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**Doing Critical Men`s Studies in a State  
Feminist Country –**

Reflections on Gender Research  
in Sweden

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## **Introduction**

As gender research now moves into the 21st Century we are witnessing an ever-growing interest in issues that are related to our field. It is often far from a wholehearted positive interest and may often be phrased in ideologically biased or politically inflated terms of . But nonetheless it is an academic field with the possibility of stirring up whirls of emotions whether it concerns questions of gender mainstreaming and gender equality - such as equal pay or paternal leave - or theoretically sophisticated feminist thinking such as in the work of e. g. Donna Haraway (cf. 1991, 1997, 2003) or Judith Butler (1990, 2004). In short, huge numbers of men and women as well as any trans-category, are rarely indifferent to questions about gender identities, subjectivities, constructions, biology and so forth. As a social category it operates in both domestic and public spaces and it is certainly one of those fundamental mechanisms of thought that inescapably govern our lives in ways that sometimes we are not even aware of.

When I say our field or we, I think of a field where we may not be a close family but rather an extended one. Although some may find the metaphor of a family a bit suffocating, I would like to think of the field in terms of familism and affinity. As we all know families can be heaven and hell, an emotional prison of abuse and guilt or a haven of emotional comfort and trust. Families have a common origin and most often a common agenda, maybe loosely coupled, but still an agenda originating in a common history and in one way or another a common destiny. Family ties connect people for good or bad. Among the gender research family I would count three modern siblings: Feminist Studies, Critical Men's Studies and Gay and Lesbian Studies including bi- and transsexuality, what more commonly is referred to as Queer Studies. The metaphorical mother or for

that matter literally the practically caring mother, would definitely be classical Women's Studies. But where the father was or is, is a bit more diffuse. In allegorical terms, he has often been in the indeterminate state between absence and presence, as also been shown in studies of fatherhood over time (Kimmel 1996, Johansson 2004). In this family, Feminism is undoubtedly the big sister and Men's Studies a little brother looking up at the elder sister. The transing sister or brother is the queer one and I dare to say that she/he also likes to be looked upon as the queer one. In other words it is something being ascribed as well as a matter of self-ascription. From that particular position much key thinking concerning masculinity has taken place (Connell 1993). It is often easy to forget that such concepts as for instance hegemonic masculinity take their starting point in investigations of subordinated gender forms, meaning not only women, but also men expressing desires that go beyond heteronormative channelled expressions of sexuality. The sexual politics of the gay and lesbian activism has been of immense importance for the interest in masculine gender configurations (e.g. Edwards 2005).

A common agenda and history, that engages and evokes feelings of unbounded and liberating gender policies as well as utterly conservative contempt, is something that belongs to a common past and also defines a common future. Our past and our future woven together can be described as an emancipatory undertaking and epistemological pilgrimage towards a social science where gender is an axiomatic category for understanding societal change and stability. Then the emancipatory objective would be to deliver the category of gender, as well as other seminal social categories such as race, from its normative power and social significance. Also belonging to such a common agenda is a belief in the possibility of change, in the sense that we can - through high-lightning and focusing our engagement in research communities, scholarly practises and empirical and

theoretical work - twist gazes and see that femininity and masculinity are multiple and changing social categories. Neither are the biological differences between men and women a legitimate ground for inequality between the sexes. Such are, according to me and my own engagement in the gender research community the different emancipatory points of departure for an agenda that creates a sense of affinity and familism.

However, the emancipatory objective is formulated differently within the different fields depending on origin and traces of history. Feminist literature and withstanding emancipatory objectives have been occupied with three major questions (Yuval-Davis 1997: 5): Why/How are women oppressed? Are the differences between men and women biologically or socially determined or both? What are the differences in the category of women? If emancipation within feminism means acknowledging the experiences of women, creating public and private space for women in a patriarchal society, stopping domestic violence against women etc., what is then emancipation for men? As men in a literal and structural meaning are dominant in the societal gender order, what is then emancipation for men? It can of course be formulated in various ways. If feminism metaphorically takes a step forward or upwards what will men do? Well, I guess they (we) have to take a step down or sideways. In a straightforward metaphorical meaning, yes! Working for a more gender equal society means that men have to take a step down or at least sideways. In a simplified structural meaning one may assume that this is also the reason why it is so challenging to work with gender equality and why many men resist discussions concerning gender and gender equality. They resist gender equality and feminist arguments because of unwillingness to lose power in different ways. Quite frankly, I do believe that is a reasonable explanation because it is not easy to get men involved in work concerning gender equality. The authority that associates power and the sense of command

is so deeply entrenched in patriarchal ways of being in the world that it is no easy task to turn around, neither in the public sphere, nor in the private one. Throughout the history of masculinity, or rather masculinities as we would have it today, a 'leitmotif' of significant proportions, whether it concerns masculine socialisation, practices, professional cultures, religious cosmologies, crowned heads or landless peasantry has always been a sense of command and mastering. In short, it is fundamental for masculine scripts to navigate in the world and to exert power over women and other men who are part of that patriarchal dividend.

Still, with this rather dull statement in mind I would like to discuss some pertinent emancipatory lines of reasoning concerning Critical Men's Studies and gender equality in my native country Sweden and the corporative political culture of the Swedish system as initial point, since I do believe that effectual work regarding gender equality is done by women and men in coalition. In other words, to further enhance gender equality on a wide societal spectrum, men's involvement is needed. Critical Men's Studies in alliance with Feminism and Queer Studies are of vital importance here. As it has been articulated within a Scandinavian context it is a matter of "double emancipation" and I will return to this topic shortly. However, first I will recount some of the central tenets of Critical Men's Studies and research on masculinity or Männerforschung as the German notion would come out.

### **Men's studies and multiple masculinities**

To understand the history of masculinity and Critical Men's Studies is an intricate and complex matter. However, to cut a long story short, masculinity has multiple and ambiguous meanings which vary according to time and place. The ways of becoming a man are also, as we have witnessed in gender

research on masculinity during the last decades, multiple. This is what Connell (1998) has termed the 'ethnographic moment' in studies of masculinity. The multiplicity of masculinity has been an explicit aim for the growing body of research (Cf. Morgan 1992; Cornwall/Lindisfarne 1994; Connell 2000/2002; Johansson 2000; Whitehead 2002) in the theoretical aftermath of sex-role theory and diverse notions of patriarchy.

If sex-role theory, most productively, came to depict men as men, as gendered beings with their own rights, with specific terms of being in the world, masculinity would become an issue of merely individual character and little of the power-laden discussions seen in Marxist theoretical vein of the 1970s would be evident here (cf. Eichler 1980). In contrast, patriarchy theory inevitably came to force one to think about a structural level. As the rule of father also came to be the rule of men as a principle of male domination on a structural level there was little room for diversification of patriarchal forms as such. Still, notions of private versus public patriarchy came to differentiate various versions of male power from each other, but in general variations of masculinity were rarely the issue on the overall theoretical agenda. The need to pluralise masculinity can also be read in some early feminist works where a certain psychological determinism is prevalent and where men are depicted as one-sided and one-dimensional (Chodorow 1978, Gilligan 1982). In an article by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985) - setting out a new direction for the sociology of masculinity - several strands of feminism are criticised for relying upon the two absolute and undifferentiated categories of men and women and for producing a "categorical theory". Consequently, differentiation and the multiplicity of different gender configurations were the next steps in the growing interest on men and masculinity in the 1980s. Complexities, divisions and contradictions within the seemingly uniform category of men were pioneered by the work of Bob Connell in

the early 1980s. His concept of hegemonic masculinity has become the theoretical handle trying to understand the changing historical character of men's lives and various cultural representations of masculinity. A concept that tries to capture everyday practices, institutional structures and to point out how various dominant and dominated forms of masculinity connect to each other. To talk about masculinities in plural is thus an axiomatic category in contemporary studies. It indicates the shift from the man's role to men's roles in discussions of gender equality as well as broader feminist interventions. It also indicates a shift to a more complex picture of masculinity both in contemporary studies as well as in historical scholarship looking at men's unequal relations to men as well as men's relations to women. Masculinities in plural have become a currency and used as shorthand for a wide range of social phenomena (Connell 1987, 1995, 2000, 2002).

In this shift that has taken place since the early 1980s one can also notice that the somewhat tragic depiction of the 'misery of masculinity' and emotionally scanty men in crises has slowly been altered to more nuanced and complex descriptions of men. Still - not least in the Scandinavian countries - masculinities has been explored in relation to the problematic side of men's lives, i.e. alcohol, absent fathers, violence, loneliness, and so forth. But another important thread in Sweden and the other Scandinavian countries is the so-called fatherhood research. It is focused on men's parenting and state legislated reforms that try to make men feel more responsible and take a greater responsibility in family life. During the last decade this branch of critical men's studies has become the most influential and important subject matter in the Scandinavian context. This is indicated by the number of publications, public visibility and interest (cf. Åström 1990, Berg/Johansson 1999, Hagström 1999, Gavanas 2001, Plantin 2001, Klinth 2002). Unfortunately, most of this research is

published in Swedish, making it inaccessible to an international audience.

So some key conclusions can be drawn from the research of the last decades. In short these are the multiplicity of masculinity, the active and dynamic character of gendering processes of men and the internal contradictions and complexity of the field. It is singled out that masculinity refers to male bodies but is not determined by male biology. So we can, as Judith Halberstams (1998) excellent book on female masculinity shows, talk about female bodies being interpreted and performed as male bodies because of different cultural interpretations that constitute femininity and masculinity. Thus, male bodies as well as female bodies are performed and structured at the same time. Structurally and individually they are constantly transforming projects being transformed in local and global gender orders. As Connell (2000: 29) states: "Masculinities are configurations of practice within gender relations, a structure that includes large-scale institutions and economic relations as well as face-to-face relationships and sexuality." Directly or indirectly themes like power and powerlessness are always present in analyses of masculinities in relation to femininity, other masculinities and cross or trans-categories. To understand processes of power in relation to processes of gendering is one of the most important themes in studies of various forms of masculinity.

From my point of view, key debates in contemporary studies of masculinity should consequently revolve around intersectional readings and understandings of masculinities. In a world of multiple masculinities we can observe a number of different forms of masculinity. Oppression works from the top down and is reproduced at various layers along the social scale. In a certain sense, such forms of masculinity are hegemonic and subordinate in parallel. There are gender relations of dominance and subordination between groups of men (and women) connected to race, class and nation. Working with a



broad approach to power also means that we should recognize that domination has multiple forms and sources, varying sites, and differing modes of agency and operation (Nonini 1999). For instance, in my own work on working-class diaspora Chinese men in Malaysia it is quite clear that they are practising a form of gender configuration that is at the junction of several structural elements that subdue as well as privilege (Mellström 2003). They are practising a locally ordered hegemonic masculinity that also operates within a system where race, nation, class, family and gender are the structural intersectional elements. In this system, these men are simultaneously dominated and dominating. For analyses of multiple masculinities, it seems to be of vital importance to recognise that identity politics take place at the the junction where such categories intersect. Such analyses would also highlight multiple grounds of identity making and the situational and dynamic character of gender practices producing and reproducing elements of domination and subordination. The contemporary politics of Critical Men's Studies have an immensely important task in addressing these multiple grounds for equality and inequality. I believe that such an approach would speak to the empirical and lived experiences of both men and women

### *State Feminism*

Returning to the national arena of Sweden we can observe that in parallel to the unfair picture of men as problematic and one-dimensional patriarchal monsters from the early 1980s, there is also a line of thought and political action, which has been most influential. That is the need to involve men in the concrete work of gender equality. In the state-feminist country of Sweden where even the Prime Minister braves himself for being a feminist, it has been of political importance to involve men in this political vision of a gender equal society. The state feminist

project in Sweden is, as in many other countries, a project in which 40 years of gender activism have been institutionalised in agencies - ranging from equal opportunity commissions and councils to departments and ministries for women and gender related questions (McBride Stetson/Mazur 1995). The government appointed a gender equality “ombudsman” (män in pluralis) and gave legitimacy to a “feminism from above”, or state feminism (Hernes 1987). In a Scandinavian context, state feminists originally refer to “both feminists employed as administrators and bureaucrats in positions of power and women politicians advocating gender equality principles” (Siim 1991: 189; McBride Stetson/Mazur 1995: 10). Individual feminists in these roles have been labelled femocrats, literally combining feminist interests with the institutionalised power. Logically then, state feminism refers to the institutionalisation of feminist interests and I would also say interests in favour of gender equality concerning both women and men. However, the notions of state and feminism are far from universal and monolithic concepts. Feminist literature on the subject generally tries to avoid any of such universalism and develops a feminist theory of the state with less abstraction and more studies of the scope and context of government action and its consequences for women (Dahlerup 1986).

In the Swedish example, the most prominent symbolic act of such a state feminism is probably the establishment of the Equality Ombudsman (JÄMO) in 1980, followed by the efforts of a new generation of social democrats in the 1970s to put gender equality on the political map. Among these was the Prime minister Olof Palme, who stimulated and initiated state plans for sexual equality by establishing the Advisory Council to the Prime Minister on Equality Between Men and Women. Consequently the Equality Ombudsman has been most active in cases concerning sexual harassment and sex discrimination. In 1983, JÄMO brought the first case of sexual harassment to

the Labor Court and until now JÄMO has brought over hundred cases of sexual harassment and sex discrimination to the court. In the year 2000 the first man was assigned to the post of Equality Ombudsman after three women held the office between 1980-2000. This caused a huge media interest in Sweden and other parts of the world. Still, for many critics of the corporative political culture of the Swedish society, the Equality Ombudsman has come to symbolise the transformative power of the hegemonic state to include its critics and tame the autonomy of an independent feminist movement. As for instance Elman (1995: 252-253) suggests: “JÄMO has [...] been conspicuously absent from the struggle for better policies to redress violence against women. Indeed, the absence of a powerful autonomous feminist movement and the Swedish tendency to define sex discrimination in terms of economic inequality has combined to disengage the principal state equality office from feminist-inspired efforts to force the government to protect women against sexual violence.” From this point of view, the Equality Ombudsman represents the state’s version of feminism rather than a truly feminist state. Critical voices contend that instead of an autonomous feminist movement based on the notion of overturning the patriarchal system, a coalition with the political system and the major political players including women’s organisations inside and outside the political parties is made, and refuses to see that women’s disadvantaged societal positions has something to do with male-dominated institutions in the political life as well as outside it. This evident paradox of state feminism is something that continuously haunts the debate on gender equality, feminism, and gender research in general in the corporative political climate of the Swedish society.

*Double emancipation, parental care and men*

In this corporative political vision of a gender egalitarian society the idea of double emancipation by way of equal parenthood has been central. Double emancipation is an idea grounded in the debates concerning gender equality in Sweden and elsewhere since the 1960s. In Sweden, the idea of gender equality came to have a huge importance in the development of the welfare state as the family historian Roger Klinth (2002: ch1.) has documented in his work on parental leave and political visions in Sweden from the mid-1960s to the mid-1990s. Already in the beginning of the 1960s demands were raised that there would be no woman emancipation without a corresponding male emancipation. Women questions were also men's questions declared the former Prime Minister Tage Erlander back in 1964. When his successor at the post Olof Palme talked about Swedish gender equality at the Women's National Democratic Club in Washington in 1970, he claimed that: "These views, which first appeared to shocking and were ridiculed, have now been officially accepted [...]. Public opinion nowadays is so well informed that if a politician today should declare that the woman ought to have a different role than the man and that it is natural that she devotes more time to the children, he would be regarded to be of the Stone Age" (Klinth 2002: 14-15). The emancipation of men became visible in an active and equal parenthood and the Prime Minister was one of the strongest proponents of such a change. Men had to take a reproductive responsibility and women had to enter the labour market to a much higher degree than in the 1950s and 1960s. As one debater expressed it at the time: "[...] it is about making daddy pregnant and get mommy a job". It was a long-lived modernist dream and the ambition of the Swedish state to change society to the very core, but to reform gender roles through an active intervention in familial relations meant to reform a society where the deep patriarchal roots are still alive and functioning. This double movement meant that men were

expected to move into the household and women into the labour market. The general political vision and belief was, and still is, that male emancipation is to be achieved through men's fatherhood. So Fatherhood became the most important project of the gender equality politics. This is what Klinth calls *daddy politics*. In a narrow sense this includes the concrete political actions of the last thirty years concerning men and family politics. In a wider sense it is a discursive set of attitudes and attempts that characterise a political ambition that covers a wide range of political opinions and parties. Although the Social Democratic party has been dominating welfare politics for the last half century, there has been a surprisingly high degree of consensus, even by Swedish standards, concerning the political ambition to accrete fathers' involvement in domestic and reproductive responsibility. Liberal and conservative politicians have generally accepted the idea of male emancipation through an active and equal parenthood.

As one key expression of these ideas the parental insurance reform came back in 1974, which legislated that men could stay home with their children and were paid for it. In short, the rules of the parental insurance have changed several times over the years. At present (2005) either one of the parents is compensated with 80 percent of her/his salary up to an income ceiling of 24.000 SEK (appr. 2600 €) in a total of 390 days. The income ceiling is expected to be raised to 32.000 SEK (appr. 3500 €) in the summer of 2006. The latter can be seen as a strong motivating factor to increase men's share in the time of parental leave. Since men approximately earn twenty percent more than women on an average, the anticipated income loss is an important factor for men not to take parental leave, although a desire to do so is often expressed. 60 days of these 390 are bound to one person, meaning that these days will not be compensated if the other parent decides to stay home and take care of the child/children. Additional 90 days are compensated

to either one of the parents to a minimum sum of 120 SEK per day.

The parental insurance came to replace the former 'motherhood' insurance (moderskapsförsäkingen). A clear point of departure for the reform was: "[...] the division of labour between men and women that characterises our society at present is locking men and women into different roles and hinders a free personal development. Demands on gender equality are therefore not only concerned with changes in women's conditions but also in conditions for men. The change is directed towards women's increased possibilities to work and men's possibilities to take a greater responsibility for the children" (The Swedish governments bill 1973:47 p. 35, my translation). By means of the parental insurance reform men were made to a political category within the reproductive sphere. Here the state was also supposed to take a reproductive responsibility and intervene into the private sphere of the family. The latter has been a constant controversial issue since state legislation reforms in the 1970s. To what extent is the family a 'holy sphere' and to what extent can the state be part of family politics? According to a huge body of research within this field, one can undoubtedly speak about a close relationship between the state and the family in Sweden and to a varying degree in the other Scandinavian countries. Concepts like the 'public family' have been used to describe this so-called nordic form of family and political vision that is based on women's participation in the labour market and men's anticipated parental responsibility and a state reproductive responsibility. Although, the political vision and the reality of ordinary people's lives are far from corresponding. In 1975 only 1% of the total time of the parental leave were used by men, in the mid-1990s 11% and today 15%, the political and the role-modelling implications have been of importance to emancipatory issues and debates in Sweden and elsewhere I dare to say.

Then one could ask the question whether men have become more emancipated through political reforms and visions. Has change occurred? In the debates trying to deal with these issues one can outline two perspectives, a positive and a negative one. These perspectives resemble the critical vs. affirmative perspectives on the Nordic welfare states measures of gender equality mentioned before. In the positive version it is emphasised that it is a unique and historical breakthrough in family and welfare politics. With the parental insurance reform a feminist framework for thinking around family politics has been established. Social reproduction has been put in front of production on the labour market. Although there is still no equal state of parenthood between men and women, there is still a huge step forward in terms of gender equality. As part of a long tradition of social engineering in the social democratic welfare states of Scandinavia, the parental insurance reform has been successful in an international perspective according to those who hold a positive perspective. Men have assumed more responsibility for the reproductive sphere, not to the extent that the legislators had hoped for, but a gradual male emancipation is the success of the parental insurance reform. As a ground for a positive interpretation of the Swedish case in relation to the cultural interpretation of masculinity, researchers have talked about a “weak male breadwinner model” (Lewis 1992, Sainsbury 1996, Sommestad 1998). Thus the political climate of the Nordic welfare state is believed to incorporate a modest form of masculinity, which opens doors to feminist concerns and politics and for questioning the distinction of domestic and public – a central organising principle to many women’s and men’s lives. This, what one might call complicit form of masculinity (Connell 1995), has historically also opened up for women’s social rights being connected to citizenship rather than family and breadwinner males.

In contrast to this there are a number of scholars and debaters who have pointed to the low rate of men who actually take parental leave. According to them the parental insurance reform rather mirrors the Swedish society's self-ascribed idea of being a gender equal society. This idea is looked upon as nothing more than an idea since we are far from a gender equal society and the parental insurance reform rather works as a shadow-play disguising the real inequalities in society (cf. Eduards 1991, 1992, Gelb 1989, Hirdman 1994, 1998, Scott 1982). The unwillingness to legislate in order to make men accept a true parental responsibility has been compared to the often compelling family politics in regard to women. Although men have had the choice to take parental leave since the 1970s the labour market has changed very little and is still organised according to patriarchal logics. Women have the possibility to enter the labour market, mostly within the public sector, but they are also supposed to take the main responsibility for the domestic work. In this way, double emancipation has become double workload for many women according to these critics. With a highly segregated labour market concerning salaries, career opportunities and attitudes, the fundamental structural inequalities remain. Actually international research has shown the firm trend that income gaps tend to increase in combination with a generous parental insurance system (cf. Hwang and Russell 2000). Thus the parental insurance reform can also be described as a women's reform conditioned by men.

As parental insurance is a welfare reform and tied to the family as a unit, now voices are raised that parental leave should be tied to the individual as all other social rights and duties in the welfare state are. By connecting the parental insurance to the individual fathers can be forced to stay home with their children or their economic compensation will be lost. For instance father and mother can take six months of parental leave each plus an extra six months to be chosen by either the



mother or the father. Currently there is a heated battle-ground within Swedish family politics and conservative politicians and parties. Christian democrats and the conservative party are portraying this as the last step on the way to a total state intervention in family life that goes beyond any previous socialist experiment with the public family model. In contrast, radical parties such as the left-wing party, the greens and certain social democrats account such an intervention a drastic step that would challenge fundamental gender inequalities in a society, a state and a labour market based on patriarchal family values.

### *Critical Men's Studies in State Feminism*

By exemplifying a key problem and discussion within the Feminist State of Sweden I have tried to illustrate some of the dilemmas and questions that concern research within Men's Studies as well as other branches of gender research. The parental insurance reform has been at the crossroads of many highly pertinent questions - regarding gender and gender equality - empirical research has grown from here to a large extent. The close affiliation between research problems and societal concerns, following a long tradition of social engineering, can be looked upon in different ways. Just as feminist thinking and research, Critical Men's Studies have been regarded as politically biased and 'unscientific' because of the emancipatory claims implied in gender research. The connection to policymaking and what is considered as socially relevant questions has also been a recurrent point of criticism. The basic argument here is that the State should not dictate what can be regarded as political correct research.

The State Feminist umbrella can thus be viewed as both - a burden and an asset. It can be considered a burden in the sense that much criticism concerns the connection between

emancipatory objectives and the common belief held in gender research that change are possible through research. In research communities - based on a belief in the detached observer viewing the world from a distance and discovering it through the lenses of instrumental objectivity - much gender research is epistemologically quite wobbly. Apparently, it is also much harder to talk about gender and power relations in the contemporary sociocultural gender order. In psychics and mathematics it is still harder than it is in sociology and the social sciences, although Feminist Science Studies have shown us the inherent gender structure and epistemological agenda of much Science and medical research (cf. Harding 1986, Bryld & Lykke 2000, Martin 1987, Haraway 1991). However, leaving that question aside, here it has been pointed out sufficiently that gender research is controversial in many fields because of the implied emancipatory agenda and epistemological differences of various sciences. This history includes the acknowledgement as an independent academic field. The epistemological claims following from that include new epistemological maps and directions (cf. Braidotti 1994). This is of course something that still goes on to a high degree and will most probably continue to do so for an unforeseeable future.

Politically motivated gender research has also been an asset and presupposition, at least when I look upon my native country. In Sweden, that today probably has one of the most developed academic infrastructures for gender studies in the world, politically initiated and directed initiatives have been of outmost importance in the establishment of Departments of Gender Studies and centres for gender research all around the different universities in Sweden. Initiatives rarely came from the mainstream academic bodies themselves but from responsible politicians in alliance with grass-root feminism inside and outside the universities. The national secretariat for gender research at Göteborg University is one example. The initiative

came from the Ministry of educational affairs and was a brainchild of the former Minister of Education, Carl Tham. It was also his idea to initiate six professorships directly related to Gender Studies. The money and professorships that were allocated in 1995 - highly controversial at the time - are today part of the infrastructural backbone of Swedish gender research. Likewise is the early allocation of 10 million SEK directed to Swedish gender research at the Swedish Research Council originally, research funding initiated in the political sphere rather than the academic community. Without this political backing the state of the art of contemporary research would have been more depressing and, on a personal level, I would not have been in the position to write this piece since my academic career can be directly related to this funding. In this sense one could say that I am an embodied example of State Feminist politics. Likewise is the now up-coming (spring 2005) first professorship in masculinity studies at Linköping University and in Scandinavia. To my knowledge it is the first professorship worldwide that is directly related to Men's Studies and masculinity research. It is therefore a professorship that has a great symbolic significance for the field and in alliance with feminism and Queer Studies it will continue to work for emancipatory objectives and an epistemological difference. In the process of securing funding and establish the field of masculinity studies further, symbolically important figures such as the new professor at Linköping University will have to fight a similar academic inertia that Women's Studies as well as sexuality research has been doing for the last thirty years. Therefore the alliance and affinity of the different siblings of the gender research family are of vital importance, in regard to a dialogue and understanding of the historical preconditions and a sense affinity being bound to a parallel epistemological project of making a difference and formulating alternatives.

In sum, State Feminism is both a burden and a blessing. In parallel it is the ground for criticism and the hand that feeds you, but what would be the alternative in academic research? We are inevitably dependent on a state which believes in the importance of a gender-egalitarian society and acknowledges the importance of discussing these fundamental issues. Critical Men's Studies have just taken the first stumbling steps in the contribution to this project.

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