that violence will be used as an instrument to pursue a range of goals, from the worthy to the unworthy. An underlying question is how 'worthy goals' might be pursued more effectively without violence as a step towards the creation of the conditions for a society to live without violence. Gender re-socialisation, I would argue, is a necessary, if not sufficient, step in that direction.

If we do not begin to imagine and implement gender re-socialisation we will be unable to interrupt the inter-generational cycles of violence even if we do address some of the 'causes' of contemporary public and violent conflicts. The endings of war, it should be noted, have

² I write 'so far', because there is anecdotal, journalistic and some scientific evidence that female participation in violent gangs, insurgencies, suicide missions and other forms of violence is increasing. This does not contradict the argument of this chapter, as it would suggest that there are contexts today in which the socialisation of girls diminishes the qualities of submission and passivity which has traditionally been one of the most cross-culturally universal models of the 'feminine'. This clearly needs further research, and we may find distinct cultural and socialisation forms in the past as well as the present which 'free' women to act violently, or where traditional gender roles are overridden by collective identities such as ethnicity and the systematic discrimination against such collective identities. The participation of women in the Rwandan genocide would be one example.

not brought an end to violence, either in the theatres in which they have been waged or in the post-war situations (Nordstrom 1997; Meintjes, Pillay and Turshen 2002; Jacobs, Jacobsen and Marchbank 2000; Pankhurst 2003). Despite our great advances in understanding nature and the transformations in public manners and behaviour, our advances in reducing violence in human interactions remain pitiful. The twentieth century is considered by many historians to have been the bloodiest in human history (Hobsbawm 1994³). If our goal is what Freud in an essay titled *Why War?* called 'the cultural development of mankind' (a phrase he preferred to 'civilisation', Einstein and Freud 1933:20) and involves a 'progressive rejection of instinctive ends and a scaling down of instinctive reactions', I would argue that this could be measured by our abandonment under any circumstances of the instinct to cause pain and suffering to another human being. I am assuming in this chapter, therefore (something that I acknowledge is not necessarily shared by all) that we not only want to end the many wars of our times but that we also want to end violence.

The first part of this chapter explores how our construction of space as fixed and separating, rather than about the relational interactions of which it is made up, has impeded us from making the critical connections between the private and the public in analysing violence. The second part discusses the relationship between gender identity construction and violence, drawing on my own and others' fieldwork in Latin America and elsewhere and using the psycho-social framework of James Gilligan (1997; 2001) on the relationship between gender social construction and the greater propensity of men to use violence. In the third section I return to the question of linkages between violences in different spheres of human socialisation and to the idea of a 'continuum of violence' (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004: 1). Finally, I use a gender lens to explore Hannah Arendt's (1969) proposition that power and violence are distinct. Could a new normative theory and practice of power that might emerge

3 *Why, then, did the century end, not with a celebration of this unparalleled and marvellous progress, but in a mood of uneasiness?...Not only because it was without doubt the most murderous century of which we have record, both by the scale, frequency and length of the warfare which filled it, barely ceasing for a moment in the 1920s, but also by the unparalleled scale of the human catastrophes it produced, from the greatest famines in history to systematic genocide'. (1994:13)*

from women's actions in the public arena and feminist theory help transform our analysis of violence and reduce its use?

Gendered and bounded space as obstacles to understanding violence

In an influential book, *The Sexual Contract*, political philosopher Carole Pateman (1988) discussed the gendered character of the construction of our understanding of 'private' and 'public' spheres in the course of the European project of 'modernity'. The emergence of the idea of 'civil society' bifurcated the 'public sphere' into two, that of the 'state' and that of a 'privatised' sphere of 'public' associational life, or civil society. The private domestic sphere of the 'home' was then another spatial construction that, like civil society, was to be autonomous from the state, but not subject to critical public scrutiny either by civil society or by the state. 'Civility' was a discourse for the bourgeois public sphere and the new social bonds of public associationalism that emerged in the late eighteenth century (Howell and Pearce 2001). The freedom of the individual, and of that individual in 'his' home, was established in the course of these bounded imaginings of space: 'a man's home is his castle' became a popular dictum. Another was 'a woman's place is in the home'. These sayings reflected the effort to fix the relationships within, as well as the boundaries of, the gendered space of castle/home.

As time progressed the boundaries did blur. In the course of the twentieth century, the state began to intervene in some aspects of the private, domestic world, and by the late twentieth century domestic violence and child abuse were at least recognised as a concern of the state in many parts of the world even if efforts to eliminate them have been slow and ineffective. Debates and social struggles about female participation outside the home also led to a re-gendering of spatial boundaries, and labour markets were eventually opened up of necessity to female participation. But still, in many parts of the world, spatial boundaries to the participation of women remain firmly demarcated through informal and formal mechanisms. Female participation in the public sphere of state and civil society has increased significantly in the West, at least, but that sphere is still dominated, perhaps with the exception of Scandinavia, by men. In many Muslim societies, women are separated physically from men in the public sphere either spatially and/or through dress codes.



A couple at home in Morocco © Alfredo Caliz/Panos Pictures

These gendered spatial constructions have become so normal that the question is rarely posed: how does violence (and power) get transmitted from private to public and back to private, and what role does gender play in that transmission? Could the differentiated socialisation process between men and women be a transmitting mechanism? As Doreen Massey (1994; 1999) and others have reminded us, space is a 'product of interrelations. It is constituted through interactions, from the immensity of the global to the intimately tiny' (Massey 1999: 28). Gender hierarchies are just one of the interrelationships within social spaces, but there is a remarkable consistency across culture, time and space in the power men have been able to exercise over women within a range of spaces. Women almost universally enjoy less participation and power in the public sphere, and the constructions of masculinity in the intimate or domestic private space condition the character and use of power and violence outside of it, and then 'double back' to reinforce the gendered relationship in the home. There is no longer a 'starting point' for explaining this as such, although the 'home' and the intimate is arguably the formative space for gender socialisation, and the most dynamic force for replenishing the circulation and flow of power and violence over time and space.

Violence in the private sphere of the home has

become an issue for the public sphere in some countries, showing that this flow can be subjected to intervention and interruption, although it remains a very difficult problem to address. Not only is the participation of women in the public sphere still limited, but the ability of women to influence public decisions around the use of violence also remains very limited. Nor does the participation of women, per se, guarantee that decisions will be different. The inclusion of women is not in itself the route to transform our understandings of violence; it is whether the women who gain power and office are able to bring new assumptions, conceptualisations, theories and behaviour that can transform the way men and women construct their relationships. Such a possibility is always there given that space is a product of 'relation-between' which 'is always in the process of becoming, it is always being made' (Massey 1999: 28). Despite spatial relationships having the appearance of structure, given that they are often very persistent over time, there is always the possibility that they can be reconstructed and relationships re-socialised.

If we go 'back home', therefore, and try to unpack the construction of gendered social differences, might we find at least some keys not only as to why the public sphere remains dominated by men, but why violence in the private and the public spheres is also perpetrated mostly by men?



Rebel fighters in El Salvador © Fernando Moreles/Panos Pictures

What difference might it make to our understanding of violence to do this and then to explore the connections between gendered spaces? A disadvantage might be to dilute our understanding, produce one monolithic problem of 'violence' whose multiple manifestations are ignored and therefore cannot be properly addressed. An advantage might be to recognise the magnitude of the problem of violence in human relationships in all the spaces it occurs, whether or not it is constructed as legitimate or illegitimate, and our shared responsibility in reproducing it. We might then begin to address the socialisation processes that appear to enhance the risks that men are more likely to use violence than women, though the triggers for whether they do so depend on a multiplicity of other variables. This will not stop violence in itself, given its multi-causality, but it might reduce the risk inherent in maintaining these forms of socialisation. But what is it about this socialisation that contributes to violence?

Shame, honour and pride: socialisation, men and violence

...male sociodocry owes its specific efficacy to the fact that it legitimates a relation of domination by inscribing it in a biological which is itself a biologized social construction. The double work of inculcation, at once sexually differentiated and sexually differentiating, imposes upon men and women

different sets of dispositions with regard to the social games that are held to be crucial to society, such as the games of honor and war (fit for the display of masculinity, virility) or, in advanced societies, all the most valued games such as politics, business, science, etc. The masculinization of male bodies and feminization of female bodies effects a somatization of the cultural arbitrary which is the durable construction of the unconscious. Having shown this, I shift from one extreme of cultural space to the other to explore this originary relation of exclusion from the standpoint of the dominated as expressed in Virginia Woolf's 1927 novel To the Lighthouse. We find in this novel an extraordinarily perceptive analysis of a paradoxical dimension of symbolic domination, and one almost always overlooked by feminist critique, namely the domination of the dominant by his domination: a feminine gaze upon the desperate and somewhat pathetic effort that any man must make, in his triumphant unconsciousness, to try to live up to the dominant idea of man. Furthermore, Virginia Woolf allows us to understand how, by ignoring the illusion that leads one to engage in the central games of society, women escape the libido dominandi that comes with this involvement, and are therefore socially inclined to gain a relatively lucid view of the male games in which they ordinarily partake only by proxy. (Bourdieu and Wacquant 2004: 273)

Differential power between men and women makes it more likely that male socialisation processes have a

wider impact on societal development than female ones. It is not, however, the gender inequality issue per se that I am concerned with here, but the character of the socialisation that underpins it and the differential effects it produces on what individuals come to internalise in their particular societies as the 'normal' qualities of maleness and femaleness. It is the *character* of that socialisation that makes inequality between men, as much as inequality between men and women, such an important question with respect to willingness to use violence, as men strive to 'live up to the dominant idea of man'.

The need to explore the relationship between masculinity, femininity and violence has arisen from my field research in the violent contexts of Latin America and more recently in Bradford, UK, where I was part of a research team⁴ looking at the riots that took place in that city in 2001, in which the overwhelming number of participants were young males of Pakistani origin. In Latin America, my experiences have taken me from the state terror and dictatorships of the Southern Cone in the 1970s to the civil wars of cold war Central America and Colombia in the 1980s, the multiple complex violences of post-Cold War Colombia, to the persistent and complex violences in indigenous communities of southern Mexico, and to the post-war contexts of Peru, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua. It is worth noting that this personal research trajectory through three decades of violence in Latin America mirrors a great deal the pathway of others who have tried to argue for linkages between everyday violences and other kinds of violence, for example, Koonings and Kruijt (1999), Moser and Clark (2001), Moser and Winton (2002), Moser and McIlwaine (2003), and Schepers-Hughes and Bourgois (2004). This is partly because Latin Americanists with this trajectory are acutely aware that the way we looked at violence in the 1970s and 1980s, a period characterised by state terror and state-promoted private violence, did not prepare us for the explosion of social violences in the course of the 1990s, both in countries which had suffered civil war and in those which had not. In El Salvador, an example of the former, an average of 6,250 people per year died from direct political violence during the 1980s, compared with 8,700 to 11,000 killed every year by criminal violence in the 1990s (Bourgois 2004: 432; PNUD 2002). But in

⁴ The field research team included Dr Janet Bujra and Dr Marie Macey.

Brazil, which did not go through civil war, violent deaths of young men were among the highest in the world in the 1990s, with a homicide rate of 18,400 for males aged 15-29 and 10,352 for males aged 30-44 in 1995 (WHO 2002: 308).

Philippe Bourgois' anthropological reflections on this are particularly poignant as he also turned from field research in war-time El Salvador in the 1980s to the United States, his own country, to deepen his understanding of the nature of violence (Bourgois 1995). He has subsequently reflected on the forms violence takes in war time and what we call 'peace time' (2004: 425-34) by reinterpreting his ethnographic data from fieldwork in El Salvador in the 1980s. He came to recognise the violences he had ignored during a traumatic moment of army repression that he had shared with the Salvadorean peasants during fieldwork in 1981. On a return visit to post-war El Salvador in 1994, the reality of life in the war, which is not easy for foreign researchers to penetrate, was finally revealed to him. He heard tales about 'misdeeds, deception and disloyalty' (2004: 430), and about the internecine violence among guerrilla fighters and executions of pro-guerrilla civilians erroneously accused of being government spies. He concluded that:

The urgency of documenting and denouncing state violence and military repression blinded me to the internecine everyday violence embroiling the guerrillas and undermining their internal solidarity. As a result I could not understand the depth of the trauma that political violence imposes on its targets, even those mobilized to resist it...I was unable to recognize the distinctiveness of everyday violence in revolutionary El Salvador and therefore failed to discern it to be a product of political and structural violence, despite that fact that I had effectively understood everyday violence to be at the interface of structural and symbolic violence in the US inner city. (2004: 432, 426)

I shared similar experiences to those of Bourgois, and lived for several months in 1984 in a guerrilla-controlled zone of Chalatenango, El Salvador, while undertaking an oral history of the peasant movement, and like him I have returned to El Salvador in 'peace time' and been astounded at the rise in social violence. My response to this has been different from that of Bourgois, however, in one key respect. While the other kinds of violence between and within guerrilla groups that evolved in the course of the war were certainly, as Bourgois argues, an



Radio operator in the FMLN, El Salvador © Mike Goldwater

illustration of 'how the revolutionary movement in El Salvador was traumatized and distorted by the very violence it was organizing against' (2004: 431), it is the gender dimensions of the violence and abuse during the war carried out by male combatants on female combatants that led me to ask the question: what happened to men and women in this civil war? Who carried out the violence? Is there a relationship between the masculine identity of the majority of guerrilla leaders and combatants, the intra-combatant violence of the war and the role of ex-combatants in the violence of the peace? A moving set of interviews of 70 former female combatants in El Salvador illustrates the anguish of their personal and sexual lives during their time in the mountains, where 'sexuality was very present in our relationships' but 'In the personal life there was a law of silence' (Las Dignas 1996: 49)⁵.

It is important to stress that by asking these gender questions I am not diminishing the categories of structural, political, symbolic and everyday violence in the Salvadorean context raised by Bourgois, and which I too would want to employ. The overwhelming amount of

⁵ 'There was no time for affection, they came in the night and wanted sex and not to talk' (Las Dignas 1996: 51).

violence in the Salvadorean civil war was perpetrated by the state army on civilians. However, I am asking how gender interacts with each of them. I want to ask: what did women do and what did men do? It is necessary but not sufficient to explain what happened in El Salvador in terms of structural and political violence. We need to know the differential way that constructions of masculinity and femininity interacted with these forms of violence. As Bourgois and I both verified in field interviews, alcoholism and abuse of women were widespread in rural communities *before* liberation theology, revolutionary ideology, and the momentum and discipline of the armed struggle brought it under control. 'We used to put away a lotta drink and cut each other up. But then the Organization showed us the way, and we've channelled that violence for the benefit of the people', a peasant man told Bourgois (Bourgois 2004; cf. Pearce 1985: 154). It did not however, eliminate the sexual abuse of women during the war, suggesting that masculine social roles had shifted only to the requirements of armed struggle, not to any transformation in the socialisation processes. And in peacetime many young male ex-combatants, socialised in war and with few opportunities of dignified work in the countryside or cities, fell into the gang cultures that began to proliferate in San Salvador in the 1990s, mostly generated by Salvadorean migrants and sons of war refugees returning from gang experiences in Los Angeles.

Even when women are combatants in armed movements, there is some evidence that their attitude towards the violence they are engaged in differs from that of men, and this difference makes it easier for them to recuperate after the war. In Colombia, for instance, a study of ex-combatants revealed how much harder it is for male than for female ex-combatants to lay down the gun. The gun had become so much part of male identity that it was almost a part of their body, and its loss was felt almost as intensely as a loss of a body part (Castro and Diaz 1997). In Colombia, the gendered character of that country's violence has only recently begun to be recognised and visibilised, and studies are beginning to appear that explore how men and women experience violence differently, although the focus is still on women as victims rather than the men as perpetrators (see, for example, Meertens 2001). What is the origin, for instance, of the vendetta cultures that in Colombia reproduce violence throughout the generations? Revenge, or 'account settling', is a conventionalised

norm among male combatants in Colombia, which leads to sons settling scores for the death of fathers, for instance, many years after the immediate act of violence⁶.

If we turn to the rise of social violence throughout Latin America in the 1990s and into this millennium, we also find that young men are the overwhelming perpetrators and victims of violence. If we analyse this from the perspective of 'structural violence'⁷, we can indeed relate it to economic inequality, urban unemployment and the neo-liberal restructuring that took place in the region during those years. We can also relate it to the way drugs trafficking has provided an alternative livelihood and lifestyle for marginal youth as well as organised criminal mafias. However, if we did not to ask how young men and young women differentially interact with this structural violence, we would miss some key points. What is it that young men can achieve in such conditions of inequality and impoverishment through violence and gang culture that women cannot? A thread seems to run through many studies of violent neighbourhoods and communities which suggest that the differential socialisations of men and women must offer a good source of the explanation. Mo Hume's research in El Boulevard, a marginal community in Greater El Salvador, found that:

data from interviews and focus groups highlight the fact that exaggerated sexual prowess and violence against women were central to men's identity. Above all, for most of the male interviewees, this identity required the domination of women, children and other men. Respondents testified to feeling more manly as a result of threatening and beating women, never giving in (no se deja), being brave, having sexual relations with many women, leaving women pregnant, having lots of children, feeling more important than other men, being proud. Some men said that carrying weapons made them feel more like a man. (Hume 2004: 67)

Changing social and economic dynamics interact with gender socialisation norms and sometimes inhibit the ability of men to live up to expectations of 'manliness'. In contexts where traditional male roles have become much more difficult to live up to, such as among

⁶ My field diary for a visit to a paramilitary-controlled commune of Medellin in 2004 records the chuckle of the paramilitary commander when I asked about revenge and vendetta among combatants: 'You mean settling accounts - of course!'

⁷ This concept comes originally from Johan Galtung (1996).

diaspora and migrant communities where disadvantaged ethnic positioning limits engagement with the formal labour market, violence may become a means for some males of compensating for diminishing honour and respect. Such a theme emerges in Bourgois' rich discussion of masculinities among drug dealers of Puerto Rican origin in a violent ghetto neighbourhood of East Harlem in the United States:

A man in El Barrio can no longer 'speak' to his children, 'with his eyes' and expect to have his commands immediately obeyed. The former modalities of male respect are no longer achievable within the conjugal household or the extended kin-based community. Several generations of men caught in different phases of this fundamental cultural transformation in family forms and gender hierarchies have been crushed. Primo brought this issue to my attention. In his concern over the fate of the men in his kin network, one can discern the gender-specific form of the experience of social marginalisation in the Puerto Rican diaspora. (Bourgois 1995: 297)

Like Bourgois, work in my own country played a strong role in opening up new questions about violence. The riots that took place over 12 hours in Bradford on 7 July 2001 involved hundreds of young Pakistani males. These males come out of rural Asian and mostly Muslim socialisation cultures (although the vast majority were second-generation immigrants), in which male honour is one of the most dominant socialisation norms. These traditional cultural norms have been fertilised with Western cultural portrayals of masculinity so that the rioters described their violence in language from film and television; it was, they said:

like a mission...James Bond...a fight to the finish...a battle...A game...I'm in the middle of a war zone...my head went...I don't take shit off nobody...I am angry...I'll take him out before he takes me out...It does mek yer feel strong, cos yer done it with a load guys and lads. (Bujra and Pearce 2005: 11)

The defence of the honour of women was a frequent justification for riot, fuelled by rumours such as 'an Asian woman had been knocked over by one of the Maria vans, the police vans' (Bujra and Pearce 2005: 11). Other comments from the young men, drew attention to the changing nature of their family socialisation and their expected roles; if his father was still alive, one

Box 2.2: Sincelejo, Colombia: where violence rules

1 April 2005

'What is the name of this affluent neighbourhood?', I ask the taxi driver as we reach Sincelejo, the departmental capital of Sucre on the Atlantic coast of Colombia. 'Venezia', he replies. 'Who lives here?' 'The son of the Mayor.' 'Who is the Mayor? Which party is he from?' 'The Corrupts, like of all of them', he says. 'Are there paramilitary?' 'Yes. But they don't control anything. They eliminate thieves every so often. The people like it.' At the hotel I close my bedroom door and switch on the television. The press has recently revealed that at least 3,000 people of the 50,000 inhabitants from the nearby town of San Onofre are believed to have 'disappeared' since the late 1990s. But the television news was not about that San Onofre, it was San Onofre the beach resort on Colombia's beautiful Atlantic coast, San Onofre the tourist paradise! I glance up and freeze as I digest a notice pinned on the back of the door. Just above the warning that the hotel is not responsible for valuables that have not been deposited in its safe box, there is another notice: *Warning. In accordance with Article 17 of Law 679 of 2001, the HOTEL warns the GUEST that the sexual abuse and exploitation of minors in the country are punished in penal and civil law according to the prevailing legal dispositions.* What has gone on in this hotel room, I ask myself, and hardly sleep that night.

2 April 2005

The taxi driver was not exactly accurate when he claimed the paras do not control Sincelejo. I talk to the very few NGO and church workers brave enough to monitor human rights in this town. They tell me that a henchman of the town's most feared paramilitary commander, known as Cadena, or Chain, has just been captured in Venezuela and spilled the beans about the landowning, drug trafficking and political links with the paramilitary in Sincelejo. A mass grave has just been dug up in the finca (farm) El Palmar in San Onofre. They think it contains the remains of some 500 of Cadena's victims. It was from this finca that a paramilitary group set off on 17 January 2001 to massacre 27 people in El Chingue in 2001. However, only recently has Cadena become associated with the paramilitary; he has never fought the guerrillas. He murdered peasants and trafficked cocaine, I am told. Yet he is now in Santa Fe de Ralita, where President Uribe has allowed the paramilitary who wish to demobilise to gather. Most people believe that the President must be aware of Cadena's antecedents; he has many links to this region and there are rumours that he has bought land in Sucre. The paramilitary expanded into Sucre in the mid-1990s, and I visited Sincelejo at that time. The guerrillas had a strong base in the town in the 1990s. Sucre was a centre for peasant activism and also had a strong civic movement, but leaders were being killed and I sensed back then that a strategic offensive was under way, uniting landowners, political leaders, army commanders and drug traffickers against not only guerrillas but social activists generally.

Now I am told, by the head of an NGO who must remain anonymous for his own safety, that 'there is no civil society' in Sincelejo. The paramilitary have political and economic power. They own many of the shops and sell cheap; in December 2005 the queues were so huge that they had to close them. There are ten gas stations, of which the paras control five. There is real fear here; people speak in hushed voices when they mention the paras. People say they are mostly young men, aged 22-30, and Cadena is a key commander. I ask about the moto-taxis that are everywhere in the city centre - young men earning a living by giving rides on their motorbikes. I have never seen anything like it before. There are reported to be a staggering 22,000 of these in the town. They appeared suddenly in 2002 and have proliferated since then. The police let them circulate and then every three months stop and fine them. Many spy for the paras. Many have been killed. Thousands of people have come to Sincelejo, displaced by the violence in the rural areas; the moto-taxis are a way of surviving. Some students pay for their studies this way. The paras exercise social control in Sincelejo; in the neighbourhoods they kill thieves and drug addicts. They also ensure that only their friends hold political office. In Sincelejo I learn of a new form of government: *narcoparamilipolismo*, government by drug traffickers, paramilitary and politicians. In Sincelejo, violence rules.

Source: Extract from Jenny Pearce's field diary



moto-taxis in Sincelejo © Jenny Pearce

young man explained, 'I'd a been locked at home, married and with children by now' (2005:11). A complementary piece of research on a white working-class estate, in the district where a smaller disturbance had followed in the wake of the main riot, revealed a similar theme among a community deeply affected by loss of male employment and traditional male roles in the household:

Asians...wouldn't leave [my girlfriend] alone...they touch and stuff...they haven't got any respect...the amounts of fights I've had with them when I've been out (Bujra and Pearce 2005: 12).

Where can we turn for more guidance and direction on how socialisation processes impact on masculinity, the *libido dominandi*, and its links to violent behaviour? The work of the American psychiatrist James Gilligan, whose two books, *Violence: Reflections on A National Epidemic* (1997) and *Preventing Violence* (2001), are based on his long-term studies of violent criminals, offer rich insights. I am not arguing that one can scale up from his psycho-social analysis to explanations for all violence. However, Gilligan's work led him straight to gender construction and socialisation processes:

Understanding why men are more violent than women requires an understanding of the highly asymmetrical gender roles to which the members of each sex are assigned at birth in our patriarchal cultures, and to which they are powerfully conditioned to conform throughout the rest of the lives by virtually all institutions of our society. The relevant point here is that the differences in those gender roles makes it possible for men to ward off or undo feelings of shame, disgrace and dishonour by means of violence, whereas that is significantly less true for women. Masculinity, in the traditional, conventional sex-role of patriarchy, is literally defined as involving the expectation, even the requirement, of violence, under many well specified conditions: in times of war; in response to personal insult; in response to extramarital sex on the part of a female in the family; while engaging in all-male combat sports etc. (Gilligan 2001: 56)

Shame, honour, pride are vital components in masculine identity formation cross-culturally, as many would instinctively recognise (see Box 2.3). The next step is to see why violence might be justified for men as a response to being shamed. Shame can be induced by many factors, from a personal insult to relative poverty,

unemployment, lower caste status, ethnic discrimination (Gilligan 2001: 67), and so on. Men and women can suffer all of these and more. But the reflexes which kick in for men and for women are different when they experience inequalities and indignities and emotions of shame and dishonour. It is in these differences that men find their identity reinforced by the use of violence and women find it undermined. For a woman to be more of a woman, she is encouraged to be submissive and accepting. The opposite is true of men.

Gender and the transmission and reproduction of violence in time and space

The literature on violence tends to divide violence into various 'forms'. People differ as to the exact categories, but Philippe Bourgois' categories outlined above are sound examples of the broad consensus: Political, Structural, Symbolic and Everyday. Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois also argue for a 'continuum' between these violences (2004: 1), and the WHO study on violence as a public health issue also points to evidence of:

links between different types of violence. Research has shown that exposure to violence in the home is associated with being a victim or perpetrator of violence in adolescence and adulthood. The experience of being rejected, neglected or suffering indifference at the hands of parents leaves children at greater risk for aggressive and antisocial behaviour, including abusive behaviour as adults. Associations have been found between suicidal behaviour and several types of violence, including child maltreatment, intimate partner violence, sexual assault and abuse of the elderly. In Sri Lanka, suicide rates were shown to decrease during wartime, only to increase again after the violent conflict ended. In many countries that have suffered violent conflict, the rates of interpersonal violence remain high even after the cessation of hostilities - among other reasons because of the way violence has become more socially acceptable and the availability of weapons. (WHO 2002: 15)

My caveat about the use of these generally useful categories of violence is that they invisibilise the gendered character of the violence. They do not necessarily conceal the victimisation of women, but they do diminish the attention drawn to the perpetration of violence by men.

I would argue, therefore, that the categorisation of forms of violence must be complemented by a spatial

Box 2.3: 'Coming of age': masculinities and male youth in Bradford, UK

A study of eight Pakistani-British and eight white English youth, carried out in Bradford between 2003 and 2006, explored their emerging ideas of masculinity and perceptions of social and anti-social behaviour.* During the ten-month fieldwork, I 'hung out' with young men, aged 10-17, facilitated a photographic 'Ladz Project', and worked as a youth worker and as a bouncer in a nightclub.

Central to the young men's emerging masculinities were their interactions and experiences with young women. While male peers were a constant influence on the development of their identity, perceptions of their power and worth evolved in relation to the opposite sex. In the nightclub, the space encircling the dance floor was appropriated by young Asian men who stood watching the young, predominantly white, women dancing in front of them. They would shout comments to attract the attention of particular girls - either to initiate a flirtatious interaction or to denigrate them sexually. Occasionally they would make forays on to the floor to chat up girls.



In the lads chillin' area (anonymous)

While the space in the nightclub was very much dominated by the more confident Asian male youth (the white youth taking a backseat for fear of antagonising their Asian peers), in their geographical environment the ethnic group of the locality dominated: Asian male youth in Broadbeck, and white male, and some female, youth in Highmoor**. Both groups of young men would interact with the opposite sex in their own environs. Although the white female youth from Highmoor would enjoy public banter with local youth, and less public flirtations with the Asian lads at the nightclub, they were very hesitant about going to Broadbeck and the park where previously they had experienced being told to 'suck my dick', or had been chased by teenagers. It should be emphasised that those who expected such comments to be taken seriously, and acted upon, were in a minority. As one lad explained: 'People use that for getting to know someone...it's like a chat up....it's either to take piss out of ya or to get to know ya' (Amir, 15).



Poster on my bedroom door (Greg, 12)

The Highmoor lads explored masculinity and sexuality through other means: several had posters or photographs of topless and scantily clad women in their bedrooms, and others had pornographic magazines. One younger lad talked me through his pile of about 30 magazines, passed on by a friend, which depicted mainly Sapphic imagery. He explained how he would hold up a particular edition to tease a girl or would sit with his mates looking at the magazines, talking about women and what they did with their girlfriends.

Strong codes were adopted by almost all the youth about what they were 'allowed' to do as young men: what was fair play or 'out of order'. It was expected that sons, brothers and friends would look out for one another, and defend the honour of family and friends.

I'll go straight in for me family....I'm there for me family always, no matter what...I'm sorry but, if they're gonna touch my family in a hurtful way, I'm gonna hurt them...in my eyes...every time if summat's ever happened...it's fully grown men that have started on [my mum] because of me real dad. Now, when these fully grown men have come to my house an' started wiv me mum, me mum's obviously retaliated because she's tryin' to look out for me. Now, I'm not sayin' I'm big an' hard. I'm not sayin' I'm leader of crew or whatever. All I'm sayin' is when that stuff kicked off I made one phone call an' I had 20 lads outside my house because there were three fully grown men outside my house kickin' off at me mum. Now I knew I couldn't take all three fully grown men on. (Tommy, 16)

It was like the Asian folks there [at the last gang fight']. They, it's one a, one of my mates, you know...and his dad's passed away 'nt it, 'n they swore at his dad. 'N everyone, 'n I mean everyone come, yeah. Went in, cleared it up. (Nav, 14)

We don't like anybody messing about with us and I mean, there is a lot of racial conflict in Bradford between white and black an' we just think that [sigh] every time there's a fight we got to call our cousins, we got to call our boys, you know. (Umar, 15)

Regardless of ethnicity, a majority of young men had used violence against others within the boundaries of their clearly defined moral codes. Some had reflected on particular incidents: although they felt the use of violence had been warranted in response to racial abuse, the attacks sat heavily on their conscience. One way of disassociating their present selves from past actions was by dismissing what they did then, when they were 'boys' and 'young and stupid', thus allowing them space to be 'men' and more mature now:

We had a lot of things against him. I mean, you know...I think he was probably, he was like a racist lad. His parents are right racist as well. And every time we used to see him he used to give, you know. Like eyes and everything. So we didn't like that at all...It was just in the heat of the moment that all the boys were like yeah, let's just go, let's go whack him an' that...there was about eight or ten to ten of us...we were, we, we were only 14 so we were pretty young at that time....We were all young, an' we were just stupid. (Umar, 15)

Another young man explained his response to a racist taunt and reflected on how he feels after physical confrontation:

So I started walkin' away, 'n then he called me a white bastard again. So I turned round 'n went 'o, you called me that, didn't you, yesterday? 'N I punched him. He fell straight to floor. Now, coz he fell straight to floor I jumped on top of him, started punchin' him in the face....He tried getting' me done for assault because I punched him that many times in the eyes, 'n that hard I nearly blinded him. I wah, I wah 14 goin' on 15. I weren't that old. Now, it does scare me, coz if I carried on I could've ...made him blind for life. Or, I coulda, could, if I'd had carried on I, I'd either blinded him, broke his nose, 'owt like that. Or, I could've, worst comes to the worst, killed him....if any of those things would have happened I would've felt guilty. I don't know why, after I've had a fight I always feel guilty anyway. (Tommy, 16)

Codes also applied to neighbourhoods, for example, not 'grassing up' or carrying out crime where you lived. These were passed down through generations and 'enforced' in the white community by those living there.



Girls walking down street (Nav, 14)

The philosophy on the Highmoor estate was you 'don't shit on your own doorstep' and those who transgressed this principle received retribution. In my observation only male youth or adults carried out physical retribution, the target of which was male perpetrators. However, one form of collective non-violent punishment recounted to me was the organisation of a petition and the literal driving out of a family whose son had arsoned a community facility. The Asian youth in Broadbeck recounted different reasons for not carrying out crime on their doorstep: in their experience it was simply foolhardy because they would be recognised:

Now I have my own area yeah.... It's too hot for me. Like our area's a bit hot. If I get caught or someone tells my description or somethin' they can come straight to my house 'coz they know me now. (Sajid, 15)

The research found that all those who took part in the research were either 'experiencing', 'witnessing' or 'perpetrating' violence in one form or another.*** Almost all were 'experiencing' violence either directly, as victims of street assaults, racial or 'gang' attacks, and punishment by family members for their behaviour; or indirectly, through structural violence (see Galtung 1996) wrought by poverty, poor housing, exclusion from education and harassment from the police. Two young men experienced violence through self-harm.



Paul (Sajid, 15)

The second most common form of violence was 'witnessing' it. The vast majority of young men had witnessed incidents in public spaces such as bullying, intimidation and attacks on youth, or had been present when 'gang' fights broke out. Fewer had witnessed violence in private spaces, such as seeing a brother punished by family members for past actions outside the home, or witnessing a parent, brother or girlfriend being assaulted in a domestic violence incident.

With regard to 'perpetrating' violence, a distinction can be made between the public and private spheres. Ten of the young men participating in this study (six Asians and four white English) told me that they had perpetrated violence in a public space through participation in, for example, street robbery, assault, intra-ethnic 'gang' attacks, vigilante-styled justice, or to defend the family or group honour (when 'dissed' or given 'dirties'). A minority in this study (two young men), acted violently in private spaces, for example, hitting their girlfriend or friend's girlfriend.

* The research presented in this box is the result of an ESRC-funded studentship on 'Discourses of the Social: A Study of Emerging Masculinities and "Anti-social" Behaviour Amongst Male Youth in Inner City Bradford', 2003-2006, supervised by Professor Jenny Pearce and Dr Janet Bujra in the Department of Peace Studies, University of Bradford.

**Highmoor and Broadbeck are pseudonyms for the two neighbouring locations in Bradford where the research was carried out. Like the aliases chosen by the youths, they are used in order to preserve the anonymity of the participants. The photographs included here were taken by the youths who wrote the captions.

*** While all the youth communicated to me that they were 'victims' of violence, they did not label their experiences in terms of the discourses used in academic literature. Terms such as 'structural violence' used to describe their experiences have been applied by me in analysis.

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analysis if we are to refine our understanding of how in practice these kinds of violences interact with gendered socialisation processes within each space⁹. I would therefore start with the socialisation space of the home, move to the socialisation space of community, neighbourhood, school, to the socialisation space of associational life or civil society and finally to the socialisation space of nation state construction, whether as a finished or (as in many parts of the global South) incomplete and arguably unfinishable process, given the logic of globalisation. Gender socialisation is a variable in all these spaces, a likely transmitter mechanism for the reproduction and reinforcement of violence through all the spaces. This kind of analysis is open to empirical research also and thus can help us refine our tools for addressing the problems as they emerge contextually as well as cross-contextually.

This analysis looks at the character of gender domination in each of the spaces, and whether male socialisation processes in each contributes to the greater propensity of men to use violence when they feel a loss of honour, an assault on their pride and a sense of shame or inability to measure up to other social norms of manhood in the given context. For example, political violence would need to be explored through a gender lens (as well as other lenses), and the question posed: who is controlling and shaping the rules of the political game in, for instance, the space of the nation state? Why is the decision to wage war so frequently the decision of a mostly male corpus of decision makers? Is there a connection between hegemonic struggles between and within nations, the power of men in national public spheres, and the readiness to use violence to defend or promote hegemony? Gender would not explain everything (I have earlier emphasised that I am not trying to explain all violences, nor diminish the weight of other variables such as class, but to explore the implications of the evidence of the greater willingness of men to use violence). But posing the question would make us aware of potential connections between the embedding of violence in the nation state construction process, alongside the domination of men in the public political realm in the course of that construction process⁹, and the persistent use of violence for certain aims. How

8 I would also seek a sharper refinement of the differential character and impact of physical, symbolic and structural violence. I think it is worth distinguishing between violence that can threaten your very physical existence and violence that undermines and erodes your physical existence but does not eliminate you.



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in turn does the publicly sanctioned use of violence relate to readiness to use violence in other socialisation spaces where male domination prevails and where masculinity is constructed in such a way as to make someone 'more of a man' for using violence? How does the flow of gendered relations between and within these spaces reinforce the normalisation, transmission and reproduction of violence across them all and through time?

Given the conventional nature of socialisation, its acceptance and internalisation in our behaviour, violence has become part of a seemingly natural human interaction. Until we question the convention and in particular its gendered components we cannot, I would argue, rid ourselves of this great source of pain and suffering. But nor would this be sufficient. We also need to think through how the acceptance of violence as a normal component of human interaction is to be challenged. And here the differences between men and women may not be so sharp. Women also often accept the normality of violence in their lives, either at home or in other spaces, as much as do men¹⁰, and often reap the benefits of male willingness to use violence or themselves reinforce the ideal of manhood that also fosters violent responses to perceived humiliation. We need, therefore, to build a much more robust mechanism for dealing with the shame, honour, pride issues that enhance the predisposition of men to use violence in given contexts, and offer alternative constructions of masculinity. While part of the agenda would be re-socialisation, the other part is to rethink the character of power and its relationship to human interactions and violence. Feminists who have consciously re-theorised gender relationships (albeit with little

9 A process which has been historically very violent throughout the world.

10 Field experience in Medellin, Colombia, reveals that girls often urge their partners to compete for power in male gangs because they reap material benefits from their partners' willingness to rob and kill.

consensus!) could potentially offer new insights and, through rethinking the exercise of power, offer women who gain the opportunity to exercise it the intellectual tools to challenge violence and the socialisation processes that foster it.

Diminishing violence through a new theory and practice of power

...Politically speaking, it is insufficient to say that power and violence are not the same. Power and violence are opposites; where the one rules absolutely, the other is absent. Violence appears where power is in jeopardy, but left to its own course it ends in power's disappearance. This implies that it is not correct to think of the opposite of violence as non-violence; to speak of non-violent power is actually redundant. Violence can destroy power; it is utterly incapable of creating it. (Arendt 1969: 56)

Arendt's distinction between power and violence is dependent on a particular understanding of power, one that appears counter-intuitive. Power for Arendt emerges when people decide to act together. Arendt is attempting to distinguish between human interactions that originate from a prior acceptance of the right of the Other to exist. This is a reciprocal recognition that nevertheless can lead to action to restrict the freedom of existence of the Other (ie power over, a form of power that Lukes rightly points out is not developed by Arendt), but does not deny recognition of the Other through pain on the Other's body and/or mind (the exercise of violence). Arendt's sense of power is actually profoundly different from conventional understandings of power, which I would argue derive mostly from masculine experiences and conceptualisations. For Arendt:

Power corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Power is never the property of an individual; it belongs to a group and remains in existence only so long as the group keeps together. When we say of somebody that he is in power' we actually refer to him as being empowered by a certain number of people to act in their name. (1969: 44)

¹¹ Lukes (2005) argues that Arendt ignores 'power over' and discusses Arendt alongside Talcott Parsons' consensual view of power. There are nevertheless vast differences between the social integrationist and functionalist propositions of Parsons on the one hand and Arendt's intellectual concern with public space and reasoned argument on the other. But Lukes is right to say that, like all conceptualisations of power, their propositions are normative (Lukes 2005:31).

I would argue that, seen through a gender lens, Arendt is trying to put forward a view of power that is much more in tune with more contemporary feminist deconstructions of power and empowerment, and the substitution of 'power over' with 'power to'.

The distinction or opposition between power and violence is not as apparent to the reader of Arendt's book if both are seen through the male lens that has become conventional to us. However, the evidence that women tend to participate in public life in supportive roles, and in community-based roles, suggests that many see power very much as Arendt outlines, as about collaboration and cooperation, and are uncomfortable with exercising 'power over'. In a recent field trip to explore civil society participation in the midst of Colombia's protracted violence and war, I asked the Casa de la Mujer, a feminist group based in Bogotá, whether they had generated their own vision of power. I am struck by how their analysis echoes that of Arendt:

Women must ask themselves, do they want to replicate exclusionary practices or encourage other types of political practices? Participation is about developing the commonality in our needs and how to negotiate individual and collective needs. Do we come together to put forward our needs or do we want to be exclusionary? Our proposals are not just for women, but for our families, for everyone. What type of political practices do we want to build? How do we not repeat other practices, including those among women? Power is denied us, how do we recognise the power of others? I don't know whether we have an alternative idea of power. We work on subjectivities. I cannot be democratic if I don't construct myself as a democratic subject. How as women do we build more democratic subjects? How do I find a balance between my personal interests and my collective interests? We need to reflect on new practices. This is a slow process. Families and schools are very authoritarian. We come from anti-democratic communities and the Church too. There is little acceptance of differences. We are very fundamentalist, left and right. The new subjectivities can materialise in new political practices. This question is in dispute in feminism. Power for what? Do we want power for human beings? Yes, but not that of men, based on

exclusion. We want a power that permits men and women to reach agreements. That doesn't mean that women are only victims. It means a construction. What is in us, which also reproduces exclusionary practices? Being victims takes away our own responsibility. In our work with women and violence, we think women are victims of violence. But we also analyse our responsibility, not for being beaten, but for not leaving the situation. We don't say women have to deal with their situation alone, we are not talking about guilt, but that something in our subjectivity makes us accept these situations. How can you transform the situation? At least you can take action and go to a doctor or a lawyer. Power is passed on through valuing the autonomy and self-esteem of women. We don't just suffer power. (Personal interview, Casa de la Mujer, Bogotá, 1 April 2005)

For these women power also has something to do with self-esteem. But it is gained through construction with others and consensus building. These reflections from differential gendered practices around power and violence could, I believe, shine a path to overcoming the destructive interaction between them that originates in gendered socialisations processes.

Conclusion

In order to end violence as well as wars, we need new ideas urgently. We need, for instance, an approach to justice claims that may recognise the justification for violent resistance or retribution in some cases, but nevertheless chooses not to use violence to pursue claims. We need to accept that non-violence is not passivity in the face of injustice. 'Civility' is an unfulfilled project in human cultural development partly because it is so unconvincing to those who experience oppression, exclusion and marginality. Such experiences generate shame and an assault on honour and pride, which in the form in which male socialisation exists, can trigger violent acts justified in terms of 'being a real man'. But to experience oppression does not mean unwillingness to oppress Others. The project of human cultural development must include an element that offers a more sustainable and universal challenge to that 'Othering', which is so often sustained or resisted by violence. It must contribute to the conditions that enable humans to live without violence.

I would argue that one of the obstacles in our pathway to reaching such a goal is gender socialisation. We need to unpack the way male and female identities have tended to foster violence and aggression in the one, and passivity and submission in the other. Through our constructions of bounded, gendered spaces, the circulation of these gendered constructions through time and space has been obfuscated. Changing our socialisation practices will not address the deep-seated inequalities which tap into the sense of shame that, it has been argued, make it more likely that men will act violently. A gendered approach to violence must, therefore, include a gendered approach to power that enables men and women to participate as equals in the public sphere where they can legitimately address the problems that have created the conditions for violence in human relationships. Unpacking the gendered components for violence is not to blame men for all violence, but to seek to understand one of the most vital components in its reproduction in order to liberate both men and women from its effects.

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