Abstract for IREC Conference 2014, theme 5: Methodology

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The paper will follow up on my discussion about gender blindness and lack of theory development in the IR-tradition (Hansen 2002). Although some things have changed since I wrote the critique of the IR-tradition other problems are still unsolved. For example has the concept of power, which is so central to the tradition (Kelly 1998), not yet been the subject of more intense theory development. Also the relation between positioning, theory and political advisory is not often discussed. And finally, gender and diversity perspectives are not as integrated in daily research as it ought to be and therefore the tradition misses out important points for example about how to conceptualize TU-leadership (Hansen & Ledwith 2013). I believe that pluralism is good and that interdisciplinary discussions are making the tradition stronger. So instead of constructing a dominant theoretical paradigm we should point out themes particularly important for the tradition for focused and united discussions from different theoretical and methodological positions and approaches as well as from different disciplines. In the paper I will discuss four themes of major importance to the tradition:

- **Power.** Building on on-going research in the production, transformation and obstruction of solidarity among workers today I will discuss how to conceptualize collective power with a specific focus on challenges, dilemmas and complexity.
- **Policy advisory.** Building on two research projects in the Danish trade union 3F about respectively Fair representation and Diversity Democracy I will discuss how a social justice perspective (Fraser 2003) in combination with a ‘love’ perspective have contributed to the development of new perspectives on gender and diversity equality.
- **Model building.** I will discuss how a gender perspective will change model-building. Firstly, how the Danish flexicurity model actually is a flexicArity model (Hansen 2007); and secondly, how the Danish labour market model mainly is building on the private male dominated labour market and does not include the specific characteristics of the female dominated public labour market.
- **Innovative methods.** With inspiration from ‘Memory Work’ developed by Haugg (1999) I will discuss how we can develop new perspectives about the making of solidarity through writing about and discussing solidarity experiences.

References


Hansen, L.L. (2002): 'Rethinking the industrial relations tradition from a gender perspective: an invitation to integration’ in Employee Relations Journal Vol.24 No. 2

