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Neoliberal Universities, Patriarchies, Masculinities, and Myself: Transnational-personal Reflections on and from the Global North[1]

Jeff Hearn

Abstract: This article reflects on working in eight universities in Finland, Sweden, and the UK, along with many transnational research projects. These are analysed within the framework of what might be called neoliberal universities, neoliberal trans(national)patriarchies, and neoliberal masculinities. Importantly, these are reflections from the global North, being transnationally located there, rather than glossed as 'global' or simply assumed as nationally contextualised. This discussion is located within the burgeoning literature on neoliberalism, and then proceeds to examine, first, experiences in the UK, before those in Finland and Sweden. The final section focuses on the transnationalisation of these neoliberal processes in academia – for example, through transnational research development, projectisation of research, and language use, performance and performativity. In such ways multiple connections are drawn between the greater organisational 'autonomy' of universities, contradictions of transnationalisations of academia, and the construction of 'autonomous' individual(ist) academics.

Keywords: neoliberalism, universities, transnational reflections

In late 1990s and early 2000s I became particularly interested in charting broad structural changes in UK male-dominated university regimes, managements, patriarchies, and gender relations (Hearn 1999, 2001). This was inspired partly by my experience in the UK as a head of a multi-disciplinary department, and partly through relocating to Finland, and trying to make sense of the UK system from the outside (Hearn 2002), as well as being with my partner, a leading expert on gender and academia. I was especially interested in the implications of changing university management regimes for constructions of men and masculinities (see Collier 1998). This interest has not gone away, but rather has become intensified in two ways: by continuing to work in three countries – Finland, Sweden, and the UK – and also for a few years working part time in Norway; and by the major increase in both the intensification and the internationalisation of academia and my own involvement in many transnational researches. In the European context, internationalisation of research and teaching has notably been promoted by the European Union.

In recent years there has been a qualified return of interest in the concept of patriarchy and thus neopatriarchy, neoliberal patriarchy, and 'neoliberal neopatriarchy' (Campbell 2014) as ways of making sense of both neoliberalism and globalisation. These debates are also of relevance for academia. Neoliberal universities operating within neoliberal (transnational) patriarchies (Hearn 2015a) are sites of neoliberal masculinities. Recent neoliberal tendencies in universities in these three countries have taken both similar and different forms. I present here some personal reflections on and around what might be called in shorthand: neoliberal universities, neoliberal trans(national)patriarchies, and neoliberal masculinities. Importantly, these are reflections on and from the global North, being transnationally located there, rather than glossed as 'global' or simply assumed as nationally contextualised.

While my focus in this article on the three countries of Finland, Sweden and the UK stems in large part from my personal experience there, this assists a more general comparison both between a more established (neo)liberal system, the UK, and the Nordic loosely social democratic systems (see Esping-Andersen 1990), and also between the two Nordic systems of Finland and Sweden. For example, Sweden has followed a more explicitly social democratic and more overtly egalitarian historical trajectory, but neoliberal influences in its governance are no weaker and are perhaps even clearer than in Finland with its traditions of dual full-time earners, qualified corporatism, and coalition politics. While Sweden is more egalitarian and social democratic in rhetoric, and indeed in explicit interventions, than Finland, societal outcomes are not so very different. For example, in 2012 Finland had a declining Gini coefficient of 27.12 and Sweden a rising figure of 27.32 (the UK stands far

more unequally at 32.57).[2] The 2016 World Economic Forum Global Gender Gap Index places Finland second at .845, Sweden fourth at .815, and the UK twentieth at .752.[3]

The article is in some ways a personal account of working across three countries, an approach bringing both challenges and potentialities. Though not an autoethnography, it builds on this and other reflexive approaches such as critical life history and memory work, along with documentary analysis. It derives from slow scholarship, long-term engagement with three different academic systems, and everyday ways of working across three different disciplines and different types of university. The following account, though necessarily selective, seeks to bring together observations on and experiences of concrete practices, complex organisational processes, and broader trends in academia within their (trans)societal contexts – as exerting considerable impact on contemporary academics.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows: first, I review what is meant by neoliberalism and its relevance for universities, as a background to the sections of the UK, and then the two Nordic countries. In the final section, I engage with some transnational and personal reflections that cut across the previous country-based examinations.

Neoliberalism and neoliberal universities

Now there is much talk of neoliberalism, and, at the same time, the neoliberal university. Neoliberalism seems to be the motif of the age. In many ways we know more or less what is meant by the shorthand 'neoliberalism'. But what is neoliberalism? Not surprisingly, there are multiple approaches to neoliberalism. Terry Flew (2014) has identified various different uses of neoliberalism, including notions as diverse as a description of a particular Anglo-American institutional economic framework, a form of governmentality and hegemony, and a variation on liberal political theory. Often, though far from always, neoliberalism is cited negatively as an 'all-purpose denunciatory category' (Flew 2014: 51; see also Boas, Gans-Morse 2009; Thorsen 2010). At the risk of simplification, different, and sometimes contradictory, understandings of neoliberalism stem, to some extent, from disciplinary differences, principally from economics, political science, sociology, and cultural studies.

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[2] The Gini coefficient (sometimes Gini ratio or normalised Gini index) is the most commonly used measure of national income or wealth inequality. The higher the figure the greater inequality. A Gini coefficient of 1 (or 100%) expresses maximal inequality; for example, where, amongst a large number of people, only one person has all the income, and all others have none, the Gini coefficient will be very nearly 1. See: http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.GINI

[3] See: https://reports.weforum.org/global-gender-gap-report-2016/rankings/

In economics, neoliberalism refers to contemporary forms of (global) capitalism that involve intensive profit-led economic growth, the move to financialisation, and the extension of financial markets and indeed informatised capitalism into new commodities. In some senses, this is a return to some of the ideologies of nineteenth century laissez-faire capitalism; it other ways, it is capitalist development in a new form. This version of capitalism has been promoted since the 1970s by a wide variety of actors, including the Chicago School of economics and its followers. It not only entails greater claims for the market and capitalists themselves, but has also led to the shift from Keynesianism to monetarism in public economic policy. These are clearly political processes. In political science, discussions on neoliberalism have focused more on the changing role of the state, the blurring of the economy/capitalism/ private sector and politics/state/public sector, political moves against trade unionism, and the growth of new public management. In the US context, Wendy Brown has argued that 'part of what makes neoliberalism "neo" is that it depicts free markets, free trade, and entrepreneurial rationality as *achieved and normative*' (Brown 2006: 694; emphasis in the original). Colin Hay (2004), writing in the UK context, has gone further in moving the analysis from normative to normalised and to necessitarian neoliberalism. Thus, this is not only a move from the New Right, but also at times from Left and Centre (Hay 1999; Larner 2000), as politicians across mainstream party spectra work within relatively given financial parameters. The 'neo' is thus partly about ideology and in turn discourse.

In many sociological, and some cultural, studies, capitalism, or these neoliberal forms, inhabit the person, identity, and the self, often seen as set within the knowledge society. This is, depending on one's cultural references, an internalisation, a subjectivation, and perhaps most importantly an (illusory) sense of calculative, entrepreneurial choice and economic individualism. As Zygmunt Bauman argued some years ago, the contemporary societal situation means that 'the successor of the modern state places its bet on the expedient of privatizing and diffusing dissent, rather than collectivizing it and prompting it to accumulate' (Bauman 1991: 279). Linking to neoliberal subjectivity, Lisa Duggan has observed that neoliberalism involves 'the transforming of global cultures into "market cultures"' (Duggan 2004: 12). Such perspectives have been further developed through other conceptualisations – for example, cognitive capitalism (Boateng 2011) and surveillance capitalism (Zuboff 2015). Sociological approaches often speak to the possible, potential, or actual merging of economy, politics, and culture. This is a heady mix: an inescapable and illusive framing that brings together structurally determining sovereign power and the poststructuralist incorporation of society *within* the person, discourse, language, and culture, rather than simply being their context. The (Foucauldian) mode of information (Poster 1990) has arrived.

All of these themes and interpretations assist an understanding of the workings of the universities and are to be found in universities, in the so-called neoliberal universities. So what are the implications of all this? There is now a considerable literature on these trends in education and higher education (e.g. Davies, Bansel 2007; Berg, Barry, Chandler 2008; Brinn Hyatt, Shear, Wright 2015). Since the early 1980s there have been, to different degrees and in different national contexts, a wide range of organisational reforms in universities, along with the greater internationalisation or transnationalisations, of academia, which together have in turn had profound effects on the construction of individual academics. Thus, changing gendered, intersectional *relations* occur between the organizational forms of academia, the international context of academia, and the constructions of individual academics. Together, these make historically different, distinct, and changing academic relations. These interlinked, sometimes *simultaneous*, relations can be represented as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Relations between the international context of academia, organisational change, and the construction of academics

**Organisational change
of academia**

**International
context of academia**

**Construction
of individual academics**
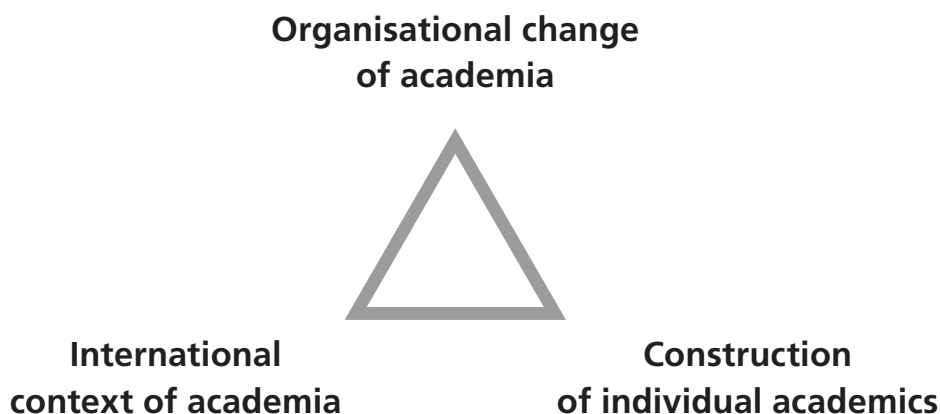
The broad socio-political trends that have been and are still taking place, both within and beyond academia, include, as noted in different degrees in different countries, extensions of global neoliberal capitalism into the worlds of academia and higher education, with various forms of direct and indirect privatisations and often austerities. These moves are summed up in the term the 'corporate university' (Beynon 2016). The corporate university of the global North is increasingly becoming the transnational corporate university, through both greater transnational interconnections and collaborations and the spatial extensions of the power of many global North universities, especially those of the Anglophone North, by their vigorous entry into educational markets elsewhere. Numerous UK and other

'Western' universities have now established campuses in the Gulf region, East Asia, and elsewhere. Likewise, there are major expansions of universities, many privately owned and run, in those regions. At the same time there are major forms of educational movement and student and researcher migration (see Forstorp and Mellström 2013).

Meanwhile in these moves, the national educational 'welfare' state shifts to the regulatory, controlling state, through New Public Management, and the blurring of national public state and private capitalist sectors. The organisational and managerial mechanisms for these developments involve the deep embedding of greater accountability through financialised, monitoring, and reporting ICT systems, as well as more specific forms of audit culture, in which academics are increasingly involved in being assessed and doing assessment (Strathern 2003; also see Beer 2016). At the level of the research team, projectisations and short-term contractualism dominate in many fields. At the individual level, individual performance and performance measurement are the norm, with each person an entrepreneurial, assessable production-unit. These trends interconnect.

Academia is thus going through a historical phase of intensified managerialism, and is more transnational, more financialised, more ICT-driven, and more individualised than earlier moves to technocratic management in the 1980s and 1990s. Broad transnational contexts and organisational changes coalesce with individual levels of practice and supposedly 'individual, gender-neutral, academic choice'. Capitalist(ic), neo-patriarchal short-term performance measurement is the current mode, combining transnational non-local performance and individual performance-based performativity with a heavy toll on academics' lives (Kinman, Wray 2013; *THE* 2016).

Local cases: universities and academia within national and transnational settings

So that is some of the background; for the remainder of this paper, I reflect on these issues and gendered changes through my own research, policy, and working experience across universities and academia in different national locations and embedded within wider transnational settings. While neoliberal forces and trends can be understood transnationally, exerting powerful pressures across national boundaries, the specific form they take in local cases depends on a mix of more immediate historical, societal, and institutional conditions and political processes. The discussion that follows is informed by my working experience within several different disciplinary positions and institutional contexts – sociology, gender studies, work research, and management and organisation studies – and different managerial contexts in the UK, Finland, and Sweden (Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of main university affiliations

COUNTRY	MAIN DISCIPLINARY BASES	TYPE OF UNIVERSITY
Finland	i. sociology ii. work research iii. management and organisation	i. old general university ii. newer general university iii. business school
Sweden	i. gender studies ii. gender studies	i. and ii. both newer general universities
UK	i. social policy and women's studies ii. social policy iii. sociology	i. newer general university ii. old general university iii. newer general university

There are several ways of framing and categorising my own relation to these changes in academia. First, there was an apparently stable, more continuous, and predictable period of 21 years 1974–1995 at the University of Bradford, though this obscures the fact that being in the same Department of Social Policy, Social Work, and Women's Studies still meant major disciplinary, organisational and political changes, and some rapid shifts in both routine and academic politics. Next, there was a more transitional phase, from 1995 to 2003, spent mainly at Manchester University, along with temporary part-time periods at four Finnish universities. Then, the third period can be taken as from 2003, when I left Manchester and secured a full-time post in Finland, followed by part-time posts in Sweden. Over the last twenty years I have worked, at professorial level, in *various combinations* of work, first in the UK and Finland, and then in the UK, Finland, and Sweden. Indeed, for almost every other year of the last 20 years there has been a different detailed combination of employments. And now I am at the beginning of a new phase, as officially retired, by age, but in fact working more or less full time through a number of part-time posts and projects, and without some of the previous responsibilities. My engagement with these changing national academic contexts is not discrete, but in personal, sometimes institutional, and often transnational, terms overlapping and sedimented (Clegg, Dunkerley 1980; Smith 1990).

The UK: new forms of leading in neoliberalism

So, first, let me turn to the UK. My initial studies there stretched across four universities – Oxford, Oxford Brookes, Leeds, and Bradford – while my university employment base shifted from Bradford to Manchester and then to Huddersfield. These universities all

have very different histories, profiles, ways of organising, managerial regimes, and, to an extent, gender regimes.

From the 1960s and 1970s the (male) 'collegial fraternity' and patriarchal university management underwent significant change towards technocratic university patriarchies in the 1980s (de Groot 1995; Davies, Holloway 1995; Hearn 1999, 2001). The form of the 'gentlemen's clubs' was rather different in 1960s Oxbridge, with its single-sex colleges still in the late 1960s, compared to the staff room of Bradford University, with its strong technological flavour, domination of engineers, and northern English gritty masculinism. In particular, from the early 1980s there was a shift from the near male monopoly of these various university gentlemen's clubs of the 1960s, 1970s, and even 1980s, to more technocratic managerialist masculinities in UK academia. The early 1980s were something of a turning point in university evolution, with the abandonment of level funding in December 1980 and government cutbacks in March 1981 of 13.5%. This led to very variable cutbacks for different universities and coded 'advice' from the central university machinery, the University Grants Commission, on what academic subjects should be expanded, reduced, or abolished in specific universities. By 1983 *The Attack on Higher Education* (Kogan, Kogan 1983) was published, a book that summarises these changes in the UK.

With the first round of the UK national research assessment, introduced 30 years ago in 1986 by the Thatcher government, albeit in very different forms to now, new financial and planning systems were introduced at both governmental and individual university levels. The centralised assessment of 'cost centres' in universities entailed more centralised controls, greater monitoring and surveillance, more standardised instruments of measurement across disciplines, and prioritising publications and 'quality', even with less resources per unit, however that is assessed. Arguably, it also established greater transparency in funding allocations at a time of declining budgets. Since then, national research assessment has taken various forms, increasingly focusing on a limited number of publications per researcher entered, devoting more attention to the research environment, and, perhaps above all, showing more concern with 'research impact' in the sense of impact on life beyond the university in technological innovation, business applications, policy, decision-making, social change, and so on. The situation has recently been summarised as follows:

The Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) is a peer review exercise, undertaken on behalf of the four British higher education funding councils, the intention of which is to evaluate the quality of research in UK higher education institutions. It began in 1986, and has been conducted at roughly five-year intervals since. Some historians have argued this has gravely distorted the research process, vastly increasing the pressure, especially on young academics, to publish quickly rather than allow their ideas to mature. Others argue that they would have produced the number of publications

required for RAE submission without external promoting, and that thus in this regard it has had little effect. All agree that the level of bureaucracy involved in the process has become increasingly onerous. The successor to the RAE, the Research Excellence Framework, is currently being developed amid lively debate concerning the use of metrics to evaluate performance. ('Making history …' n.d.)

To implement all this at the local level, 'top management teams' and 'strategic review bodies' and the like were created and strengthened. These different organisational regimes represented different gendered managements, different gender dynamics, and different academic and academic-managerial men and masculinities. Interestingly, the shift to the latter, more managerialist gender regimes was, to some extent, intertwined with the challenges of feminisms and other movements within the academy. While radicalism, (pro)feminism, and managerialism might seem odd bedfellows, they were and still are concerned with making the academic managerial systems more transparent, more accountable, less overtly discriminatory, more 'collective' (see Hearn 2014). While collegial fraternity amongst lower- and middle-status male faculty was on something of a decline, or at least open to challenge from several quarters, university managerial cultures shifted from the very hierarchical, almost feudal, patriarchal forms – in the sense of the legitimacy of and trust in the elite university patriarchs, the 'great and the good' – to, somewhat paradoxically, more fratriarchal management.

These latter 'brotherhoods' emerged in the form of new technocratic strategic bodies, committees, and top management teams, usually overwhelmingly made up of male managers. They have operated, and, with some qualifications, still operate, with a strange contradictory mix of informatised transparency and outright secrecy, such that it was difficult to locate specific individual responsibility. There were several further contradictions and complexities of this technocratic system: the intertwining of academic and managerial hierarchies; the growing technologisation and informatisation of academic output (if it isn't re-recorded, it doesn't exist!); the contradictory ideological climate around gender and gender equality; the changing gender and generational composition of management (Hearn 2001). Together, these have made for a continuing impact of greater managerialism and intensification on everyday academic working.

Since the late 1990s these processes have been accompanied by the more fully fledged marketisation and transactional selling of knowledge, not least through bond sales on the money markets, high fee levels, and the exploitation of the marketising of degrees, especially at postgraduate levels, on the 'international' market. In the UK, fees were introduced (except in Scotland) by the 'New Labour' government in 1998 at Ł3,000 per year, and have since then been raised to Ł9,000. This clear market push has been directed by further centralisations, with vice-chancellors and pro-

vice-chancellors taking more resources and control power for themselves, in some contrast to what seemed to be the initially more collective management noted above. It has also been accompanied by greater decision-making power moving to administrators, human resource departments, external relations, and 'enterprise' units, each with their own goals, which are rarely primarily academic.

These organisational changes are paralleled at the more individual and group level. The use of research assessment, initially at a collective level, is now atomised to the level of the individual academic too. This way of 'doing research', or more accurately 'doing publication' and 'doing impact', makes for many opportunities and possibilities for playing the system or 'gamesmanship' in publishing (Macdonald, Kam 2007a, 2007b, 2009, 2010), especially in management studies. For example, colleagues who are publishing less or not at all may be co-opted to the publishing plans or 'outputs' of heavier, more active publishers. In some universities this gaming of the rules of assessment is an *explicit* formal institutional strategy, as the research assessment has both shorter- and longer-term implications for research income from the national centre.

These various change processes have proved very stressful for many UK academics. Nearly three-quarters of academics surveyed in the 2016 *THE [Times Higher Education] University Workplace Survey* reported being deeply disillusioned with their university's future plans and senior leadership (Beynon 2016). The *THE* report also points to a major structural division within universities, with massive differences between academics and university administrative, professional, and support staff in their felt experiences at work:

> When asked if their university leadership is performing well, only 28 per cent [of academics] agree, compared with 61 per cent of administrators. Academics are also markedly less likely to be excited about their university's plans (27 per cent felt this way, compared with 63 per cent of professional and support staff). … only 38 per cent of academics would recommend working at their university, compared with 77 per cent of professional and support staff.[4]

The combination of the atomisation of academics and the marketisation of students and academia more generally that has gathered pace over the last 20 years is mutually reinforcing. In discussing these kinds of movement, Ann Phoenix (2004: 227) cites Valerie Walkerdine and colleagues in suggesting that neoliberalism has positioned people as responsible for their own 'self-invention and transformation' to be 'capable of surviving within the new social, economic and political system' (Walkerdine et al. 2001: 3). This 'self-invention' applies for academic managers, academics, students,

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[4] https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/university-workplace-survey-2016-results-and-analysis.

and the general population, including those facing growing disadvantage. Alison Phipps and Isabel Young (2015: 314) have recently expressed a similar cultural shift in UK universities as follows:

> … marketised universities exist within (and perpetuate) a culture based in 'having' or 'getting' (grades and/or jobs), which develops a sense of entitlement and in which education becomes a transactional exchange. … Such market-based views of personhood threaten the existence of community …

Surviving as an individual, a micro-economic unit, an academic or a student seems to be what is at stake in this personalised capitalist world context.

These moves also have a profound impact on research, including the gendering of research. In terms of specific implications for research content, I met these various ideological neoliberal forms of life very directly in 1990 when taking part in the UK's Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) small research programme called, somewhat ambiguously, 'The Management of Personal Welfare', which ran until 1995. What was interesting about this research programme funding was that it was based, initially at least in its framing, on the stress-coping-social support (SCSS) model of how people cope materially and socio-psychologically with problems and challenges; the assumptions behind the model are individual and group-based, not structural. Through this diversifying approach, ambiguities were possible between: on one hand, the critique of monolithic models of welfare and the critiques on difference, multiplicity, multiple oppressions, intersectionality, and 'diversity', *including* anti-racist, feminist, and leftist critiques; and on the other, increasing pressures to accede to the demands of neoliberalism, for example, in focusing on the individual and the local 'resilience' and self-reliance of welfare clients, customers, and users, assumed to be able to cope differentially with social problems (Williams, Hearn, Edwards 1999; Popay, Popay, Oakley 1998; for a more contemporary analysis, see Chandler, Reid 2016). While the SCSS model was ostensibly gender-neutral, in practice it did not deal well with gender power relations. In 'testing' it, Jalna Hanmer and I collaborated to see whether and how the model worked in relation to: (i) women who had experienced or were experiencing violence from known men, usually partners or ex-partners; and (ii) men who had been or were violent to known women, usually partners or ex-partners. Needless to say, the SCSS model did not fare well, when those who might be one's main source of 'support' were the very people being violent or being violated. This was the last major research project I was involved with in the UK, before I moved to Finland.

Universities in the UK seem to have gone a long way down the neoliberal road. And they may still have further to go. This is in part attributable to the establishment of a complex system of centralised national control, monitoring, and auditing combined

with devolving 'autonomy' to universities – meaning in effect more centralised control *within* each university – and using the language of autonomy to further marketisation. The language in use operates within strongly marketised neo-liberal transnational contexts, offering marketised education and degree qualifications, often operationalised by and constitutive of neoliberal masculinities.

Nordic followers of neoliberalism

Many of the features described in relation to the UK can also be observed in the Nordic region, albeit in a less pronounced form and with an apparent time-lag, perhaps 15 years 'behind' (or perhaps "ahead") the UK, and with different national systems for universities and funding. The recent European Universities Association (EUA) report *University Autonomy in Europe*[5] is a very useful summary of developments. In the report on the extent of university autonomy across EU countries, using four main criteria, the UK came out first in organisational autonomy, second in staff autonomy, and third in both financial and academic autonomy. In comparison, the Finnish university system was some way behind, and Sweden was significantly less autonomous (see Table 2).

Table 2: Ranking of the extent of autonomy in selected countries

	ORGANISATIONAL	FINANCIAL	STAFF	ACADEMIC
Finland	3rd	16th	6th	5th
Sweden	20th	16th	3rd	14th
UK	1st	3rd	2nd	3rd

(Out of 29 European countries)

My own main academic base in Finland has been in a business school, the Hanken School of Economics, formerly the Swedish School of Economics and Business Administration, historically established for the Swedish-speaking Finns, now reduced to a 5% minority with full language rights. I have also spent shorter periods in departments of sociology, gender studies, and work research in three other, more general universities: Helsinki, Tampere, and Åbo Academy. My working experience in Sweden is less extensive time-wise, but still spans over ten years at Linköping and Örebro Universities, as well as visiting professorships at Gothenburg, Linnæus

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[5]　http://www.university-autonomy.eu/.

(Växjö), and Uppsala, with additional extensive links with Karlstad, Lund, and Umeå. The disciplinary connections crossed gender studies, social sciences, sociology, and interdisciplinary research. My Norwegian experience is much more limited as a three-year part-time attachment in sociology at Oslo University.

There are both similarities and differences between these three Nordic countries. For a start, they are much more equal societies than the UK in both class and gender terms, and gender equality is recognised as respectable in all Nordic countries. Ideologically, Sweden is probably the most upfront in terms of gender equality, with almost all political parties supporting feminism, and with an explicitly feminist (Social Democratic) government. However, when it comes to universities and higher education, the broad gender structures, vertically and horizontally, are less different between the Nordic countries and the UK.

Having said that, there are some notable differences. For example, Finland has long had a higher proportion of women amongst the professoriate or at Grade A academic staff, at about one quarter (Husu 2001), than other Nordic countries (something some Swedes can find hard to believe), while Sweden has had, until recently, significantly fewer women professors, close to the 2012 EU average of 20% (She Figures 2013, Table 3.1). These figures have now risen to about 29% for Finland and 25% for Sweden, according to respective national official statistics.[6] Part of the increases in the proportion of women in the professoriate in Sweden is due to the recently established system of internally promoted (*befordran*) professors who have the professorial title, but do not compete with external competition and retain the same duties and pay. At the same time, Sweden has had more women university rectors (vice-chancellors), and they now fill about half of such positions. Norway and Sweden have in recent years been more active than Finland in the promotion of gender equality in universities and institutions of higher education.

Yet the situation is still more complex. For example, Sweden may appear the most active in developing and supporting gender studies as a university discipline, but the discipline and gender studies scholars are also fairly regularly subject to significant political attack from both within and beyond academia. Moreover, while in Sweden consensus, moderation, and politeness are often culturally valued, this is only one level of interaction; behind the scenes, and sometimes not far behind, there is another layer of patriarchal, not so moderate, and not so polite interaction, power, and process. The cultural valuation of consensus and moderation in Sweden can

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[6] The 2015 figure of 25% for Sweden is taken from governmental figures: http://www.scb.se/sv_/ Hitta-statistik/Temaomraden/Jamstalldhet/Indikatorer/Jamn-fordelning-av-makt-och-inflytande/Ovrig-representation/Professorer-vid-universitet-och-hogskolor-2015/.
The figure of 29% is from the Ministry of Education and Culture Vipunen database. For more information on Finland, see: http://stm.fi/julkaisu?pubid=URN:ISBN:978-952-00-3861-8.

strangely legitimate various forms of non-communication and non-responsiveness that can border on more passive bullying and abusive management, contrasting with more direct management styles in Finland. Moreover, in the current semi-autonomous Swedish academic system it is possible for a university rector to prescribe university policy unilaterally, for example, specifying research priorities for (usually) his university, without consultation with the professoriate, research leaders, and experts in the organisation – something quite unimaginable in some other times and places.

More generally, Finland is a country with a very high level of education and higher education, an established historical respect for schooling, teachers, and generally university expertise, and tuition-free university education, at least for nationals and EU citizens (with fees for outside EU and ETA citizens starting August 2017). Into this system university 'autonomy' reforms were introduced in Finland in 2009/2010. The university [autonomy] Reform Law of 2009/2010 had the major effect of reducing the coupling of university budgets and the state budget, thus extending university autonomy to specialise and cease being 'universal', and even if that autonomy was itself more centralised within individual institutions. Earmarked strategic budget items were made available as strategic lump sums.

The national university governance structure was also changed, with new legal status as foundations or public corporations; staff was no longer state civil servants as earlier, but employed by the universities themselves. Alongside this, major incentive-driven university mergers were implemented, at times against rather strong opposition. As noted, decision-making power and decisions became more centralised within each university, with a reduction of the power of faculties and with greater impacts from central administration, HR departments, and central research offices. Somewhat similarly to Finland, 'university autonomy' arrived in Sweden with the internal organisation of universities deregulated in January 2011. Again, this has meant more centralised decision-making in individual universities, even with some greater flexibility from national governmental control. University teachers still have the status of civil servants.

Most recently, in Finland the new 2015 Centre-Right[7] coalition government introduced new austerity and swingeing cuts to university funding, with a result that many universities undertook personnel cuts, with most dramatically the University of Helsinki deciding to sack over a thousand academic and administrative jobs, despite resistance. Meanwhile, the decision of the previous coalition government to introduce

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[7] This contrasts with my own experience of non-international and anti-internationalisation in Finnish sociology in the later 1990s and early 2000s, and so represents a significant both disciplinary and temporal change from late 1990s resistance (Hearn 2004a, 2004b).

Strategic Research funding was implemented, alongside the research council funding of basic research. This new Strategic Research funding prioritised applied research that addressed stated national priorities, such as equality, sustainability, and technological innovation, and favoured large, multi-university, and longer-term projects, with clear applied dimensions, focus on societal impact, and extensive engagement with multiple stakeholders.

Within these complex systems, many academic men and masculinities, though dominant, appear now somewhat more constrained than previously, set more within a web of interacting powers and forces, even if the very top managers of universities appear to have more power to wield internally within universities. Of course, at the same time university managers themselves might well consider their relative autonomy is itself at the behest of national state government directives, even with more 'autonomy'.

After a period at the general university, Åbo Academy University, I ended up in the business school, Hanken, because they took me in, initially on short-term research money from their linked private foundation, then on national research council funding, and eventually as part of the permanent faculty. The culture, and the gender culture, there is especially interesting. In some ways it is a conventional business school with strong support from Swedish (language) Finnish capital. It is also very alert to new trends, to innovation, and seeks to be at the 'cutting edge', especially in research. Interestingly, although there is a strong base in mainstream work, there is also room for rather a lot of critical work that would be marginalised in many business schools.

The academic world in Finland that I have encountered and participated in at the business school has involved a high, even a very high, level of internationalisation.[8] The business school world is now strongly directed towards, even desperate for, foreign faculty, in part as a means for international accreditation, that is, accreditation by corporate or not-for-profit educational bodies, such as EQUIS, EFMD, AACSB, and AMBA. Direct payments from the linked private foundation are made, as personal income, to faculty staff and researchers, including doctoral students, for journal articles with an impact factor over 1.0; along with this there are distinct pressures to do article or essay-based doctorates. Alongside the system of rewarding publication in higher-impact journals, a system of personal rewarding of research funding was introduced in Hanken in 2016, to the tune of 1000 to 5000 euros, depending on the amount funded, for those who gain external funding to the EU (including ERC, Horizon 2020), the Academy of Finland, and TEKES, the national innovation agency,

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8   Such labels are risky in comparative work, as meanings of Centre and Right differ markedly across countries. For example, Finland and Sweden maintain a tripartite system of labour relations between employers, government, and trade unions, very much unlike the UK.

or up to 1000 euros for those who gain high evaluations in research applications to those bodies. Interestingly, the distribution allocating this money to research project members has to be decided at the application stage of the project. The internal rules read:

Research groups who wish to be rewarded for external funding of research are to follow the guidelines below. In order to facilitate follow-up, and make the process more transparent, the research group shall fill in a form before the application for funding is submitted. Through the form, the research group can indicate how a possible reward is distributed among the researchers in the group, should the project be eligible for a reward.

This has the effect of assuming that research projects are implemented as planned in research applications; this may not be so. Also, it solidifies the decision-making on relative work amongst team members, which may have other unintended consequences. The university, its faculty, and even its doctoral students are thus incentivised, in keeping with neoliberal practice.

What strikes me here is that Hanken, a small unit, about the size of a faculty in a larger university, with not many more than 30 full professors in total, appears much more agile and flexible than some larger universities, and much more willing to spot new opportunities as they arise. An active Gender Research Group was established in 2000, producing about 12 PhDs, and bringing in a very large amount of research funding. There is also critical extensive work on, for example, diversity and intersectionality, humanitarian logistics, sustainability, and corporate social responsibility. It has had three women rectors (vice-chancellors) in a row, which is in itself very unusual in any university, let alone and perhaps unique in a business school, and contrasts with most Finnish universities. These are some reasons why I ended up there.

The overall outcome for the university has, in this case, been extraordinarily successful by the measures of the age. In 2016 in the global multirankings, Hanken was placed fifth (sic.) behind Rockefeller University, MIT, Harvard, and Stanford, and ahead of a multitude of world leading universities.[9] Hanken is a fascinating case study of changing gender relations in a small university within neoliberal times.

Transnational-personal reflections

There are many reflections that can be made on these changes in or towards neoliberal universities, neoliberal (trans)patriarchies, and neoliberal masculinities. In recent decades there have been pronounced moves from explicitly patriarchal management

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[9] www.umultirank.org.

to technocratic patriarchal management and then to marketised, informatised patri-archal management, with accompanying effects for managers, academics, and students. These shifts take place at different speeds in different national contexts and traditions, and with different institutional forms; meanwhile male dominance persists across national boundaries, beyond immediate local sovereign controls.

Thus far, I have focused mainly on the organisational aspects of change, with some passing remarks on gendered aspects of transnationalisations and the transnational construction of academics. The moves to more managerialist systems and the technocratic, marketised, and centralised organisational forms of control introduced over the last 30 years or more are, however, just one part of the wider story of gendered university change. In this last section I focus on two major loci of change: first, the pressures on constructions of academics, and, second, the greater internationalisation of academia in new transnational patriarchies that stretch across national boundaries. The uneven trends outlined increasingly operate transnationally, as well as within local and national contexts, thus leading to some new configurations between individual academics, academic organisations, and wider transnational change (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Relations of transnationalisations of academia, organisational autonomy, and the construction of academics

Greater organisational 'autonomy' universities

Contradictions of transnationalisations of academia

Contradictions of 'autonomous' individual(ist) academics
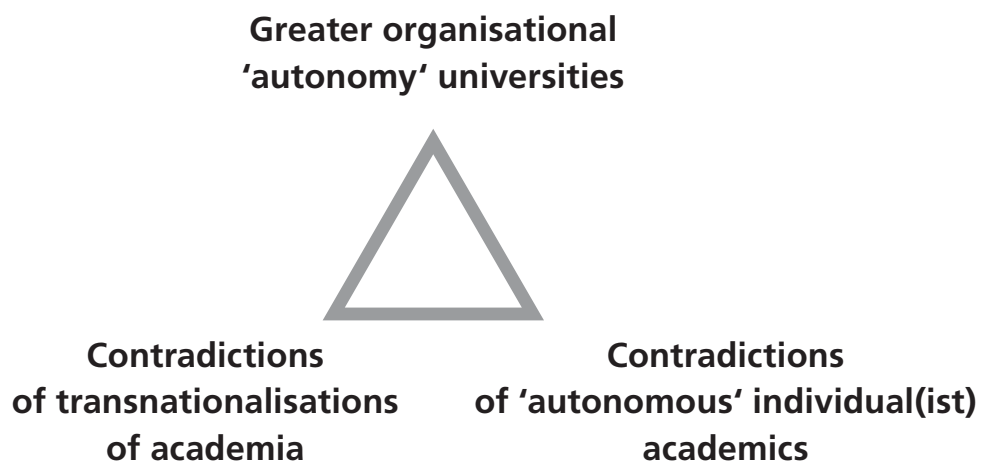
On the first count, the individual academic is pressured, probably increasingly, to become self-driven, self-monitoring, and self-surveilling – and is in that sense supposedly 'autonomous', perhaps both highly agentic and docile. These changes bear on self and selves, including my selves, in pressures towards individualism, evaluation, and so on. To be direct, these organisational, transnational, and more immediate changes, and their simultaneity certainly also construct me and my academic/

non-academic practice; I am thereby implicated. Thus, even though I am by now a privileged, 'successful', white professor, based in the global North, past retirement age, my life and working life has become much more discontinuous and unpredictable than was the case during the first 20 years of my academic employment. I have done what I can in raising research funding, in the constraints of time and resources, and have felt the competitive excitement when successful.

Academics are set within less obviously, less explicitly patriarchal, ostensibly gender-neutral intensifications, at the lower academic levels, a kind of gender-neutral democratic misery for all, but still within highly aged, gendered organisational forms and patriarchal managerial structures. Men still overwhelmingly dominate many disciplines, academic hierarchies, and managements. This becomes even more obvious when working transnationally, as it becomes evident that the same gender patterns are repeated across and between countries. This is so even though more women are present and implicated in middle management; gender 'democracy' and democratised identities co-exist with greater structural (gendered) inequality. Indeed, the greater presence of women and feminists/feminism in the academy coincided rather closely with the initial moves to more technocratic forms of academic organisation and management. It is now much more possible for women academics to disagree strongly with each other in public and in university politics than was the case 30 years ago.

New forms of entrepreneurial academic masculinities are promoted at all academic levels, but this also indirectly can mean greater separation of university managers and HR officials, and academics and researchers. At the same time, the growth of long hours culture has been accompanied by a shift to internationally mobile, competitive, article-orientated, English-language, non-local publishing, and from carefree to careless masculinities (Hanlon 2012), with less concern for teaching and administration. Many younger academics pursue precarious, geographically mobile careers as 'reserve armies' of doctoral and postdoctoral academic labour for teaching, research, and knowledge production, often across dispersed transnational networks. This raises many problems, especially so for some younger women academics.

Evaluation, evaluation, evaluation – has become normal, offering flattery and collusion for some, and sometimes, perhaps increasingly, operating transnationally. The quality and gendering of evaluations is very important, if often forgotten. Gender awareness is very variable, and sometimes totally absent, in evaluations. In the quest for speed or political fixing I have seen chaotic, totally unscientific evaluations. Gatekeepers are assuming greater powers in journals, funding bodies, and so on, even if it is often not the most qualified who take the role of evaluators.

A key aspect of this move to evaluation is the changing uses and meanings of publication. Within the university world, the location of publishing, especially

in international 'high-impact' journals, now often seems to be more important than the content (see Mountz et al. 2015). This can lead at times to strategic (maybe international) co-authorship rather than authorship strictly by contribution or expertise, as well as careful attention to the construction of CVs, especially but not only in the early career stage. Thus, the function of publication seems to have changed in many contexts. Without romanticising past relations to the word and the text, in my academic world at least it was the content of publications that was of most interest in the earlier, 'pre-technocratic' academic patriarchies, though it should be stressed that these involved first and foremost men writing for men. Now, the main functions of publications seem to have become for institutions, whether it be research groups, departments, faculties, or whole universities, in order to gather funding or at least to avoid further cutbacks, and for persons, to enhance the CV in a very competitive and intensified academic market, in order to obtain jobs and funding.[10]

All these processes in the UK, the Nordic region, and elsewhere are taking place transnationally and increasingly so – with greater bilateral and multilateral links between universities; greater impact of transnational academic organisations and organising; and more transnationalising configurations of academic practice. Transnational processes and transnationalisations of academia open up space for greater gender and other contradictions, for and between more domination and more collaborative transformations, at all levels, individual, organisational and transnational. What is interesting from my personal experience is the various combinations of changes that, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes unevenly, operate across disciplines, universities, and countries. For me personally, events, projects, or systems – the projectisation of research – in one country may merge with those in another or with events across countries. This is clearest when considering the operation and impact of transnational research projects extending the span of specific universities and research organisations. Such projects are in effect more or less collaborative, temporary organisations (Lundin 1995; Lundin, Steinthórsson 2003). They can be rigid (post-)bureaucratic extensions of parent organisations' power and control, sometimes into new fields, even if retaining such knowledge is difficult (Bakker et al. 2011). In other cases, projects can be 'relatively free' zones where 'business as usual' is suspended or played down in setting up project teams and getting projects done – even at odds with the dominant practices in a parent organisation (Hearn 2015b).

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[10] The CV can be seen as an autobiographical practice (Miller and Morgan 1993), it is now perhaps better seen as a gendered strategic career practice, and sometimes fiction (see Tarrach 2011, for an alternative).

Transnational processes are clear in EU and Nordic research collaborations and in working with colleagues in South Africa and elsewhere. Transnational projects have their own gender structures, processes, power relations, interactions, and experiences, across languages, nationalities, and also changing university and research systems subject to uneven neoliberalism, technocratisation, and marketisation. Transnational projects, including those that are feminist(ic) and gender-related, can bring out the best and the worst in feminist(ic) and gender researchers, sometimes in surprising ways. I have experienced fantastic, supportive, creative feminist transnational collaboration (see Hearn 2015b); I have also witnessed some appalling behaviour from those whom I previously respected and thought could be trusted, as institutions scrabble for scarce funding. It is hard sometimes not to be disillusioned when those you collaborate with in networks behave thus. It seems as if the transnational accentuates gender power processes, with the meeting of different gender structures, cultures, and practices, and with additional ('corporate') pressures on individuals and research groups to negotiate, compromise, control, and be subordinated to others, even with their stated 'progressive' politics and preferences. The lack of regular face-to-face contact may open the space for practices that would not be contemplated with immediate organisational colleagues; there may be parallels here with non-contact online abusive behaviour (Lapidot-Lefler, Barak 2012). For some, non-solidarity wins.

The maintenance of non-feminist, and perhaps neo-patriarchal, relations is especially virulent in highly competitive arenas, such as competitions for so-called centres of excellence (see *Gender and Excellence* 2004). For example, I was recently part of an unsuccessful application for a Nordic 'centre of excellence' competition on gender equality in academia and research. In the event, one of the successful bids was coordinated by a third-sector institute (ISF, Oslo) and led by a senior gender researcher (Mari Teigen), who had previously informed that her institution, though not specifically expert in the area, was going to apply, and who was actually also a key member of our own bid – but who failed to inform our team she would actually be leading a competing bid. Moreover, this last piece of information was only gleaned upon the public announcement of their success six months later … corporate-think seems to override many other considerations; that is the short story. Meanwhile, the Nordic funding body concerned (NordForsk, the Oslo-based collaborative body of the Nordic national research councils) has been unable to supply proper scientific evaluations of the bids, successful or unsuccessful. The only feedback received has been minimalistic, with no assessment against the supposed scientific criteria, and written in what appears an *ex post facto* manner. The 'centre of (research) excellence' model seems in this instance to have moved closer to a 'centre of consulting' model.

The contemporary scene thus conjoins neoliberal, supposedly 'autonomous' universities, neoliberal transnational patriarchies, and neoliberal, individual(istic) academic masculinities. Part of the problem, for individual academics, academic institutions, and transnational academic processes is that the language of autonomy, of freedom, has been co-opted within neoliberalism (Boas, Gans-Morse 2009). Universities are 'free' to do business without being 'morally and intellectually independent of all political authority and economic power' (*Magna Charta Universitatum* 1988/2016, cited in Beynon 2016). Likewise, individual academics are 'free' to be autonomous entrepreneurs without critical academic autonomy.

The role of language and visualisations in neoliberal academic processes is indeed of special interest (Holborow 2013, 2015; Ledin, Machin 2016) (so now, if it isn't on the website, it doesn't exist!). This is partly because in academic work itself, language, typically English, is one of the main media of work, especially so in the humanities and social sciences. There appears to be increasing overlap between performance in doing academic research, assessment of academic performance, and performativity, whereby doing and quantifying performance is the work performed. Style, presentation, and apparent coherence in research, research proposals, and research applications may supersede knowledge content, uncertainty, negative, null or inconclusive results, and building research on previous research results and even academic achievement. Transnational 'cooperation' and decision-making makes for new possibilities for transnational homosocial bonding and neo-patriarchal practices in the allocation of funds. This can easily depoliticise research and promote research that is not threatening to various status quos. Equally, the transnational neoliberal language of autonomy and performance permeates academic management, as 'Neoliberal discourse functions as intertheme, or a macro-theme, … interdiscursively, that is, from one discourse (economics/finance) to another (education)' (Ramírez, Hyslop-Margison 2015).

Across all of these organisational and more individual contradictions, the transnational dimension offers opportunities for both extensions and intensifications of patriarchal relations, and also subversions through transnational feminist and related practices. Transnational academic organisations and patriarchies are engaged by transnational feminism and transnational academic feminisms. This engagement is part of what RINGS, the International Association of Institutions of Advanced Gender Studies, is itself about, located and operating in the conjunctions of diverse neoliberal academies and transnational feminist political practice. Global Southern- and Northern-based research and researchers need to find better, less colonialist, imperialist, or patriarchal ways of working together or separately, or of working, with 'mutual learning across boundaries' (see Hountondji 1997; Connell 2014; Hearn

2015b).[11] Through the contradictions of transnational patriarchal neoliberalism and the relations of individual, organisational, and transnational academic worlds beyond the local, academic hegemony of the global North and West may be both and contradictorily affirmed and subverted.

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[11] Connell (2014: 218) summarises the global situation as follows: 'In this larger [academic] economy, as the Beninese philosopher Paulin Hountondji (1997) has shown, there is a broad division of labour on a world scale. The global metropole is where most journals are located, most theory and methodology are produced, and data are aggregated in libraries, museums, data banks and research centres. Most of the material resources for scholarship, such as well-funded universities, doctoral programmes, research funds, journals and conferences, are located here. The role of the global periphery is by contrast to supply data, and later to apply science in practical ways.' However, Hountondji makes a larger point than simply the South serving the North, namely the case for less 'extraversion' towards the global North on the part of global Southern researchers.

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GENDER **A** VÝZKUM

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