

Getting in touch with our feelings: the emotional geographies of gender relations in PETE

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Abstract

This paper attempts to illustrate how embodied ways of knowing may enhance our theoretical understanding within the field of Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE). It seeks to illustrate how teacher educators' viewpoints and understanding of gender relations are inevitably linked to socially constructed webs of emotions, as much as to intellectual rationales. Indeed, the paper argues for the need for PETE research to transcend the dualistic divide of reason/emotion. It builds upon interview data from an investigation interested in illuminating the ways in which teacher educators develop their professional identities, using the lenses of gender equal opportunities and equity to examine the degree to which identities reflect 'managerial' or 'democratic' professional projects. In particular it analyses the way in which 'gender talk' seems to evoke strong emotional reactions, often 'negative' feelings, while at the same time, gender equity concerns remain on the periphery of the discipline, despite increasing research evidence which reveals damaging discriminatory learning environments. By using Hargreaves (2000) concept of 'emotional geographies' the paper contends that 'negative emotions' about gender issues are currently hegemonic on account of today's configurations of human relations in PETE, because the discipline's feeling rules construct 'negative feelings' as being reasonable. Acknowledging that professional identities are on-going projects, and that feeling rules can be re-configured, the paper also seeks to illustrate how competing emotions may in the future lead to gender equality assuming a new role in PETE's 'regimes of truths'.

Key words: gender, emotion, emotional geographies, teacher educator, Physical Education

Introduction

Many of us strive towards creating interview situations where our informants feel safe to reconstruct their emotional lived experiences of phenomena because we adhere to the belief that our understanding of social realities is both cognitive and sensory. I question, however, the degree to which we (and here I position myself clearly within the collective we) endeavour to systematically analyse and reconstruct our own and our informants' embodied experiences in our texts? I suspect that the emotions of interview talk colour our interpretations but that they seldom represent the main focus of our attention. This article is an attempt to place emotions at the heart of a discussion concerning the seeming reluctance of some Norwegian Physical Education (PE) teacher educators to reflect upon or engage with the growing body of knowledge about the constructions of femininities and masculinities, and discriminatory practices in physical activity and sport. It builds upon data from an investigation interested in illuminating the ways in which teacher educators develop their professional identities, using the lenses of gender equal opportunities and equity to examine the degree to which identities reflect 'managerial' or 'democratic' professional projects (Sachs, 2001).

Looking back, the research grew out of the many strong emotions I had experienced in my role as a teacher educator in Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE) in Norway, not simply my academic curiosity. It has been driven by the need to understand why my feminist, critical researcher identity continues to be a cause for ridicule; to understand why sexist and homophobic talk continues to pervade PETE discourses (Clarke, 2002; Dewar, 1987; Flintoff, 2000); and why years of policy-making has proven to be seldom effective in securing students more equitable learning environments (Wright, 2002). Anger, frustration, and despair are fitting nouns to describe many of my emotional encounters with gender equality/equity relations in both the

wider PETE culture and within my personal endeavours to avoid a reproductive teaching code, although occasionally feelings of unexpected joy have also overwhelmed me. Until now, ‘the regimes of truth’ (Evans & Davies, 2004) within PETE have silenced and marginalised these embodied forms of knowing, but following Evans et al (2005) I will argue that formal education is inevitably affectively embodied and thus an understanding of the configurations of emotions is essential to the sociology of education.

In many ways, the emerging data were not unusual and they confirmed international findings about gender relations in PETE (Flintoff, 1994; Evans & Penney, 2002; Wright, 2002). As I have reported elsewhere (Dowling, 2006), the teacher educators’ views of gender were heavily influenced by biophysical sciences, technical-rational approaches towards education and strong performance identities linked to traditional notions of masculinity and femininity. Invariably their professional identities were more akin to managerial than democratic identities. A strong feature of the data which so far appears to have received little attention in the literature is, however, the strength of emotion evoked by matters of gender equality/equity in PETE. Although emotion was not a theoretical focus in the initial research project, it emerged as a significant feature of the on-going data analyses. Paradoxically, something which seemingly is perceived as being peripheral to the professionalism of teaching PE, nevertheless, aroused and unleashed deep sentiments among many of the informants. The register of emotions was rich, ranging from laughter, happiness, mockery, embarrassment, indifference, disdain and disgust, but characterised by what we might term ‘negative’ feelings rather than ‘positive’ ones. For example, one informant angrily exclaimed, “God help me, what an awful question!”, when asked to talk about his gender identity, and another almost exploded in exasperation as he divulged, “I, nor my students, find gender very interesting!” It seemed pertinent, therefore, to ask ‘why

‘negative’ emotions dominated the interview talk?’ because the informants had volunteered to participate in the project fully aware of its focus upon gender. Questions such as, ‘whose feelings are acknowledged?’ and ‘whose feelings are overlooked?’ begged to be asked, rather than dismissing the emotional responses as merely the ‘grunts and sighs’ of transcriptions and observation notes. In the light of Tinning’s (2000) observations about the seeming failure of cognitive commitment to curriculum development, it seems timely to explore the potential for emotional commitment to enhance students’ educational experiences in PETE. Indeed, Evans et al (2005) give us a fitting reminder that we ought not to shy away from questions concerning “... the potential negative use of emotion in sustaining social hierarchies and effecting social control” (p. 131), and ask, ‘what role do emotions play in configuring gender inequalities in PETE?’.

Emotion and education

Feminists have of course long since recognised the emotional aspects of knowing with their critiques of the male Enlightenment project (Dillabough, 1999; Noddings, 1984) but sociologists (Williams & Bendelow, 1998) and sociologists of education (Evans et al, 2005; McCaughtry, 2004) have continued to allow emotions, like the body, remain on the margins of sociological thought. As Williams & Bendelow (1998) argue, much research on emotions has also tended to reflect on-going debates within the field of sociology, such as micro versus macro, quantitative versus qualitative, positivism versus naturalism and the biological versus the social, thus perhaps not realising its potential to transcend the sterile dualistic divides of reason/emotion, body/mind, public/private and nature/culture. Indeed, building upon the work of Csordos (1994) and Denzin (1984), they believe that the study of emotions may offer a truly embodied sociology if we view emotions as,

“...existentially *embodied* modes of being which involve an *active* engagement with the world and an intimate connection with both culture and self. From this viewpoint – one which is not merely *about* bodies but *from* bodies – embodiment is reducible neither to representations of the body, to the body as an objectification of power, to the body as physiological entity, nor to the body as the inalienable centre of human consciousness (Csordas, 1994). Rather, as an ‘uncontainable’ term in any one domain or discourse (Grosz, 1994), embodiment instead lies ambiguously across the nature/culture dualism, providing the existential basis of identity, culture and social life (Csordas, 1994).

The interactive, relational character of emotional experience ... in turn offers us a way of moving beyond microanalytic, subjective, individualistic levels of analysis, towards more ‘open-ended’ forms of social inquiry in which embodied agency can be understood not merely as ‘meaning-making’, but also as ‘institution-making’.

... Indeed, from this perspective, social structure, to paraphrase Giddens (1984), may profitably be seen as both the medium and the outcome of the *emotionally embodied practices* and *body techniques* it recursively organises.” (Williams & Bendelow, 1998:xvi-xvii)

In other words, I seek to explore the ways in which ‘knowledge transmission’ in PETE – in this particular instance, knowledge(-s) about gender relations and equity - is generated, regulated, shaped, worked on and ‘normalised’ within webs of emotional, social relations (Evans et al, 2005). I am not interested in *what*, exactly, emotions are, but instead follow Denzin’s (1984)

interest in understanding the way in which our emotional consciousness is structured via intersubjective experience. As Lupton (1998) writes,

“... our concepts of our emotions are often integral to our wider conception of our selves, used to give meaning and provide explanation for our lives, for why we respond to life events, other people ... in certain ways, why we might tend to follow patterns of behaviour throughout our lives.” (Lupton, 1998:6)

I am therefore interested in the teacher educators’ emotional identities because they are integral to their professional identities, and I wish to analyse their emotional responses to gender talk by disrupting their multilayered, taken-for-granted assumptions about ‘being in the PETE world’ (Lupton, 1998; Zembylas, 2003). As Hargreaves (2000) writes, “Teaching, learning and leading may not be solely emotional practices, but they are always *irretrievably* emotional in character, in a good way or a bad way, by design or by default” (Hargreaves, 2000:812).

Following Zembylas (2003), it seems important that teacher educators can identify how their emotions are located in educational histories and how they can expand or limit their possibilities in teaching. How we *are* emotionally is influenced by our socio-cultural background and our social interactions within current dominating discourses. In the context of this paper, the binary opposition between ‘emotional/irrational woman’ and ‘unemotional/rational man’ is an example of such a discourse, with its exception within the sports arena where it is legitimate for men to express their emotions, particularly anger and aggression, or the joy of winning (Lupton, 1998; Messner, 1992). So-called ‘feeling rules’ (Lupton, 1998) regulate how individuals and groups can behave emotionally in either socially acceptable or unacceptable ways; we are constantly ‘managing our emotions’ (Hochschild, 1979, cited in Lupton, 1998). I ask, therefore, why do some of the PE teacher educators in my study express happiness, whilst others feel disdain for

gender relations in PETE? How are their emotions shaped, and what are the consequences of their feelings for their professional identities, their interactions with colleagues and students, and the gender hierarchies within PETE? Do the many ‘negative’ emotions perhaps reflect hegemonic ‘feeling rules’ in PETE regarding gender relations, and thus rather than representing emotional outbursts, they can best be interpreted as “a deliberate social strategy” (Lupton, 1998:19)?

Emotional geographies and Physical Education Teacher Education (PETE)

In order to better understand my informants’ culturally embedded and politically contested emotions with regard to gender equality and equity in PETE, I would like to build upon the work of Andrew Hargreaves (2000) by borrowing his idea of ‘the emotional geographies of schooling and human interaction’. That is to say,

“ ... the spatial and experiential patterns of closeness and/or distance in human interactions and relationships that help create, configure and colour the feelings and emotions we experience about ourselves, our world and each other.” (Hargreaves, 2000:815)

This concept offers a means for identifying the supports for and threats to the basic emotional bonds and understandings of teacher education that are constructed by the forms of closeness or distance in teachers’/students/ policy-makers’ interactions and relations. In other words, we can ask what helps to create, configure and colour the ‘negative’ emotions of the majority of my teacher educator informants’ towards matters of gender, but also creates and configures ‘positive’ emotions for others?

Hargreaves (2000) identifies five forms of closeness and distance in interactions and relations within the institution of Norwegian PETE which can either strengthen or threaten emotional (professional) understanding. Firstly, sociocultural geographies refer to the closeness or distance between PE teacher educators' and students' cultural and social backgrounds. Secondly, moral geographies concern the closeness or distance between the PE teachers' moral purpose (for example, their pedagogical and ideological philosophies) and that of fellow actors in PETE. Thirdly, professional geographies are concerned with the spaces between competing forms of professionalism (for example, managerial or democratic). Fourthly, political geographies concern the relations in the hierarchical power structures of PETE and PETE policy. Finally, physical geographies refer to the physical spaces between PETE colleagues and students: the frequency and quality of their close or distant proximity? Before exploring the data in relation to each of these concepts, I will explain the methodology employed.

Methodology

As indicated, the study aims to illuminate whether teaching in PETE is a technical-rational/managerial or a moral/democratic project for the actors involved and how, in particular, gender, gender equality and equity are constructed therein. Using purposeful sampling (Patton, 1990), three universities were chosen as being useful and appropriate sources of information. Informed consent was sought from the dean of each PETE faculty and from the participating, voluntary informants: teacher educators, supervisory teachers and students. Data were being collected by a number of methods, including in-depth interviews (Kvale, 2001), observation (Patton, 1990) and document analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

With regard to this paper, the discussion is generated from in-depth interviews with seven PE teacher educators at three institutions, together with analysis of documents such as module plans, strategy documents and curricula (national and local). On the basis of the conceptual framework for the project, an interview guide (Mason, 1996) has served as the basis for the conversations with a purpose (Taylor & Bogdan, 1984). Three researchers have conducted the interviews: a female, 31 year old PE Master's student; a male, 58 year old senior lecturer in PETE; and I, a female, 43 year old senior lecturer in PETE. Interviews were conducted at the informants' workplaces at a place and time which suited the individual. The intention was to provide a safe environment in which trust between the interviewer and informant could be built. We are acutely aware that our project's credibility, similar to all qualitative projects' authenticity, rests upon our ability to establish mutual respect between interviewer and interviewee, and our capacity to be reflexive about our familiarity with PETE culture (Ball, 1990; Delamont, 2002). To aid our reflection we have used log books for personal reflections about our interview interactions and written 'analytic memos' (Ely et al, 1991) about our emerging concerns and analyses to share with each other. That is to say, analytic memos about what has occurred in the research process, what has been learned, the insights this provides and the leads this suggests for future action. The Master's student is, in fact, a former student of one of the informants, which she believes provided a level of intimacy beneficial to the interview talk. The male senior lecturer was acquainted with 3 of the informants, two of whom had been former students and one of whom he has met occasionally at national professional meetings. He, too, felt that this former contact enhanced the flow of interview talk, rather than hampering it, not least now that the former students had now become his colleagues. I, on the other hand, was not acquainted with the informants even though we are members of the same professional group. The conversations (2 per informant, lasting 1.5-2 hours) have been recorded and then transcribed *verbatim*. Although

the emotions of the interview talk, such as laughter, were recorded in the transcriptions, we have listened and re-listened to the recorded conversations in order to grasp their feeling tones.

Documents were supplied partly by the informants or have been sought by me via the universities' internet sites and the Department of Education.

The data have been coded and analysed using a 'content analysis approach' (Mason, 1996) where the emerging theme of emotions in relation to the issue of gender equality in PETE have been categorised in relation to Hargreaves' (2000) 5 forms of emotional geographies. The interview transcripts and our emerging themes (from the interview data, the analytic memos and document analysis) have been given to the informants during this process, although outside the interview context the informants have until now provided little feedback. The informants are two female and five male PE teacher educators, whose ages range from 31 - 59 years. Their work experience in PETE ranges from 5 - 32 years: in Huberman's (1993) terms, two from the early-, three from the mid-, and 1 from the late-career stage. With the exception of two informants Fredrik (male, 31 years, 5 years' experience in PETE) and Randi (female, 38 years old, 13 years' teaching practice in PETE), they all have worked as PE teachers in middle or upper schools: Alexander (male, 42 years old, 11 years' PE teacher experience, 6 years' experience in PETE); Jane (female, 40 years old, 2 year years' PE teacher experience, 10 years' experience in PETE); Per (male, 42 years old, 4 year years' PE teacher experience, 11 years' experience in PETE); Ronny (male, 50 years old, 10 years' PE teacher experience, 8 years' experience in PETE); and Kristoffer (male, 59 years old, 2 years' PE teacher experience, 32 years' experience in PETE). All of the informants have studied PE with some form of pedagogy course (either integrated in teacher education or in the form of a post-graduate course), and with the exception of Kristoffer (59 years old), they all have achieved a Master Degree in a PE-related subject.

Below the data are reconstructed in the form of a ‘realist tale’ (Van Maanen, 1988) using pseudonyms, which is intended to respect the informants in the study, cohere with our current knowledge about PE teacher educators and the issue of gender equality in PETE, and may pave the way for reconfigurations of emotions about gender equality and equity. I deliberately suspend my more explicit theoretical interpretations of the data because I want to provide the reader with a sense of the subjective webs of gender equality emotions in PETE. This is nevertheless simply an illusion given the fact that my authoritative pen has inscribed these realities (Richardson, 1990).

Socio-cultural geographies and gender equality

Starting with a look at the socio-cultural geographies of PETE, the Norwegian teacher educators’ experiences are similar to those of international PETE: they describe a homogeneous group, with a sense of closeness between students and colleagues. As Jane exclaimed,

“The majority of our students are most certainly ethnic Norwegians! In many ways the students, male and female, are very alike. They’ve been socialized in PE lessons and from sport. After all, sport is what brings them to us! I was like it myself when I went off to college. I just wanted to pursue my love of handball! (ironic laughter)”

Ronny pointed to the profession’s self-perpetuating tendency, and like all the informants pointed to the persistence of male dominance in the field due to the subject’s historical roots:

“I probably became a PE teacher because I wanted to be like my PE teacher, I’d had a good role model. ... PE has traditionally been a masculine arena. You know, it brings to mind the image of the reserve officer with moustache bellowing out orders and

maintaining discipline. Although I wasn't *that* bad, I have to confess I was something of a disciplinarian when teaching in schools.”

The teacher educators' gender identities might be described as representing traditional norms of masculinity and femininity, although they are on the whole such a taken-for-granted aspect of their identities that they are difficult to articulate with words and they required much encouragement from the interviewers before they could talk about their gender selves. Questions about how they best would describe their own gender identities gave rise to considerable laughter, which we interpreted as amusement in some instances and embarrassment in others. After considerable prompting and long agonising pauses in the flow of interview talk due to our “awful question!”, the following comment from Fredrik is fairly typical for the male teacher educators:

“How would I describe my masculinity? (long pause) I don't think it's very easy. (pregnant pause). Masculinity? (deep sigh) I suppose, I'm a traditional man, who likes to be seen as tall and strong, a good huntsman (embarrassed laughter) ... (pause) Someone who can provide for their family ... I wouldn't like to be called feminine. That much I *do* know. (indignant tone of voice)”

Of course, not all the men were interested in hunting and some did not mention the role of bread-winner, but their main sporting identities have been formed in the ‘masculine arenas’ of football, climbing, outdoor pursuits, and cycling where strength, endurance and courage are seen as essential and fine qualities. Both the female informants described themselves as ‘sporting tomboys’, although Jane indicated that her identity has shifted in recent years,

“I suppose you might say that I'm a product of sport and PE, of competition and rules, of masculine activities, because I've enjoyed all that (laughter)! ... It's only when you start

to read and look afresh, that you realise not all girls (and boys for that matter!) like all of that (indignant laughter).”

Indeed, with the exception of Jane and Alexander, there appears to be widespread agreement that male and female students demonstrate different social and physical characteristics, determined by their biological sex, which in turn dictate the appropriateness of different physical activities:

“The boys tend to be a bit macho. The girls are more careful, tend to remain more in the background.” (Kristoffer)

“Girls are more dutiful, proper, punctual, a bit quieter, more careful. Male students tend to answer more questions, demand more of my attention, are loud-spoken, stand out more ... To my mind, girls lag far behind the boys in football. ... I actually like to dance, but I'd say that it's mainly women who like dance”. (Fredrik)

“Biology dictates to a large degree what the boys or girls can manage or perform on outdoor hikes.” (Randi)

Using the example of climbing, Alexander disagreed that gender dictates what activities female and male students can perform well, yet paradoxically he upheld dualistic views about gendered bodies in claiming that women are flexible compared to men who are strong:

“If you take climbing as an example, the stereotype is of the strong male with big bi-ceps hanging onto a cliff, yet, I nearly always find that it's the girls who succeed when we have climbing because they're in touch with their feet and are more flexible, more coordinated. The boys can be strong but that doesn't help if you're afraid of heights, and they tend to be stiff! (amused laughter)”

Jane, on the other hand, explained differences in behaviour as stemming from differing social expectations:

“I must say that I sort of get irritated with girls who act weaker than they are, for example, when I teach the smash in volleyball. It’s not ’cause they can’t do it, it’s just that they’re so careful and sort of hesitant, you know (frustrated, scornful tone of voice)”

She seems in fact to single herself out as an informant whose socio-cultural background is sometimes at variance with the majority of her colleagues and students in matters of gender equality, which can be illustrated by this comment,

“You know some of these sporty girls they just don’t see a problem with the way they are, yet there are so many other femininities out in schools which they ought to recognise! It’s so frustrating in many ways! (despairing tone)”

Other informants talked about additional threats to the close bonds of PETE relations. In direct relation to gender, homosexuality appears to represent the most commonly felt threat and is often rendered harmless with the help of humour. Fredrik informed us,

“It’s not unusual to hear remarks like, ‘you homo!’, that sort of thing among the students. I know when I’m out with the boys hunting, it’s common, too. But it’s only a bit of fun (hearty laughter), nothing’s meant by it (laughter). I suppose I’d have to say something if a student shouted ‘you homo’ to another student in a formal setting, but that doesn’t really happen.”

Kristoffer, on the other hand, demonstrated a somewhat more intolerant view when he angrily proclaimed:

“Homosexuals are very peculiar, not normal. Inexplicable! I’d never dream of touching a man’s body! (voice full of loathing and disgust)”

Other perceived threats to the harmony of social relations in PETE concern ‘the non-mesomorph Other’ or ‘the ethnic minority Other’, as the following quotations from interview talk with Per reveal:

“A few years ago we were really concerned that the pre-school teacher students were a little too round, so to speak, you know – too wide, too broad (amused laughter). But this year they seem to have a better body shape, more appropriate with regard to physical activity.

... Of course those students with foreign backgrounds, they’re often not used to outdoor activities and the like, and there’s the religious aspect, of not being able to have physical contact, at least for the women. It can sometimes be very frustrating.”

Despite a few cracks in the harmonious façade of PETEs socio-cultural geographies, the overwhelming picture is one of close relations with regard to gender equality and equity: namely, that there’s a hegemonic belief in gender as a biological given, pre-determined and unchangeable. Competing views of gender appear to remain private, as opposed to public, discourses. As a result, “... gender equality really isn’t an issue, for me or for the students (frustrated, angry tone)” (Fredrik).

Moral geographies and gender equality

Moving on to the teacher educators’ sense of moral purpose, this too appears to be a non-contentious issue amongst colleagues and students. I interpret the dominating discourse to be one of morally developing the ‘universal student’ via the codes of ‘fair play’ in sport.

Notwithstanding Jane, the teacher educators interact with students whose gender (and social

class) is seen as irrelevant to the process of learning to “respect rules, each other, learning to show empathy and being helpful” (Kristoffer). Ronny expressed his views like this,

“It’s essential that you combine physical upbringing with moral development otherwise you risk having the ‘perfect body’ yet lack human morals. You have to learn to live with other people, accept society’s rules, and PE offers this through ‘fair play’ (a passionate tone),”

Alexander said this,

“For me it’s about giving the students the opportunity to find themselves, their place in the world. I need to know them as an individual and help them from there. ...

Disrespectful behaviour is unacceptable behaviour, that’s the bottom line.”

Several of the informants shared their views about the importance of learning the students’ names: for example, “I want to be remembered for knowing the students by name after the first session” (Kristoffer), or “I want to be remembered as a teacher who saw them for who they are, to look them in the eye and to say their name” (Jane). Many of them purported that PE was a unique subject for the purposes of developing students’ sense of morals,

“... because it’s a practical subject, you’re not stuck behind a desk and you have to interact with others, learn how to communicate. You know, ‘fair play’ in PE where kids learn about co-operation, solving a problem together, playing by the rules.” (Jane)

Data from Jane’s interview talk in fact reveals glimpses of a competing discourse in which students are recognised as having gender identities, alongside many other identities, and the recognition of a moral sense of duty to raise students’ consciousness about matters of social injustice. Her belief that female students are treated unfairly within PETE configure her

emotions differently than the majority; rather than contentment with the way things are, Jane displayed anger and despair when recalling how her attempts to create greater equality are met with indifference from students and colleagues alike:

“It’s so easy to paint a black and white picture. Male qualities are things like being tough, rough, wild, strong whereas female qualities are sort of softer, more refined. And when I hear myself say this, I’m so very much opposed to it! We all have some of these qualities, we’re a mixture (raised voice)!

... Yet, I don’t think that the needs of girls are necessarily met in PE. Take, for example, the types of activities which are taught in PE. They’re mainly ball games, and many girls report that they don’t like ball games, it’s been documented in a lot of research, but dance and aerobics, which they like, that’s not prioritised at all (angry tone)! And that’s overlooked ... We don’t have many discussions about PE teaching in general, let alone gender and PE (frustrated tone)! It would be nothing more than informal lunchtime chat in response to a TV programme, something like that (despairing tone)! My colleagues have very different interests than me, in fields that span from physical activity and psychiatry to biomechanics!

... I’ve introduced some literature about this (read ‘gender inequality in PE’) in my courses and we tend to have some great debates, but I’m not sure the students quite understand the problem! (disappointed laughter)

... Today’s students are not exactly gender specialists, I’d rather call them individualists! It’s all about *me*, and my right to choose, irrespective of gender. I really feel as though there’s been a change in the mentality of students.”

Professional geographies and gender equality

In keeping with the majority of the teacher educators' liberal individualism, as illustrated so far in the data, not surprisingly their professional geographies can also be described as neo-liberal or technical in character. They defined their professional role as being an expert deliverer of PETEs pre-defined knowledge and skills, as opposed to being an active meaning-maker in the social interactions of PETE and as someone who is concerned with processes of democracy. The following quotations are typical for many of the informants:

“You need knowledge of what it is you're teaching, and then you need the means by which to communicate that to others. Need to be a good instructor. (a matter-of-fact tone)” (Kristoffer)

“You ought to have skills in the different activities, knowledge about them too – historical, cultural background. You ought to be able to argue for their legitimacy, not just from a health perspective, although that too is important, but for the activity's own sake.” (Fredrik)

Recognising the need for experts, the teacher educators' professional identities are closely related to particular sporting practices and/or specific sub-disciplines within PETE (“I'm a psychologist”, “I'm a physiologist”, “I'm an outdoor ed. person”), and their practice tends to be private as opposed to collective. With the exception of Jane, none of the informants identified themselves as a 'gender specialist', and accordingly, knowledge about gender is marginalised. Per confessed in an indignant tone, “I don't give gender a thought, no!”, and Alexander joked that, “given my lack of theoretical knowledge about gender, I'd advise a student who showed interest in the subject to ring Fiona! (amused laughter)”.

The informants explained how they, in their role as an ‘expert’, are given autonomy to deliver their expertise to students, and for those who are interested, to further develop their expertise via a researcher identity in a PE-related field. With regard to the latter, it seems that a hierarchical career ladder based on a ‘classical male model’ persists in PETE, as opposed to other types of careers, such as a ‘feminine caring model’ of professionalism.

Yet again, as the dissenting voice, Jane expressed regret at the lack of a learning community amongst colleagues in PETE, and the tendency towards pursuing individual teaching and research interests (see moral geographies section), but the remaining informants seemed to accept the structures of the workplace as inevitable and agreeable:

“I’ve recently been involved in the development of a new outdoor pursuits course, a subject I hold dearly, so it’s been great for me to be able to read up on this and develop the modules.” (Fredrik)

“This term I’ve been involved in a project with a colleague ... tried to gain more time to be able to get off the campus, and it’s been good. We’ve managed to do it, but it’s entirely our own doing, nothing to do with the department. We’re quite free to try out new things, if you have the initiative. I have to say, though, I mainly work on my own.” (Alexander)

“I feel I’m supported by the department to pursue my research interest in how exercise may help drug abusers.” (Ronny)

To summarise, I see mainly close relations between the colleagues’ views of professionalism in PETE, characterised by distance in their daily contact. Jane’s view deviates from the norm,

expressed in terms of a longing for newly configured work patterns, which among other things, could afford the opportunity for gender to be put on the agenda. Yet as the following quotation illustrates, Jane's desire for change is caught up in webs of traditional notions about dualistic workplace roles for men and women, and indeed illustrates how we have to live with the challenges of negotiating conflicting emotional identities:

“Yeah, I still think there's a tendency that men get management jobs easier than women, and I think that partially has to do with the fact that it's easier for them to be heads of department. That they're good at accepting the responsibility which goes with the job, it's easy for them, if you like. In a way, I'm still of the opinion that in a way men and women are not alike. ... (Self-mocking laughter) ... Even though we talk about equal opportunities and equity, I'm not convinced, I suppose, and sometimes I think there are things that make boys men and girls women, and men find it easier to be in charge. I'd probably stay awake at night with the worry, but they don't seem to, do they? (amused laughter)” (Jane)

In fact, several of the informants talked about gendered differences in salary and the male dominated workplace arena as ‘naturally occurring phenomena’, because as Per stated, “men are aware of their ability to lead others”.

Political geographies and gender equality

Following on from the informants' seeming acceptance of the ‘taken-for-granted’ male-dominated power structures in PETE, and not least their experience of autonomy in their work, they reported little disharmony in the political relations of PETE. Despite a major reform in the higher education sector in Norway in recent years, the so-called ‘Quality Reform’ (UFD, 2005), which aims for greater accountability and quality control in degree courses and research, no one

reported feeling greatly affected by this policy, nor of the national policy which regulates teacher education, the National Curriculum for Teacher Education (UFD, 2003). I would summarise the informants' views as 'collective scepticism' towards policy in general, and gender equality policy in particular. Relations between teacher educators and policy in PETE can on the whole be characterised as distant. Randi's comments are typical for the majority of the informants' views concerning steering policy,

“I don't know if policy has an influence ... I don't really know the details of the written law ... and you tend to work at a more concrete, practical level: how many hours and what themes am I going to teach?”

Fredrik laughed heartily when he was informed that his institution had an action plan for creating more equal gender opportunities:

“... an action plan here at Strand? Never heard of it (amused, hearty laughter)! But if I might say so, it sounds extremely ambitious! I don't see it fitting into my teaching subjects, I don't include literature about gender, no (laughter). But I presume those who are interested in gender do include something, so the students get it from somewhere (mocking laughter)!”

Per, along with some of the others did, however, admit that changes in policy have an indirect influence upon PETE, “because school reforms, for example, do make us think a bit more about what is we teach at college level”. Indeed, Jane once again demonstrates how competing forms for relations within PETE can exist side-by-side, when she configured closer and less sceptical relations to policy, as the following quotation illustrates,

“Gender equality is a part of the national curriculum for teacher education, under general pedagogy, but I use it actively within subject didactics (a proud tone of voice) – I interpret

that there's room to do that After all, it's the teacher who interprets plans, for better or for worse.”

Physical geographies and gender equality

The final form of emotional geographies which colour emotional (mis)understanding within PETE is that of physical geographies. That is to say, the closeness or distance in contact between colleagues and students, where issues such as gender equality may be addressed and/or problematised. Here the data point to a unanimous experience of fragmented and episodic encounters with both colleagues and students. As I have illustrated above (under moral geographies), the teacher educators often work in isolation from colleagues, and whilst they spend a great deal of time with students, rather than establishing close relations with a small group of students, they tend to have distant contact with scores of them. Even though some teacher educators expressed the need to know students by name, and Alexander was proud of his ‘open-door policy’ for students, generally speaking students appear to remain interchangeable in the sense that their social and ethnic backgrounds, as well as their gender, are perceived as unimportant to the informants’ perceptions of the goals of PETE. I see the informants’ use of gender stereotypes (as exemplified in the discussion of socio-cultural geographies) as symptomatic of the seeming distant relations in PETE, where the supposed traits of girls and boys are valued instead of acknowledging the need to understand a student’s unique character and motivations.

The teacher educators’ teaching load is high and extremely varied, and thus provides little space for critical analyses of matters such as gender in PETE. As Ronny stated,

“It’s quite usual in sports science departments that you have to teach a bit of this and that – we’re not so large that we can afford to have specialists in every subject! (mocking laughter)”

Indeed, for example, Fredrik lectures in anatomy, outdoor education, football, skiing, ball games and skating; Randi lectures in physiology, outdoor education, dance and orienteering; and Ronny lectures in sports psychology, principles of training, statistics, health and nutrition. There is widespread acceptance that beyond the immediate concerns of course content knowledge or ‘private research interests’, the structures of PETE limit closer bonds between colleagues or with students. The majority of the informants seem content with these physical relations in as much as they accept them as inevitable within today’s structure of higher education.

Interpreting the ‘negative emotions’ of PETE and gender equality

Moving on from this realist presentation of data concerning what I have called the emotional geographies of PETE and gender equality, I would now like to offer a more explicit theoretical analysis. My starting point for this discussion will be my initial ‘misinterpretation’ of the informants’ emotional responses to gender talk, which I classified as ‘negative’, because clearly the above analysis reveals largely harmonious relations. There are certainly glimpses of dissent from this picture, which are mainly illustrated by Jane’s subjective experiences, but by and large teacher educators appear to be satisfied with the way gender relations in PETE are organised. Traditional forms of femininity and masculinity are accepted as normative (Wright, 2002), the emotional work of teaching universal students is viewed as a rational process (Dillaborough, 1999; Dowling, 2006), and gender is commonly viewed as a marginalised concept within the discipline of PETE (Flintoff, 1994; Flintoff & Sraton, 2005; Wright, 2002). Henkel (2000) has shown how academics across disciplines persistently share a view that their discipline and the

concepts embedded in it are central to their academic identities, and how sustaining the discipline is an end in itself, which would appear to be supported by my data. She points to the role that the language of a discipline plays in this respect, but here I would purport that the emotional relations of PETE may be of equal importance.

The evidence of what I term to be ‘negative’ emotions (amusement, mockery, embarrassment, shame, disdain, disgust) in the data may thus be merely representative of the dominant form of PETE socialisation with regard to gender (Flintoff, 1994; Wright, 2002). Whilst from my social location these emotional responses can be understood as ‘emotional illiteracy’ and perceived as ‘negative’ with regard to developing more equitable learning environments, from the social and professional location of my informants, their feelings represent ‘emotional literacy’ and are certainly not perceived as being negative in the light of a ‘non-existent problem’. Their emotions are normative and mine are deviant. In Denzin’s (1984) terms, my theoretical position and the continual challenges I meet within my on-going gendered professional identity project lead me to interpret the teacher educators’ ‘negative’ emotions as representing ‘emotional *mis*understanding: showing, for example, disdain towards colleagues’ and students’ gendered sense of selves and failing to show empathy for the individual student and their unique character and social background, preferring instead to use stereotypical characteristics of masculinity and femininity. The majority of my informants, however, who demonstrated similar emotional responses to the issue of gender may well perceive their ‘negative’ reactions as demonstrating ‘emotional understanding’: that is to say, they could almost instantaneously ‘read’ the situation facing them by delving into their past emotional experiences and reacting appropriately (Hargreaves, 2000). From *their* socio-cultural position gender equality is somewhat of a red herring, so laughter and mockery are appropriate responses according to the ‘feeling rules’ of PETE!

When pressurised (albeit within the niceties of interview talk and ethical interview practice) to dwell upon this ‘trivial’ aspect of PETE it is easy to understand how amusement can then turn to anger. Similarly it is not difficult to see how the teacher educators may have felt discomfort when ‘forced’ to consider matters of gender for which they did not possess an emotional blueprint, not least when asked to describe their own gender identity, which from their point of view is a biological ‘given’. As Messner (1992) has shown, men in particular can feel threatened by the thought of losing male privilege in an arena which they consider strongly to be theirs by right, such as the sports arena. It is also perhaps not surprising that a collegial discussion about competing gender theories can feel threatening or evoke embarrassment if one of the discussants experience that s/he lacks the necessary theoretical grasp of the arguments. Yet, a lack of such a theoretical approach is logical given the social geographies of PETE as illustrated above; why should one gain a theoretical understanding of a subject with which one does not identify? Of course we never set out to make our informants feel inadequate, and all of them consented to taking part in a time-consuming project about gender issues in PETE, but in retrospect the research team must accept partial responsibility for unleashing such a depth of feeling when pursuing ‘innocent’ gender talk within PETE.

This responsibility includes trying to explain the magnitude of some of the emotional responses beyond the confines of interview talk. How, for example, do today’s emotional geographies affect teacher educators’ individual professional identities? How do they affect the collective development of the discipline of sports science/PE? How do they affect the learning experiences of students, and in turn, affect the experiences of school pupils in PE lessons? The close configuration of emotional relations in PETE appears to leave little room for competing forms of

gender relations, as Jane's insights demonstrate, or indeed my own experiences within PETE seem to confirm. Certainly her story reveals the possibility for transforming one's own gender identity and professional identity (Zembylas, 2003), but simultaneously it reveals how complex and tenuous such a process can be. Whilst all of the informants remind us of how our self-identities become so taken-for-granted, Jane in particular prompts us to revisit our multi-layered ways of being in the world; it is possible to feel passionate about both wanting new gender relations *and* keeping things the way they are! Here I refer specifically to Jane's views about how there are multiple ways to be a female and or a male, and yet her insistence that men are better suited to management jobs because of some inherent gift, which is an anomaly she recognises herself. Interestingly, I note that her explanation for the latter is an embodied and an emotional one: she would have difficulty in sleeping should she have the responsibility of being a head of department. Similarly she feels irritation and frustration at the thought of girls who play on traditional forms of femininity in classes, rather than offering a theoretical analysis of why the girls do as they do. I am not purporting that the latter is more appropriate than the former, but I do believe such embodied responses imply that we need to acknowledge that a theoretical understanding of gender is perhaps impossible to achieve before it encompasses an emotional dimension. Following Williams & Bendelow (1998), Jane's emotions can be seen as both a medium and an outcome of the social structure of PETE, as indeed can the hegemonic emotions of the majority of the informants in the study.

Thus, rather than dismissing the 'grunts, sighs and joys' of my interview talk about gender relations in PETE, I think we need to see how the spectre of emotions can together represent a powerful mechanism for sustaining practices of gender discrimination. We need to go beyond the confinement of 'rational' explanations for why policy (at national and institutional level) fails

to bring about different gender relations in PETE. Of course insights from research on how neo-liberalism is affecting practice in higher education (Henkel, 2000; Mahony, 2000), research on professional identities in PETE (Dowling, 2006), or research that deconstructs the discipline of PETE (Kirk & Macdonald, 2001) may all be useful in throwing light on the issue, but without research which critically analyses the prevailing 'feeling rules' in PETE, we cannot hope to grasp the complexity of how gender relations are configured in PETE. In other words we must acknowledge that our understanding of the perpetuation of discriminatory practice on the basis of gender has both an intellectual and an emotional dimension. We need to ask intellectually, and emotionally, if we wish to continue to perpetuate them? Are we comfortable with feeling amusement, anger, frustration and/or happiness in relation to gender issues in PETE or do we *feel* that we would like to experience other emotions and/or broaden our cognitive understandings? Can a different set of emotions expand our teaching possibilities (Zembylas, 2003)? Brown & Evans (2004) have proposed that our embodied gender dispositions can influence our behaviour in PE and they argue how PE teachers may be conceptualised as intergenerational living links or cultural conduits in the cultural reproduction of the subject, not least due to the "emotionally loaded relationships" in PE settings (p. 55). I want to argue that these gender relations, which are configured and re-configured via the emotional geographies of PETE, need to be brought to the forefront of our attention.

Research on PE teacher students, such as that of Wright (1999, 2002), Flintoff & Scraton (2001) and Rich (2004), demonstrates how student teachers' emotional understanding is in fact of little use beyond the realms of PETE itself, because once they enter schools they discover, often painfully, that their gender emotional repertoire is too narrow in relation to the broad socio-cultural background of their pupils. As a result PE teachers can face a lot of 'emotional labour'

in trying to coax disinterested children into their gendered, bodily practices because they lack the emotional maturity to understand different gender positions, and accordingly, some pupils fall unavoidably victim to discrimination in the process. The strategies of being a good motivator, of endorsing 'fair play' or being well versed in social skills, which many of the informants mention as a means for securing inclusive PETE, seem thus to have limitations in practice, not unlike the limitations of reducing 'emotional intelligence' to a set of technical competencies (Hargreaves, 2000). This type of strategy fails to consider the broader socio-cultural structures of PETE, including the powerful webs of emotions, in which all teacher educators and their gendered practices are entangled.

What I am proposing is, of course, far from being an easy task. Even if we are willing to expose this intimate aspect of our teacher educator identities, there is the challenge of just *how* to do so. I want to stress that I am not advocating self-indulgent sentimentality or emotionality simply for its own sake, but like Hargreaves(2000) see a critical engagement with our feelings, as and when it seems appropriate, as a potential means for enhancing our teacher education practice.

Noddings (1996) has long since recognised story-telling as a way of helping teachers to get in touch with their feelings, Richardson (1990) highlights in this respect the collective story's transformative power, Tinning (2002) points to the possibilities for literary criticism to open up our emotional horizons, and I would add to this list of possible methods, the composition of poetic representations of our lived work experience as a means for conveying how this can feel (Dowling Næss, 1998; Sparkes et al, 2003). Whichever method we employ, however, we need to be conscious of the extraordinary level of trust and respect, which an exposure of our innermost and vulnerable selves, will require of both ourselves and of our colleagues (Day & Leitch, 2001). An emotional understanding of gender relations, or other aspects of our work in PETE for that

matter, will not provide us with a *better* understanding, but can transcend the dualistic divide of reason/emotion by providing equally important insights into how our emotionally embodied practices regulate and shape the discipline's prevailing theories, as much as rational thinking does.

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