UNSUSTAINABLE INSTITUTIONS OF MEN

TRANSNATIONAL DISPERSED CENTRES, GENDER POWER, CONTRADICTIONS

Edited by
Jeff Hearn, Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila and
Marina Hughson

Unsustainable Institutions of Men

How are men, masculinities and gender power implicated within global institutions? How are global institutions to be understood in terms of men, masculinities and gender power? What are men up to in such arenas as: global finance, corporate law, military intelligence, world sporting bodies and nationalist politics?

Unsustainable Institutions of Men examines men's dealings in transnational processes across the economy, politics, technologies and bodies. In exploring the men's domination of institutions in national and transnational realms this volume underpins a novel approach built around multiple "dispersed centres" of men's power. Indeed, in critical discussions of men and masculinities there has been a gradual shift in focus from the local, so-called 'ethnographic moment', to a broader view encompassing several dynamics (e.g. global, transnational, international, postcolonial and the global north-south). Building on this conceptual move, *Unsustainable Institutions of Men* focuses on pinpointing men's actions and influences that support and enact transnational processes, disclosing those connections and examining institutional alternatives which could contribute to more inclusive and democratic transnational dialogues.

Comprised of a range of international contributions, *Unsustainable Institutions of Men* will appeal to students, researchers, experts and activists seeking to understand the deep structural conditions of contemporary globalized threats, created by old and new patterns of gender power and transnational patriarchies.

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Transnational Dispersed Centres, Gender Power, Contradictions
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We dedicate this book to our kind friend and inspirational colleague, Marie Nordberg (1 April 1955–29 March 2015).

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Introduction: unsustainable institutions of men

Transnational dispersed centres and immanent contradictions

Jeff Hearn, Marina Hughson and Ernesto Vasquez del Aguila

Men, masculinities and gender relations exist locally, but are not only local – as if they ever were. In the scholarly, political and policy communities engaged in critical discussions on men and masculinities there has been a gradual move from talking about the local to a much broader view. This latter take goes under various labels, for example, the global, transnational, postcolonial, decolonial (izing), as well as often addressing what come to called global North–South or more accurately metropole/centre–semiperiphery–periphery dynamics (Blago-jević 2009). In this book we build on and add to these moves through a focus on what men and masculinities do in the basic functioning, and indeed changing, of the institutions that support and enact multiple transnational processes. As such, we are indebted to the growing scholarship that engages explicitly with the relations between men, masculinities, gender, intersectionality, globalization, and transnationalizations.[1] We interrogate those connections, and wish to contribute to thinking and reflection on institutional alternatives which could contribute to more inclusive, democratic, decolonializing and feminist transnational dialogues and futures.[2]

While there are many insightful and important debates on globalization that provide keen insights on political economies, they still often do not explicitly address gender relations, let alone men and masculinities. We draw attention to the ways men and masculinities are shifting within the contemporary political and economic climate and current phase of globa-lization. This includes how elite men are taking over institutions that are themselves becoming multiple dispersed centres of power, and yet which often continue to bear the facade of being 'democratic'. New institutions and paradigms are changing the contours of men's power, especially within what we refer to as dispersed centres of transnational change, which have their local, regional and global materializations. The concept of institu-tions is used here, rather than simply organizations, as the former is a more open-ended, culturally sensitive concept that stretches across and between particular organizations and specific ways of organizing resources, power, technologies, and people.

The FIFAization of institutions

The uneven, changing, sometimes unpredictable, global and transnational processes and institutions have been examined by many scholars through contrasting and sometimes incommensurate paradigms, historically and in the contemporary period. The historicity, temporality and often temporary nature of such institutions have been taken up in very many ways, ranging across the political and analytical spectra.

One major line of critique emphasizes the instability of institutions under capitalism. Marx and Engels (1848/2010) wrote in *The Communist Manifesto* that 'all that is solid melts into air', as echoed by Marshall Berman's thus named book (1982). That capitalism destroys social values has been highlighted by various conservative and reactionary commentators, but both Marx and Berman, among many others, saw the radical and liberatory potential of the insight.[3] There have been innumerable studies of capitalist crisis, boom and slumps, the global falling rate of profit (Carchedi and Roberts 2018), economic 'contagion' effects from imperialist centre(s) to peripheries (Ba 2017), and shifting of crisis from economic to financial to fiscal to political (Walby 2015).

Meanwhile, within the mainstream, in *The Great Degeneration: How Institutions Decay and Economies Die*, the historian Niall Ferguson (2012)[4] examined the degeneration of the institutions that were once considered the 'pillars' of Western society: representative government, the free market, the rule of law, and civil society. In *The Origins of Political Order* and *Political Order and Political Decay*, Francis Fukuyama (2011, 2014) pointed to the fragility of liberal national democracy in the emerging global world order, and the specific risks of 'repatrimonialization': favouring family or friends with whom reciprocal favours are exchanged as a 'natural form' of sociability. More critically, the feminist commentator, Naomi Klein (2007), in *Shock Doctrine* and other books, has examined degeneration and fragility in a different way by delving deeply into the murky waters of disaster capitalism.

Another a rather different line of analysis tends towards emphasis on social and institutional progress, linearity of modernity, continuity and convergence. Thus, even with the recognition of the many kinds and analyses of change, a widely used model of the effects of globalization on institutions has been that of 'McDonaldization', a supposed worldwide homogenization and rationalization of societies and contingent control and centralization of institutions (Ritzer 1983, 1993/2011).

We suggest that both these tendencies do not capture the complexity of the current situation of global and transnational institutions that we see as changing, even transforming, in the contemporary era, facilitated by financialization and digitalization of political economy. The model for many transnational institutions is now more like a FIFAization of cultures and institutions, that is, one of *transnational dispersed centres*, of several different forms, in which centring, dispersal and the transnational are in triangular tension.

While McDonaldization is a form of globalization based on replication and franchising on a small scale, albeit ubiquitously, FIFAization, in contrast, is based on contracting and dispersal of finance, media, and visuals often from a single or main location, to the level of subsuming national democratic institutions or local business, and transforming them in accordance to its corporation-like set goals. Another important difference is that FIFAization is connected to a more intense level of 'immaterial' digitalization and virtualization, as opposed to McDonaldization, which is based on a more material and tangible service-oriented economy. Hunger is a real need, which can be satisfied in different ways, but the 'need' for a football game on a screen is heavily produced and dependent on information and communication technologies (ICTs), digitalization and virtualization more generally. So, those two models represent different types of production, consumption, and financial growth. These conditions facilitate further financialization, contracting out, outsourcing and offshoring (Urry 2014), as opposed to repetition and decentralization in previous phases of capitalist development.

Thus, with this book we challenge some (dominant) paradigmatic understandings of globalization, and even some approaches to gendered transnational change, with both multiple dispersed centres of men's power, and dispersion within those centres. We interpret those transnational entities, as well as the present dominant type of globalization, through a critical focus on men and masculinities dominating (in) the transnational centres of power. The contributions explore the links between domination as exercised by men throughout historical and present-day manifestations in national and transnational realms. Historical continuity pertains in some of these developments, but now the stakes are even higher, with transnationalizations set up to control spaces beyond their coordinates. In other words, there is no escape, no exit back to the small-scale. Contemporary domination is based on all previously lessons learnt on domination, and has severely constrained or closed down, if not totally eliminated, step by step, alternative spaces, exits and strategies.

The overall embracing and publicizations of all aspects of public and private lives, and public and private patriarchies, with increasing surveillance and concentration of technological power, is deeply redefining everything that was once known as 'society', 'individual', 'privacy' or 'freedom'. Conceptual vagueness corresponds to a growing cacophony produced by and within decentralized social networks, which additionally strengthens the centres controlling, centralizing and dominating power. However, although it is difficult at the moment to clearly see where and how the new alternatives can emerge, it is in the very nature of the 'new' to be unpredictable. This condition is no more clear than in the deep unpredictability or 'fluidity' of #45, the current president of the USA, in a global ultraconservative alliance, 'whose defining characteristics are kleptocracy and dominating masculinity, with the likes of Putin (Russia), el-Sisi (Egypt), Erdogan (Turkey), Salman (Saudi Arabia), Duterte (Philippines) among others' (Messerschmidt and Bridges 2017), and perhaps Kim Jong-un (North Korea). Arguably, such fluidity is enhanced in creations of 'alternative facts', and technologies for visual 'deepfakes'. Therefore, 'it is not over until it's over'.

Such contemporary transnational changes are best seen as significant developments in the near totalization of transnational patriarchal (transpatriarchal [Hearn 2009]) processes and other forms of domination, if not strictly a historical paradigm shift. To develop this approach is not to dismiss the potential of the 'local' to mutate, ameliorate and transform such transnational developments. Nor is it to understate the potential for resistance and positive change in relation to transnational dominance, as might be emphasized in, for instance, in a Foucauldian perspective on relations of power that are always to some extent dispersed, and always with possibilities for manifestations of counter-power. These dispersals also raise the question of the unsustainability of many of the transnational developments. The potential impacts of the local and/or the possibilities for resistance and positive change offer some ways towards analysis of how positive resistance to these totalizing processes, in addition to their unsustainability, might be envisaged.

Transnational centres: forms and contradictions

The book, *Rethinking Transnational Men: Beyond, Between and Within Nations*, edited by Hearn, Blagojević[5] and Harrison (2013) considered transnational men and masculinities from the perspectives of social processes of transnational men *within, across, and beyond nations*. This perspective is our first dimension of analysis. As discussed previously, 'the transnational' invokes two elements: the *nation* or *national boundaries*, and '*trans*' (across) relations, as opposed to 'inter' relations or 'intra' relations (Hearn 2004). This raises a paradox: *the nation is simultaneously affirmed and deconstructed*. This is partly a question of what is meant by the 'trans' in 'the transnational'. In short, the element of 'trans' refers to three basically different notions, as well as more subtle distinctions between and beyond that:

> *moving across* something or *between* two or more somethings, in this case, across national boundaries or between nations …;
> *metamorphosing*, problematizing, blurring, transgressing, breaking down, even dissolving something(s), in this case, nations or national boundaries – in the most extreme case, leading to the demise of the nation or national boundaries …;
> *creating new configurations*, intensified transnational, supranational, or to different degrees, deterritorialized, dematerialized or virtual entities: structures, institutions, organizations, classes, groups, social movements, capital flows, networks, communities, supra-identities, cultural and public spaces, involving two or more nations, or more often different actors there interacting across national borders.
>
> (Hearn and Blagojević 2013: 9)

From these previous analyses, our primary concern is with the question of multiple *transnational centres* across such multiple transnational sites as:

business and finance; militarism; international sport; sex trade, and sex-ualization in the global mass media; ICTs and other socio-technologies; transportation, environment, energy; migration; social movements; and knowledge, scientific and medical production.

The notion of transnational centres conveys seemingly opposing and contra-dictory meanings. On one hand, it connotes concentrations of power, not neces-sarily materialized, while in some cases quite physical and material, as in global cities or global metropoles. These are not necessarily bounded geographical sites or places, but may well be. Some of these different forms of transnational centres concern the direct and hierarchical *concentration and accumulation* of resources, financial, business and political. Classic concentrations of resources occur in supranational organizations bounded in particular times and spaces. They seek to control beyond their boundaries, with imperialist and colonial interests, while situated in global centres, peripheries and semiperipheries. They often reflect dynamics of the global city, and are dominated by men at the top, but they are also intertwined with the local men's elites. The fact that men are dominating centres of power is both the cause and the consequence of long established, global patriarchal patterns of men and masculinity, expressed in hierarchies, oligarchies, plutocracies, competitions, and exclusions (Connell 1998, 2014, 2016). These power dynamics of men and masculinity are especially focused on elite practices in elite settings. Examples here might include: big business, multi-national corporations, financial organizations, sport organizations, political organizations, legal organizations, multilateral organizations (for example, UN, EU, OSCE, OECD), and militaries.

On the other hand, the concept of transnational centres explicitly conveys how such centres are also transnational, albeit in diverse ways. Transnational centres may be spread, in a dispersed way, across locations and borders, horizontally and vertically, rather than centred in or restricted to one particular point in time and space, in literal or metaphorical headquarters. Transnational centres may build their concentrated power from the fact that they operate in supranational spaces 'above', often in a constant flow and processuality, and that therefore they are not affected, controlled or influenced by localized centres of power. Their domination is closely linked to their illusion of immateriality and independence from the material and tangible world 'below'. Hence, we talk of transnational centres to capture this present state of high invisibility of the *modus operandi* of those centres in connection to men and masculinities, and the apparent contradiction between their physical locatedness and transnational flows, with both physical-material and virtual *dispersions*.

Thus, many transnational centres are what we call *transnational dispersed centres*, albeit of several different forms. As such, the book engages with the immanent contradictions of transnational processes, of spatialization (cen-tralization and dispersal), of structural institutionalization and apparent transience, of gender power, and of men and masculinities. With transnational dispersed centres, the power of men is drawn together in a rather different way, with different spatial and social arrangements, from the examples of

classic centres of top-down domination above. With transnational dispersed centres, the 'centres' are multiple or networked rather than simply tangibly concentrated. These institutions are also generally dominated by men at the top, but are polycentric, and as such they reflect ethnically and nationally diverse and connected mini-patriarchies and gendered hierarchies. Such forms occur across all the sectors of concentrated centres noted above, and also include: science and technology institutions (both state and corporate), virtual and online activities, ICTs, media, advertising organizations and campaigns, cultural industries, and the film industry, with the specific forms and impacts of Hollywood and Bollywood, and their products, as forms of soft invasion.

A key issue in analysing transnational dispersed centres is the transfer and deployment of a variety of both material resources – finance, people, and things – and virtual resources. In the latter case, dispersion is often reproduced symbolically, and operates through and in the contexts of ICTs, with complex and evolving forms of technocratic virtualization (Hearn et al. 2013; Poster 2013). Mobility and migration with patterns of movements of both rich and poor, are undoubtedly fundamental aspects of transnational dispersed centres. Some privileged men's power is thus extended materially and virtually – for global elites, managers of large multinationals and their foreign assignments, and military and governmental leaders; but for others such transnational processes mean temporary or permanent displacement, whether they are dispossessed, forced, relocated, disentitled or partially sought (Donaldson et al. 2009; Vasquez del Aguila 2014). There are also, through transnational processes, growing numbers of dispersed students, researchers and technicians, sometimes in precarious forms of labour.

Some transnational dispersed centres are based in supranational institutional structures and formalized networks; others are more emergent; some are centred on specific activities or events, for example, public gatherings and major sports events; some are more stabilized; others are ad hoc and temporary. Some dispersed centres like famous universities and elite schools and their emerging campuses dispersed across continents successfully use established networks and well-established infrastructures and motifs, while others build power on their supposed newness, innovativeness and uniqueness.

With activities and events, the institutions concerned may seem temporary, short-term or spectacular. They take the form of apparently informal, often massive, gatherings that are often organized formally, and sometimes repeated as if having a life of their own. They can leave a mark afterwards. We are referring here to trends towards 'mega' events in which people come together from many nations across the so-called global North and South, itself another convenient but sometimes damaging construct. This involves wide public participation and suggests a different kind of transnational centre, which incorporates multiple constituencies of men. These often include large numbers of men as spectators, users of substances such as alcohol and other drugs, and viewers and consumers of prostitution. Men who participate in those events reconstruct and reproduce their patriarchal masculinities through

and by those events, while at the same time they reconstruct and reproduce the patriarchal nature of those events. Examples include: large sporting events like the Olympics, various sporting world cups, business fairs, marriage fairs, mega-churches, global evangelism, pilgrimages, and beauty contests. While those events are often, perhaps typically, both men-centred and patriarchal, they also consume the space of possible non-patriarchal parallels.

Finally, it is important to note that transnational dispersed centres, however, are located on both sides of the globalized political power structure: in the power concentration and consolidation of the new transnational predatory (male) elites, as well as transformative, disruptive counter-power centres, embodied in transnational networks, organizations and individual leaders. Due to the intentional designs of dominant political elites, their rate of concentration at the moment is faster, but new modes of counter-power and transnational dispersed centres are already operative.

The (un)sustainability of institutions

The example of FIFA and FIFAization has already been introduced. FIFA has become organized as a global institution combining many national associations, and it operates through leadership that is sometimes autocratic (and even perhaps corrupt) by certain elite men. In this example, concentrations of power are polycentric. FIFA is centralized – numerous resources and people *feed into* the main event, and then *feed out* in terms of commodification, images, values, and refashioned and appropriated urban spaces. FIFA is responsible for producing one of the largest and most powerful mega-events – financially, visually, consumer- or media-wise – not to mention through the building of massive urban infrastructures. Business masculinity in FIFA is apparent in the egregious links of global sports to corporate sponsorship and media broadcasting, both direct consumption in real time and post-event packages. Masculinity or masculinism also pervade the performance and spectacle of manhood on the field, and the creation of male elite millionaire athletes.

Furthermore, big sporting events are associated with sexual violence of many kinds, as evidenced in the increases in abuse of women by fans in the aftermath of games. The whole setting of football events is created visually along the lines of rigid gender roles and positionings. Even women's football does not effectively change the pattern, but instead this rather easily becomes incorporated into the already defined masculinity-based game and business. The impact analysis of young men's socialization through and by trans/national elites gathered around football is still missing; what such dynamics mean for men and masculinity is only starting to be explored.

A rather different set of examples of transnational dispersed centres concerns engagement with natural resources and the environment more generally. The centres may be dispersed, but they are marked and restricted by the physical environment and finite sets of resources. Men in these institutions are in control of, or seek to control, geographies for their industries that may

draw directly from nature. As the environment is beyond national borders, institutions are precariously situated. Often they are organized regionally or focused on one natural resource or area. Examples might be: organizations and institutions which address environmental issues, globally, regionally, or locally, in general, or specifically transport, water management, oil production, waste industries, space research, NASA, and similar institutions in the EU and elsewhere.

An even more complex example of this changing paradigm for transnational centres of men and masculinities is that of the United Nations. The UN has shifted its governing agenda from the 2000 'Millennium Goals' to that of 'Sustainability', in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This latter process of specification is more wide-ranging in terms of the involvement and incorporation of the views of more political actors than national governments alone, notably business and some kinds of NGOs. The UN is shifting to a more diffuse, dispersed agglomeration than simply an international cooperation of nation-states.

At the same time, sustainability can be understood as representing a new way of looking at globalization that also warrants a reconsideration of the critical analysis of men, masculinities and gender power relations. The prior focus was on ending poverty, in the classic modernization view of 'development', as Liz Ford (2015) explains:

> The eight MDGs [Millennium Development Goals] – reduce poverty and hunger; achieve universal education; promote gender equality; reduce child and maternal deaths; combat HIV, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; develop global partnerships – failed to consider the root causes of poverty, or gender inequality, or the holistic nature of development. The goals made no mention of human rights, nor specifically addressed economic development.

However, the new agenda expands from eight to seventeen goals. Variable, often loaded, and sometimes ideological, notions of resilience and endurance pervade most of these categories. Another implication is the striking and repeated emphasis on the environment: this realm is listed in five of the new goals, from sustainable use of oceans and ecosystems, to management of water and sanitation, to energy and climates. Critically, sustainability applies to so much more: cities (goal 11), consumption and production (goal 12), infrastructure, industrialization and innovation (goal 9), and economic growth and employment (goal 8). Indeed, the very economic substructure and foundation of global societies are now seen through the concern for livable and lasting institutions.

Human society is once again being subjugated to 'higher goals', which in reality can easily turn into the new totalitarianisms. In fact, the sense of 'urgency' to take a global coordinated action, which is constantly being nourished by fears related to environmental disasters and terrorism, is a fertile

ground for growth of both an old and a new type of absolutism, as a form of political governance in the growing number of countries with 'facade democracies'. Transnational fear of disasters and terrorism, translated into mandates of supranational entities, can feed local autocrats, most often being men and belonging to men's transnational elites. They increasingly draw their local political power from transnational realms, which are beyond democratic control from 'below'.

This kind of thinking is also increasingly in play in education, research, research funding and publication, for example, the European Commission Horizon2020 research programme. It surfaces in what may seem surprising places, such as some business schools, and the desire to create 'responsible leaders' of global capitalism. The language in use is that of 'leverage', 'capacity building', 'incentivizing', 'scaling up', 'robustness', and the positive relation of 'business' and 'societal relevance'. What is on offer is sustainable capitalism, with the SDGs its ideology or ideological banners.

What is perhaps most interesting here is that at the same time as equality is promoted and inequality opposed by the SDGs, inequality seems to increase inexorably and human rights seem widely under threat. Across the global economy, '(a)lmost half of the world's wealth is owned by one percent of the population. … The bottom half of the world's population owns the same as the richest 85 people in the world' (Fuentes-Nieva and Galasso 2014: 2–3; also see Credit Suisse 2016; Hardoon et al. 2016; Oxfam 2017). Latest projections from the UK House of Commons suggest that this figure may reach two-thirds of global wealth by 2030 (Savage 2018). In particular, Pogge and Sengupta (2016) make three critical arguments on SDGs in relation to human rights:

1   The SDGs promote a false sense of success and make it easy for governments to go slow on the realization of human rights;
2   The SDGs fail to specify what a human-rights-based duty or genuine goal to eradicate severe poverty requires: a clear division of labour;
3   The full realization of human rights requires a massive roll-back of international and intra-national inequalities, which the SDGs fail to demand.

In essence, then, this UN agenda articulates the locations and issues where inequality is playing out through global North–South imbalances of power. The ambition of the UN is highlighted at a time of increasing authoritarianism in government and politics, and when its impact is very limited against nationalistic, protectionist and authoritarian tendencies. Instead of dealing with the root causes of global and local inequalities throughout the world, a sustainability agenda is presented both as an 'urgency' and 'emergency' which can justify subordination of humans, their societies and their rights. It is these sites – and their current state of unsustainability – that we seek to interrogate. This entails addressing in what ways are certain men and certain kinds of masculinity at the core of the barriers to safe, inclusive, and thriving global institutions? This is especially urgent with the current combination of global