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Men, Masculinities & the Climate Crisis

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Global heating and gender

- The climate crisis is gendered not only because it disproportionately harms women.
- It is also disproportionately created by men.
- Only 5% of FTSE 350 CEOs, 21% of government ministers, and 15% of environmental ministers are women

(McDonagh & Fitzsimons 2020; IPU & UN Women 2020; IUCN 2021)



The role of masculinities

- Men more likely to work in industries causing most environmental harm (e.g. 78% of oil/gas - Rick et al 2017).
- Bigger carbon footprints (Räty & Carlsson-Kanyama 2010) - more resources, practices of hegemonic masculinity (e.g. meat, driving, flying).
'Petro-masculinity' (Daggett 2018) Industrial breadwinner (Hultman & Pulé 2019).
- Less concern about climate change (Pearson et al 2017).



Men's violences

- Different forms of men's violence are interconnected, through their roots in the attempted exertion of masculine power and control (Kaufman 1987).
- This also frequently applies to environmental destruction – driven by a sense of entitlement, ownership and dominance – and detachment from nature (Pease 2019).
- Climate change as 'slow violence' (Nixon 2011).



Uprooting masculinities

- Men involved in different forms of environmental activism may challenge dominant masculine norms, by practicing an ethic of care for nature (Connell 1990).
- But gender inequalities can also be ignored or reproduced within environmental activism.
- Men must speak out - and engage peers in changing our relationships with nature.
- 'Gatekeepers of gender equality' (Connell 2005).



Time to change

- Covid-19 may have instigated changes (ONS 2021).
- Climate crisis exposes human vulnerabilities. Men may find this particularly difficult to accept or adapt to (e.g. backlash - Anshelm & Hultman 2014).
- Need to challenge notions that solutions lie solely in masculinised spheres (e.g. science, technology, business).
- Need for gender-transformative engagement about the climate crisis.



Thanks for listening!

- Contact me:
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- Durham Centre for Research into Violence and Abuse (CRiVA): www.durham.ac.uk/criva
- Check out our new podcast, 'Now and Men: Current conversations about men's lives'
now-and-men.captivate.fm



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