umets’ work is most likely of relevance to researchers and stakeholders in post-socialist European countries dealing with encounters between their socialist/communist past, and their adjustment to democracy and neoliberalism.

Tobias Axelsson

Eira Andersson poses an important question in her thesis about masculinity – is masculinity changeable, negotiable or stable? She poses the question through very interesting material. The aim of the study is formulated around how masculinity is consolidated and maintained in a male-dominated mining collective in a Swedish company. The sub questions are whether similar gender constructions change spontaneously or through external demands.

She contextualizes the thesis aim by pointing to the mining industry as a field of change going into a modern era. Another additional aim, she argues, is to shed light on experiences of a close interactive research co-operation on gender specific issues together with a mining company.

As a thesis about masculinity in mining Eira Andersson gathered her material in two separate processes. The first was a participative observation study going on for two weeks when she followed six plus five shifts in two different parts of the mining organization which could be considered as nothing less than a huge study for one person to pursue in a very short time. Andersson went back for four short revisits a few years later. The second was working together with a gender mixed group of miners in a change project with focus on risk reduction, work place culture and gender equality, a change project initiated by the owners and the managers of the company.

The author suggests that she, with this method, got a deep and thorough understanding of the terms and conditions for the
work in the mines and of the masculinities of the miners.

The material from the change project was added out of an interest from the Human Resources to enlarge the number of women in the company especially as gender was very unequal in both quantitative and qualitative terms. The research in itself is a result of an extension of this change project to which the author was invited as an expert and change agent. The author by that had double loyalties, both to management as a change agent and as a researcher with the miners as fellows. There is in my opinion no doubt that this research design an process has given her access to a rather closed and hard-grained work culture and she reads clearly up on how she has worked in the process which displays an interesting insight into the mining context.

For a period of two years the author worked with a rather heterogenic group of minors from various places in the company. As far as I understand the vast part of her material comes from this group; their narratives and discussions around certain gender specific issues, reflections on inequality at their work place and what it means to be a man and to be a woman in the parts of the company where the members of the group work. Continuously through the thesis and the way she uses the material the reader gets an in view of how the members of the group talk about their work. They talk about how they feel, how they consider themselves to reason about life and gender and the mine and what they would claim to be doing in their everyday work. One of the clear contributions of this thesis is the opportunity to get this closer look at a work place rarely pictured or described. I also consider it a contribution to get the view of the workers, those active on an operative level in a company, since it is far more common to read about a leadership perspective. This thesis is liberating free of leadership voices although both HR and the strategic level of leadership, management, is present in the background as some sort of constantly present fond. Although the author’s aim is to present and analyze the operative level and those working there the voices of management do come through in both her presentation of the company and the processes for change she is invited to work with.

The core issue of the thesis is the masculinity construction of miners and whether these are changeable or not, or at least negotiable or at least definable. Since masculinity research has widened its focus from investigating men’s violence and leadership positions there have been some studies on masculinity or masculinities in different contexts, and foundations of masculinity (-ies) construction(s). The question of what masculinity is and how it can be understood is repeatedly interesting for scholars to
pose with the following question of the consequences of certain constructions. Eira Andersson presents herself as a pluralist meaning that she considers masculinity to have a variety of constructions; that it varies with both the context and from time to time. She goes into the understanding of class and the way masculinity is affected by, is connected to, or perhaps co-varies with class positions/constructions. The author comments about class throughout the thesis and points to the importance of understanding class, the terms for working class positions and masculinities. I think that the discussion about class and the way she actually defines class is another major contribution with this book. Since class has been such an unmodern field for quite some time it is fair to say that it is underdeveloped in the last three decades, with some minor exceptions. Eira Andersson raises the issue with vigor and gives us a clear view of the importance to continue the dialogue and discussions on masculinity and class. I do think that she could have used the potential of developing the understanding of masculinity constructions through class positions a bit further since the implications for certain masculinity constructions is so obvious.

The discussion of masculinity constructions is of course the core theme since the thesis is supposed to be all about masculinity and the potential for change. Even though the author doesn’t claim change to be the major aim or theme of the book change is what she gets back to throughout the text. Is it possible to change the masculinity of the miners or not? She wants to point to how maleness and mining are closely connected, the danger of the mining masculinity – or rather risk exposition –, how development challenges masculinity in the mine since development brings with it new tasks and new organizational structures.

She draws mainly on Joan Ackers’ theory of gendering processes to analyze the doing of gender in the studied organization and she does that by applying each of the processes on the material. Ackers’ gendering processes are well known and have been in use back and forth since her famous article was published. Among the contributions of the thesis I would add the consequent and very determined use of this theory. It is clear that it works as an analytical tool when investigating the doing of gender in the narratives of an organization’s every day work. Andersson uses other theory as well and refers to classical as well as new research in the gender and work field. I do think that the major theoretical contribution is the way she shows the usefulness of Ackers’ model and in particular in adding the class perspective. I consider the references to Ulf Mellström and his studies of men and technology.
(Mellström, 1994) as another important theoretical discussion as well as the rather short analysis of masculinity and risk were she uses Furedi’s theory of risk exposure and risk prone behavior. Since both technology and risk rather often are tightly connected to masculinity constructions at least in the general idea of work place gender constructions although the contribution could have been larger with a deeper analysis. For one thing there is a recurring mix of the concepts – or is it the terms – maleness and masculinity that leaves the reader a bit confused. Is she discussing and studying maleness or masculinity constructions? Referring to R.W. Connells work hints perhaps that it would be masculinity constructions, or masculinities, but on the other hand the references to women’s masculinity constructions are very few and Judith Halberstam is not even on the list of references which implies that it could be maleness after all; the masculinity that men do. I think that that’a pity in a material such as Anderssons’ since the presence of women in a male dominated context often points to the masculinity constructions. One parallel example could be e.g. studies of fire fighters where the presence of women makes both the gender inequality narratives and the masculinities very clear. It also enables an analysis of how masculinity (-ies) and gender inequality is connected and co-construct each other. A third contribution could be the potential discussion of how and why women do masculinity; perhaps discovering a desired construction and not only because it is demanded.

When it comes to the research design and the structure of the thesis Andersson is rather unorthodox, or at least tries to take an unorthodox path, in presenting the theory after the material in a way that seeks to be inductive. She positions herself in a hermeneutic, action research, tradition and as such giving herself a position of learning on the way and the informants the position of co-researchers. The grip doesn’t work all the way through. It seems clear for me as a reader that she does have a rather vast and firm knowledge gained from other contexts than the mine and that this knowledge is used not only in analysis of the narratives but also in the design of the work. The relationships with the group and its individuals during the second process of gathering material does have more of the characteristics of her as a catalyzer than her as ‘one of the team’. She is after all management’s change agent and not a miner. The text and the analytical work would have gained from a clearer distance to the material and, more important, a clearer distance to the mining company. The author does discuss her role as a researcher and how she relates to her informants but the discussion does have a
lack of consequence according to the performance.

In spite of that lack of distance this is a thesis with several contributions in terms of an enlarged understanding of a certain work place previously not very well known although e.g. Lena Abrahamsson, referred to in the text, has mapped out the field of masculinity in mining in her very interesting studies of miners and masculinities. It also makes a contribution in terms of masculinity constructions and in particular in the narratives of both the female and male miners in the heterogenic group. My opinion is that Eira Andersson takes a big and useful step towards an analysis of doing gender in every day work through Acker's theory in the expose of a particular context – the one of mining.

Anneli Häyrén Weinestål

Anna Hedtjärn Wester

In her book Män i kostym (Men in suits: Princes, artists and hod-carriers around 1900), Anna Hedtjärn Wester challenges the notion that the modern male suit was a uniform that concealed men’s individuality and group affiliation behind an armour of anonymity and homogeneity. On the contrary, the meanings of the dark suit differed greatly depending on the man inside. Comparing photographic and painted portraits of four princes, three prominent artists and a group of union-organized hod-carriers (unskilled labourers who carried bricks at construction sites) around the turn of the century 1900, Hedtjärn Wester examines how a range of Swedish men who were not members of the middle-class used the male suit for self-expression. She analyses 35 portraits of these men as self-sta-