



Response

Cultural commentary or gender scholarship?

Elizabeth Ettore^{a,b,*}^a School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, Liverpool L69 7ZA, UK^b Center for Alcohol and Drug Research, Aarhus University, Artillerivej 90, 2300 KBH S, Denmark

Radcliffe and Measham's (2014) claim that Tutenges and Sandberg's (2013) analysis is 'starkly silent regarding relations of gender, sexuality and taken for granted heteronormativity...' is not surprising. Tourism studies 'have historically suffered from an inadequate politics of identity and an underdeveloped theorization of gender' (Knox & Hannam, 2007) to say nothing of the alcohol and drugs field where 'epistemologies of ignorance' surrounding gender (Campbell & Ettore, 2011) have flourished for years (Ettore, 1986). Why in 2014 are articles like Tutenges and Sandberg's being published? Simply, there is a market for voyeuristic research employing masculinist epistemology which suppresses 'the concepts and technologies that make its observations possible' (Gregory, 2000). Basically, 'masculinism obscures the very conditions that enable the production of knowledge'; 'objective knowledge becomes a matter of masculinity' (Berg, 2001) (quoted by Sundberg, 2003).

Obviously, the authors were not interested in gender only in a debatable assumption that 'part of their reason (for participants) ... engaging in heavy drinking ... was that they wanted to build a repertoire of personal drinking stories (p. 543). Whether or not this assumption is true, one need not be disappointed. This research is predictable, not at all about gender, inequalities nor analyses of cultural and social dimensions of power. In the end, you get what you see – a descriptive, cultural commentary set within a neoliberal framework, protecting the rational, autonomous, individual subject – self-regulating, productive and responsible for his (sic.) own well-being in the world of alcohol consumption. How interesting – but also, how lackluster and unsatisfactory. While it is commendable that Tutenges and Sandberg (2014) 'welcome critical studies of drinking stories', how can they themselves be critical when privileging 'the body economic' or 'homo economicus' (Foucault, 2010) to the detriment of gender, race, ethnicity, class, etc.?

* Correspondence to: School of Sociology, Social Policy & Criminology, University of Liverpool, Eleanor Rathbone Building, Bedford Street South, Liverpool L69 7ZA, UK. Tel.: +44 7870668046.

E-mail address: E.Ettore@liverpool.ac.uk

Sadly, in this genre of writing 'difference is treated as pertaining exclusively to culture' (Fraser, 1997) and attempts to make 'feminism something unpalatable' become clear (McRobbie, 2009: 150). What Tutenges and Sandberg's (2013) demonstrate is how the masculine body is substantively 'in play' at Sunny Beach. What they don't reveal is that masculine bodies cannot be understood as 'neutral media of social practice' (Connell, 1995). Indeed, it is a bodily fact that these male bodies don't disrupt their hegemonic masculinities, the point well made by Radcliffe & Measham. The circuit of body-reflexive practices that constructed their hegemonic masculinities is complex, moving through the institutionalized system of the tourist economy, commercialized sex, alcohol consumption and drinking stories to the personal and group practices of disruptive, abusive fraternities, male sexual exploitation and predatory masculinities (see Connell, 1995) What a pity that a rich, social scientific analysis is missing from a potentially important piece of work. In the end, we can only conclude, 'It's 'dicks out for the girls' on Sunny Beach'.

References

- Campbell, N., & Ettore, E. (2011). *Gendering addiction: The politics of drug treatment in a neurochemical world*. Palgrave: Basingstoke.
- Connell, R. (1995). *Masculinities*. Polity Press: Cambridge.
- Ettore, B. (1986). Women and drunken sociology: Developing a feminist analysis. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 9, 515–520.
- Foucault, M. (2010). *The birth of biopolitics*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.
- Fraser, N. (1997). *Justice Interruptus: Critical reflections on the 'post socialist' condition*. New York: Routledge.
- Gregory, D. (2000). Empiricism. In R. J. Johnston, D. Gregory, G. Pratt, & M. Watts (Eds.), *The dictionary of human geography* (pp. 205–206). Malden, MA: Blackwell Ltd.
- Knox, D., & Hannam, K. (2007). Embodying everyday masculinities in Heritage Tourism. In N. Pritchard, L. Morgan, L. Ateljevic, & C. Harris (Eds.), *Tourism and gender: Embodiment, sensuality and experience* (pp. 263–272). Wallingford: CABI.
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. London: Sage.
- Radcliffe, P., & Measham, F. (2014). Repositioning the cultural: Intoxicating stories in social context. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 25(3), 346–347.
- Sundberg, J. (2003). Masculinist epistemologies and the politics of fieldwork in Latin Americanist geography. *The Professional Geographer*, 55(2), 180–190.
- Tutenges, S., & Sandberg, S. (2013). Intoxicating stories: The characteristics, contexts and implications of drinking stories among Danish youth. *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 24, 538–544.
- Tutenges, S., & Sandberg, S. (2014). Bad Boys telling sexist stories? *International Journal of Drug Policy*, 25(3), 348–349.