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CONTENTS

#INTRODUCTION

URSZULA KLUCZYŃSKA CARING MASCULINITY OR HYBRID MASCULINITY? AN ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS ON MALE NURSES IN POLAND	07
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#ARTICLES

ANNA M. KŁONKOWSKA NEGOTIATED MASCULINITIES: POLISH AND US TRANS MEN ON SOCIAL AND PERSONAL ASPECTS OF MASCULINITY	27
JAROSŁAW R. ROMANIUK, ANNA KOTLARSKA-MICHALSKA, & KATHLEEN J. FARKAS AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON SUICIDALITY AMONG MEN IN POLAND	45
MONIKA FRĄCKOWIAK-SOCHAŃSKA MEN AND SOCIAL TRAUMA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THE MALADAPTIVENESS OF TOXIC MASCULINITY	73

#ARTICLES BY EARLY STAGE RESEARCHERS

EDYTA TOBIASIEWICZ PATTERNS OF MASCULINITIES IN DISCOURSE OF REPORTS ASSESSING CONDITION OF POLISH STARTUPS ORGANISATIONS	95
KACPER MADEJ MOTIVATIONAL BODYBUILDING VIDEOS AS A COMPONENT OF DISCOURSE INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS OF MASCULINITIES	117

#DISCUSSIONS & RESEARCH NOTES

MACIEJ DUDA MALE ALLIES OF POLISH WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION. ON THE EXAMPLE OF EDWARD PRĄDZYŃSKI'S AND EUGENIUSZ STARCZEWSKI'S PROJECTS	135
RENATA ZIEMINSKA MASCULINITY AS AN IDENTITY AND AS A CLUSTER OF TRAITS	147
WOJCIECH ŚMIEJA BETWEEN TRADITIONS AND TECHNOLOGY: POLITICAL RADICALISM AND THE SPECTACLE OF MASCULINITY IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND	159

CARING MASCULINITY OR HYBRID MASCULINITY? AN ANALYSIS OF RESEARCH RESULTS ON MALE NURSES IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT: In studies on men and masculinities, there is an increasing number of theories, which result from development, discussions and criticism in the area. However, in the context of this paper, two ways of describing masculinities are taken into account, i.e. caring masculinities and hybrid masculinities. The article analyses research results on male nurses in Poland, which were performed by means of in-depth interviews, according to theoretical assumptions on caring and hybrid masculinities. The interviews revealed varying ways of perceiving masculinities in the context of care. Out of the ways identified by the Author, the study focuses on the analysis of how to define masculinity as a belief that masculinity is accomplished by ensuring hegemonic masculinity. It also shows how this way of defining masculinity is related to the assumptions of hybrid masculinity. As a result, the analyses show that caring masculinities are not only diverse but also that the very term is disputable with regard to masculinities involved in various types of care.

KEYWORDS: masculinities, caring masculinities, hybrid masculinities, hegemonic masculinities, care, CSMM

INTRODUCTION

Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) are a developing area, so new terms and categories defining masculinities are formulated. At the same time, new terminology is criticised for being structuralist and following post-modernism

terms in modernism descriptions (Berggren 2014). Apart from the dominant hegemonic masculinity theory of R.W Connell (1995), and other related masculinities, such as complicit, marginalised and subordinated, the CSMM mention toxic (Kimmel 1995, 2013), inclusive (Eric Anderson 2009), hybrid (Demetriou 2001; Bridges & Pascoe 2014) as well as caring masculinities (Elliott 2015). Although descriptions of masculinities are based on assumptions and contexts, e.g. decreasing homophobia levels in relation to inclusive masculinity, they only deal with certain models of masculinities, thus following a trend that distinguishes masculinity types (Waling 2018). From my perspective, these numerous categories of masculinities overlap, and it is difficult to demonstrate relationships and interconnections between them. An example of an analysis that describes some of these relationships and interconnections is Karla Elliott's (2020) proposal of open and closed masculinities.

The main aim of the article is an attempt to reconceptualization the concept of caring masculinities. The research I carried out among male nurses showed that in some circumstances, men's participation in care might support gender hierarchy. That is why I analyse relationships between caring masculinities, as described in my research, and hybrid masculinities. The focus is on one of the ways of defining masculinities in the context of care, which is related to the ways of understanding hybrid masculinities. Empirical studies (Kluczyńska 2017b), being the basis of my considerations, are not described here in detail. The article aims to reflect upon terminology and find relationships within the analysed categories.

CARING MASCULINITIES – DEFINING AND CONTEXT

While analysing the concept of caring masculinities, I also describe feminist considerations on care as an activity thought to be connected with femininity (Kluczyńska 2017a). This element is important for defining the core of caring masculinities. Besides, I quote research on caring masculinities, emphasise its value as being pro-equality, and refer to my research on caring masculinities accomplished by ensuring hegemonic masculinity.

Feminist analysis of care

Any feminist analyses of care and concepts of care ethics start with the situation of women. These theories constitute a good perspective for caring masculinities because care is a universal human responsibility, even though it is entangled in numerous relationships, including gender-related ones. Because defining caring masculinities is based on care as such, though generally perceived as a female activity, I briefly present feminist analyses of care in order to highlight basic relationships.

Having reviewed historical ways of interpreting and analysing care in the context of gender, we should look at the first wave of feminism because it focused on women's unpaid care work. That work was not associated with gender as it was treated as a natural female domain (Philips 2009). The second wave of feminism emphasised dissimilarities between care provided by men and women, and praised the specificity of

caring activities provided by women (Philips 2009). Clare Ungerson (1987) differentiated between 'care for someone' and 'care about someone', and assigned the former to women and the latter to men. Thus, care was perceived from two dimensions: 1) 'care for' as selfless emotional work assigned to women; and 2) 'care about' as financial and managerial work seen through the prism of privileges assigned to men (Philips 2009). Assigning care to women was based on a conviction that they had better abilities to recognise needs due to their experience of motherhood. The third wave of feminism was connected with sexual integration, appreciation of women, and integration of care economics (deprived of the negative, subordinated role) (Mattahaei 2001). What is essential here is the 'ethics of care' that goes beyond biological determinism and replaces previous attitudes, which described women through work ethics, whereas men through fairness ethics (Gillan 1982). Also, care was no longer categorised as public and private, male and female. As a result, care and its crucial role in life have been emphasised (Philips 2009; Engster 2009; Baier 1985; Fineman 2004; Kittay 1999).

In the above sense, care is the first and foremost human activity that is precious and interdependent by its very nature. It can be a source of satisfaction even if it is strongly reliant. The point is not only to appreciate care, but show its human dimension. Care is also seen from the gender perspective, where the main role is played by the woman who is usually obliged to provide care. This perception of care as a human activity should also be taken into account while discussing masculinities. We should consider how care can affect defining masculinities or how men can define care.

Care vs hierarchical model of masculinities

Hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) is defined as masculinity that does not undertake care (Hanlon 2012). It is a privilege of dominant masculinity which – by subordinating femininities – assigns this issue to women or expects other masculinities to perform the task, i.e. subordinated masculinities. Men who accomplish complicit masculinity (Connell 1995) undertake care because by starting a family and fatherhood, they compromise and accomplish a more active role of a father or a carer.

Niall Hanlon (2012) describes why care is absent in the traditional pattern of masculinity and basically sees it as an element of femininity as opposed to masculinity. In hierarchically arranged gender relationships, care is associated with feminisation and a symbolical step towards or into a group of subordinated masculinities. Besides, care is described as an activity men are not good at and cannot perform it well. Such arguments, based on 'natural abilities', are supported and copied by biologist and determinist attitudes which sanction 'naturalness' of women and undermine the universal character of care. In relation to women and men alike, care is a relationship that should include the needs of both parties that are interdependent. All participants of the process have to learn specific actions, recognise one another's needs, and modify activities. Thus, it cannot be stated that care is something men are not able to do, and it is something they have to learn. Hanlon (2012) says that providing care means that traditional masculinity abandons its authority, a situation that can be unacceptable to some men. Accomplishing caring masculinities, thus giving up privileges and power

ascribed to traditional masculinity, may bring about social ostracism resulting from forgoing a conformist male role (Elliott 2015).

When care is undertaken through the prism of the hegemonic masculinity theory, inevitable consequences arise. First of all, some men are excluded from care or care is seen through the prism of power. When a man participates in care, he may move down in the masculine hierarchy, providing such a hierarchisation of masculinity exists. According to research, men who undertake care work (nurses) often come from ethnic minorities, and a medical job becomes a kind of social promotion. In R. W Connell's terms (1995), men who belong to subordinated masculinities may undertake care work without a threat to hegemonic masculinity. It can result from the way hegemonic masculinity is defined in a given culture and the very fact that they belong to subordinated masculinities. Performing care work does not undermine their position in the masculinities hierarchy. In some situations, they can even get socially or financially promoted despite doing a 'feminine' job or exactly because of doing it. Studies show that for men from small villages or poor families, doing a care job is a sign of social promotion, and its 'feminine' character is unimportant (Kluczyńska 2017a). Other groups that could be defined as subordinated masculinities according to Connell's theory, e.g. gay, may have a different attitude towards a care job and performing care work. This results from the fact that they already belong to a subordinated masculinity group, and they have 'little to lose', because they are already associated with women, and a 'feminine' job changes little in that respect.

Caring masculinities – beyond hierarchy

Defining care is crucial for the perception of caring masculinities beyond the hierarchical division. Care is a universal activity that is a value both for its recipients and providers. It is more and more often appreciated by society, as demonstrated by an increasing prestige of the nursing profession (CBOS 2019). A feminist analysis of care clearly shows that care work is the one that has to be done, and it is of utmost importance for the sense and preservation of humanity (Elliott 2015). Appreciating care can change the position of caring masculinities against hegemonic masculinity. However, if masculinities are to be analysed horizontally, a number of aspects and negative connotations which contribute to a drop in the hierarchy, according to Connell, would have to be changed or removed, such as skin colour, sexual orientation, background, and material resources. Likewise, the hierarchical perspective of masculinities could be turned down for the sake of the horizontal one, which would perceive caring masculinities as a dismissal of domination.

Caring masculinities can be seen in everyday life of men as it regards care activities in families and the community, as well as 'female' care jobs, but it also concerns activities connected with self-care, i.e. taking care of one's health and emotions by reducing behaviours hazardous for health, but also cherishing friendships and close relationships. Caring masculinities are an option for men who are the family's breadwinner (Scambor et al. 2015). Therefore, it is an alternative to hegemonic masculinity, whose cost can be eliminated and substituted with benefits offered by accomplishing

caring masculinities .

In Karla Elliott's (2015) view, what is vital for the caring masculinity model is the very fact of rejecting domination and an integration of values derived from the realm of care, i.e. positive emotions, interrelationships, and maintaining a relationship. Not only does caring masculinity model reject the pursuit of domination, but it also highly values positive emotions (Elliott 2015; Hanlon 2012). This is an apprehension of values and satisfaction derived from care both on the theoretical and practical levels. Studies carried out by Niall Hanlon (2012) showed that providing care let men feel responsible, competent, happy, proud, and cheerful. Similar results were obtained in research on male nurses in Poland (Kluczyńska 2017a). Hence, values associated with care become a source of accomplishment and fulfilment.

Caring masculinities can be a rejection of the load of rules that classify masculinities in the hierarchical system. In this way it is a step towards gender equality (Hanlon 2012; Scambor et al. 2014; Elliott 2015; Flood & Howson 2015) that does not struggle for power but for diversity. Caring masculinity can be seen as pro-equality masculinity. Basically, a pursuit of gender equality is ascribed to femininity, because it is assumed that women may achieve most benefits when gender equality is implemented. Nevertheless, this issue is connected with the cost paid by women, but also by men as a result of dominant or subordinated masculinities. Thus, researchers suggest that it is essential to include men in endeavours aiming at gender equality (Scambor et al. 2014), because contrary to a common belief they may benefit from such a change.

Indeed, involving men in childcare and household duties, stereotypically seen as feminine tasks, is pro-equality. When men are involved, it is not only women whose situation improves, but it is also to the advantage of men, and their emotional and psychosocial wellbeing. Studies show that an engaged man profits from better bonds with the child, as well as an overall satisfaction from life and the relationship. So, it affects positively both men themselves and other family members. The very participation in care contributes to the quality of life, health, lower number of risky behaviours, lower violence, and a better relationship (Scambor et al. 2012). Care – even if it is a must – has the potential to bring about changes in the way of thinking about care and the position of care as an element that constitutes a man's identity. In short, care work changes gender, and it changes men (Hanlon 2012).

CARING MASCULINITIES IN RESEARCH ON MALE NURSES IN POLAND

On average, one person in ten working in nursing is a man, but in Poland men constitute only 2.5% of the nursing staff (Naczelna Izba Pielęgniarek i Położnych 2018). The modern model of nursing, developed in the 19th century by Florence Nightingale, contributed to this profession being associated with femininity, which prevented men from entering it. On the other hand, nursing gave women an opportunity to leave their private sphere and pursue a career (Mackintosh 1997; O'Lynn 2007). Nowadays, care has become a profession and it is treated as a job that requires certified skills and competences. In this way, 'formal care' as professional work, here nursing, received a higher status than informal care, not to mention an income that accompanies it.

Research on attitudes to various jobs in Poland shows a rise in the society's regard for nursing jobs (CBOS 2019). In fact, nurses enjoy a high prestige in Poland, but the profession remains to be underpaid, although the pay depends on terms of employment.

According to studies carried out among male nurses in Poland, their choice of the profession is of a polimotivational character (Kapała & Rucki 2008; Domagała et al. 2013; Dziubak & Motyka 2013; Kluczyńska 2017b), including vocation, medical interests, pragmatic reasons, and chance. What is more, Bradley (1993) shows that the fact that men enter feminised professions is connected with advancement in technology and economic opportunities.

Men in a feminised job are able to make use of promotion mechanisms (Kluczyńska 2017a), which allow them to be promoted to senior positions, i.e. a ward nurse or a chief nurse, but – above all – they can work in specialist laboratories, and under a contract, which is known as a horizontal promotion. Working on contract is a kind of self-employment, under which it is possible to negotiate higher pay, but there is lower job stability and no possibility for a paid holiday. For these reasons female nurses that also look after their family members in the private sphere are less likely to work on contract.

Masculinity understood as dominance and aggression enables men to reach higher posts and higher income as they perceive negotiating their pay as male strength and dominance. In this way such masculinity sustains the gender order that is based on inequalities (Kubisa 2012). Still, it has to be remembered that not all men strive for dominance and promotion.

Studies (Kluczyńska 2017a, 2017b) show that undertaking a care job and providing care may, but does not have to, be connected with the rejection of dominance. Although motivation for choosing nursing in Poland may vary and may be of an internal or external character, the fact that a care job is taken does not mean a rejection of aspirations to accomplish hegemonic masculinity. The paragraphs below describe all types of masculinities revealed by the research among male nurses. This complex description shows the rich ways in which masculinities can be defined as well as the relevant background. However, in the context of care the most important definition of masculinity is based on a belief that masculinity is accomplished by ensuring hegemonic masculinity.

Method

The analysis is based on individual, semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The study included 24 licensed male nurses working in the profession for at least two years. The number of respondents was associated with data saturation. A purposive sampling method was utilized. I reached the respondents by informal means and utilizing the snowball effect afterwards. The interviewees included male nurses working on various wards, in units, and clinics. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed according to the premises of the grounded theory method (Charmaz 2006, 2011). Data were collected between January 2014 and December 2015 in Poland (Kluczyńska

2017a, 2017b).

Results. Ways of defining masculinity in the context of care

The collected data let me describe different ways of defining masculinity in the context of care. Two of them define masculinity by negation: masculinity as the opposition to femininity, and caring as non-masculinity. The first two ways of defining masculinity in the context of care are based on negation, the first of which is described as an opposition to femininity or rather an opposition to how 'what is feminine' and 'what is masculine' are imagined. Being a woman or a man is defined by differences and based on biological determinism, gender stereotypes, and gender order. Then, masculinity is the negation or the opposite of caring. The next two show how masculinity is accomplished by ensuring hegemonic masculinity, and accepting caring masculinity. The following two ways of defining masculinity in the context of care stem from the common ground of feeling confident about one's masculinity, where there is no place for fear or negation. Just the opposite, there is a conviction that 'everything is in the right place'. So, care can be integrated into the concept of masculinity in different ways. Finally, masculinity is defined by suspending gender in the context of care.

1. Defining by negation – masculinity as the opposition to femininity

Here, masculinity is defined on the principle of a binary opposition. Masculinity is non-femininity.

I'm a man because I not a woman. (Teodor)

Those men take gender order and men's domination for granted, which is supported by biological differences, so to say for them 'biological' means 'natural' and 'certain'. No need to say that these differences reinforce gender inequality.

I pee standing and I stick to it. (Andrzej)

Because this point of view assumes that masculinity is non-femininity, 'male care' must be distinct from 'female care'. 'Female care' applies to some dimension of care: care about, emotional support, meticulousness, whereas 'male care' is thought to be rational, task-oriented and medical.

From this perspective, care is linked with femininity, and perceived as the core of femininity, and a 'natural' inclination to fulfil the role of the mother. Care provided by women focuses on nurturing, demanding accuracy and carefulness in tasks which men tend to skip. These men think that 'female care' is not crucial and rather 'cosmetic'. On the other hand, 'male care' is understood as different and more important than 'female care'.

Men are more task-oriented. They've got their tasks and they carry them out one by one, whereas for women it's connected with maternity. It's their attitude and they give more. We - I mean guys - do what is necessary. (Andrzej)

Men lack what women have patience. Women do everything meticulously, while men

don't notice that something is dirty. Men only do what is necessary, but it doesn't mean that something bad will happen to the patient. (Jerzy)

2. Defining by negation – caring as non-masculinity

The second way of defining masculinity in the context of care is founded on the perception of caring masculinity as non-masculinity. Here, masculinity is the negation of femininity, and it is based on a binary opposition which excludes femininity. However, it does not take into account complexity, and rules of other varieties of masculinity. Thus, masculinity defined as a negation of caring is associated with differences and inequality, which are thus further confirmed and ensured.

This point of view is something more than a negation of femininity, because it is connected with being afraid of stereotypes of men in nursing. According to these stereotypes, being a man in nursing means being closer to femininity and being subordinated to other men (e.g. being gay). From this perspective masculinity and care are based on negation, fears and homophobia. These feelings may discourage men from providing care and choosing nursing professions.

Here, caring is understood as being close and supportive. Caring is non-masculine: it is feminine or it is a part of subordinate masculinity. Care which is perceived as masculine is limited to providing security, performing instrumental or medical tasks, all of which are deemed more prestigious.

According to the respondents, there is an alternative for men in nursing: a specialisation with limited care or a medical job other than nursing, for example a radiation therapist or *'in the ambulance as it is a job more for a man.'* (Szymon)

Men whose attitude to care is the opposite of masculinity tend to be fearful and lack confidence. However, some of them stay in the profession for some reasons, others quit it. The fact that their dominant version of masculinity is endangered prevents them from feeling fulfilled in the job or makes them resign. What's more, the fear and insecurity with regard to their masculinity results in frustration.

Nursing. A guy doesn't quite fit in. For me, if I were financially satisfied (...), but in fact I've never felt entirely fulfilled, and it's not quite what I should be doing, it's not quite what a man should be doing (...), even if I were financially satisfied, I would still feel it mentally. (Bartosz)

3. Feeling confident about one's masculinity – ensuring hegemonic masculinity

Here, the key to feeling confident about one's masculinity in the context of care is a conviction that some model of a dominant form of masculinity is fulfilled. For these male nurses hegemonic masculinity is important, and they claim that they have succeeded in this respect as they feel that they have power. For them, working in a caring profession does not endanger their dominant version of masculinity.

The fact that I work in nursing doesn't affect whether I feel masculine or not. I don't have a problem with that and don't have to prove that it's masculine and I'm mas-

culine. I feel masculine and I am masculine. Obviously, the profession is feminine, because it's usually women who do it. People can tell me it is a feminine job, but I'm not bothered by that. (Szymon)

Men from this group declare they have hardly considered what it means to be a man, or wondered what masculinity means to them. They have not reflected on it in the context of working in a caring profession. These men define care as a part of professional work, and there is no dissonance in the model of hegemonic masculinity. The fact that they work in nursing does not mean that they continue or realise caring or nurturing activities in their private life. They define care as medical and specialist tasks, not as nurturing. They usually work in specialist wards, and they earn more, because they work on contracts. They feel they have an impact on the situation, and they are not afraid of change or risk taking. What is more, they are the men who use the 'glass elevator' mechanism and make use of the privilege of being a man in a feminized profession. They also assume that their participation in a feminised occupation can positively affect its prestige, for example by raising wages.

If there were more men, nurses would have more clout. I saw it during strikes. When nurses went on strike and we were going [to Warsaw], lots of women, they were staying outdoors in tents, they had no clout. When miners went there, they demolished half of the city, and on the following day everything [they wanted] was signed. (Pa-tryk)

I think men are needed even for the ordinary talks. We are all employed under civil law contracts, but if not for those men, for example my colleague or myself, ladies from wards would still be getting little money under those contracts. (...) Because of stress and pressure, some of the ladies would have given in in the negotiations. It's because of fear that they would lose what they've got. Obviously, it is to do with their nature, family, kids and so on. A guy has got a different attitude: 'Well, if not this job, there will be another one'. Of course, it is not quite like that, but under the influence of adrenaline and all that, men do have a different attitude. (Tomek)

From this point of view nursing is for men, but 'the real men', who aspire to hegemonic masculinity, able-bodied, powerful, who like sport, and make use of privileges as a man.

4. Feeling confident about one's masculinity – accepting caring masculinity

When talking about feeling confident in the context of masculinity, male nurses do not often refer to hegemonic masculinity. They draw confidence from alternative masculinity, which is not defined by negation, homophobia, but by a multiplicity and – what is important – a non-hierarchical system. These men accept their weakness and they are ready to look for support. Here, masculinity is closely linked with care, because for them care is an inherent part of masculinity. Care is seen in a wide context, also as nurturing and closeness. Men from this group stress that they have a chance to be themselves. They accept caring as the core of masculinity.

I'm tender and that's how I know I feel good in this job, because I don't have to pretend to be some macho in a metalwork workshop or at a garage. I don't have to pretend that I'm someone I'm really not. I'm fulfilled in both roles professionally and personally. (Błażej)

5. Suspending gender in the context of care

Men from the last group do not mention gender as an important factor when choosing nursing. They usually omit this aspect. Being a man or a woman is not important for them in the context of care. They chose nursing because of their interests, they suspended gender in the context of care. My respondents very often skipped the aspect of gender as they were talking about nursing, nursing situation in Poland, different aspects of care, and even used feminine name for their profession. (In Poland the word 'pielgniarka' means a she-nurse, it is a feminine form; it is the official name of the profession, although there is a masculine form 'pielęgniarz"). For them it was not a problem. Above all, for them care is an activity, a profession that confirms humanity.

Is it masculine to be a nurse? Can't say as I've never seen it in that category. I just work in this profession and I'm a man, so it must be so. (...) You can't measure everyone against the same pattern, and it's also true with gender and profession. (Hubert)

I don't consider the job in this category whether it is masculine or feminine. Simply, I'm in this profession. (Dawid)

Defining masculinities is closely connected with power and subordination, i.e. the gender order. Defining or aspiring to masculinity through hegemonic masculinity or treating it as a reference point is linked with a belief that men's domination over women and other men is right. Defining masculinities is linked with the way care is realised, but also with appreciating care in developing one's masculinity. Caring can be seen as an aspect undermining masculinity or as a stereotypical 'female trait' which also threatens masculinity. In this situation care is perceived through the prism of power, and men tend to avoid less prestigious aspects of care, especially nurturing. This way of thinking about masculinity versus care supports men's domination and gender order. Another way of describing masculinities deals with confidence. It is about how confident one feels about realising a dominant version of masculinity or caring masculinity. In the first situation – which strengthens the gender order – authority as well as a profitable job are crucial. In the second one – which undermines the gender order – care is defined widely as care about, emotional support or an activity which brings satisfaction. Finally, masculinity in the context of care can suspend gender, and treat caring as an activity which confirms humanity.

The results of my analyses show that working in nursing may be, but does not have to be, connected with abandoning hegemony. A caring job does not always mean rejecting aspirations related to hegemonic masculinity. In this situation nursing is often defined through traditional masculinity, and men tend to step back from low-ranked

tasks. They also tackle the dissonance of working in a feminised occupation by re-defining 'femininity' of the job, and attributing higher quality of the performed tasks to men as well as higher incomes. Simultaneously, many men who take up the profession feel they fit in, and draw satisfaction from a caring job and fulfilling caring masculinity (Kluczyńska 2017a, 2017b).

HYBRID MASCULINITY. CAN THE HIERARCHY BE SKIPPED?

Hybrid masculinity, a concept mentioned in analyses on masculinities, is described in detail by Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe (2014, 2018). In order to discuss research results on male nurses, it is worth specifying what hybrid masculinities are.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity was criticised by Demetrakis Z. Demetriou (2001), who claimed that hegemonic masculinity was not an entirely white or heterosexual configuration of practice, but a hybrid masculine bloc that united various masculinities so as to guarantee patriarchal reproduction. Demetriou analyses hegemonic masculinity, which is always presented in relation to women and subordinated masculinities (Connell 1987). When conditions that enable patriarchal reproduction change, hegemonic masculinity changes, too (Connell 1995). Demetriou (2001) coined a term 'dialectical pragmatism' which describes abilities to include appropriate elements of subordinated masculinities and marginalised into hegemonic masculinity. He also claims that the strength of hegemonic masculinity relies on this very ability to adapt, and it should be understood as a bloc capable of encompassing what is useful and constructive for the domination project in a given historical moment (Demetriou 2001). Demetriou undertakes to deconstruct the binary between non-hegemonic masculinities and hegemonic masculinity by offering a new term 'a hybrid masculine bloc', which combines various practices with the aim to create the best possible strategy for patriarchal reproduction. Thus, hybridisation is a reproduction strategy of patriarchy, and hegemony reproduces through hybridisation.

Indeed, studies prove the specific character of hybrid masculinities. On the example of Promise Keepers movement, Brian Donovan (1998) shows how hybrid masculinity is created as a combination of men's sensitivity and strength, and thus a new form of authority is created which enhances the authority of men. According to Schindler (1997), Promise Keepers' members are trying to regain traditional gender roles by means of inclusive discourse, sympathy and brotherhood. Then, Demetriou (2001) demonstrates how the inclusion of elements from gay culture contributes to the creation of hybrid masculinity, which enables dominance over women.

Hybridisation contributes to an illusory belief that gender practices become less oppressive and more egalitarian (Demetriou 2001). For example, if men pay attention to grooming, the dominant masculinity form becomes milder, and on the symbolic level it opposes modern femininity in a lesser degree. However, Donovan (1998) says that it is an illusion, because milder forms of masculinity do not affect women emancipation, but rather conceal usurpation of women rights. Therefore, hybridisation is a form of camouflage or masquerade that lets uphold patriarchal reproduction (Demetriou 2001). What is more, Michael Messner (2007) talks about an 'emergent hybrid mascu-

linity'. He describes Arnold Schwarzeneger who became governor of California, owing to his image based on a combination of strength and gentleness in a way that tends to conceal rather than undermine the system of power and inequality. Actually, Messner describes hybrid masculinity in his earlier analyses, in which he features a New Man who – emphasises the author – 'is more style than substance, he is self-serving and no more egalitarian than the traditional man, and thus does not represent genuine feminist change' (Messner 1993:724). As Tristan Bridges and C.J. Pascoe (2014) say, an inclusive masculinity model of Eric Anderson (2009) is an example of hybrid masculinity. It assumes an inclusion of cultural aspects which are perceived as 'Others'. Nevertheless, research on the transformation of masculinities is basically performed on groups of young men who identify themselves as straight. This observation shows that only the privileged can afford such flexibility. Still, in Tristan Bridges and C.J. Pascoe's view (2014) not only this group realises hybrid masculinities, as marginalised and subordinated masculinities can also do so.

According to Tristan Bridges and C.J. Pascoe, hybrid masculinity 'refers to men's selective incorporation of performance and identity elements associated with marginalised and subordinated masculinities and femininities' (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 246). Hybrid masculinity is a change of masculinity, which is connected with issues of hierarchy and subordination, and followed by a few consequences. 'First, hybrid masculine practices often work in ways that create some discursive distance between young, white, straight men and hegemonic masculinity, enabling some frame themselves outside the existing system of privilege and inequality. Second, hybrid masculinities are often premised on the notion that masculinities available to young, white, straight men are somehow less meaningful than masculinities of various marginalised and subordinated Others, whose identities were at least partially produced by collective struggles for rights and recognition. Third, hybrid masculinities work to fortify symbolic and social boundaries between (racial, gender, sexual) groups – further entrenching, and often concealing, inequality in new ways.' (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 250)

Tristan Bridges and C.J. Pascoe, (2014) elaborate on three consequences associated with constructing hybrid masculinities: discursive distancing, strategic borrowing, and fortifying boundaries. They describe a process how significance and practices of hegemonic masculinity change with time in a way that maintains gender regimes, domination of men over women, and domination of some groups of men over other men (Bridges & Pascoe 2018).

In the first place, discursive distancing creates a belief that hybrid masculinity distances itself from hegemonic masculinity, whereas it actually supports it. Research provides examples of hybrid masculinities' practises. Bridges and Pascoe (2018: 261) demonstrate bromance, i.e. a close relationship between men, which is emotional, intimate, non-sexual, but including intimate touch. Such a relationship seems to reduce distance between hegemonic masculinity and intimacy, simultaneously undermining the essence of homophobia in contemporary ways of forming masculinity. The very word 'bromance' comprises romance, so it is an intimate bond between pals or bros. Thus, symbolically 'bros' emphasise a straight relationship, which distances it-

self from an erotic relation between a man and a man, even though intimate touch is possible in this relationship (Bridges and Pascoe 2018). Furthermore, Bridges (2010) and Master (2010) provide examples of male practices, whose aim is to show their support to women and distance from sexism and domination over women, i.e. elements of hegemonic masculinity. Discursive distancing also shows ways how men can enter practices which can be described as 'feminine' (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). Kristen Barber (2008), who analysed beauty parlours, shows how men participate in 'feminine' activities, such as pedicure and manicure, which ensure their status against other men.

The second consequence of constructing hybrid masculinity is strategic borrowing (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). Hybrid masculinities are realised by men from privileged groups who borrow symbols associated with various 'Others' that let them define themselves as part of marginalised or subordinated masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2018: 263-264). An example can be hipster culture which borrows elements from the working class. Another example is an inclusion of gay culture among straight men, i.e. metrosexualism (Bridges & Pascoe 2018: 264). When a young white straight man borrows practices and identity elements from subordinated groups to strengthen his masculine capital, the borrowed elements confirm the deviant character of these subordinated groups, thus enhancing the system of power and dominance (Bridges & Pascoe 2014).

Finally, the third consequence of hybrid masculinity is fortifying boundaries (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, 2018). Bridges and Pascoe claim that seizing masculinity elements or practices subordinated by young white straight men contributes to blurring boundaries between these groups as 'hybrid masculinities further entrench and conceal system of inequality in historically new ways, often along lines of race, gender, sexuality and class' (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 254). While carrying a study on white straight men making sex with other men who identify themselves as straight, Jane Wards (2008, 2015) shows the process of fortifying boundaries. These analyses demonstrate that white men seeing themselves as straight can have sex with other men free of identity consequences.

CARING MASCULINITY VS HYBRID MASCULINITY IN THE CONTEXT OF STUDIES ON MALE NURSES IN POLAND

It is worth reminding that hegemonic masculinity, being a certain 'cultural ideal' accessible only to some, is a point of reference (Connell 1995) and definitely it is a non-caring masculinity. Quoting R.W Connell's theory, men who provide care and 'compromise' because of various reasons realise complicit masculinity. Among male nurses there are also men who – according to Connell's theory – can be assigned to subordinated masculinities, especially homosexual men, men from ethnic minorities, working class or rural areas (Kluczyńska 2017a). However, most male nurses can be described as those who realise complicit masculinity. Basically, care is undertaken by women and subordinated masculinities or – if the consent and decision is conscious – complicit masculinity, which benefits from the privileges of masculinity, i.e. patriarchal dividend. On the other hand, caring masculinity model 'rejects domination and

its associated traits embrace values of care, such as positive emotion, interdependence, and relationality' (Elliott 2016: 240).

The above considerations and clarifications are indispensable to put the analysed group of male nurses in the perspective of masculinity categories, especially hybrid masculinities. Analyses on hybrid masculinities are embedded in the reflexion and criticism of Connell's theory. In this article the focus is only on one out of five ways of defining masculinity in the context of care, i.e. defining masculinity as a belief that masculinity is accomplished by ensuring hegemonic masculinity. Among this group there are able-bodied, white, straight men whose income is high. What they have in common is the financial success in a profession which is seen as low-income, they also work in specialised units, they are promoted (using the 'glass elevator' mechanism), they feel they make a difference, and they are not afraid to take risk. In fact, work in specialised units usually means that they are not involved in care activities of the lowest prestige, even though initially each of them did care work as part of nursing chores. In fact, they perceive basic care activities as a part of the nurse's work, but this aspect does not concern them anymore. In their view, care is defined as an element of work, not an element of private sphere. After all, they are nurses and they do care work (Kluczyńska 2017a).

Hybrid masculinity model is connected with discursive distancing. Although it is based on distancing from hegemonic masculinity, it actually supports it. So, by working in a nursing profession, whose core is care, men distance themselves from hegemonic masculinity, which is defined as a masculinity which does not undertake care and delegates care activities to femininity or masculinities whose position in the masculinity hierarchy is lower. Definitely, men who work as nurses accomplish caring masculinity, not hegemonic masculinity, by virtue of the profession's character. Doing a 'female' job, i.e. care, distances men from hegemonic masculinity. Still, this distance may be illusory, because what matters is how care is defined by male nurses themselves. Therefore, it is important to recognise how they redefine practices borrowed from subordinated groups. Strategic borrowing means that symbols associated with subordinated masculinities and femininities are borrowed from them. Indeed, this is what happens in the analysed situation. White straight male nurses borrow care, enter a profession, redefine their position, make use of their features (being a white straight man), and emphasise differences between themselves and subordinated groups, such as female nurses, gay nurses, what in fact strengthens the system of domination and hierarchy. In this way, boundaries are reinforced, even though apparently they are redrawn. Some men accomplish caring masculinity in nursing, however, others redefine care and make use of privileges of men, i.e. the patriarchal dividend. Re-defining care and types of tasks, as well as enjoying privileges in a feminised profession lets one stand out, and reinforce the boundary between caring femininity and caring and subordinated masculinities, especially gay. Therefore, it is 'others', i.e. subordinated, who perform care activities of the lowest status. Needless to say, in this way boundaries are reinforced, even if it happens in a different way, and the division between 'us' and 'others' remains. Reinforcing boundaries is also important because in a feminised caring profession, i.e. nursing, care as the pivotal element of the profession is

so closely linked with femininity that it needs an effort and persistence to dissociate oneself from performing ‘feminine’ care and the existing stereotypes which associate male nurses with subordinated masculinities. Fig.1 shows aspects which male nurses aspiring to hegemonic masculinity use to constitute hybrid masculinity.

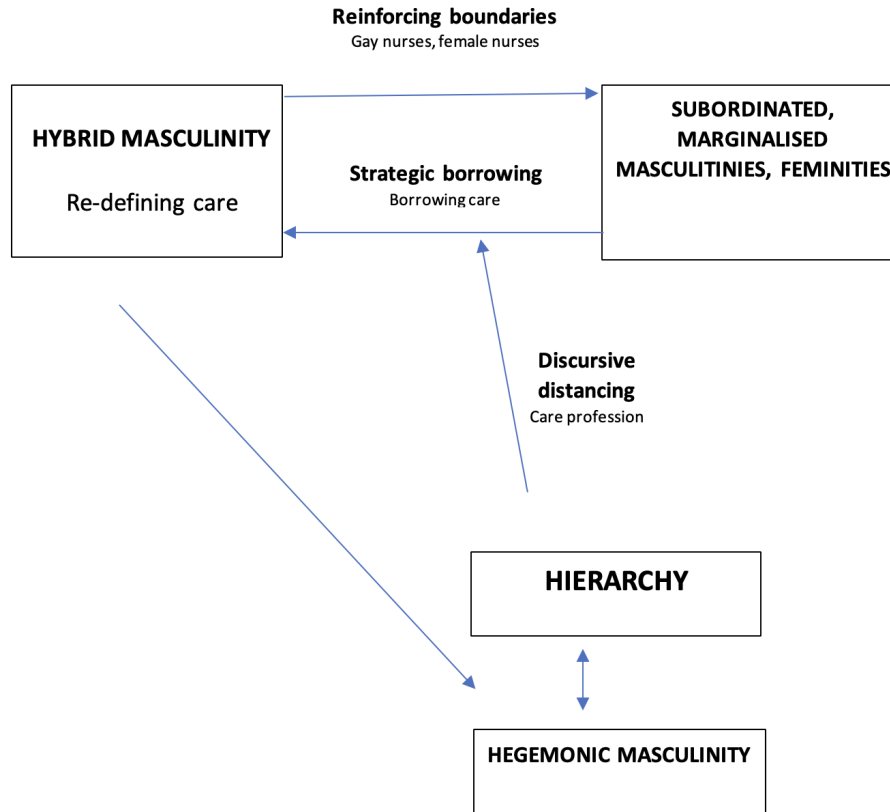


Figure 1. Constructing hybrid masculinity by male nurses
Source: own elaboration.

Seemingly, male nurses are a uniform group, but in fact they are very diverse. When Wards (2015) analyses ways of defining men having sex with men, he infers that this practice does not significantly affect identity consequences. By analogy, the difference in nursing is the type of practice. Care may thus affirm masculinity, because it is essential which men from dominant groups participate in care and how they define it. In this context, care is essentially specialist, technical, requiring qualifications, far from nurturing activities of the lowest status. So, care is ‘male’, and better than ‘feminine’. In this way, white straight men may work as nurses free from identity consequences, because the fact that they are engaged in care – if we take into account care in the above sense – does not affect the way masculinity is defined.

By definition, the profession of a male nurse is so close to practices of subordinated masculinities and femininity that distancing from hegemonic masculinity is immediately noticeable and needs no further explanations. In fear of too obvious distancing from dominant masculinity forms, a campaign was launched ‘Are you men enough to be a nurse’, whose aim was to encourage men to nursing and show that in no way it was getting close to subordinated masculinity. This campaign revealed how hybrid

masculinity could be developed in nursing, because it showed men working as nurses in the context of hegemonic masculinity attributes, thus borrowing symbols from dominant forms of masculinity. The attributes let them be defined as surfers, motorcyclists, climbers or musicians. In the photographs even the body posture emphasized confidence and domination, being elements of dominant masculinity in line with cultural hegemony codes. Additionally, the images were subtitled 'Are you men enough to be a nurse', implying that nursing requires enough confidence to be a man. This technique, called soft essentialism (Messner 2011; Bridges & Kimmel 2011), is based on an assumption that we are all equal but different, what in fact enhances inequalities. So, nursing is for men, but only for 'real men', i.e. men enjoying the privileges of men, and aspiring to dominant masculinity, who are able-bodied, strong, of 'masculine' interests, i.e. sport. This campaign brings a man closer to hegemonic masculinity and stems from the desire to neutralise distance and demonstrate attributes of dominant masculinity by those who undertake care, which by definition is associated with subordinated masculinities and femininities.

To conclude, privileged men define their hybrid masculinity by re-defining care. They work in nursing and they seem to accomplish – by the very fact of being engaged in care – caring masculinity, supporting at the same time pro-equality activities. To quote Messner (1993: 724) 'the change is more style than substance'.

SUMMARY

Hybrid masculinity creates a distance between a man and hegemonic masculinity, whereas in fact, it only replicates relationships between power and inequality (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). Being a male nurse seems to reduce the distance between hegemonic masculinity and care. However, re-defining care and using the fact that they are men in a feminised profession enhances dominant masculinity. As a borrowed element, care is defined through the prism of competence and know-how, and lets men distance and cut away from femininity and subordinated masculinities. This distancing concerns different ways of defining masculinity in the context of care because it also distances underprivileged men who cannot benefit from the patriarchal dividend. Therefore, the image of an educated person of high specialist competence and experience strengthens boundaries between other masculinities, for example working-class masculinities. On the other hand, by re-defining the notion of care, dominant masculinity can incorporate care as its attribute. In fact, a man performing a caring job, with care at its core, does not necessarily accomplish caring masculinity, which is pro-equality and rejects dominance by its very definition.

Being a nurse, i.e. undertaking care, does not always define the main axis of one's identity. Detailed studies on male nurses' motivation and career reveal a number of differences (Kluczyńska 2017b). As analyses show, caring masculinity in the context of care can be accomplished in various ways, and what matters is how care is defined. A question arises whether doing a caring job equals accomplishing caring masculinity and rejecting dominance (Kluczyńska 2017a). If caring masculinities is defined through a rejection of dominance and an integration of values from the realm of care

(Elliott 2015), not all men working in care fit assumptions of caring masculinities. The fact that a man undertakes care is not synonymous with rejecting dominance. Re-defining care and incorporating it into dominant masculinity practices means that it is hard to perceive these men as accomplishing caring masculinity. For these reasons, in my opinion, hybrid masculinity is the most appropriate term to describe the analysed subgroup of nurses and the specificity and relationships between dominant masculinity and caring masculinities.

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NEGOTIATED MASCULINITIES: POLISH AND US TRANS MEN ON SOCIAL AND PERSONAL ASPECTS OF MASCULINITY

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ABSTRACT: The paper is based on a qualitative research project carried out in Poland and the United States. It intends to compare the attitudes of trans men toward dominant notions of masculinity in their respective countries. Focusing on people who had been recognized as female at birth but whose experienced gender is male, the paper addresses their definitions of masculinity, attitudes toward accomplishing socially acknowledged patterns of maleness and re-defining their gender identity. For this purpose, the study compares the ways in which the research participants conceptualize dominant models of masculinity, their childhood socialization to locally and globally defined gender roles, the cultural context they grew up in, and its influence on negotiating one's own gender identity. As a result, conclusions from the study present a comparison of Polish and US trans men's efforts to negotiate personal and social identity in light of dominant masculine ideals (e.g., their potential reworking, acceptance, and rejection of various elements of those ideals and explore how alternative notions of masculinity shape different experiences of female-to-male transition in both countries.

KEYWORDS: trans masculinity, Poland, USA, hegemonic masculinity, identity, gender socialization

The knight is a man of blood and iron, a man familiar with the sight of smashed faces and the ragged stumps of lopped-off limbs; he is also a demure, almost a maidenlike, guest in hall, a gentle, modest, unobtrusive man. He is not a compromise or happy mean between ferocity and meekness; he is fierce to the nth and meek to the nth. (...) The man who combines both characters – the knight – is not a work of nature but of art; of that art which has human beings, instead of canvas or marble, for its medium. (Lewis 1986: 13-15)

Social studies on men and masculinities have undergone significant development during the past three decades, with the majority of literature being published in English (e.g. Connell 1995, 2016; Hearn 1992, 1998, 2015; Kimmel 1992, 2010, 2013; Gilmore 1990; Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2003; Anderson 2009; McCaughey 2012; Rosin 2012; Bridges and Pascoe 2014). Additionally, there is an increased focus on trans masculinities (e.g. Devor 1997; Cromwell 1999; Kotula 2002; Rubin 2003; Noble 2006, heinz¹ 2016), however, this area of masculinity studies remains under-investigated. In Polish social sciences, masculinity studies have emerged later (e.g. Arcimowicz 2003; Melosik 2006; Fuszara 2008; Kluczyńska 2009, 2017; Wojnicka 2011, 2016; Suwada and Plantin 2014, Suwada 2017; Śmieja 2016), and to a large extent refer to theories developed in the United States and other Anglophone countries. Also, in the Polish studies on men and masculinities, there is hardly any attention focused on the specificities of trans masculinities *per se* (e.g. Bieńkowska 2012: 132-149; Kłonkowska 2018).

Notions of masculinity among trans men may help us understand the socially acknowledged patterns and expectations of maleness, whether performed by cis or transmasculine people. Transgender persons, who develop their gender identities and gender performativity consciously – unlike those among us who had been socialized to their femininities and masculinities since infancy, and have embraced them to a large extent subconsciously – tell us more about our gendered selves. Being true “self-made-men”, trans men are in a unique position to concurrently embrace the socially uncontested concepts of masculinity and distance themselves from them. For the aforementioned reasons, this paper’s research study investigates the personal and social factors in constructions of masculinities among trans men. This article aims to present the interviewees’ efforts to meet the imposed social expectations to be recognized as male, their compensating for and theorizing on socially acknowledged attributes of maleness, and their negation of some male box features that they distance themselves from. It shows the efforts to strike a balance between expectations, possibilities and needs, thus working out their own masculinities: their negotiated masculinities that find a way to satisfy both: their personal attitudes and social notions of maleness.

Thus, to build a bridge between theories of masculinity that have evolved in the United States (along with other English-speaking countries representing the Western culture), and notions of masculinity commonly acknowledged in Poland, this research was designed to be a comparative study of both: US and Polish trans men’s percep-

¹ matthew heinz’s name and surname are written with lower case letters, accordingly to heinz’s wish.

tions and productions of masculinities.

METHODS

The methodology for this study has been inspired by grounded theory in its constructionist approach (Charmaz 2006). To allow the concepts gradually emerge from the data, without adopting any antecedent assumptions, I have collected 57 in-depth, intensive, semi-structured interviews among trans men: 30 interviews in Poland and 27 in the United States. No hypotheses had been put prior to data collection and analysis.

The respondents came from two different Polish voivodships and two other States: both from metropolitan cities and small towns. Additionally, in each country, I followed a few individuals in their everyday lives and during chosen activities related to the process of medical, legal, personal, and social transition. All Polish respondents identified within the same ethnical/racial group, while the US respondents were diverse in that respect, which reflected the relative ethnical/racial homogeneity of the Polish society and heterogeneity of the US society. The respondents originated from various age ranges and represented different levels of education, however people with a college degree/B.A., as well as persons in their 20s and early 30s composed the majority of research participants in both countries.

The research participants were recruited through the snowball sampling technique. Initial contacts were made thanks to the local NGOs and meeting groups supporting LGBT+ persons. The interviews collected in Poland were conducted in Polish with selected citations translated into English. All of the interviewees were informed of the scope and purpose of the study. All the interviews were recorded, with the consent of the research participants. I have personally collected, recorded, and transcribed all of the interviews, due to the fact that many of the research participants would not have felt secure about third-party access to the recordings. Each interview was done so privately, individually, and in a place chosen by the research participant.

Having followed the grounded theory approach when applying qualitative data analysis (Charmaz 2006), I used open coding as a basis for deriving axial and selective codes in order “to make comparisons and to identify any patterns” (Gibbs and Taylor 2010). It was a cross-case analysis. Being aware that the interaction between the researcher and participants “produces the data, and therefore the meanings that the researcher observes and defines” (Charmaz 1995: 35), I have paid particular attention to immerse myself - as a researcher - “in the data in a way that embeds the narrative of the participants in the final research outcome” (Mills, Bonner and Francis 2006: 31), and keep the participants’ voices present in the theoretical outcomes.

The names of the respondents have been changed. Of note is that some of the interview participants are cited more frequently than others. It was the author’s intentional choice, as those respondents concisely and aptly express thoughts representative for other interviewees who share their opinions.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Dominant Model of Masculinity

While discussing the social constructions of masculinities, all my respondents referred to the dominant notions of masculinity in their respective countries and their own attitudes towards it. However, the Polish respondents were more likely to talk about masculinity (as one dominant model),

Well, masculinity is masculinity... There are some features that are simply manly. It's not that all men are exactly the same, but this [masculinity] likens them to each other and makes them different from women. [Wojtek PL]

while the US respondents more often pertained to masculinities (as many concurrent models). The US research participants were paying particular attention to differences dependent on the person's racial or ethnical background:

I think there are a few models, and I think that is due to a different context (...). Masculinity is performed differently. Even as an American person, depending on, like, for example your race or depending on, for example your age. I think those are two biggest contributors in the ways, in which certain characteristics of masculinity manifest themselves or are being performed. [Roberto USA]

The lack of reference to racial/ethnical context in Polish respondents does not surprise, since Poland is in this regard a very homogenous country (GUS 2015). Among the US respondents, it was mostly members of minority groups who would particularly highlight the dependence of a notion of masculinity based upon one's family background.

I think that [the notion of masculinity] really depends family to family, or culture to culture in America. (...) I know mostly Hispanic families, that's what I am and where I grew up, that's mostly Hispanic. And some are different types, or ways... [Terry USA]

Yet, I found one thing especially surprising: even though the US respondents would indicate the diversity of masculinities, the descriptions they gave me – always referred to similar characteristics, encompassing strength (both physical and psychological), power, being non-emotional, being a breadwinner and a protector.

Men are expected to be... just like these big strong people and whether or not like those things manifest themselves through physical traits of being like a tall person or very strong or muscular person or through the way one conducts themselves, like interpersonally, (...) not showing any weakness. [Roberto USA]

The man is the one that (...) makes things easier for the rest of the family. Like the breadwinner. That's typical what I've seen. The man is the one who makes sure the house is taken care of and that the family has what they need. [Terry, USA]

They're supposed to be strong, supposed to be non-emotional, I guess that's the

main two [features], really. Like, you know, supposed to be the breadwinner, I guess. Strong and non-emotional. [Chuck USA]

But the declared diversity of masculinities and the homogeneity of the actual descriptions do not have to be perceived as a paradox. Maybe – as one of my respondents said:

I think it's different takes on a same model. Like it's the same general idea, but it might differ slightly depending on a culture or a family. [Terry, USA]

But there was another observation that I found more challenging: even though most Polish respondents claimed that there is basically one dominant model of masculinity, the descriptions of this “one model” that they gave me, did not seem to be fully compatible. Their characteristics of the dominant model of masculinity oscillated from a self-possessed protector and guardian; through an acquisitive, achieving, assertive leader; to a macho-like character, etc.

Strength, courage, loyalty, fight, spear, and sword. Some knight, a fighter. [Edward PL]

Protectors and guardians, providers – this is a bookish ideal [Bartek PL]

They [men] are more likely [than women] to be leaders. And people would listen to a man more likely than to a woman, men are more assertive... (...) [Men] can speak out for themselves, but not only themselves. [Marian PL]

When I think about masculinity, I think about power... maybe macho-like. Men are supposed to be strong, they shouldn't show weaknesses, (...) they should be ready to protect their women, it's something about the whole demeanor. [Andrzej PL]

At first, this left me puzzled: Was the diversity of descriptions simply a trait of culture, as is pointed out in the common Polish joke, which says that if two Polish people discuss something, at least three different opinions will appear? First of all, it could be that Polish people are aware of how homogenous (concerning ethnicity, religion, culture, etc.) their society is. Thus, they may assume that their opinion should be relatively representative for a general population (hence the idea that there is basically one dominant comprehension of masculinity). And yet, there may be more differences among perceived masculinity models, than they suspected (hence differences in descriptions given). However, hardly any evidence for this explanation came from the collected interviews.

Instead, analysis of the dominant masculinity models' conceptualizations given by the Polish respondents, indicated that despite the seemingly divergent models of masculinity they relied upon, my respondents were referencing similar core beliefs. Of note is that most of the Polish interviewees would also – just like the US respondents – mention strength (understood as both physical strength, and a feature of personality), power, a demeanour of protecting others, and not expressing emotions denoting weakness – as features linked to masculinity. Thus, it seems very likely that after all –

just as one of the interviewees has aptly expressed this – it is also just “different takes on a same model”.

Gender Norms in Childhood

Also, the descriptions of how boys are brought up and socialized to be men, seemed to be coherent in both countries.

Boys are raised up to be tough. For example, since they are little there is no consent for them to cry. Even already at preschool, you know, if a girl cries over something, she will get everyone’s sympathy and the teachers will hug her and try to comfort her, but if a boy cries, he will be told that ‘boys don’t cry’ and that he mustn’t be a crybaby. So, they learn that. [Henryk, PL]

Boys are expected to be more independent than girls, in childhood even. And they’re expected not to be emotional. Telling them not to cry, don’t be a sissy. I mean at a pretty young age they are getting those messages, that they are supposed to be strong, not emotional, independent and, you know, if they don’t fit that model, then supposedly there’s something wrong with them. [Chuck USA]

These descriptions highlight those features that the respondents also mentioned as generally associated with socially acknowledged, dominant model(s) of masculinity: strength, being strict, and hiding emotions that might reveal weakness. Also, both US and Polish respondents agreed, that

...masculinity is (...) taught and learned as not-femininity (...). Boys are expected to be just masculine. (...) And when they do not adhere to those hegemonic ideas of gender, then it is instantly perceived as a feminine trait, whether or not it’s something a woman actually does. [Roberto, USA]

and any feminine-like behavior in boys is punished in the traditional upbringing, while, at the same time, children assigned female gender at birth are allowed to be ‘tomboys’.

Girlish characteristics in boys are always more frowned upon than masculine characteristics in girls. [Andrzej, PL]

Many (although not all) of my respondents recall experiencing this from their own childhood:

I guess, I never got those pressures to be like, you know, feminine, or put on makeup, or grow my hair longer, you know, be less independent or strong. [Chuck USA]

Even though I was born female, I would always play with whatever I wanted. [Adam USA]

The same was being recalled in case of my Polish respondents:

In fact my dad... - I guess he’s always wanted to have son, but he had three daugh-

ters -, so he's always been happy if I helped him with painting the fence or fixing my bike. (...) I mean, it was hard at first when I finally come out one day, but when I was a kid, I think he even liked me more than my sisters for being such a tomboy. [Bartek PL]

One of the research participants aptly pointed out a possible reason for this double standard:

The performance of those roles [masculinity and femininity] are regulated and enforced differently. Because masculinity is inherently tied to a power, that plays a huge role (...). Whereas women are inherently perceived to be second to men and therefore less powerful, so there is a degree to which, even though fluidity in femininity is subversive and against gender norms (...), there is a degree to which it's not even taken seriously... [Roberto USA]

Thus, because it is perceived as desired and elevating, at the same time masculinity represents a set of rigid norms, to which one can aspire, but may not renounce (compare: Kłonkowska 2018: 12-14).

Negotiating Masculinities

Both the US and Polish respondents said that they try to distance themselves from the dominant, socially expected model in their own production of masculinity. Sometimes, they even defined and shaped their own identity by referring to what kind of man they did not want to be. They also seemed to be more aware than cisgender men of masculinity's social construction and more critical towards it (compare: Devor 1997: 513-582). This is probably because transgender people – due to their more complex socialization to gender norms – are in a unique position to tell us about our gendered selves. And maybe this awareness of social construction of masculinity could be the reason that most of my respondents found it difficult to explain how they became the men they are:

I'm not sure what it is that I possess that makes me feel masculine, I certainly don't have any of those qualities. That's kind of a social thing that obviously I didn't grow up with, so there is something more internal that gives you masculinity, I'm just not sure what it is (...). I don't have physical strength at all, any physical strength, really. (...) I don't have a lot of confidence. So I don't have most things that I actually describe as masculine. Yet, something internally tells me I have masculinity. That is most likely the thing that you are born with. (...) It's something that is internally in there, it's always been there. I just don't know what that is. [Lance USA]

My masculinity has never been obvious to me. I mean, it's always been obvious that I am a man, but not so obvious what type of men. I never got the upbringing that cis guys get, I had to find myself. [Czesław PL]

It could be, that the respondents' personal productions of masculinity – which they “had to find themselves”, instead of taking anything for granted – comprise a middle

ground between social constructions of masculinity as well as personal convictions and insights. That is why these seem to be “negotiated masculinities”, constituting a distinctive compromise of meeting the social standards in order to be recognized as male, and satisfying personal attitudes and needs. It is clearly visible when related to some – featured below – aspects of masculinity productions.

Male Performativity

Thus, on the one hand, my respondents would – to some extent – distance themselves from the dominant notion of masculinity, yet, on the other hand, they wanted to blend in. Male gender performativity and passing seemed to be important for them. But their opinions (both in Poland and in US) on whether the skill how to “be masculine” – in their behaviour, body language, and other ways of expression – was something inherent, something they were born with or something acquired – would differ.

For certain things – I had to learn how to be masculine. (...) I’ve been told that I have some feminine characteristics that make me seem I’m a gay guy, because that’s how people view it. ‘You have some feminine characteristics, then you must be gay’. So, obviously for me that’s not the case. I have feminine characteristics, because that’s how I was raised. I was raised and socialized to be feminine, so that’s how I was taught: ‘you have to sit up straight, like a lady, you know, cross your legs,... so I had to break myself off these habits. Cause you know, people see the way you stand and if you stand with your hip pointed out – that’s how a woman stands. But if you stand straight – that’s how a man stands. So, for certain things, I have to break myself off certain habits. Especially before, I looked and sounded not as masculine as I do. And always people were confused how to call me, what gender I was. Because they would [think], like.. ‘you dress like a guy, but you carry yourself this way, and sound...’ and all becomes complicated. So, I had a certain sense of masculinity, but I had to develop it. And the way I did it, was... I just based it on the people I had around me. Carlos came around, my step-dad, and certain aspects around him... obviously I would change it towards me, but I would see that this is the way he handles certain things, this is the way he walks. [Terry USA]

...this is not an external thing. This is something you are born with. No one taught me how to walk, or sit, or throw a ball. I have a natural way of doing it. And it was never on the feminine model. And if someone suggested: ‘why you’re sitting like this?’ - it was all natural to me. Someone would say: ‘you walk, you know, masculine’ – that was not anything I was taught or I didn’t model it after my father. It just... came naturally. There is a joke about throwing like a girl: ‘you throw like a girl’ I never did that. I automatically picked up the ball and threw it. [Lance USA]

Also, some of my respondents, mostly the Polish ones, would say that at the beginning of their transition they tended to be hyper-masculine in their gender performance as if they were trying to convince themselves that they are “manly enough”:

I've tried to be this kind of turbo-guy (...). Only later I realized that I don't have to be ideal. [Edward PL]

Among Cis Men

Some differences appeared when I asked my respondents how they felt among cis men. Some of the people interviewed in the US complained that they could not stand some cis men behaviours

Cis guys make certain comments about females, like sexist comments. Certain locker-room talks I'm ok with, but certain are like derogatory. And I'm like: 'bro, how are you ok talking like that – you've got a mom!' I would never want to talk about a female like that, because I've got my mom, my sisters. [Terry, USA]

and their lack of tact

Yes, actually one of my co-workers was... wanted to show me how to be a real man. (...) There was more like: 'I need to show you how to walk, talk, act' (...). I felt slightly offended. But he wasn't trying to be offensive. [Terry, USA]

Some of the US respondents also mentioned their anxieties:

Among cis men I'm like sooo anxious, because I can't help to feel like cis men would either see me as... see me as something that I'm not. Whether or not, they would see me as a gay male, which I'm not. Or see me as not male at all (...). I'm way more focused on like how I perform masculinity, specifically I'm focused on minimizing the feminine aspects, like mannerisms or even things like the way I laugh, or the way I gesticulate. (...) In my production of masculinity I feel very threatened. (...) And a part of that is also on the level of myself as a person who still has a biologically female anatomy. And I'm having like paranoid anxieties about that stuff. (...) But it's in my head. It's not necessarily like there is going to be like a direct attack on my body, or anything, but it's more like: 'we see these feminine traits in you. We're gonna use it to undermine you'. (...) It's like suddenly I have this very strong comparison of everything I am not. [Roberto USA]

In the case of Polish interviewees, those feelings were shared mostly by those among the research participants who identified as more gender-fluid trans men. They were more likely than trans men who more definitively self-identified as binary, to complain about cis men behavior and to mention anxiety they feel while being among them. The binary identified trans men often declared that – while among cis men – they feel just like „one of the guys”.

I've always had male friends. (...) They treated me normally, like other buddies. Brawls, not brawls, you know (...) normally. [Sebastian PL]

While referring to their attitude towards cis men, both US and Polish respondents who had an unambiguous binary perception of gender in relation to their identity and rejected any degree of gender fluidity, also mentioned issues connected with anatomy.

Multiple feelings about this. I'm grateful that they don't seem to question an-

anything about me. Yet, still you have a little bit of a sense that you're not equal with them. There is this kind of feeling like I'm not... like I'm just a little bit below than they are. I'm still... I don't mean below like they're better than me, but I just don't feel completely at the same level with them. Maybe because I didn't have the upbringing, the comradery, you know, whatever, the locker room thing, or maybe I don't have physical... equal physical... (...) I mean I did hang out with a lot of guys and they did include me, but I still didn't have... I still wasn't completely in their circle. (...) I don't know if it's one of those things I'm making bigger because it's something that I didn't have, but you know, male physical anatomy tends to be something that other men put a lot of weight into. Even if it's not the physical penis, it's the idea of it, it's... they use it in expressions: 'oh, he's got a big set of balls', that means, you know, he's very aggressive. It's the central concept. And so lacking that naturally... it puts you conceptually in a lesser position than other men, because it's such a... a focus... Like if a guy drives a very fancy sports car, they would say, you know, that it's an extension of his penis. Many masculine ideas hold that as a central piece of a puzzle and when you're lacking that – it automatically makes you feel less masculine, less than equal to them. (...) I can promise, that if you ask any other guy that walks out of the building: 'would you rather lose your penis, or would you rather lose your arm' – they would rather lose their arm. [Lance USA]

...for me it's always the fact which body parts I have, and which I don't – this is substantial, at least for me. (...) I find it difficult to accept, that I don't have a penis... that I won't be a man in 100%. [Marian, PL]

Previous Socialization to Femininity

Those among the US respondents who had feelings of uncertainty and lack of self-confidence while being among cis men usually blamed those feelings on being brought up as a girl. And – even though they stated that children assigned female at birth could be more flexible about their gendered behaviour – differentiating socialization that boys and girls receive was often mentioned in this context:

...let's take gender and speech and how women are taught to be quiet, at least in United States. And men – oh my god! – freaking culture and gender. Because in American culture women are taught to be quiet, reserved, you know, not speak unless spoken to. [Roberto USA]

Boys are raised to be the responsible, (...) they are kind of protector, to have a family and high paid job. There's kind of pressure with that. And girls are kind of raised and taught, either by the society, or their friends, to be more like... looking for that protector, instead of trying to be independent. [Adam USA]

Many men have a self-confidence about themselves (...). And even if they feel maybe insecure inside, they still conduct themselves in a manner that conveys

strength, that is self-assuredness (...). I'm not sure why women don't carry that outward confidence, and I would tend to think that, unfortunately, women that do, tend to be insulted for it. [Lance USA]

However, Polish respondents did not mention their previous socialization to femininity as a factor that has significantly shaped their masculinity production. A few of the Polish respondents claimed that they have always been assertive "in a masculine way". Staś, who lives in a small town, recounts an extreme act of "assertiveness" after local bullies ridiculed him and his gender identity several times:

There are arguments and arguments. I have a few friends, who are, to say so, able to persuade something either with the strength of their speech or with a strength of their fists. And they are on my side. So I really don't have to worry about this who I am. Others either accept this, or are quiet, cause they're scared. And I'm lucky to have buddies and friends, who are really tall and have such "paws" [arms]... So if they punch somebody once and for all, then nothing bothers me. Everyone, if they had something against me – they have told that long time ago and now they are quiet, cause they see the it won't change anything. And if anyone still has something against... also... would rather be quiet, cause either me, or someone else may punch them for that. It was simply a forced tolerance. [Staś² PL]

According to him, acting like that brought him respect not only because the bullies were afraid of him and his buddies, but also because by such acts he proved to be "a real man" who "has guts" to do this.

Even though I haven't punched anybody in the face for a long time, they still remember and know that, nevertheless, I can do this. [Staś PL]

Of course, such extreme ways of dealing with lack of recognition of their experienced gender and with intolerance are rare, yet, some of the Polish respondents recalled their attempts of being assertive when it came to questioning their gender identity:

I've always been like that, I had to tell something back. I would always say something back, and, you know, then it would eventuate in one way or another. [Sebastian PL]

This inclination among some Polish trans men to say something back if offended might be connected with a slightly different socialization to femininity in their childhood if compared to what the US respondents recall. It could be the heritage of gender socialization in communism, promoting an iconic model of a more assertive, self-reliant femininity (see: Stańczak-Wiślicz 2013; Toniak 2008; Keff-Umińska 2009; Fidelis 2010), which either my respondents have experienced, or their mothers did and passed it on them as primary "gender role models".

Interestingly, some of the US respondents – with Hispanic family background – also mentioned this kind of assertive attitude either in themselves or in other persons who

² Interview with Staś was a part of a larger research study (see: Kłonkowska 2017).

received female gender socialization in Hispanic families. This could be derived from a specific gender role socialization in childhood and from what they observed in their mothers. They connoted an image of a “loud Latina”, a strong feminine figure, with the status of a mother, caregiver, who speaks out loud for herself.

Females... in my family, if someone says something to you, you say something back, you don't let them do all over you, but they are more encouraged to cry about it, whereas boys are not. [Terry USA]

It's not me (...) but there is also the position of the loud Latina, who speaks out for herself, who has a strength in her femininity, but does also embody this very, very... status... like mother, like nurturer, caregiver. (...) My sister (...) who is married and has a kid, she came into her loud assertive self. And she was shown to be that person through my mother. [Roberto, USA]

Thus, paradoxically, the model of female socialization the trans men received in their childhood and what notion of femininity they observed in their mothers – may have had an influence on their level of assertiveness in their masculinities.

Male Privilege

Quite a few of my US and Polish respondents recall experiencing some kind of male privilege after transitioning.

A man will always get a better job than a woman. [Sebastian PL]

I had an across street neighbor (...). And a flood happened that washed her car... into a... it was like a flash flood (...). So she was on the phone with the insurance company, trying to get through to someone to find out how to process the claim. And when she made the phone call they transferred her left and right, this person to that person. By the time I got to her apartment, she was just so overwhelmed and frustrated, so I said: ‘let me try to call, let me see, you know, if I can get further than you. (...)’. And she was ok, so she handles me the phone, I get on the phone and I get a woman on the phone. And I said: ‘Hi, my name is Damon and I'm calling on behalf on my friend. And I need some answers to some questions. Are you able to help me?’. “Oh, absolutely. Yes, absolutely.’ I got further than she did, so for me that was my first male privilege experience – over the phone. It was astonishing. [Damon USA]

The Polish respondents, however, were more likely to recall situations that were substantial for their career, professional lives, in a few cases also family status. In contrast, the US respondents referred more to regular contacts with other people. And those who did not recall such experiences, sometimes seemed to feel obliged to have done so,

... for sure I did... I just can't recall a good example right now. [George, USA]

or – especially in case of the US interviewees – rejected the idea of having personally experienced advantages related to their male gender status, however without a denial

of the male privilege phenomenon in some people.

... it depends on the situation and people (...) it all depends on place and person and the situation. [Terry, USA]

Generational Differences

I have also noticed some generational differences. The US interviewees in their 30s/early 40s and older were more binary in their experienced gender than those who were younger. They were also more likely to identify with the notion and image of the so-called “true transsexual” and conform with the socially acknowledged masculinity model.

At the same time, younger people, were more distanced from the normative masculinities, more of them identified their masculinities as to some extent queer or fluid. Even though identifying as trans men, a few among them would rather use pronouns *they, them, their* than *he, him, his*.

The older trans men were also slightly more inclined toward the medical view of transgender, while the younger respondents thought of transgender more in cultural and social categories. The older among my respondents seemed to be more stabilized in their gender identities, sometimes no longer perceiving their masculinities in terms of “trans”, and less often looking for support from LGBT+ organizations.

At the same time, more individuals among the younger respondents seemed to be “seekers”, still reworking their identities, and they were closely associated with the LGBT+ communities and trans-affirmative groups.

A similar generational difference seemed to be taking place among my Polish research participants as well, however, it appears to have occurred almost a decade later, with observable differences between individuals in their late teens/early 20s and those who were older. Additionally, those generational differences seemed to be slightly less explicit among Polish respondents.

DISCUSSION

The research participants in both countries expressed ambivalent attitudes towards dominant models of masculinity in their respective countries. On the one hand, the fact being recognized as “truly masculine” seemed to be of great importance to them, especially in the case of trans men who unambiguously identified with the binary perception of gender. On the other hand, in their personal productions of masculinity, the interviewees seemed to distance themselves from those socially acknowledged norms associated with being a man. As one of the pioneers of social studies on transgender - Aaron Devor - noticed in his classic study of trans masculinities:

Because participants were positioned to make observations from vantage points afforded to a few members of society, they had the potential to see women and men differently than those of us who have never lived as anything but either woman or men” (1997: 513). “Some of the sensibilities which they had acquired

among women also inoculated many participants against some of the more virulent aspects of masculinity. (p. 551).

Thus, similar to the participants of Devor's research study, my interviewees also developed a sensitivity to sexism that "largely prevented them from succumbing to (...) peer pressure to act in sexist ways toward women" (1997: 551), or even to passively witness so-called 'locker-room talks'. For the same reasons, my interviewees were able to distance themselves from some of the characteristics that they perceived as inherently linked to the dominant model of masculinity, which are being imprinted in boys in the process of socialization. Thus, they "largely rejected masculine socialization, which favoured the suppression of all emotions save anger and acquisitional desires" (p. 551).

Since there were also intergenerational differences in the interviewees' perception of their own male identities and masculinity productions, it seems probable that the research participants tend to follow the dominant discourse when their coming out and/or transition took place. Although almost all respondents claimed that their masculinities evolved in time and with consecutive lifespan stages, the older individuals among my research participants were more likely to align with the depicted as "traditional", the hegemonic concept of masculinity and often labelled themselves as "transsexual men" or "ex-transsexual men" (compare: Cromwell 1999: 104). The younger participants were more likely to embrace the inclusive or hybrid masculinities and escape unambiguous identity categories, by self-identifying as gender-fluid-, queer- or non-binary trans masculine persons. As Matthew Heinz accurately depicts it:

This is a significant discursive shift from earlier discourse, perhaps most easily captured in the proliferation of identity labels transmasculine individuals select to describe themselves to others, in the increasingly common rejection of selecting a particular label and in the growing stress on deemphasizing gender identity while claiming the validity of transmasculinity. (2016: 217)

Interestingly, male anatomy also arose in relation to complying with socially recognized standards of normative masculinity. The lack of penis made some of the interviewees feel uncomfortable or even lesser in the company of cis men. The assumption that "gender presentation is genital representation" (Bettcher 2009: 105) added a symbolic dimension to having this particular bodily organ. This issue, raised by the previously prevalent "wrong body" discourse, becomes relegated to the background by the newer discourses on transgender. Thus, it could be that the problem is not as much the lack of penis *per se*, but "the attitude that without surgically reconstructed penises they are not real men or even able to be categorized as such" (Cromwell 1999: 135; see also pp. 112-113).

A stronger dependence on the country where the research participants lived, rather than on generational differences was visible, especially in two issues raised by the interviewees.

One of them was a male privilege experience. The Polish respondents recalled such situations more easily than the US respondents, and by far less frequently distanced themselves from the idea of having experienced it. Considering that the situations of

gaining male privilege recalled by the Polish interviewees referred mostly to their professional lives, the reason could be sought in differences in social policies to entrench more gender equality in public sphere and workplace. However, another possible explanation is that in Poland – contrary to the US - the issue of privileged and underprivileged social groups is hardly present in the public and media discourse (which could be caused by relatively greater homogeneity of the Polish society as well as different historical and social experiences). In the US, discussions regarding social privilege are undertaken not only in academia but also in popular culture discourse. Ambivalent attitudes towards being granted privilege based on one's social or demographic characteristics and a lot of controversies aroused in the USA might have also influenced trans masculine discourse in that matter:

Transmasculine discourse affirms and denies the granting of male privilege; it differentiates transmale from cisgender male and qualifies male privilege by recognizing intersectionalities. (heinz 2016: 213)

Another instance where cultural rather than generational differences could be observed was the impact of prior socialization to femininity. The availability of a self-reliant model, assertive femininity in cultural background experiences, and seized to underlie the initial feminine socialization, could have had an impact on general personality characteristics that influenced a particular production of masculinity later in life. According to Devor's (1997: 529) reflections regarding trans men,

Their backgrounds as women, no doubt contributed heavily to their success both in terms of what they have learned from living as women, and in the judiciousness with which they selectively accepted the masculine socialization which was directed at them.

Thus, different experiences in backgrounds as women, including those based on different culture family backgrounds, could have influenced those contributions.

CONCLUSIONS

The Polish and US interviewees who participated in this study revealed a high awareness of the social constructions of gender and their personal masculinity productions. They consciously embraced masculinity and developed critical attitudes towards 'traditional' hegemonic masculinities and rigid social norms of maleness.

In the context of experiences related to their background culture, they expressed critical attitudes towards differentiating gender socialization in children.

The masculinity models adopted by the research participants seem to be a resultant of a few factors: dominant models of masculinity in their respective countries; possibilities and limitations to meet those expectations; intervening factors; and – above all – personal attitudes toward socially-expected constructions of masculinity. The interviewees' productions of masculinities result from finding a middle ground between the social and the personal; between implied patterns and one's own attitudes. These are "negotiated masculinities" that allow obtaining social recognition and maintaining a unique identity.

Among the noticed intergenerational and culture/country of origin related differences in the productions of masculinity, the influence of family cultural background and related initial socialization to femininity needs further investigation. However, as the present study did not provide enough data to provide further conclusions on the latter topic, future investigations might yield additional insights.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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AMERICAN PERSPECTIVES ON SUICIDALITY AMONG MEN IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT: This article examines sociological, psychological, and suicidological research on the determinants of male suicide to explore the fact that Polish men complete suicide 7.4 times more than women, a frequency twice as high as in the US. This paper is based upon an examination of relevant literature and statistical databases. A keyword search was completed in both Polish and English language databases. Ideals of masculinity and negative social attitudes towards a non-binary view of gender may increase stressors and discourage men in Poland from revealing their problems while seeking support, explaining the high rates of suicide completion among Polish men. Suicide prevention programs must tackle gender conceptualizations and alcohol use patterns as well as increase avenues for male help-seeking behaviors. These changes will require political and religious organizations to confront the weakening of male hegemony as the organizing principle for family and society. This paper explores the increased rate of male suicide in Poland from the perspective of gender.

KEYWORDS: gender, masculinity, social work, sexual minorities, alcoholism, identity formation, suicide prevention

INTRODUCTION

Suicide is a result of many factors and often difficult to predict (Hołyst 2002; Rodziński et al. 2017; Czabański & Mariański 2018). Psychologists and psychiatrists study suicidal behavior as a mental health problem among individuals. However, suicide is also widely thought to have sociological explanations leading to differences in the prevalence of suicidal behaviors in various countries and cultures (Chu et al. 2010). In this paper we ask questions concerning the personal and socioeconomic conditions that may prevent or enable suicide for specific populations in Poland and make comparisons with conditions in the United States.

The most startling finding from a review of suicide statistics across countries and cultures concerns the gender difference in the frequency of suicide. The ratio of suicide occurrence (RSO) among men can be several times higher than for women (Richie et al. 2020). According to *OurWorldInData.org* (Richie et al. 2020), the proportion of men to women (RSO) in the United States is 3.5; that is, men in the US completed suicide 3.5 times more than women.¹

In Poland, the RSO is more dramatic; Polish men complete suicide 7.4 times more than women, a frequency twice as high as in the US. The Polish RSO is one of the highest in the entire world, and, to date, there is not much explanation for it. In Poland and the US, the significant difference in the suicide ratio between men and women has not changed for decades (Ritchie et al. 2020). Very little empirical research is dedicated to exploring the causality of the significantly higher suicide completion rates among men than women, but some hypotheses concern higher levels of access to services among women and the use of less lethal means by women (Coleman 2015). The work of Höfer et al. (2012) suggested that women in Poland use “soft” methods to kill themselves, such as poisoning, whereas men use hanging. The discrepancy in suicide occurrence among men and women could also be the result of less formal documentation of suicide when “soft” methods are used.

Understanding the difference in male to women suicide occurrence is essential for the planning of any prevention strategies. According to Sobkowiak’s (2011) guide to suicide prevention, the best approach is public education about the causes and symptoms of suicidal behavior. Two questions are of fundamental significance: 1. Why, in

¹ This paper used *OurWorldInData.org* data (Ritchie et al. 2020) concerning suicide ratios as they show change (or a lack of change) over an extended period of time. However, research conducted at another time or with other methods may produce different data (Rosa 2012). Although the exact numbers can be different, the significance of the differences in the data for men and women in the countries discussed is still valid. This perspective changes when we compare data from other countries and other cultures. For example, in China the ratio of male to female suicide ratio is about 1.5. It is tempting to explain this result by the long-lasting tradition of the absence of a male and female polarity in Chinese culture (Wang 2005), but in today’s reality there might be different considerations. The authors do not exclude the existence of other sources of the differences in RSO discussed here, but we did not find any other competing explanation besides those cited in this work. Perhaps more international studies could offer more insight explaining why the male to female ratio in suicide can be so different (from about 1.5 in China to above 7 in eastern European countries) across different countries and different cultures (Richie et al. 2020).

some cultures, such as the United States and Poland, do men complete suicide more often than women? and 2. Why is this ratio (RSO) twice as high in Poland than in the US? Since these differences concern a phenomenon related to gender, we look for an explanation in issues related to gender. There are many factors that may explain the etiology of suicide in relation to gender, but we will focus on two hypotheses we found in the literature to be the most general and that can be verified across cultures and time. The first pertains to the meaning that society gives to each gender (Payne et al. 2008; Coleman 2015), and the second concerns the culture of alcohol consumption (Landberg 2008; Razvodovsky 2015). The authors of this paper are social workers with interests in international social work and a focus on comparing sociological incidences in Poland and the US (Kotlarska-Michalska 2019a). Throughout our years of cooperation with social workers in Poland and the US, we encountered both similarities and differences in the approach to gender issues and addiction.

METHOD

This paper is based upon a review of relevant literature and statistical databases. A keyword search was completed using the following key words: gender, suicide, suicide risk, suicide prevention, masculinity and variations of these words. Databases include both English and Polish language articles published within the past fifteen years. Classic sociological and psychological literature was included because of its topical relevance. Both empirical studies as well as theory-based articles were included in the literature review. Papers published in the Polish language were translated into English by the primary author, and the translations reviewed by a native English speaker fluent in Polish. It needs to be stressed that our goal was not a literature review concerning suicide and masculinity but the search for the answer to why men in Poland complete suicide seven times more often than women whereas the same ratio in the US is 3:5. This is why our main focus was on gender differences concerning suicidal behavior.

BACKGROUND THEORY

In an effort to design appropriate techniques for prevention, we will begin with a focus on the bio-psychosocial basis of suicide and then explain its gender associated etiology, with special reference to the incidence of suicide in Poland and the United States. Psychological explanations for suicide such as the theory of needs and the theory of alienation provide a starting point for analysis, but these theories do not answer the question of why a person attempts suicide. The sociological point of view initiated by Durkheim (1897/1951) is still being developed and can be treated as parallel to the psychological trend. Some studies have confirmed the importance of additional factors that were not included in Durkheim's studies. A Dublin and Bunzel (1933) study confirmed the influence of gender and community values on suicide attempts, showing that the suicide rate among foreign men was twice as high as for the entire male population in the USA.

One of the theories on which social workers build their practice is Erikson's epige-

netic concepts of bio-psycho-social development (Gibson 2007). According to Erikson, both men and women face different crises specific to the age of development during their lives. At a young age the developmental task is achieving a healthy identity. In middle age, individuals are expected to be productive and creative, applying acquired skills and resources; in later years, they are supposed to achieve satisfaction from their life accomplishments. Erikson's ideas can be applied to an initial understanding of the higher rates of suicide among men. In both the US and in Poland, the expectation is for men to be self-reliant, independent, and financially successful (Pirkis et al. 2017). For women, there are a number of different ways to be successful, but for men, the path of success is narrower and always includes economic stability. Men who do not meet their developmental goals may feel lost, unaccomplished, and less than others. Each developmental crisis, when not resolved, may generate a state of hopelessness and despair that could then lead to suicide.

Erikson's theory is very helpful when considering the research of Shiner and co-workers (2009) on men's suicide across the lifespan. Today's young men can be confused by societal messages questioning traditional masculinity and the model of male identity. The world of middle-aged men has been shaken by changes in the globalized work market, transformations of the family model, and women's empowerment both in and out of the family setting (Möller-Leimkühler 2003). In recent decades, the man's role as the main breadwinner is questioned at the same time that social support for his difficulties is diminishing. Elderly men experience physical problems and losses due to aging processes, which might be detrimental to their sense of their life accomplishments. They might increase their alcohol consumption, thereby reinforcing their health problems (Möller-Leimkühler 2003; Binczycka-Anholcer 2005). All of these crises can be viewed within the context of the ideal of masculinity. When the developmentally appropriate masculine ideal becomes difficult to reach, a man reaches a crisis.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

The concept of hegemonic masculinity attempts to describe the position of men in today's society. The adjective *hegemonic* defines this position as one of dominance and power. We understand that the standing of men in society is different in various moments of our history and that this standing changes with the political and economic system that places men in hierarchical construct (Connell 2002). Poland and the US belong to countries with a patriarchal culture, where men are awarded a higher social status than women. However, not all men share the same status. The highest, ideal status, especially when talking about the US, belongs to a white heterosexual man, married with children, employed, and educated. In Poland, being of the Roman Catholic faith also adds to a man's social status. In other words, married, heterosexual men with children have more social privileges than unmarried, gay, or divorced men. The ideal representation of a man is a patriotic man expressing the nationalist ethos (Barłowski 2018). In Poland, he is Catholic, married with children, able to serve in the military, and educated and employed. Sometimes, the professional or social position

is high enough to replace other attributes. For example, Polish Catholic priests are not married and are childless, but they occupy a high position in society as a result of their profession and the country's long relationship with the Roman Catholic Church.

Most adult Poles declare that they belong to the Catholic Church and the Church ideology regarding a "real" man may create pressure on men, thereby increasing men's stress. However, the lack of information in the Polish police statistics on the attitude towards religion among those who have completed suicide does not allow us to confirm the relationship between religiosity and suicide. The possibility that religion, including the Catholic religion, could be a protective factor against suicide in the US was also discussed (Norko et al. 2017).

Some authors discuss hegemonic masculinity in terms of masculine domination (Reddy et al. 2019), a discussion that is very close to the discourse on social privileges. The ideal of masculinity defines not only the goal for individual males to achieve, but also creates a hierarchy of men from the most successful to the least desirable subpopulation of men. A man on the top of the masculine hierarchy would be accomplished in an area of work, physically fit, stoic, and a member of a social majority group defined by such characteristics as religion, race, and sexual orientation. On the other end of the masculine social hierarchy are men representing minority groups who are not successful and have some missing attributes of this idealized masculinity. Following this theory, men with a different skin color, different religion than the mainstream, who are unemployed and/or poor, homeless, and physically or mentally disabled will live their lives experiencing different forms of social exclusion, stigma, and discrimination in part based upon their failure to attain the elements of the ideal masculine stereotype.

There is a discussion in the literature concerning the use of the term masculinity vs toxic masculinity (de Boise 2019). In our work we will use the term masculinity as it was used in our literature sources. We understand, however, that when using this term in the context of suicide, the term "toxic" seems appropriate. The term masculinity is general and possibly misleading when analyzing how stereotypical male behavior has changed in recent decades (de Boise 2019).

People generally assume that biology determines sex, who is male and who is not. Although humanities scholars have already stopped using a binary description of gender (Bieńkowska 2011), the public continues to argue about what we have learned from biology (Hamidi & Nippoldt 2019). Recent progress in genetics has brought new data to the discussion concerning sex and gender. It has been suggested that there is no one single type of genes for male and female sex. Each human may have a different group of genes that can be placed on the X or Y chromosome, affecting sexuality. There is no such thing as a definitive gene package for hegemonic masculinity (Snell et al. 2018). Progress in epigenetics may verify new ways in which environment can affect people's sexuality and create generational changes in human behavior (Fine et al. 2017; Cortes et al. 2019).

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SUICIDALITY

In western literature there is a long tradition of forming theories of masculinity that are defined in opposition to femininity (Connell 2002). However, their application in understanding the gender difference in suicide is limited (Pirkis et al. 2017). In Poland, the discussion concerning hegemonic masculinity is less complete in comparison with western countries (Kluczyńska 2018), partially due to a limited interest in “gender studies” and due to significant criticism from conservative activists and government leaders (Odrowąż-Coates 2015; Korolczuk 2020). Nevertheless, most of the research cited in this work discusses the role of hegemonic masculinity in creating the social pressure among men to conform to this ideal of masculinity. Our paper then is not just another voice in the discussion about the concept of masculinity or masculinities, but an exploration of how the ultimate goal of “being a man” may lead to individual and perceived societal pressures that affect an individual’s decision to kill himself (Möller-Leimkühler 2003; Payne et al. 2008; Coleman 2015; Coleman et al. 2020) and how those societal stresses differ between Poland and the US.

Suicide Completion: The research of Maria Jarosz provides information on the influence of gender on completing suicide. Jarosz hypothesizes that the position of the Polish woman has long been relatively high, related to the woman’s special role of cultivating and transmitting patriotic and religious values (Jarosz 2004). Jarosz claims that the high position of the woman in the family and society may be, for a man, a factor that is both stressful and suicidogenic. Those cultural determinants that influence low rates of female suicide death result in a dangerous self-destructive syndrome for men, resulting in a higher suicide rate for men (Jarosz 2004).

Loss of Love: Among men who attempt suicide, about half of them die; among women, the rate is less than one-third (Hołyst 2002). Hołyst rightly reminds us that the key factor playing a role in the etiology of suicides is the state of satisfying needs and the disruption of interpersonal bonds. He points out that the syndrome of pathologizing interpersonal bonds is defined as the loss of love syndrome (Hołyst 2002). At this point, we can ask whether the lack of love is a more difficult blow for men to accept, since this factor plays such an important role in making the decision for suicide. It is difficult to answer this question because this factor is not included in suicidological studies.

Reasons for Suicide: Research conducted in 2000 by the Polish Society of Mental Hygiene under the supervision of Hołyst, on a nationwide sample, showed that Poles who are in the worst financial situation have suicidal tendencies. This percentage is seven times higher than in people who have a different financial situation. A more frequent occurrence of suicidal intentions among the most well-off was also noticed, suggesting that high financial standing may expose people to stressful situations (Hołyst 2002). These studies have also shown that men are more likely to experience suicidal thoughts than women. Men more often than women consider an incurable disease a reason for suicide, and men more often than women consider the death of a loved one a reason justifying a suicide attempt. Men more often than women see the lack of meaning in life as a sufficient reason justifying a suicide attempt. The cit-

ed studies confirmed that men are more accepting of suicide and more often justify suicide attempts (Hołyst 2002). Perhaps the fact that men are more accepting about the reasons for suicide translates into the fact that, in particularly difficult situations, they themselves decide to attempt and to complete suicide more often than women.

Age: Joe and Niedermeier (2006) reviewed the state of professional knowledge and suicide research in the field of social work. The main conclusion of their work was to notice the increase in the suicide rate in recent years among young men (15-44 years old) and the decrease in the suicide rate for older men, over 45. Studying men's suicidality across the lifespan gives the impression that the average age of men completing suicide has decreased. Suicidal behaviors occur with higher ratios in groups of people with certain characteristics. These groups include adult children of parents who killed themselves, members of families in which somebody completed suicide, and people living with AIDS. A higher rate of suicide was found among survivors of sexual and physical abuse but also among perpetrators of sexual abuse. Well-known risk factors for suicidal behaviors such as mental health problems, including depression and substance abuse (Cavanagh et al., 2003), were also discussed. Joe and Niedermeier (2006) found many differences concerning the incidence of suicide related to gender as well as age. They found differences depending on range of age of the sample population and on the culture and environment where people live.

Hołyst's research shows that suicides are the result of many factors and motivations and that people aged 31-50 are particularly at risk of suicide because they react differently to feelings of alienation than young people. In addition to external factors, frustration resulting from the knowledge of immediate threats and feelings of an individual's powerlessness affect the middle-aged differently than the young (Hołyst 2002). People over 70 are less likely to complete suicide. The motives are different for men and women. Women more often complete suicide due to mental illness and chronic disease, and men more often complete suicide for economic and family reasons (Hołyst 2002). Suicides in people aged around 50 are completed by those who have experienced significant difficulties or injuries that they have not been able to cope with. Such people often have difficulty verbalizing their feelings. The cause of suicide lies more in the development of the personality and life situation than in the acute state immediately preceding suicide (Ringel 1990). However, Conner and co-authors (2012) found that people who abuse alcohol may attempt suicide within a short period after experiencing stressful life events. The focus of the research may lead to a different conclusion that might contradict other findings. For example according to Osgood (1991), the suicide rate among people aged 65 and over is 50% higher than among people aged 15-24 and increases systematically throughout old age. With age, the number of suicide attempts decreases and the number of completed suicides increases. A special group of those completing suicide are divorced and elderly widowed people (Osgood 1991). For those widowed, the death of a spouse is an acceleration of their own death, and the number of suicides in this group is highest in the period from six to twelve months after the loss of a loved one. The suicide rate is twice as high among men (Baumann 2008), which may lead to the conclusion that men's loneliness after the death of a spouse is harder to bear or that men have fewer, active

social supports in place after the death of a spouse. There is a well-known “gender paradox” that confuses many researchers who try to understand gender differences in self-destructive behaviors.

Mental Health and Help-Seeking: Women, more often than men, report suicidal ideations and men more often attempt and succeed in completing suicide than women (Freeman et al. 2017; Czabański & Mariański 2018). Men’s suicidal behaviors may not follow any signaling of distress. The impact of mental health can be different for each gender with greater significance of depression in women’s lives and more significant consequences of substance abuse for men. Personal loss, like divorce or the death of a spouse, can be especially detrimental for elderly men and have varied effects for women, depending upon the study.

Depression is a factor that increases the likelihood of suicide among both men and women. However, the number of suicides among men suffering from depression is two to four times higher than among women, and the risk of suicide in men clearly increases after the age of 45-50 (Pużyński 1997). It can also be hypothesized that during a crisis situation, men use psychological help less often than women, which may be a sign of an ideal masculine stereotype. Research has confirmed that men use psychological help less often than women (Kessler, Brown, & Broman 1981), and they do so only when absolutely necessary. Moreover, many men treat asking for help as a sign of their weakness and helplessness (Möller-Leimkühler 2002). The work of Oliffe and his colleagues (2020) questions such an explanation of men’s suicidality. The authors cited studies on men’s help-seeking behavior, showing that men often use mental health services before suicide. Unfortunately, not much is known concerning their openness when discussing their conditions with mental health professionals and what kind of help they received (Oliffe et al. 2020). Płaczkiewicz (2019) described individual and social causes of suicidal behavior. She concluded that the main source of men’s emotional pain that may lead to suicide is loneliness and a lack of attachment to another human.

According to an interview with Daria Biechowska from the Polish Suicidology Society (Olender 2019), there are few if any suicide prevention programs in Poland. Polish men feel a significant responsibility to be “the breadwinner”. They do not have enough support when things are not going well and quickly lose self-esteem when they cannot meet their roles in society. The statistical picture of a Polish man who completes suicide is between 35-60 years old, unemployed, with a substance abuse problem, and lives in a small city or village. There is an additional problem with the stigmatization of suicidal behavior in small cities, indicating that the stressors must be greater than the perceived stigma.

Different professions, such as social work, sociology, and psychiatry present different pictures of suicide. Research by a team of psychiatrists from Warsaw argues that it is not possible to precisely determine the profile of a suicide. However, based on the analysis of some characteristics of patients who made suicide attempts, these psychiatrists contend that a male who completes suicide has no qualms about applying coercion and manipulation toward someone whose favor he wants. Their characterization continues to describe these men as ambivalent in interpersonal relations,

quarrelsome, and defensive, and having difficulty adapting to the everyday social expectations. Men completing suicide characterize themselves as “losers” and struggle to formulate and achieve goals. The researchers add that, among the features in this portrait, such a man may seem conservative in contacts and not inclined to act in complex, unclear situations. He has a tendency to change, and at the same time he may not control the limit of his abilities. However, this set of features applies to young men (Koweszko et al. 2018). It is worth noticing that the characteristics of psychiatry patients who made suicide attempts are formulated according to the medical model of mental health. Nursing and social work practitioners use a trauma-informed care approach that avoids stigmatizing language and use a person-in-environment model to capture the dynamic relationships affecting the individual (Kelly et al. 2014).

Suicidal Ideation: In search of an answer to the question why men commit suicide more often, one can refer to the studies by Galasiński and Ziółkowska, who show a relationship between thoughts of suicide and descriptions of suicidal thoughts (based on information collected in the form of recordings of psychiatric interviews in three psychiatric hospitals). These researchers point out that women construct suicide attempts as potentially beyond their control. Men’s narratives show that they are in control of a suicide attempt, as if they were choosing an option. Galasiński and Ziółkowska pay attention to patients’ ignoring and simplifying the experience of having suicidal thoughts, which are constructed as homogeneous thoughts about committing and planning suicide. The authors argue that the literature on suicide ignores the experiences of those who think about and try to commit suicide. The authors demonstrate that their initial consideration of the complexity of suicidal thoughts proves that these people are marginalized and treated as irrelevant in accounts of suicide attempts (Galasiński & Ziółkowska 2013).

The research of Justyna Ziółkowska (2016) is also noteworthy. According to Ziółkowska, doctors focus mainly on confirming the occurrence of suicidal thoughts, but patients in psychiatric hospitals talk about various aspects of their suicidal experiences. Ziółkowska’s research is based on fifty partially structured interviews conducted among people after suicide attempts while hospitalized in psychiatric institutions. Ziółkowska claims that people with an internal locus of control believe that they control their own lives, and people with an external locus of control are convinced that their lives are controlled by factors independent of them. Ziółkowska refers to the well-known concept of Shneidman from 1993 and believes that there are three main dimensions of the suicide model: pain, disorder, and pressure. Ziółkowska proves that men have a greater acceptance and a more lenient attitude towards suicidal behavior than women (2016: 87). Such an attitude may be considered as a factor that facilitates making decisions about the final parting with life. Ziółkowska cites the findings of Shneidman (1996: 59), who assigned a special role to perceptual narrowing. This narrowing boils down to the belief that suicide is the only choice and the only possibility.

Protective Factors and Suicide: To understand gender differences in suicide behaviors some researchers study protective factors that decrease the suicide occurrence for women. They found that populations of women who are religious (VanderWeele 2016) or married or have children have lower rates of suicide (Høyer & Lund 1993).

It is interesting that the protective effect of religion is not observed in research concerning men (Stack 1983). The risk factors for suicide for men are unemployment and frustration with underemployment during economic crises (Van Hal 2015). Men's use of alcohol and unhealthy lifestyles also contribute to indirect self-destruction. The results of studies by other researchers confirmed these observations (Jarosz 1997, 2004). The portrait of a suicidal male is a person who is not achieving his goals and is discouraged, feels defeated, and is fearful of the future (Koweszko et al. 2018). In general, depending on the time and place of the research, we can observe that any protective factor may have differential effects on the suicide ratio for both genders. For example, researchers have published data showing that being a father can be either a barrier to suicide (Coleman 2015) or risk factor for men (Pawlak et al. 2018).

Scourfield, in his work on *Suicidal Masculinities* (2005), discussed the gender difference in RSO, surveying sociological studies. In Table 1 of his work he presented a summary of his research that shows very similar findings as in the social work research of Joe and Niedermeier. He referred to religiosity and social support systems as protective factors against suicide among women. Women may well understand the underlying effect of depression on suicide and be willing to seek and accept help. To explain the different methods of suicide among men and women he concluded that women have negative attitudes toward lethal suicidality, especially with the application of firearms. Concerning men, he specified that more men abuse alcohol than women, which can also lead to differences in RSO. Scourfield's logic focused on the role of a dominant model of hegemonic masculinity as a risk factor for lethal suicidality. Men kill themselves when they cannot achieve the ideal of being a man. He also noted that there is insufficient research concerning the significantly higher prevalence of suicide among men compared to women.

As we mentioned earlier, discussions and explanations of higher RSO for men compared to women usually address differences in suicide protective factors for women and risk factors for men. Though these are important and valid studies, they do not explain the magnitude of the RSO difference between men and women. As Scourfield (2005) observed, many authors compare suicidality among men and women without paying attention to specific gender groups, such as men with a different sexual orientation. He also said that researchers often respond to public discussion on contemporary findings, such as an increase in suicide among young men, and relate their work to the changes in the model of masculinity in mainstream culture. Public discussion about social equality, human rights, and hegemonic masculinity may significantly affect current social research. Recently, more and more authors agree that the masculine ideal oppresses men, and they conclude that different, more inclusive masculinities are better for men's well-being (Nagel & Mora 2010; Klingemann & Gomez 2010).

IMPACT OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND SUICIDALITY

The concept of hegemonic masculinity can be used to discuss the higher rates of suicide among men in Poland. Those who are part of a minority group will experience additional discrimination as well as lower level of societal supports. In 2017, the Central

Statistical Office of Poland (GUS) presented data concerning the social perceptions of discrimination in Poland. The least socially desirable group were the homeless; 63% of respondents cited homeless people as socially undesirable. The second least desirable group were those identified with the LGBT population; 50% of the respondents said LGBT people were undesirable. The following groups were also discriminated against: poor (41%); handicapped (40%); race other than white (34%); ethnicity other than Polish (25%); and different religion than Catholic (23%). In the same data, 7% of male respondents and 11% of female respondents said women are discriminated against. Interestingly, women acknowledged that the abovementioned social groups are discriminated against at a rate just slightly higher than that of the responses from men (1-2%). These numbers increased with the age of the respondents. Another study reported in the same document of GUS (2017) presented people's opinions concerning reasons for social exclusion in Poland. For each group, the percentage of people who agreed the group was socially undesirable is listed in the parenthesis: drug addiction (83.4); mental health problems (81.3); alcoholism (80.5); poverty (75.5); pathological family (74.9); LGBT members (61.1); physical disability (55.7); and old age (43.4). Religion other than Catholic was chosen by 22.5 percent of respondents. Comparisons with the US are difficult, but data from the Pew Research Center indicates that the US reports similar, if not higher, perceptions of discriminated groups. However, statistics concerning the general acceptance of gays and lesbians in the US are improving (McCarthy 2019).

Two areas of difference are that issues of social discrimination in the US are more often publicly discussed than they are in Polish society, and there is a very different historical context for these discussions in Poland and in the US. We can choose one attribute of ideal masculinity at a time and study the impact of this attribute on a man's life. In response to economic recession there are more cases of suicide among men (an 8% increase compared to 1% for women) who have problems fulfilling their role as breadwinners. There is also an increase in alcohol abuse related to unemployment and foreclosure. Most affected are men aged 45 to 64 (Kerr et al. 2017). Another attribute of masculinity is bravery. Studies show (Day et al. 2003) that fear is very common among men, but they deny confronting it, which can lead to negative health consequences such as anxiety and depression. According to Galasinski (2008) men feel that depression undermines their masculinity. In general, men avoid looking for help with mental health problems. They very often somaticize their emotional reactions, which affects both their physical and mental health conditions (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2017).

Each year there is an increase in the rate of suicide among men in the US Army, up to 21.7 per 100,000 in 2009. The authors (Braswell and Kushner 2012) suggest that male soldiers deny any problems related to trauma, PTSD, and other emotional problems due to the ideology of masculinity and that they do not seek help. Polish studies concerning suicide among male soldiers also found that there was an increase in the suicide ratio during the first period of economic transformation (Ilnicki 2018).

A category that arouses interest among suicidologists is the professional police. The research results indicate the significant role of stress, and especially long-term stressful situations, in suicide. Authoritarian relations between superiors and sub-

ordinates also play an important role (Hołyst 2002). In the case of this professional group, there are several factors that have a significant influence, both resulting from the specificity of the profession and from the specificity of family situations, generated indirectly from the former.

Men's sexuality is clearly affected by attributes of masculinity. The belief that men need to be domineering and unemotional limits their ability to develop intimacy and build healthy partnerships. They may use pornography, created with the vision of men controlling women, as a type of emotionally safe sex (Garlick 2010; Romaniuk 2020). However, when asked about sexual fantasies, men acknowledge that they may have fantasies of being submissive toward women (Hawley & Hensley IV 2009).

Sexual orientation is an important factor in the etiology of suicides. A study by Danish researchers shows that suicides are significantly more common among gay men than among heterosexual men. According to Maltby et al. (2009) suicides are completed eight times more often by gay men than by married heterosexual men. These interesting research findings in Denmark indicate that gay men in relationships are at increased risk of completing suicide. According to Bell and Weinberg, the main cause of suicide attempts among gay men was the breakdown of a relationship (Bell & Wineberg 1978). A study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found gay men completed suicide three times as often as the general American population (21% created a suicide plan and 12% attempted suicide, Paul et al. 2002). Both studies in the United States and in some European countries have supported the influence of sexual orientation on the risk of completing suicide, but comparisons are difficult due to methodological differences. However, it can be assumed that the reality of homophobic attitudes in Poland, fueled by the open and official governmental aversion toward those who identify as LGBT (Odrowąż-Coates 2015), create a hidden dynamic that coexists with other factors.

HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY AND MINORITY GROUP STRESS

Members of minority groups are perceived as "other"; they are often stigmatized and labeled with negative stereotypes (Królikowska 2011; Iniewicz et al. 2012; Dottolo & Stewart 2008). One of the most stigmatized groups includes those with a different sexual orientation and those who identify as transgender (Paul et al. 2002; Kowalska 2018; Palmer & Clegg 2020). People of minority groups, besides their specific problems (such as homelessness, disability, or mental health symptoms), deal with minority stress as the result of stigmatization and social exclusion (Nystedt et al. 2019; Królikowska 2011; Iniewicz et al. 2012). The effects of such stress are the same as of any other chronic stressful condition and lead to many physical and mental health problems such as high blood pressure, diabetes, headaches and muscle pain, anxiety, and depression. According to Grabski and his colleagues, bisexual orientation and its dimensions constitute the greatest risk of developing mental disorders (Grabski et al. 2012). They conclude that living in a hostile environment gives rise to mental health problems and minority group stress.

When men believe that they are insufficiently masculine, they may also experience

a so-called discrepancy stress in their life (Reidy et al. 2014). It usually starts at a young age and may take the form of bullying (Rosen & Nofziger 2019); intimate partner violence (Reidy et al. 2014); or sexual abuse toward both women and men (Romaniuk & Loue 2017). These stresses, with all their effects, can lead to suicide (Chu et al. 2010).

TWO HYPOTHESES

In both the US and Poland the ideal of hegemonic masculinity is similar, and it is fair to assume that males in the US and in Poland experience the pain of not meeting the perfect model. However, we still need to consider why the ratio of men's suicide over women's is twice as high in Poland as in the US. It is a significant difference, especially since the ratio in Poland is one of the highest worldwide. There are two hypotheses: 1) The hegemonic ideal of a man creates more significant social pressure in Poland, and 2) The pattern of alcohol consumption in eastern Europe is more detrimental to the well-being of men.

Alcohol consumption and suicidality: According to Landberg (2008), men in Eastern Europe drink alcohol such as vodka, which may more quickly lead to addiction with comorbid physical and mental illnesses. Problems with health and behavior among men affected by alcoholism lead to unemployment and poverty. The consequences of drinking are risk factors for suicide among men and would explain the higher RSO when compared with countries in which less destructive drinking patterns are present (Landberg 2008). We suggest that men in Poland practice heavy drinking as an attribute of "being a man" (Lemle & Mishkind 1989). If we assume that heavy drinking is a demonstration of the expression of masculinity, then we have only one hypothesis explaining higher RSO for men: the hegemonic ideal of masculinity results in self-destructive behaviors.

Hegemonic masculine ideal and suicidality: What is the difference between the US and Poland in the social pressure on men to achieve the masculine ideal? First, it is the traditional role of marriage and the positions of a man and a woman in the family. The conservative outlook on family in Poland is reinforced by messages that people receive from the Catholic Church. Even the Communist Party, before 1989, supported the conservative attitude concerning the role of family in the society; it was easier to control people who had to provide for their families. After the economic transformation of 1989 and the confusing policies concerning the place of women in the job market (Saxonberg & Szelewa 2007; Ramet 2017), the public discussion concerning the right to an abortion revived the efforts of Church and government officials to establish men's political control over women rights (Szwed 2019; Calkin & Kamińska 2020).

Although the influence of the Catholic Church in Poland increased significantly after 1989, the public support of the Church and its role in family life started to decline (Kissling 1991). From 2003 to 2013 the number of divorces increased 35% and a majority of Poles were in favor of same-sex civil partnerships. In recent years, the increase in collaboration between government and Catholic authorities is associated with the decrease in public trust toward Catholic teachings (Ramet 2017).

Systematic racism and homophobia are still present in American society. While

there is still much work ahead to confront the culture of discrimination and social exclusion, there has also been some significant progress. Gays and lesbians can marry and serve in the military, unthinkable just decades ago. Being gay is more acceptable in today's America and gay men can benefit from more legal protections than ever before (McCarthy 2019). In contrast, gays in Poland were never accepted socially, they have no rights to marry, they cannot serve in the military, and they are not legally protected. Tension that is created by religious leaders produces anxiety and chronic stress in the lives of gay men in Poland (Zarzycka, Rybarski, & Sliwak 2017). Governing party officials and bishops of the Catholic Church have identified what they call "gender ideology" (Szwed 2019), which recently they replaced with "LGBT ideology" while literally dismissing the humanity of those who identify as LGBT. These political and religious leaders regularly demonize the so-called "LGBT ideology", and many cities in Poland have designated themselves as "LGBT free zones" (Crowley 2020). When homophobia in Poland is used in politics together with other tropes of the conservative right, such as patriotism and Polish traditions, then advocating for gay equity becomes very difficult (Graff 2010). Similarly, Golebiowska (2017) asserts that LGBT activism for equality in Poland meets with political barriers when arguments of patriotism and nationalism are put in opposition to cultural compatibility with the European Union.

For men in a society that affirms hegemonic masculinity, any sign of femininity is interpreted as being weak and not being able to stand up for himself. He may well be afraid of being called a "sissy" (gay). This fear, which is simply called homophobia, affects both straight men and gays. Young boys in Poland who discover an interest in the same sex have no information and no successful role models for being gay. However, they have plenty of negative descriptions of who is gay available in their environment. When they hear that being gay is equivalent to being a pervert or when they hear homophobic remarks from parents and friends, then they become unwilling to face their sexual orientation. They may try to build an identity of a straight man, using the role models available around them. The same is applied to a straight man whose traits or personality might include characteristics some identify as more feminine or gay (Sánchez et al. 2009; Fasoli, Hegarty, & Frost 2021). They can be called "sissy" by colleagues or be mocked. To avoid such situations, they internalize homophobic messages to conform with the ideal of a hegemonic man, in the process denying their real personality. As a consequence, both gays and straights may experience a lack of self-esteem and self-confidence; they may even develop self-hate because of their apparent "perversion". In both these cases, men may look to self-destructive behaviors to relieve their stressful situations, often leading to the development of chemical and behavioral addictions (Tsirigotis et al. 2015; Landberg 2008). Research has shown that LGB youth are at greater risk for depression and substance abuse. Nearly one third (29%) of LGB youth had attempted suicide at least once in the prior year compared to 6% of heterosexual youth (Lyons et al. 2019).

Much higher numbers for suicide ideation (46.55%) and suicide attempts (27.19%) are reported among the population of transgender men (Adams & Vincent 2019). This is the most vulnerable group of men, a group exposed to considerable discrimination

and violence. Men whose sex assigned at birth was female and who were socialized in childhood to some expected role of a woman in society struggle with integrating masculinity into their identities. Understanding their own femaleness and seeing being a man as their goal, they hardly acknowledge their masculinity. They instead identify themselves as “trans men” in the midst of going through the process of becoming a man (Seamont 2018). From the perspective of the individual, they might achieve the most inclusive form of masculinity but they are met with distrust, a lack of understanding, and transphobia by the rest of society, leading to drastic forms of social exclusion (Konopka et al. 2020; Palmer & Clegg 2020) and higher rates of suicide (Adams & Vincent 2019).

Research conducted among people with a non-heteronormative orientation in Poland from 2015 to 2016 shows that this group struggles with many problems in their lives (Świder & Winiewski 2017). Those with a non-heteronormative orientation experience a sense of loneliness, a lack of acceptance from family, discrimination by health care staff, and manifestations of inferior treatment in the living environment and at work. They also experience violence and hate speech and struggle with depression. It should be added that negative attitudes towards the non-heteronormative Poland are currently fueled by the Church and the ruling political party. The list of hidden problems experienced by people of different sexual orientations is quite long, but most of all they experience minority stress. Research has confirmed that the number and scope of problems experienced by this social category are mainly influenced by the environment, education, and gender (Kotlarska-Michalska 2019b). The families of the LGBT population are often hidden, because they threaten the official moral standards dictated by religious and political doctrine in three ways: 1) they are an expression of informal relationships; 2) they include children who are raised by “evil” role models; 3) and they bring out moral panic in the community (Kotlarska-Michalska 2019b).

It is documented that having a family is a protective factor against suicide. That means that losing a family or having family problems can be a risk factor for suicide. It is possible, that in Poland, where family is such a center of social life, family problems would have more meaning as a risk factor for suicide than in the US. Research has shown (Olesiński 2012) that marriage comes in second, just after good health, as most important in people’s lives in Poland. It is worth mentioning that the divorce rate in Poland is about 1.8 per 1000 whereas in the US it is 3.2, evidence of a relatively more relaxed approach to institution of marriage in America. For gay people in Poland, who cannot get married, the protective role of marriage does not exist at all (Olesiński 2012; Iniewicz et al. 2012).

The issue of paternity among gays is addressed by researchers in Poland (Mizielińska, Struzik, & Król 2017) who believe that there is a relationship between the degree of social homophobia and the model of non-heterosexual fatherhood. Reducing the level of homophobia influences the change of expectations towards men, who may fulfill themselves in patterns of being a man other than hypermasculinity. A significant obstacle in Poland is the fact that the parentage of two men is not legally or institutionally or culturally legitimized. These researchers argue that the socialization of men is limited to an ethics of care and housework, contradicting the male model

of fatherhood and masculinity. Gay fatherhood is a hidden problem and completely invisible, resulting from the fact that homosexuality is hidden in family and social relationships.

On the basis of the literature cited in this paper, we suggest that the main reason for the higher RSO for men compared to women is the ideal of hegemonic masculinity that all men are supposed to strive for. The two times higher RSO rate in Poland compared to the US may be the result of the stronger effect of hegemonic masculinity in a conservative society with significantly more homophobia and discrimination against sexual minorities, negatively affecting all men (Crowley 2020).

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR SUICIDE PREVENTION

Jacek Kochanowski, the author of a book on the sociology of sexuality, writes that the modern world is no longer a homogeneously male world and there is a possibility to question all hegemony. Such questioning opens up the social space to politics, difference, otherness, and antagonistic procedures enabling the consideration of various desires and interests. This means a gradual dismantling of the system of compulsory heterosexuality (Kochanowski 2013). Kochanowski analyzes various strategies that can help men overcome their paranoid fear of what is feminine, the fear that results in aggression towards women. The strategy of consciously overcoming the boundary between masculine and feminine is very difficult.

There are many studies concerning how to help men when they experience suicidal ideations or have attempted suicide (Joe & Niedermeier 2006; Sobkowiak 2011). Usually this help involves specific substance abuse and/or mental health treatment interventions (Seaton et al. 2017; Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2017) or a more systemic family approach (Kołodziej 2016; Hunt et al. 2017). However, since we believe that the main reason for the disproportionate suicide rate is the ideal of the hegemonic man, we address this concept as a core issue in designing prevention efforts.

We believe that the ideal of hegemonic masculinity is a central source of stress and the mental health problems of men who deal with social pressure to adjust to this ideal. The final stage of such conformity would be escape from a stressful life through suicide (Braswell & Kushner 2012). There has also been a call to reject the ideal of masculinity; this is the opinion of Stoltenberg (p. 365), as described by Berggren (2015).

Another way of dealing with the effects of hegemonic masculinity is to reframe the concept of access to resources. In this case the issue of social control is not inherently tied with the male gender but with those who own wealth. In today's world it is not difficult to imagine a woman having better access to resources and the ability to foresee how society needs to change to make conditions easier for her. With this simple reframing of power tied to one gender, we can open our thinking to all genders (Russell 2019; Hawley & Hensley IV 2009).

Most of the research cited here points out the role of hegemonic masculinity in creating the hierarchy of power, with the strong, married, heterosexual white man on top. Each time he demonstrates a behavior not in accordance with an attribute of that ideal, his standing in society and his individual perception lowers his position of priv-

ilege. However, it has also been shown that there is not one model of masculinity but many concepts of masculinities. In the study of men who were infected with HIV, it was found that although illness as a weakness affected their privileged position, a man can present himself favorably by redefining his status as a responsible person who takes care of his health (Russell 2019). Eric Anderson (Nagel & Mora 2010) in his work on inclusive masculinity suggests that masculinity may not be defined in opposition to either femininity or homosexuality.

The ideal of hegemonic masculinity is built on the preference of one gender and discrimination of the other. Such a global concept affecting the lives of all people has profound consequences. It is not surprising that a culture such as Poland's, built on this concept, avoids questioning it. In general, sexual education (or lack of it), sex relations, sexual behaviors, and sexual orientations are all topics that are to a great extent controlled by a unitary expression of Polish culture creating a hegemonic view of masculinity with pressures to conform resulting in suicidal behaviors among men. In everyday life authorities such as politicians, lawmakers, and religious teachers tell people what is appropriate concerning human sexuality and masculinity. Since this state of affairs creates problems for society, such as those described in this paper, society should, at the very least, question the ideal of hegemonic masculinity as part of society changes to decrease suicidal behaviors.

While the literature concerning the LGBT population is rich in examples of how social stigma and stereotypes affect the life and health of this population, it also presents many examples of how the LGBT community helps and supports its members. In recent decades, the positive description of LGBT people has become more common in mainstream culture (Wacławik 2011). Although statistics show that about half of the population in Poland and the US still believe that LGBT people are discriminated against, these results are lower than in previous decades. Presenting positive role models and creating positive literature concerning the LGBT community is a step forward in diminishing stigma and the negative perception of sexual minorities and as a first step in the prevention of mental health issues, alcohol use, and suicidal behaviors. Although researchers found that there is not enough educational material for schools on how to educate about sexual minorities (Kołodziej 2016), there is more and more quality research available concerning sexual minorities in the Polish language (Olesiński 2012; Iniewicz et al. 2012) especially concerning parenting (Kołodziej 2016; Kowalska 2018).

One of the problems of same-sex couples is relatively little knowledge about male-male relationships, making it impossible to build a positive image of a gay couple. Discrimination and a lack of acceptance often lead gay men to develop their own specific coping strategies based on getting support from their own communities. These strategies may have a positive effect on relationship building (Olesiński 2012). It is interesting that the suicide prevention strategies for men described by Oliffe and co-workers (2020) are the de-stigmatization of mental health, peer and community support, and the promotion of health care seeking behavior as an act of self-reliance and independence.

The research concerning men in substance abuse treatment programs offers an-

other avenue for change. Clients of the treatment program were asked about topics that they felt were not addressed by therapy. They said that all issues related to sex and family problems were avoided by therapists and were exactly the topics that they struggle with and that they need to deal with for the sake of long term sobriety. More research is called for to meet the needs of men in therapy (Klingemann & Gomez 2010).

It is also suggested that some of the attributes of masculinity, such as bravery and responsibility, can be used as clients' strengths to build motivation for change (Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2017). Kuehn (2009) described suicide prevention methods for the US military consisting in the de-stigmatization of mental health, improving access to health care, and the development of a so-called "battlemind", which is the application of a soldier's skills developed in military training to everyday life. Others have suggested that military training for both men and women can be re-framed from the perspective of performance rather than from the perspective of the masculine ideal (Boldry, Wood, & Kashy 2001). In addition, the theory of patriarchy, as well, expands the framework beyond the masculine ideal to discuss gender hierarchy in today's society (Soman 2009).

Bałandynowicz points to the need to target presuicidal prophylaxis at two types of recipients: 1) the family (here the activities should consist of preparing individuals for the proper performance of roles in the family, that is, motherhood and fatherhood); 2) the general public, in order to debunk the myths and stereotypes about suicide and to encourage the public to adopt attitudes of understanding, acceptance, and kindness (Bałandynowicz 2014). The current state of knowledge about the causes of suicide among men should be used to build special programs for those most vulnerable to completing suicide and to encourage men to seek psychological help and to discuss their struggles openly. These smaller programmatic changes must take place within broader societal efforts to reduce hegemonic masculine ideas and provide more inclusive elements into society in the hopes of reducing suicide rates among Polish men.

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Jarosław R. Romaniuk, PhD, LISW-S, LICDC, is a researcher and educator. Currently he works as a full-time lecturer at the Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences. From 2004 to 2015 he worked as a social worker at the Louis Stokes Cleveland Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center. He also worked in the School of Medicine, Case Western Reserve University, as a neuroscientist. His experience at the VA has led him to participate in national VA committees and the National Association of Social Workers in Ohio. He was also involved locally, as a Board member of The Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services (ADAMHS) Board of Cuyahoga County (2010–2017).

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MEN AND SOCIAL TRAUMA OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC. THE MALADAPTIVENESS OF TOXIC MASCULINITY

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ABSTRACT: The first purpose of this paper is to analyze the direct and indirect, short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for men. The second purpose is to identify the mechanisms underlying the present and predicted pandemic's impact on men's life and health (both somatic and mental). The author interprets the higher men's mortality rates due to coronavirus and the males' suicide rates that heightened from the beginning of the pandemic due to life-style that reflects the toxic masculinity norms. This paper's theoretical framework is determined by the social (cultural) trauma theory and the Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities. The method used for the present study is desk research based on the integrated literature review including the results of empirical research directly or indirectly addressing males' experience of the COVID-19 pandemic from the years 2019 and 2020, the previous pandemics (SARS in 2002-2004 and Ebola in 2014), other social crises caused by economic and political processes, and research explaining men's stress-related behaviors.

KEYWORDS: toxic masculinity, social trauma, COVID-19 pandemic, men's mortality, men's suicide, male depression

INTRODUCTION

The first purpose of this paper is to analyze the direct and indirect, short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic¹ for men. The second purpose is to

¹ The COVID-19 pandemic is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARSCoV2). The disease was first identified in December 2019 in Wu-

identify the mechanisms underlying particular present and predicted consequences of the pandemic for men's life and health (both somatic and mental).

Based on the hitherto WHO's data, men are dying from coronavirus more often than women worldwide (Global Health 50/50 2020; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday, et al. 2020). The proportion of males' deaths of COVID-19 ranges from about 57% to 75%, depending on the country (Bischof, Wolfe, & Klein 2020; Sharma, Volgman & Michos 2020; Xie, Tong, & Guan 2020).² Moreover, male patients develop more severe symptoms of COVID-19 (Alkhouli, Nanjundappa, Annie et al. 2020; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020). The causes of men's higher mortality and more acute course of the disease are not fully understood. The biological factors do not entirely explain these differences³, because the individuals' health condition primarily results from the life-style and socio-cultural norms of behaviors. Moreover, men are particularly vulnerable to the most severe consequences of the mental health crisis arising as a repercussion of pandemic and related social crisis, namely suicide. Taking a gender perspective while dealing with somatic and mental health issues enables us to understand the mechanisms that may seem invisible and elusive when abstracting from gender. In this context, some medical issues and social problems related to them can be interpreted as "the side effects" or Merton's (1968) latent functions of socialization to specific gender roles.

The theoretical framework of this paper is determined by the social (cultural) trauma theory (Alexander 2004, Sztompka 2002) and the Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (Pini, Pease 2013).

The COVID-19 pandemic meets the criteria of social trauma since it leads to rapid, unexpected, radical changes in diverse areas of social life. It affects politics, the economy and labor market, education, and individuals' everyday life. These changes manifest themselves in altering the systemic regulations, the principles of everyday routine, and the priorities declared at the social and the personal level. The world of habits, customs, and meanings, stable so far, gets disturbed. People confront the new

han, China. The World Health Organization declared the outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March. As of 11 September 2020, more than 28.1 million cases have been reported in more than 188 countries and territories, resulting in more than 909,000 deaths; more than 19 million people have recovered (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic, access: 11 September 2020).

² More exact data will be presented and discussed in the further fragments of the paper.

³ The researchers consider factors resulting from better immunity among women due to the additional X chromosome to explain the discrepancy from the biological perspective. "This differential regulation of immune responses in men and women is contributed by sex chromosome genes and sex hormones, including estrogen, progesterone, and androgens. Sex-specific disease outcomes after viral infections are attributed to sex-dependent production of steroid hormones, different copy numbers of immune response X-linked genes, and the presence of disease susceptibility genes" (Griffith, Sharma, Holliday 2020:2, Sharma, Volgman, Michos 2020). The research on the cellular response mechanism to the SARS-CoV-2 virus revealed that cardiac diseases in men strengthen the sex effect. Men have higher plasma ACE2 levels than women do. A recent study of patients with heart failure showed that plasma ACE2 concentrations were higher than average in men and higher in men than in women, possibly reflecting higher tissue expression of the ACE2 receptor for SARS-CoV infections (Sama, Ravera, Santema et al. 2020; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020). In the case of the acquired heart disease, biological factors play a part, and the psycho-social ones.

forms of risk and lose safety since everyday activities such as interacting with other people in regular social situations became hazardous. The economic consequences of pandemic lead to unemployment, worsening living conditions, and insecurity for many people. Simultaneously, the pandemic reveals the problems of inequalities in distributing resources that enable individuals to protect themselves. Social trauma spotlights pre-existing problems such as scarcity of resources in health care and other institutions that have crucial meaning in critical situations. (Frąckowiak-Sochańska, 2020). Finally, social trauma leads to the revision of how the fundamental values, norms, and notions that constitute the culture are conceptualized (Sztompka 2002:463). This assumption also addresses socially constructed concepts of gender. In the context of social trauma, some patterns of masculinities may seem notably dysfunctional. The present analysis focuses on the maladaptive patterns of masculinity that become visible in the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. In other words, social trauma burdens the individuals with stress, the reactions to which may reveal the dysfunctional patterns described in the categories of “toxic masculinity.”

For the present analysis, “toxic masculinity” is defined as a concept that serves as an analytical instrument to identify traditional attitudes and practices among men that are based on the culturally constructed image of specifically understood strength, dominance, emotional restraint regardless of they lead to exercising power in particular men’s lives (Connel, Messerschmidt 2005, Kimmel 1994, Jewkes, Morrell, Hearn 2015). Although new masculine patterns and the theoretical reflection on them emerge (Anderson 2009, Elliott 2016, Bridges, Pascoe 2014), traditional (and often dysfunctional) masculinity patterns are still an essential point of reference in contemporary men’s and boys’ socialization process. Therefore many men face the consequences of these patterns in their lives. In January 2019, the American Psychological Association (APA) released guidelines on working with men and boys and precisely dealing with those who adhere to traditional masculinity patterns (de Boise 2019). The APA described traditional masculinity as „marked by stoicism, competitiveness, dominance, and aggression which is, on the whole, harmful” (Pappas 2019, de Boise 2019). The arguments for APA’s guidelines focus on data according to which men commit 90% of homicides in the United States and represent 77% of homicide victims. They are the demographic group most at risk of being victimized by violent crime. They are 3.5 times more likely than women to die by suicide, and their life expectancy is 4.9 years shorter than women’s (Pappas 2019). In this context, the notion of toxic masculinity addresses the conformity to gendered attitudes that manifest more frequently in men’s behavior that are actively damaging for others and the men themselves. The anti-social components of toxic masculinity include violence, transphobic, misogynistic, homophobic or racist bullying, sexual assault, or harassment. The auto-destructive factors comprise excessive drinking and its consequences, physical injuries from fighting, steroids, body dysmorphia, drug-taking, inability to express emotions (de Boise 2019). In the pandemic’s situation, toxic masculinity implies non-compliance to safety norms that expose an individual and people around him to the risk of contagion. In the face of an epidemic emergency, not wearing a mask or resisting other security regulations can be interpreted as both anti-social (Solnit 2020, Harsin

2020) and self-destructive attitude.

The present paper's central thesis boils down to the assumption that toxic masculinity patterns manifest themselves in anti-health and risky behaviors that result in higher males' mortality on COVID-19, more severe course of the disease, and the increase of males' suicide risk in the face of pandemic's socioeconomic consequences.

THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used for the present study is desk research, based on the integrated literature review procedure. This strategy allows the inclusion of research employing multiple methodologies to capture the context, processes, explicit and implicit mechanisms addressing a research problem (Muennich Cowell 2012; Whitemore & Knaf 2005). Two main research problems boil down to the following questions. What are the direct and indirect, short- and long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for men? What mechanisms underlay particular present and predicted consequences for men's life and health? In order to answer the above questions, a consecutive research strategy was performed.

The author used Google Scholar to identify scientific papers and research reports published until 1 September 2020. The analysis consisted of two stages. The first stage focused on the direct consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for men's somatic health and life hazard. The search keywords were: "COVID-19", "coronavirus," "pandemic," "men," "women", "gender." The studies were selected and reviewed for potential inclusion. The studies were included if they analyzed gender differences in COVID-19 and addressed the biological factors and the sociocultural ones. The second stage focused on the pandemic's indirect consequences for men's mental condition and suicide risk. The search keywords were: "COVID-19", "coronavirus", "pandemic", "social crisis", "men", "women", "suicide". The studies were included if they analyzed from a gender perspective the relations between social crisis caused by a pandemic and suicide rates.

At both stages, the supplementary searches were performed as the key themes emerged from the analyzed material. At the first stage, these were: "alcohol abuse and nicotine consumption by men and women," "male and female reactions to stress," "gender differences in risk behaviors," "gender differences in help-seeking behaviors." At the second stage, the additional searched themes addressed "male depression" since suicidal behaviors and depression are inextricably linked.

Throughout the whole research process, the inclusion criteria were: validity, reliability, and the explanatory value of the studies. The selected papers addressed the research carried out in 2019 and 2020 at the main stages and after 2000 at the supplementary searches. The selected materials included complete descriptions of methodology procedures. The research contributed to understanding the mechanisms underlying the specificity of males' morbidity and mortality of COVID-19 and higher men's suicide risk resulting from the pandemic's social crisis.

The author is aware that it is difficult to compare and generalize studies on the same topic because of the large number of variables in studies of this type. The myriad

of studies that have been published in the literature has utilized diverse study populations that may have different perspectives regarding gender differences in health. In the face of the above challenge, the author focused foremost on international analyses that employed the meta-analysis procedures. These studies' results indicate some common, trans-local, and cross-cultural patterns that may be interpreted in the context of Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities.

Searching for some general mechanisms related to the influence of the toxic masculinity patterns on males' health in diverse populations was performed deliberately, with the awareness of the potential differences underestimation risk. However, this procedure is justified according to the previous studies picturing toxic masculinity as an intercultural phenomenon (de Boise 2019; Harsin 2020). Since the present research is preliminary, it focuses on the general mechanisms, the local variants of which should be submitted to forward, more detailed investigations.

TOXIC MASCULINITY AND MORTALITY DUE TO COVID-19 - RISK FACTORS AND RESPONSE PATTERNS IN THE FACE OF HAZARD

Disease outbreaks affect women and men differently and increase gender inequalities that have already existed in different societies (UNFPA 2020). Moreover, they intensify the social problems within gender categories and sharpen the differences between males' and females' subcategories depending on their economic resources and social and cultural capital. As Christina Ewig (2020) points, gender and its interactions with class, race, and other variables that determine the individuals' social status impact several dimensions of social crises, including the pandemic and its consequences.

The analyses that addressed the first stage of the COVID-19 pandemic focused primarily on women's experiences such as overload by caregiving functions regarding lack of institutional care, higher risk of domestic violence resulting from increased household tensions. The above analyses also focused on hazards connected with a high rate of women's employment in healthcare, social work, commerce, and other areas that require face-to-face interactions. Another issue is sexual and reproductive health (especially the experience of pregnancy and delivery during a pandemic) (UNFPA 2020; Robertson & Gebeloff 2020). Many of these problems occur in the context of toxic masculinity patterns and underlying androcentric socio-cultural norms.

Analyses of the above issues may conclude that certain aspects of males' social status protect them from specific social problems and make them privileged in the face of the pandemic. Simultaneously, epidemiological data indicate that more men than women die of COVID-19 worldwide (Global Health 50/50 2020, 2021; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020; Ewig 2020).⁴ According to Global Health 50/50⁵ report based on

⁴ Since the pandemic situation is dynamic, this paper relies on the hitherto data published until September 2020.

⁵ Global Health 50/50 is an organization promoting gender equality in health care that designed a data tracking tool. On 25 January 2021, this data tracker had sex-disaggregated data for just 60% of the global cases and 70% of the global deaths reported to the World Health Organization (Global Health 50/50 2021)

the largest body of publicly available sex-disaggregated data from the global government sources, notwithstanding no apparent sex differences exist in the number of confirmed cases⁶, more men than women have died of COVID-19 in 41 out of 47 analyzed countries taken into account in 2020 (Global Health 50/50 2020). On the global scale, the overall COVID-19 case-fatality ratio is approximately 2.4 times higher among men than among women (Global Health 50/50 2020, Griffith, Sharma, Holliday, et al. 2020). Based on data for the years 2019-2020, the proportion of men's deaths of COVID-19 amounted to 57% in the USA (Bischof, Wolfe, Klein 2020), 70% in Italy (Sharma, Volgman, & Michos 2020), 75% in China (Xie, Tong, & Guan 2020). According to the updated Global Health 50/50 report as of 25 January 2021, at the global level, for every 10 female confirmed cases that have died, 15 male confirmed cases have died. These numbers reflect the fact that confirmed cases are evenly distributed between men (49%) and women (51%), but men comprise a higher proportion of hospitalizations (53%), intensive care units admissions (68%), and deaths (57%) than women (Global Health 50/50 2021).

Regarding the above data, it is essential to take the gender perspective in general and men's perspective in particular while analyzing the pandemic and other public health issues. Commenting the focus on females' perspective and women's problems in sociological research concerning pandemic's consequences Christina Ewig (2020) writes: "These are crucial issues. However, what seems to be getting lost is that gender affects all of us: men, women, non-binary people, and trans people (...). The unequal death rate between men and women as a result of COVID-19 should prompt greater attention to the gendered effects of this crisis on men—particularly the role of masculinity." The COVID-19 pandemic is shining a spotlight on neglecting men's health at local, state, national, and global levels (Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020; Baker, White, & Morgan 2020).

Men and women assumedly contact the virus at similar rates (Ewig 2020). The data on evenly distributed confirmed cases imply that both sexes are comparably susceptible to the disease. Since any single biological factor cannot easily explain the sex gap in COVID-19-associated with mortality, it is essential to recognize the difference between sex and gender in health outcomes and discern their mutual influences. Derek M. Griffith, Garima Sharma, Christopher Holliday et al. (2020) claim that the interaction of biological, psychological, behavioral, and social factors may put men at a disproportionate risk of death.

A study of critically ill patients carried out in China, Italy, and the USA revealed the highest mortality rate among men with comorbidities such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, chronic kidney disease, and diabetes (Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020; Meng, Wu, Liu et al. 2020; Richardson, Hirsch, Narasimhan et al. 2020; Reeves & Ford 2020; Istituto Superiore di Sanita 2020). An international health research database using the TriNetX Network showed that among 14,712 male and female patients

⁶ It should be noted that data on confirmed cases in men and women are influenced by who has access to testing in each country. "Data on testing broken down by sex is available from only a handful of countries, meaning that it is difficult to assess whether figures on confirmed cases are being skewed by certain people having greater access to testing than others." (Global Health 50/50 2020).

with confirmed COVID-19, men were older and had a higher prevalence of hypertension, diabetes, coronary heart disease, obstructive pulmonary disease, and heart failure (Alkhouli, Nanjundappa, Annie et al. 2020; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020). The higher proportion of men suffering from comorbidities explain why men were more likely to be hospitalized than women. The above diseases are mostly derivate of life-style and culture-related, gendered patterns of responses to stress. In many societies, men are more likely to suffer from heart disease and chronic lung disease as they more frequently smoke, drink alcohol, or work in occupations that expose them to air pollution (Global Health 50/50 2020). Using nicotine and high levels of alcohol consumption can result in, or exacerbate, the underlying health conditions that make men more susceptible to the more severe course of COVID-19.

In many societies, excessive drinking and smoking are still parts of the traditional patterns of masculinity. According to WHO global data, 6.2% of all male deaths are attributable to alcohol, compared to 1.1% of female deaths. Men also have far greater rates of total burden attributed to alcohol than women – 7.4% for men compared to 1.4% for women (WHO 2011). Global Health 50/50 report reveals that men are 83% of young smokers (at the age of 15-24) and 86% smokers at the age of 25-69 globally (in all WHO Regions) (Hawkes, Buse, & Yoon 2018).

Using psychoactive substances such as alcohol and nicotine is a reaction to daily stress and emotional tension. Because of the males' socialization's training in hiding emotions and not dealing with them directly, smoking and drinking may be the only way of reducing the emotional tension, many men know. Using psychoactive substances as a part of toxic masculinity is an intercultural phenomenon. For example, a study carried out in 2019 on Chinese men found a greater prevalence of binge drinking when a man felt he was not living up to his society's ideal of masculinity (Ewig 2020). The stress of fulfilling gender norms may fall unevenly across socio-demographic categories such as ethnicity and class. For example, the expectation that men should be the primary breadwinner can be incredibly stressful for individuals with few economic opportunities (Ewig 2020). American studies have revealed that heavy drinking (especially among young men) has long been a part of performing traditional masculinity and, for others, the means of escaping from the stress of societal expectations for attaining masculine ideals (Ewig 2020). Independent research projects in many countries have confirmed the tendencies linking the adherence to traditional masculinity patterns with drinking and smoking. (Mullen, Watson, & Swift 2007; Emslie, Hunt, & Lyons 2013; Kodriati, Pursell, & Nur Hayati 2018). Smoking (like drinking) is a stress-coping mechanism, and young men believe themselves to be physically more resilient to the harmful effects of it. As a result, they take up the habit (Ewig 2020). The older men who smoke relatively lengthy expose themselves to the unfavorable health effects of using nicotine. In this context, we can assume that the male representatives of the older age groups are at the highest risk of life-threatening COVID-19 course not only because of the sex-age combination but because of the gender-related life-style's components as well.

According to the preliminary research on people with a severe course of COVID-19, the burden of the comorbidities that put the individuals in a high-risk group may, in

part, be driven by higher levels of risky behaviors, which are more common among men than women worldwide (Global Health 50/50 2020). Men engage in applying preventive measures to a smaller extent than women. They tend to have lower rates of hand-washing, social distancing, avoiding large public gatherings and wearing masks (Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020; Ewig 2020). The difference between men and women in the face of pandemic addresses behavior and convictions. Men are more likely to downplay the severity of the virus's potential to harm them (Griffith, Sharma, Holliday, et al. 2020, Ewig 2020). Data from two waves of a nationally representative panel survey conducted in March and April 2020 in eight countries: Australia (n = 2,010), Austria (n = 2,000), France (n = 4,036), Germany (n = 3,501), Italy (n = 1,997), New Zealand (n = 1,997), the United Kingdom (n = 2,012), and the United States (n = 4,096), for a total of 21,649 respondents indicate large gender differences in the individual perception regarding the seriousness of COVID-19 as a health problem in the respondents' country (Pons, Profeta, Becher et al. 2020). The data from the first wave in all eight countries (n = 10,594) show that 59.0% of the female respondents considered COVID-19 to be a severe health problem, against 48.7% of the men⁷. In the pooled data from the second wave (n = 11,025), these proportions had decreased by more than 15 percentage points among both men and women, but a sizable and significant gender difference remained⁸. In both survey waves, the respondents evaluated how strictly they were following seven recommended rules, on a 0 to 10 scale (from "not at all" to "completely"): washing hands more often, coughing into one's elbow, ending the greeting of people by shaking hands or hugging, avoiding crowded places, keeping a physical distance from others, staying at home, and stopping visits to friends. In the second wave, additional items addressed: wearing face masks in public places, wearing gloves in public places, and leaving home less than once a day. The authors of the study have constructed an overall index of respondents' compliance with public health and social distancing rules in each wave by averaging their answers to all questions after normalizing each of them on a 0 to 1 range. According to the data, essential gender differences in compliance with rules were observed. Pooling data from all eight countries in the first wave (n = 10,602) indicate that compliance was markedly higher among women than among men⁹. Pooled data (n = 11,029) show that, in mid-April, general compliance had decreased (from 0.857 to 0.747) but remained at a high level. However, a sizable and significant gender difference persisted¹⁰(Pons, Profeta, Becher et al. 2020).

Males' beliefs and behaviors in the face of the epidemic hazard can be explained according to men's socialization patterns. The tendency to risk-taking and underestimating the risk are parts of the toxic masculinity schema that rely on the concept of "strength." This schema's key component is disguising anxiety, perceived as "weakness" (Real 1998). Many men have learned to mask their fear by anger and impulsive-aggressive behavior. Therefore, it is essential to consider how hiding fear and

⁷ M = 0.590 vs. 0.487, Mdiff = 0.104, 95% CI [0.086; 0.121].

⁸ M = 0.396 vs. 0.330, Mdiff = 0.067, 95% CI [0.048; 0.085].

⁹ M = 0.881 vs. 0.832, Mdiff = 0.049, 95% CI [0.042; 0.057]

¹⁰ (M = 0.776 vs. 0.718, Mdiff = 0.058, 95% CI [0.051; 0.065])

replacing it with anger and aggression affects men's response to COVID-19 (Gupta 2020). As Jennifer Lerner, Roxana Gonzalez, Deborah Small et al. (2003) claim, fear and anger have opposing influences on people's risk perceptions, risk preferences, everyday choices, and policy support. After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the authors carried out a series of research on US national, representative sample revealing that fear heightens the subsequent perception of risk and increases the plans for precautionary measures, while anger reduces risk perception and the involvement in preventive activities (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small et al. 2003).¹¹ The study results indicate that men tend to be more optimistic than women in the risk assessment. Males' risk estimates were lower than females' (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small et al. 2003). In the pandemic's situation, the males' reactions constructed according to traditional masculinity patterns boil down to expressing anger that reduces the perception of susceptibility and severity, which then translates into a decrease in the practice of preventive measures, such as wearing masks, hand-washing, and protests against pandemic-related restrictions (Gupta 2020). In this context, Ewig (2020) puts forward a thesis that men may tend to underrate the risk of contagion as they downplay the health consequences of smoking and drinking.

Another risk factor that should be considered addresses the occupational hazard. In many countries, men outnumber women in the low-skilled or low-paid occupations that are considered essential workers (such as food processing, transportation, delivery, warehousing, construction, manufacturing, mining). These occupations are associated with a greater risk of incidence and mortality (Robertson & Gebeloff 2020; Griffith, Sharma, Holliday et al. 2020). An example is the mining industry since mines are the hotspots for the spread of COVID-19 infections worldwide (Leahy 2020). According to the mechanism described above, the occupational hazard may activate fear that transforms into anger. As a result, men may downplay the risk and heighten the feasibility of contagion.

A pattern that is still present in the contemporary men's behavior boils down to their resistance to seeking various forms of help, lower use of health services, including preventive health services. As a result, men are further along in their illness before they seek care. In the case of the ebola epidemic, men typically presented at a hospital on average 12 hours later in the disease than women did, which is one of the reasons, why men's death rate was higher (Global Health 50/50; Agua-Agum, Ariyarajah, Blake et al. 2016). This finding is in line with the previous research results on males' health

¹¹ The research was carried out on a nationally representative sample of Americans (N=973, ages 13-88). At the first stage, the survey questions included the Anxiety Subscale from the Stanford Acute Stress Reaction Questionnaire and a four-item face-valid Desire for Vengeance Scale. At the second stage, the experimental procedure was performed: the participants were randomly assigned to one of three emotional conditions (anger, sadness, or fear), then they answered questions about their mood and received two-part emotion induction: (1) the narrative task in which they had to describe what makes them angry, sad or afraid after the terrorist attacks, and (2) the audio clip about terrorism that had in pretests evoked the targeted emotions. After that, each respondent judged the risk on three levels: country, self, and the average citizen. Finally, the respondents evaluated four safety policies on a 4-point Lickert's scale anchored at 1 (strongly oppose) to 4 (strongly support) (Lerner, Gonzalez, Small et al. 2003).

behavior patterns, according to which men are more likely than women to use the medical assistance only in absolute necessity – in life-threatening situations or severe pain that disturbs the normal functioning (Gillon 2007; Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2017). Consequently, they turn to specialists in a worse health condition that is more difficult to cure. This state of affairs is explained concerning the traditional schemas of masculinity, including the patterns of specifically understood strength, independence, and self-reliance. The repercussions of these masculinity patterns address somatic health and mental condition, including the suicide risk.

TOXIC MASCULINITY AND SUICIDAL CRISIS IN THE CONTEXT OF PANDEMIC

Leo Sher (2020) and Ira M. Wasserman (1992) explain the relations between pandemics and suicide by referring to Durkheimian categories of decrease in social integration and interaction during the epidemic, the pandemic's fears, and the socio-economic consequences. This thesis has been confirmed by statistical data addressing the previous epidemics such as the Spanish Flu in 1918-1919 (Wasserman 1992) and partially SARS in 2003 (Yip, Cheung, Chau, et al. 2010). Although, as Tiago Zortea, Connor Brenna, Mary Joyce et al. (2020) claim, we cannot draw a firm conclusion regarding a direct relationship between epidemics and suicide-related outcomes, evidence suggests an impact of epidemics on the circumstances in which the risk of suicidal behaviors rises (Zortea, Brenna, Joyce et al. 2020).

According to the preliminary analyses addressing the ongoing pandemic's consequences, we can put forward a thesis that the COVID-19 crisis may increase suicide rates during and after the pandemic (Sher 2020; Kawohl & Nordt 2020; Khan, Ratele, & Arendse 2020). Considering heightened worldwide unemployment rates caused by the current pandemic, Wolfram Kawohl and Carlos Nordt (2020) estimate a global increase of between 2135 and 9570 additional suicide deaths per year.¹² Leo Sher (2020) prognosticates that mental health consequences of the COVID-19 crisis, including suicidal behavior, are likely to be present for a long time and peak later than the actual pandemic. According to the research addressing the repercussions of the SARS epidemic (2002-2003), the implication of a social crisis for individuals' mental health may last much longer than the crisis itself (Lee, Wong, McAlonan et al. 2007; Mak, Chu, Pan et al. 2009; Lai, Ma, Wang et al. 2020; Maunder, Hunter, Vincent et al. 2003; Bai,

¹² The authors prepared a model that allowed to examine the effect of unemployment on suicide based on global public data from 63 countries, and they observed that suicide risk was elevated by 20-30% when associated with unemployment during 2000-2011 (including the economic crisis in 2008). This model was applied to predict the effects of the currently expected rise in the unemployment rate resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic on suicide rates. The authors applied the overall estimates to World Bank Open Data (worldwide number in the labor force in 2019, the unemployment rate for 2019, and male and female populations in 2018 in the four age groups). The expected number of job losses due to COVID-19 were taken from the International Labor Organization's press release from 18 March 2020, reporting a decline of 24.7 million jobs as a high scenario and 5.3 million jobs lost as a low scenario. In the high scenario, the worldwide unemployment rate would increase from 4.936% to 5.644%, associated with the increased number of suicides of about 9570 per year. In the low scenario, the unemployment would increase to 5.088%, associated with an increase of about 2135 suicides (Kawohl & Nordt 2020).

Lin, Chue et al. 2004; Chua, Cheung, Cheung 2004). According to Antoinette M Lee, Josephine G W S Wong, Grainne M McAlonan, et al. (2007)¹³, SARS survivors had higher stress levels during the outbreak, compared with control subjects¹⁴, and this persisted 1 year later¹⁵ without signs of decrease. In 2004, SARS survivors also showed worrying levels of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic symptoms (Lee, Wong, McAlonan et al. 2007). In this context, the suicide rates and socio-demographic characteristics of persons who undertake suicidal behaviors during and after the Covid-19 pandemic require dedicated attention (Reger, Stanley, & Joiner 2020).

The state of the pandemic and its social, economic, and political consequences (likewise all social crises) burden the individuals with the immense stress that impacts their mental condition (Dong & Bouey 2020; Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2020). WHO study on the results of the world economic crisis in 2008 on the individuals' mental health revealed the increase of suicide rates, addictions and deaths due to alcohol abuse, and the incidence of depression (WHO 2011).¹⁶ The two first issues addressed men primarily. As to depression's prevalence, the number of men who have this mental disease may be underrated, since the official psychiatric classifications of symptoms ICD (International Classification of Diseases) and DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual) include symptoms that are traditionally associated with femininity, such as openly manifested sadness, tearfulness, withdrawal from activities, and lack of feeling pleasure. Therefore, some experts, directly or indirectly, postulate broadening the official classification by introducing the untypical depressive symptoms that are more common among men (Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016; Cochran Rabinowitz 2003).

Recent research reports indicate that various socio-economic, psychological, and health-related impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic may heighten the risk of suicidal behaviors (Khan, Ratele, & Arendse 2020; Reger, Stanley, & Joiner 2020; Gunnell, Appleby, Arensman et al. 2020). Uncertainties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, along with global responses such as lockdowns, have heightened depression, anxiety, isolation, loneliness, financial concerns, the risk of job loss, anger, irritability, relationship conflicts, post-traumatic stress disorder, fears, and increased use of alcohol and nicotine

¹³ The authors used the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) to assess SARS survivors treated in 2 major hospitals (non-healthcare workers, $n = 49$; healthcare workers, $n = 30$) in 2003. They invited SARS survivors from the same hospitals (non-healthcare workers, $n = 63$; healthcare workers, $n = 33$) to complete the PSS-10 again in 2004. At that time, they were also asked to complete the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) and measures of depression, anxiety, and posttraumatic symptoms. PSS-10 scores were also obtained from matched community control subjects during the outbreak ($n = 145$) and again in 2004 ($n = 112$) (Lee, Wong, & McAlonan 2007).

¹⁴ (PSS-10 scores = 19.8 and 17.9, respectively; $P < 0.01$)

¹⁵ (PSS-10 scores = 19.9 and 17.3, respectively; $P < 0.01$)

¹⁶ Shu-Sen Chang, David Stuckler, Paul Yip et al. (2013) investigated the 2008 global economic crisis's impact on international trends in suicide. Based on data from 54 countries (included in WHO and USA databases) addressing people aged 15 or above, the authors found that the increases in suicide mainly occurred in men in the 27 European and 18 American countries. The suicide rates were 4.2% (3.4% to 5.1%) and 6.4% (5.4% to 7.5%) higher, respectively, in 2009 than expected if the earlier trends had continued. There was no change in European countries for women, and the increase in the Americas was smaller than in men (2.3%) (Shu-Sen Chang, David Stuckler, Paul Yip et al. 2013).

(Zortea, Brenna, & Joyce 2020; Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2020). These factors intensify the risk of suicidal behaviors in people traditionally considered vulnerable and those who did not belong to the risk groups before the pandemic (Suicide Awareness Voices of Education 2020; Courtet, Olié, Debien et al. 2020).

According to the world's epidemiological data, men demonstrate higher suicide rates than women at all times and across regions, and ethnic and socioeconomic groups (Vijayakumar 2015; Naghavi 2019; Cleary 2019), and current sources indicate similar trends during the Covid-19 pandemic (Mooney, Kaplan, & Denis 2020). As reported by WHO, men worldwide commit suicide on average twice as often as women (WHO 2019). The most significant difference was found in Europe, where the rates of suicidal deaths amounted to 6,6 women and 24,7 men per 100 000 population, and in the Americas, analogical numbers reached 4,6 for women and 15,1 for men.¹⁷

Gender differences address not only the prevalence of suicidal behavior but the correlations with socio-economic variables as well. Only in men's case has there been a negative correlation between income per capita and suicidal behavior (Sher 2006; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Across the socio-psychological literature, there is a plethora of evidence that associates male suicidal behaviors with triggers such as joblessness, unemployment, failure at work, relationship strains, depression, hopelessness, and substance abuse disorders. In women, the most important triggers are personal problems and complications within interpersonal relationships (Coleman, Kaplan, & Casey 2011; Yang, Lau, Wanget al. 2019; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Men significantly more often than women commit suicide under the influence of alcohol and drugs. The relation between substance abuse and suicidal behaviors is more robust in men than in women (Payne, Swami, & Stanistreet 2008; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Early reports about male suicide during the COVID-19 pandemic agree about several triggering factors: financial insecurities, fear of infections, social stigma, anxiety, and excessive regulations (Thakur & Jain 2020).

Suicide is strongly related to depression, which prevalence among men is often underrated due to socio-cultural schemas. In this context, it is essential to understand the mechanisms of male depression that are often interfered with by other health problems such as impulsive and risky behavior and substance abuse. This comprehensive knowledge is crucial from the perspective of suicide prevention. Depressive and anxiety disorders are the derivate of stress since chronic stress transforms into anxiety and chronic anxiety converts into depression (Murawiec & Wierzbiński 2016). Whereas stress affects people regardless of gender, the individuals' reactions to stress reflect the gender schemas. Women are usually more likely than men to manifest openly their anxiety and depression. They search for social support and professional help, whereas men are more likely to hide their anxiety and depression behind impulsiveness, aggression, alcohol and drug abuse, and medicine misuse (Khan, Ratele, & Arendse 2020; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016).

The clinical picture of male depression contains aggressiveness, anger explosions,

¹⁷ In Africa, women's suicide rate was 4,8 and, and men's 9,9 per 100 000 population; in Eastern Mediterranean accordingly: 2,7 and 5,1, in South-East Asia, 11,6 and 14,8 and Western Pacific, 9,4 and 10,9 (WHO 2019).

substance abuse (alcohol, drugs, nicotine), risky behaviors such as excessive engagement in work, physical activities, hazardous driving, and unsafe sexual contacts (Magovcevic & Addis 2008; Sher 2006; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016).¹⁸ Among the dominant symptoms may appear: the significant decline of stress resilience, burn-out, subjective feeling of constant pressure and tension, withdrawal from family and friends relations, and lack of control that has not appeared before (or occurred to a notably smaller extent). On the contrary, men, less frequently than women, manifest sadness, feeling of guilt, helplessness, and hopelessness. Depressive men may more strongly suppress the hurtful emotions and suffer from undefined somatic ailments (Magovcevic & Addis 2008; Sher 2006; Cohran & Rabinowitz 2003; Rice, Fallon, Aucote et al. 2013; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016).¹⁹

According to James Mahalik, Benjamin Locke, Larry Ludlow, et al. (2003), the results in a test measuring the risk of developing male depression (Male Depression Risk Scale) correlated positively with the conformism to traditional gender norms measured by the Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). The most vital relations have been noted between the attachment to the traditional masculinity norms and risky behaviors and manifestations of anger and aggression (Rice, Fallon, Aucote et al. 2013; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016).²⁰ The relations between adherence to traditional masculinity and atypical symptoms of depression include many mechanisms. For example, suppose a man considers the classic symptoms of depression, such as sadness and tearfulness, as “not male” display of weakness, he can hide them from other people and damp by using psychoactive substances (Magovcevic & Addis 2008; Möller-Leimkühler & Yücel 2010; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Another mechanism concerns the inability to self-detection of depressive symptoms. Some research findings indicate that men who strictly follow the norm of emotional self-control have significant difficulties recognizing their low mood and conscious feeling of regret and sadness (Levant, Richmond, Majors et al. 2003; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Moreover, the persons who share the belief

¹⁸ The most common research tools to study male depression are the Gotland Male Depression Scale (Zierau, Bille, Rutz et al. 2002), the Male Depression Risk Scale (Rice, Fallon, Aucote et al. 2013), and the Masculine Depression Scale (Magovcevic & Addis 2008).

¹⁹ However, the above symptoms do not occur in all depressive men, among whom some suffer from the typical depressive manifestations, and some – experience typical and untypical symptoms (Martin, Neighbors, & Griffith 2013; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). Moreover, because of gender roles' transformation, the untypical symptoms of depression may be observed in women. Some findings indicate the lack of differences between men and women in the prevalence of depressive symptoms considered as typically male (Möller-Leimkühler & Yücel 2010; Martin, Neighbors, & Griffith 2013; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). In this context, Mariola Magovcevic and Michael Addis (2008) submit the concept of “male depression” to criticism and claim that it relies on the dichotomy “male-female depression” without considering possible intermediate states (Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016). According to this line of thought, the classification of depressive symptoms should include both typical and untypical manifestations in people of all genders.

²⁰ Concomitantly, no similar correlation was found concerning the Beck Depression Inventory, which measures the classic symptoms of depression (Rice, Fallon, Aucote et al. 2013; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016).

that “one should deal with problems on one’s own,” much later (if ever), ask other people for help. That can notably worsen the personal, family, or financial situation of an individual in depression, extend the therapy’s duration, and heighten the risk of suicide (Addis 2008; Chodkiewicz & Miniszewska 2016; Frąckowiak-Sochańska 2017).

Anne Cleary (2012) carried out individual in-depth interviews with 52 young men after serious suicide attempts. The interviewees noted that before having decided to end their lives, they experienced a very high level of emotional pain and suffering, which they did not reveal to people around. They also were not able to identify their symptoms accurately, and they did not seek help. They tried to deal with the mental pain by using alcohol or drugs, which made their condition even worse and finally led to a feeling that death is the only solution.²¹

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The above analyses conclude that similar factors may lead to higher men’s mortality because of COVID-19 and suicidal death resulting from life crises caused by the pandemic. Therefore, the male patterns of responses to stress, including behaviors aiming to free themselves from tension, should be subjected to the reflection because of their nonadaptability to social trauma caused by the global pandemic crisis.

Pandemic brings a plethora of challenges, one of which is health education addressed to men. The educational campaigns should take into consideration the diversity of men as a social category. Individuals who define themselves as men belong to many social categories, depending on socio-demographic variables such as age, social class, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality, place of residence, (dis)ability, sexuality, family status. These categories overlap, interweave, and influence one another. They also influence the significant behaviors, patterns of emotional reactions, and cognitive habits considered when health issues are discussed. As the health problems are a derivative of toxic masculinity norms, one of the most critical challenges boils down to a question, how to communicate the need of changing these norms to the men who strongly identify themselves with this version of masculinity. While discussing the mental health promotion and therapy addressed to men, Mark S. Kiselica and Matt Englar-Carlson (2012) suggest referring to some traditional masculinity values. An example of these values is task orientation that can be a source of motivation for healthy behavior. Independence can be a resource that allows being critical about the dysfunctional stereotypes of masculinity. Courage, though, may allow introducing the changes in men’s life. Moreover, the motivation for withdrawal from dysfunctional masculinity patterns could rely on the values connected with the males’ social roles of partner, father, and breadwinner (Kiselica & Englar-Carlson 2012). These suggestions may help promote preventive means in the COVID-19 pandemic and suicide prevention programs focused on men.

²¹ These findings are commensurate with the research “Epidemiology of mental disorders and access to mental health care” in Poland in 2012. According to this research, men, more often than women, declared that they could not count for other people’s support (particular help or a talk) while struggling with problems. (Moskalewicz, Kiejna, & Wojtyniak 2012).

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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PATTERNS OF MASCULINITIES IN DISCOURSE OF REPORTS ASSESSING CONDITION OF POLISH STARTUPS ORGANISATIONS

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is presentation patterns of masculinities, present in startup discourse, which as professional structures with new management models, belonging to the knowledge-based economy model, and are an example of organizations typical of the information society. The method used in the research was critical discourse analysis, and the sample included five reports published by (the largest institution reporting on the condition of the Polish startup ecosystem) the Startup Poland Foundation from 2015-2019. This paper is also an attempt to apply the heuristic framework of integrative theories of gender to interpret the results of the research, from innovative organizational structures. The research results show that the symbolic dimension of startups is a significantly gendered space. The meanings attributed to working in a startup are strongly related to hegemonic masculinity (fight, win, economic domination, expansion, risk taking), which is embodied by a few actors (e.g. owners of Facebook, Amazon). At the same time, the specificity of hegemonic masculinity is redefined in this context (e.g. physical strength gives way to intellectual proficiency). There are also numerous appeals to practices in the startup discourse which could be associated with other gender constructs (cooperation, consent to make mistakes or creating wide networks of social relations).

KEYWORDS: patterns of masculinities, gender, critical discourse analysis, integrative theories of gender, startup, gendered organizations

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to present the results of a critical discourse analysis, aimed at examining what patterns of masculinities are present in reports informing about the situation of the Polish startups organizations (and all startups ecosystem), and by for what are characterized these patterns.

Research focusing on issue of gender in various organizations has been intensively developed since the 70s of the 20th century (see Kanter 1977; Epstein 1988; Williams et al. 1992; Acker 1990, 1992; Connell 2006; Pacholok 2009; Siemińska 2019). The vast majority of available studies focuses on the situation of broadly understood cultural femininity (see Leszczyńska 2016; Bird & Rhoton 2011; Martin 2003; Alvesson & Billing 1992) interpreted intersectionally, and to a lesser extent masculinity, the initial analyses of which could be considered a “side effect” of research on femininity and women. However, what is especially important considering the purpose of this article, these analyses are usually embedded in the context of highly formalized organizations, with classical management patterns, hierarchical structure, and specialized operating strategies. The analysis of masculinities patterns, which I undertake in my article, places gender in the area of startup organizations and supporting institutions (like foundations, universities, mentors) that are characterized by a completely different specificity: non-traditional and non-hierarchical management models, a relatively short period of developing your own business, undefined and stabilizing organizational structures, oriented towards generating innovative solutions that can be spread on the international arena, and also towards achieving high profits, using advanced technologies (Kulej 2018).

The structure of the article is as follows. Part one provides an overview of research focusing on gender and organizational issues (especially high-tech), as well as key findings from empirical research. The second part is devoted to the discussion of the most important theoretical concepts relating to patterns of masculinities, as well as those relating to the subdiscipline of gendered organizations. The third part presents the methodology of the conducted research. The remaining two parts present the results of the analyses and place the research results in the theoretical and empirical context.

GENDER IN THE CONTEXT OF TECHNOLOGICAL STARTUPS

An analysis of the literature on gender and startups proves that these organizations, along with their institutional environment (called the startup ecosystem), are not gender neutral. On the contrary, gender is a differentiating category for many dimensions of startup activities.

Numerous published statistical analyses allowed to illustrate the percentage of women and men in startups. The results clearly indicate the overrepresentation of men and the underrepresentation of women both among the founders of technology startups, but also investors supporting startups at early and later stages of development, regardless of the analysed economic and cultural context (see Ashcraft & Blithe 2010; Startup Genome 2019, 2020).

Another area of analysis that focuses on gender and startups is the owners motivations to start their business. In the case of men, starting their own business is caused by the pursuit of self-realization, and in the case of women, the effect of mediating between family (motherhood), personal, emotional and professional life (Marlow & McAdam 2012; Paolini & Dumai 2015).

An important area of research is the relationship between gender beliefs and expectations towards gender and the possibilities of obtaining funding for the operation of your own startup. Research Dana's Kanze, et al. (2018) show, that startups run by women are much less likely to receive funding from venture capitals funds, including due to the stereotypical assignment of gender-related characteristics to owners. During the public presentation of the idea of developed startups, women are much more often asked by investors about what actions they will take to resolve crisis situations, having to convince the audience that their invested capital will be returned. Men are obliged to prove in discussions how their startup will be successful and how the invested capital will bring profits (Kanze et al. 2018: 601–604). Such oriented questions, in a (startup) context in which the ability to take risks and maximize profits are rewarded, create specific perceptions about each gender and place women in a subordinate position at the stage of competition for financing (venture capitals) of their own business. The research by Ewens and Townsend (2020) also confirms the importance of gender stereotypes, showing that startups with the same specificity, run separately by women or men, are much less likely to obtain financing from male investors if their owner is a woman. The results of the above-mentioned studies are significant in the light of statistical data which show that in the USA (between 1990 and 2016), over 90% of investors are men (Gompers & Wang 2017). Ewens and Townsend observed that when the investor in a startup with female owner(s) is a different woman, these startups are more successful, than if the investor was a man (Ewens & Townsend 2020: 2). The reluctance of investors to finance startups run by women is puzzling in light of the data showing that these startups are characterized by a lower degree of debt and a slightly higher profitability (see Demartini 2018; Illuminate Ventures 2010). From the research of Loren Henderson et al. (2015) follows that startups owned by men also receive significantly higher credit scores than do new firms owned by women in the opinion of banks (Henderson et al. 2015: 477). It should be noted that startups run by women not only receive support from financial institutions less often, but also apply for it less often (Kwapisz & Hechavarría 2018), which may be due to the awareness of the existing limitations.

Interestingly, also for the same reason as in the case of venture capitals funds, men are much less successful at crowdfunding (which is a form of financing various projects, based on small voluntary contributions from the community, deciding to support the project of its choice). Women starting their own business are considered to be more trustworthy than risk-oriented men, so they are more likely to receive the support of individual founders who are guided in their choices by gender stereotypes (Johnson, Stevenson, & Letwin 2018: 826–827). This specific type of funding turns out to be more beneficial for women, because actors operating in this context follow the logic of credibility, and diminish the importance of competences. The results

of research from the Swedish context confirm this general tendency and prove that women's startups are usually based on informal capital (Abbasian & Yazdanfar 2015).

As writes Jeff Hearn, the still neglected area of empirical research conducted in the tradition of critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM) are topics related to information and communication technologies, social media, artificial intelligence, robotics or, for example, big data (Hearn 2019: 58; see also Lohan & Faulkner 2004). Importantly, these areas are the domain of many technology startups and institutions indirectly surrounding them.

Research conducted in the context of small IT companies proves that the discourse on masculinity in this industry (in Canada) normalizes youthfulness, short and intense character of individual careers, technological skills, contains numerous references to metaphors related to sport, war and "being motivated". In this context, aging means not so much age as fatigue with technical work, contributing to the departure of "veterans" from the industry (Comeau & Camp 2007).

One of the few studies examining masculinity in intersectional terms in the context of Silicon Valley (see Shih 2006), describes strategies of Asian men (and women) in the workplace as representatives of minority groups. Johanna Shih emphasizes the importance of different contexts in developing paths of resistance, such as: alternative and rich networks, based on gender and ethnicity, improving the situation of marginalized individuals different from those dominated by older white men, and a dynamic labor market (Shih 2006: 200–202).

The article by Marianne Cooper (2000) is another example of research that breaks the silence about masculinity as a cultural and social complex phenomenon, in which the author focuses on studying the identity of men who are employed in Silicon Valley and play the role of a father. Cooper shows that in the startup context, hegemonic masculinity gains a new character, it is based on specialist technical knowledge, many hours of work, leading to displaying verbal and physical exhaustion, thus proving his own commitment and endurance. The new hegemony diminishes the importance of physical strength and emphasizes the value of intellectual ability and resourcefulness. Work is performed in a "small team of *great* people", and is also a kind of youthful play, oriented to win (overcome competitors) in the market and bring profits (Cooper 2000: 381–387). According to Cooper, startups are characterized by "masculine ethic", because it is assumed that employees do not have obligations other than those resulting from paid work, thus hindering the implementation of the model of engaged paternity, practiced by "Superdads" (Cooper 2000: 394).

In summary, empirical research in the field of gender and technology startups is often quantitative, statistical, and aims to describe the "state" of the situation. The processual, discursive or symbolic dimensions of this type of organization are analyzed much less frequently. What is especially important, when gender is studied in the context of startups, many works focus mainly on women's experiences, "gender inequality" (see Wynn 2019) or "gender diversity" (see Kwapisz et al. 2014). Masculinity in startups, in the light of the available data, is usually captured in a one-dimensional and internally undifferentiated manner (e.g. the cited results of the works of Johnson et al. 2018; Kwapisz & Hechavarría 2018; Kanze et al. 2018). And most of the existing

research comes from highly developed countries, embracing the culture of the Global North (e.g. USA, Canada, UK, Sweden).

GENDER THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

At the end of the 20th century, a consensus developed on the basis of the discipline of gender studies, became the conviction that gender should be understood as a system that stratify social actors in intersectionally way (that is, intersects with various axes of inequality) and goes beyond individual properties (like gender identities, stereotypes, etc.) (Risman & Davis 2013: 10). This system covers the level of organizational structures (see Gherardi & Poggio 2001; Britton & Logan 2008; Martin & Collinson 2002; Avesson & Billing 2009), which are gendered by the (often) invisible processes occurring within them that differentiate the status of women and men, as well as the applicable norms and logic of work, organizational culture and many other dimensions of the organization (Acker 2012, 1990, 2006). Which leads to the rooting and reproduction (in them) of a specific gender order and patterns (Connell 2006). According to Connell, gender patterns are active categories, they are not stable, and the relations between them are dynamic (Connell 2006: 838). In his classic typology, Connell distinguishes and defines four types of masculinity:

- *hegemonic masculinity* – characterized by heteronormativity, domination over women, children and other males, and the gender division of the labor market. For the remaining categories, it is a reference point, it can be embodied by few (Connell 2005: 77–78);
- *complicit masculinity* – which benefits from the gender order, although it does not achieve such a high status in society as hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005: 79–80);
- *subordinate masculinities* – includes male patterns that, for various reasons, do not meet the conditions of the previous two patterns (for example, men of a non-heterosexual orientation) (Connell 2005: 78–79);
- *marginalized masculinities* – they refer to any relation of domination and subordination (between hegemonic and subordinate masculinities, or between subordinate masculinities) differentiated by social class or ethnic origin, and occurring in a specific context or (also in individual) situations (Connell 2005: 80–81).

The hegemonic status is the subject of constant struggle between different types of masculinity that can be embodied by individuals, groups or institutions (Connell 2005), and its content may undergo some changes (Connell 2003). However, the relative flexibility of the hegemonic pattern allows patriarchy to survive and reborn in different variations and socio-cultural contexts (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 247).

In recent years, other model of masculinity have also been discussed and developed. One of them is the concept of hybrid masculinity (Bridges and Pascoe 2014). The authors of the construct, convinced that there are currently significant changes in

the gender order (based on the results of the analyses, see Messner 1993, 2007; Arxer 2011; Messerschmidt 2010) and conceptualize a new pattern that, according to them, is characterized by fluidity in integrating and distancing oneself from particular practices, typically ascribed to marginalized and subordinated patterns (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 247), with the assumption that this procedure, in a specific situational context, may bring benefits (Messner 2007: 461). The fragmentary borrowing of elements of practices or identities by persons with higher status makes gender inequalities much more difficult to identify than before (Messner 1993).

The literature on masculinities patterns also includes descriptions of *inclusive masculinity* (Anderson 2009; Anderson & McCromack 2014 2018), *mosaic masculinity* (Coles 2008), or *sticky masculinity* (Berggren 2014). The last of the enumerated patterns is based on the author's deliberations on the discursive construction, negotiating the position of the subject, and drawing the attention of CSMM on an important aspect reproduction of masculine.

One of the paths of maintaining the gender order, the processes that legitimize it, and gender patterns are the discursive practices of individuals (Martin 2003; Connell 2006). Analyzing discourses and narratives allows one to learn about the dominant values and norms prevailing in cultures and organizations (Gherardi & Poggio 2001; Gherardi 1996). The concept of gendered organizations, developed over the years, suggests that the values and norms dominating in organizations (also present in language) should be viewed as closely related to the cultural meanings assigned to genders (Acker 1992: 568). According to Acker, gender subtext, which in her understanding includes the written and spoken word, appearing in all explicit and implicit discursive organizational practices (documents, notes, guides and many others), become part of the organizational gender substructure (Acker 2012: 217). Thus, the texts describing the methods of operation of an organization (both scientific and non-scientific) reproduce the gender patterns present in the organizational discourse (Bendl 2014), which, as I assume in this text, can be discovered by examining the discourse of reports informing about the state of startup organizations.

If we assume that male patterns are the result of a recursive relationship between the actors' individual identities and organizational structures (Risman 2004, 2011; Connell 2009), the structures of Polish startups, created in context of the information society and in line with the knowledge-based economy model, they can potentially be a space to engage in practices that construct patterns of masculinities with a new specificity. Moreover, recognizing the historicity, contextuality and situational character of gender (Connell 2006; Martin 2003; Ridgeway & Correll 2004), the context of startup ecosystems in a developing economy, a country in Central and Eastern Europe, may also redefine the meanings attributed to e.g. hegemonic masculinity, and other gender types in relation to him. It is also worth paying attention to the fact that Polish startups, as a new type of organization, actual are created and developed in the period of strong transformations and social polarization (e.g. activism of ecological and feminist movements; technologization and digitization of processes inside companies; traditionalization and nationalization of public media discourse). The study patterns of masculine in such a specific social context that differs significantly from the insti-

tutional and cultural environment of startups operating in the countries of the Global North (and from which a significant amount of research comes from) is the value of the analyses carried out in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this article is to examine and present what patterns of masculinities are present in the discourse of reports published by an institution describing the condition of Polish startups, and what characterized this identified patterns? For this purpose, I analyzed (1) practices to which startup employees are encouraged, (2) images (e.g. metaphors, symbols, values, ideas and icons) referred to in the discourse of reports, and (3) methods of presenting information and opinions in the examined documents. In the last part of my paper, I try to relate the results of my analyses to the specifics of the cultural and social context of Polish startups.

The research method that I used in my research was critical discourse analysis. The discourse itself in social sciences is defined in many ways, and for the purposes of this text, I understand the discourse as the entire act of communication, consisting of verbalization (text), but also a range of extra-linguistic factors, participants, accompanying situations of use, methods of production along with general psycho-socio-cultural context (Leszczyńska & Skowronek 2010). Moreover, I also consider discourse as a tool for constructing reality, a means of reproducing ideology and power (Jabłońska 2006: 57). It is worth noting that masculinity as a construct (in Connell's theory) is entangled in relations with power and domination, as is the discourse, the critical analysis of which is to reveal the relations of subordination and privileging.

The meanings given to social actors and practices undertaken by them, I will interpret using gender interpretive frame, while at the same time relating them to the realities of the wider context in which the texts were created (gender order).

The selection of the sample was targeted choice and included all reports published by the "Startup Poland" Foundation from 2015 to 2019. In total, the collection of analyzed data included 5 reports, including four in Polish language and one (the last) in English language, with a total length of 437 pages. The Startup Poland Foundation¹ is the only institution, which conducts regular research on the activities of startup organizations in Poland. The analyzed reports present the results of quantitative research and the number of respondents increased every year from 432 in 2015 to 1,235 in 2019. Report partners were both state (PARP) and private (Google, Citi Handlowy) units. All analyzed materials can be downloaded for free online². The content of the

¹ In subsequent citations, appearing under the abbreviation "SP".

² "Startup Poland. Raport 2015": https://www.citibank.pl/poland/kronenberg/polish/files/Startup_Poland_raport_2015.pdf,

"Startup Poland. Raport 2016": http://www.citi.com/poland/kronenberg/polish/files/Startup_Poland_Raport_2016_16.pdf,

"Startup Poland. Raport 2017": http://www.citi.com/poland/kronenberg/polish/files/Startup_Poland_raport_2017.pdf,

"Startup Poland. 2018": http://citi.com/poland/kronenberg/polish/files/raport_startup_poland_2018.

analyzed reports was encoded using the MAXQDA 2020. The encoding technique was based on the indicative encoding, after which the codes were merged into broader categories.

RESULTS OF ANALYSES

The purpose of the analysed reports, as the authors write in the 2019 publication, was: “First and foremost, the aim has been to make Poland and Polish startups more visible abroad and to overthrow all the stereotypes that have dogged Poland from the outset. Only when Poland appears as one of the strongest countries in CEE region can we drive the change and draw attention of foreign investors and capital to our market. The data that we collect is our weapon in this challenge, therefore every startup that took part in any of our researches has a real chance to influence Polish startup ecosystem on a bigger scale.” (The Polish Tech Scene. 5 years, 2019: 12). The structure of the reports consisted of parts reporting the results of proprietary surveys, describing the characteristics of various dimensions of startup organizations and their environment. Usually, each section was provided with the statements and comments of experts. Men constituted the significant majority of specialists commenting on the situation of the Polish startup ecosystem. Each of the reports has a methodological part describing the method of conducted the research. This type of practice can be interpreted as a procedure aimed at authenticating the results and the validity of statements. Therefore, on the one hand, due to the research method used, these reports are partially scientific, on the other hand, due to experts statements – opinion-forming.

Men in lens of critical analysis discourse

Although it is not typical for discourse analysis to create numerical summaries, I decided to start by recalling purely statistical data to illustrate an important tendency that appears in results. In all analyzed reports, the concept of “man” appeared twice, and “male” – five times. The concept of a woman in its various possible variants (including also the English versions) appeared 46 times.

Looking quantitatively at the researched texts, masculinity and men, in the light of the analyses of reports, constitute an almost invisible category. Only in a few cases do they appear as a separately described phenomenon. Women, as a separate social category in startups, were described much more often and more precisely. However, this fact does not mean that there are no men among startup co-creators. The men in the reports are the silent, invisible majority. This is also evidenced by the statistics included in the report, which show that the number of management boards of all surveyed startups consisting exclusively of men ranged from 71.1% to 75.4% over the years. Masculinity and men function as “taken for granted” categories, that is, their presence in startups is widespread and does not need to be problematized. Being a

[pdf](#),

“The Polish Tech Scene. 5 years” (2019): <https://www.startups2019.startuppoland.org/>.

point of reference for other actors playing in the field, they constitute the background on the basis of which other elements of the startup ecosystem are listed.

In the first of the reports, to describe startups run by men and startups managed by mixed teams (women and men), the culturally related attributes of gender were referred to using the terms “skirts” and “slacks”, emphasizing gender duality. Also, the headline “Skirts vs. slacks” signals their opposing and even competitive character. Although the authors summarize the differences between these two types of startups as “slight / insignificant” in the following, they are exposed by recalling the elements of clothing, as a gendered artefacts.

When analysing the discourse, the suggested procedure is to evaluate the content in the vicinity of which the topics of interest to us occur (Lisowska-Magdziarz 2007). In the reports of Startup Poland, among the distinguished characteristics, there were, among others being a woman, being a person from abroad, being a representative of the scientific community, as well as belonging to a given age group. Based on these elements, it is possible to describe a constellation of “background” traits: “non-feminine”, “non-foreign” and “non-scientific” and age other than 20-40 years. Relating the content of the reports to the context in which they were created, we can interpret the majority as masculine, Polish, pragmatic / business / entrepreneurial and in (re) productive age.

Men, as a category in itself, have not been examined for internal complexity, unlike women, for whom a more detailed characterization has been taken. In one of the reports includes information about their marital status or the number of children:

More than half of the respondents admitted that they were in a relationship (formal or informal) at the time of registering their business activity, and 45% of respondents already had children at that time. Every fourth woman, starting her career in business, was single, and about 1 in 8 raised a child (or children) alone. (SP 2017: 9)

There was no distinction between men into subcategories relating to family or personal life. The man presented in opposition to the feminine, and is object unrelated to the family, reproduction, or private life.

Gendered categories in startup discourse

Analysing the metaphors featured in the reports, startups can be interpreted in terms of an “child of entrepreneur” whose proper development is the main life goal of the “father”. The text repeatedly contained phrases relating to a wide range of parenting experiences, such as: “incubator”, “they were fledgling startups”, or “stage of development”. In the discourse of reports, startups are personified, they acquire human characteristics (like DNA), and are presented as a product of human procreation and creation of an entrepreneur, playing the role of a child in a symbolic space.

Each Partner’s DNA has something that startup entrepreneurs need the most: capital, knowledge, energy and development. (SP 2017: 11)

The only examples of presenting masculinity in detail in the statistical results in-

cluded in the report relate to business practices in startups run by men. It turns out that the organizations they manage less often use mentoring, more often act alone and sell to business customers, and produce “software” (SP 2015: 31). Masculinity is characterized only in the context of business and ways of cooperation. It is worth noting that directing your offer to business customers (not individual) and selling “software” are the strategies that bring the fastest profits. That means that male teams more often undertake practices thanks to which they gain access to key financial resources in this context.

Analysis of comments, relating to the practices undertaken by particular genders, showing men as persons who are less willing to admit their unawareness, taking advantage of other people’s advice, or the guidance of experienced social actors. Masculinity is therefore the practice of striving for self-sufficiency and independence. In all reports, we can find multiple incentives directed towards startup owners, encouraging them to cooperate with various actors (scientists, investors, clients), create wide social networks, frequently use mentoring or appear at industry meetings. This context emphasizes the importance of networking, therefore the strategies undertaken by men in the dimension of social relations are not assessed positively.

Another feature that can be inferred from presupposition is the tendency to high or over-assess the value of one’s own enterprise.

On the basis of the available data, however, we cannot state whether the higher valuations of “male” projects result from greater courage in estimates or the actual value of the company, especially since the declared revenue growth rate is only slightly higher in “slacks.” (SP 2015: 32)

“Skirts”, on the other hand, use mentoring much more often (or admit it more often!). (SP 2015: 32)

The credibility of the survey is based on the assumption that the declarations of our respondents are true. In the cases described above (presupposition), the authors suppose that “being a man” may be a factor “censoring” the answers, and therefore they assume caution in interpreting the obtained results. The fact that in 2015 the authors of the report were only women may also be significant. What has been attributed to masculinity in startups is not always an adequate belief about the value of one’s own enterprise.

The analysis of the discourse of reports the Startup Poland foundation, showed that the language describing the desired values in such organizations is also gendered. One of the foundations of the activity of startup organizations is the desire to generate innovative solutions. The word – innovation – can be read in each of the reports from about 50 to 100 times, in its various varieties and contexts.

In the reports examined, innovation is perceived as something completely new, so far unprecedented, unique, but also transforming the current state of affairs. The opposite of this concept is “imitation”. In the analysed texts, innovation has been associated with communication and information technologies, science, R&D, ecosystems, the culture of innovation, globality, entrepreneurship or patenting solutions.

The category of innovation in reports is both a feature of certain human practices or processes, but also a property assigned to specific solutions / inventions. Innovation in the startup ecosystem (regardless of which dimension it covers) is one of the key values that companies which want to achieve success should be oriented.

Every year, the Foundation's reports carefully monitored the number of people employed in Polish startups who were of different nationality. Startup owners were encouraged to hire foreigners in the comments of experts. In reports, cultural diversity implemented at the level of employee employment was presented as one of the strategies facilitating the generation of innovation. Argumentation proving its legitimacy was based on the indication of the possibility of reaping financial benefits and profits through access to a new source of competence and outlets along with an understanding of their specificity.

The benefits of employing foreign specialists are twofold – a startup not only gains competences, but also access to the network and insight into the needs of their markets of origin. In industries where the ability to flexibly respond to changing conditions is not only a virtue but also a necessity, a variety of points of view, methods of operation and environmental relations becomes an advantage. In a book store or a car repair shop, the benefits of international staff are generally not that visible – in a startup that makes its investment valuation dependent on the ability to expand abroad, this is a visible advantage. (SP 2017: 26)

Foreign specialists, in the network of connections takes the position of “gatekeepers”, opening access to new capital and symbolic and cultural resources. Moreover, this opening offers a chance to gain a position of economic domination in a new field. Cultural diversity is thus becoming an idea “harnessed” to work for innovation.

Another motive that emerged in the discourse analysis was to encourage startups to “global expansion” and promote it as a desired state. All terms related to the expansion create a narrative in which entering foreign markets with your service is a symbol of victory, winning or achieving success.

This is especially true when serving enterprise clients; either you meet their demands for constant availability, responsive customer service, and constant expansion... Or you're left in the dust, overtaken by the competition. (SP 2019: 99)

The rhetoric of expansion it appeals to meanings with a colonial tinge, and brings to mind the economic conquest of new territories, increasing one's own sphere of influence, and places the startups actors in the position of conquerors.

In line with the startup dynamics, only a small percentage of projects will go through the entire process and reach the expansion phase. (SP 2017: 18)

This expansion also has its own individualistic variety. In the conducted analyses, it appears as an invitation to leave the “comfort zone”, overcome oneself, cross the boundaries inherent in “only our heads” and be tireless in struggling with one's own weaknesses and encountered barriers.

If a company creates an organizational culture that highly values and cares about

the needs of its employees, trusts them and gives them autonomy of action, creates an inspiring workplace where people have a chance for self-fulfilment, it will start attracting the best talents from Poland and the world. It will start ahead of the competition in terms of speed. It will delight customers and investors. It is then that the founder will begin the process of pushing the limits of development opportunities – first for his own, and then for his company. (SP 2017: 49)

The narrative appearing in the reports proves that not only the development of the organization depends on the acquisition of international talents, ahead of the competition and the delight of customers and investors, but also the development of the person who founded it. The structure of this argument suggest that the company is “extension” of its owner.

The founders are slowly learning to draw conclusions from their failures and set up new companies with the hope that this time it will succeed, because the point is not to give up. (SP 2016)

Doing startups is all about making mistakes. (SP 2017: 8)

Personal development is possible thanks to the method of trial and error. The attention of the recipients of the report is redirected from the effect to the very process of producing an innovative and powerful organization. Actors active in the startup ecosystem are encouraged to experiment, not to be discouraged by failures and to start new companies. Perseverance and dedication in pursuing a profitable and international company are presented as important values. However, this argument is inconsistent and may cause dissonance. On the one hand, the goal of all activities in the startup should be oriented towards scalability, expansion, cost reduction and innovation, ultimately leading to the generation of significant revenues. On the other hand, in a situation where work does not bring the intended profits, and the business model turns out to be a failure, the process is presented as valuable, not the effect (at which all activities have been directed so far).

Startups also mean a certain attitude and culture. Its fundamental values are openness, cooperation, ambition, growth, risk and dedication. It is the risk of failure, inherent in the nature of conducting startup experiments, that makes the spirit of unwavering, responsible entrepreneurship mature the fastest and most fully among startups. (SP 2017: 9)

A practice that startup owners are often encouraged to do, it is constant taking risk and brave decisions. For the effective development of startup ecosystems and enterprises, “strength of spirit” and “persistence” in achieving the set goals are equally important. Moreover, the value of these practices increases significantly when the narratives accompanying the goals pursued by companies, compared to improving the world, are taken into account.

Founders start from different positions, with unequal access to capital and the time they can spend on making their dreams come true, and not all have motivate improving the world. (SP 2016: 22)

The discourse present in the reports creates a vision of the reality in which work becomes a path to self-improvement and self-development. In a comment by one of the experts, there is a comparison that indicates that finding and generating innovative solutions is like discovering cures for cancer. Although no one has succeeded in this so far, further attempts are still being made, the values of which are not questioned. If, however, any person were to engage in such an act, the health and soundness of his mind could be called into question by this argument.

Most research programs don't discover cures for cancer. However, no one in their right mind will give up funding research: because the very process of experimenting, as long as it is not secondary, is a value in itself and can bring beneficial, though unintended, results. (SP 2017: 9)

Searching for an antidote to cancer, which today is one of the most common causes of mortality, brings to mind the theme of salvation, redemption from misfortune and disease. More broadly, the language arguing the value of working in a startup is full of references to the vision of creating a better world, changing reality, and heroic actions. The advent of a better world may happen in this context by producing new solutions – mainly technological.

The images described above are complemented by numerous metaphors referring to the theme of combat in its various versions. One of them is the fight understood as an individual sport, then it takes place in the “ring”, where the most important battles are fought for funding: “How many rounds of external financing have you used?” There are also references to team sports, where experts urge to build a team consisting of the best specialists from the beginning.

Another variant of combat is warfare / battle, in which the main goal is to recruit people who will help to “win” in the international “arena”.

Companies cut a worthy piece of the market and defend it against the temptations of other players. (SP 2016: 68)

The language describing the context of startups actions present the many dangers which comes from the animal world, which can be seen through comparisons to the nature world (ecosystem, jungle, tigers, cockroaches, etc.)

However we still have a long way to go before we can talk with any degree of certainty about Polish entities of digital economy being tigers ready to emerge from the domestic jungle. (SP 2019: 100)

Actors of Polish startups are encouraged to engage in more aggressive practices, and surviving the most difficult periods in the startup's life cycle, referred to as “going through the valley of death”.

During his visit to Warsaw, he paid special attention to the fact that we, Poles, must be more aggressive in promoting what we have. Customers from all over the world will not come alone, you have to hammer into them with doors and windows, but otherwise you cannot build a big business. Without aggressive promotion, we will never get the “Polish Skype.” (SP 2016: 54)

The metaphors used in the Foundation's reports, which create the reader's image of the described world, maintain the discourse of typical workers, which must prove physical strength, aggressiveness, and struggle.

DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses carried out confirm the tendency present in the literature on gender and startups, and show that the startup ecosystem is not a gender-neutral space. Gender in the reports of the Startup Poland Foundation is presented in a binary way, and masculinity and femininity are treated as opposing categories. Men, despite the fact that in all subgroups (investors, startup owners, experts) constitute a numerical majority in startups, their "direct" presence is distinguished only a few times, which makes them the background for events in the analysed context. This phenomenon has also been described in the literature so far as „invisible masculinity” (Kimmel 1993). While women were divided into certain subgroups (women who have / do not have children; who are / are not in partnerships), men constituted a monolithic, internally undifferentiated category, which is not related to the social networks of dependencies. Their non-professional needs, e.g. connected with family, are unnoticed, and the activity and agency of masculinity are present only in the public sphere, recreating the gender division of labour (procreation vs. reproduction) (Acker 1992). However, various studies show that men who take an active part in family life report a higher level of happiness and life satisfaction (Kimmel 2011: 164–191).

When analysing the gendered of the symbolic space of startup ecosystems, one can notice the presence of various patterns of masculinities, both in the structural and individual dimension.

On an individual level, startup employees are encouraged to practice hegemonic masculinity through numerous invitations to engage in fights, be aggressive, or compete, as well as show self-confidence to ultimately achieve winner status (on the market). The results of my research are consistent with the results of other studies, where masculinity in the technology industry was identified with self-confidence and the ability to achieve success (Wright 1996). As in the research by Cooper (2002) hegemonic masculinity in the context of startups, I gain a new quality, it is defined by commitment, persistence and stubbornness in carrying out specific tasks. In this context, the strength of physical muscles (associated with traditional masculinity) is exchanged for a force that internalizes and becomes a strength of spirit / personality strength. The linguistic layer contains many references to hegemonic masculinity, also through numerous comparisons of activities undertaken by actors, to behaviours present in sport, or to the vocabulary describing that context (see Kluczyńska 2010).

Actors in startup ecosystems are motivated to look for creative, non-schematic, “out-of-box” solutions (usually from the field of technology), looking for inspiration and initiating actions that ultimately translate into profits. In this way, startup employees are obliged to constantly demonstrate and prove their worth, which corresponds to the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity, which as a status is transferable, and therefore must be confirmed by many practices (see Pacholok 2009). The logic of maximiz-

ing profits and minimizing costs means that in new, Agile management models (like “Lean Startup”, “Scrum”), the actors are subject to the performance regime.

In the startup ecosystem, through technocratism and the vision of work as a practice of heroic saving the world, cultural masculinity is spreading on a symbolic level.

Similarly, the category of “risk” can be read as gendered and put men and masculinities in a privileged position. The work model present in the startup (flexible working hours, no remuneration during the development period, non-standard forms of employment), on the one hand, may favor inclusiveness in the workplace (by activating people with caring roles in the family), on the other hand, has many points in common with the type of precarious work. However, the results of the research from the Polish context, shows that women more often choose stable work and long-term forms of employment, treating them as a source of a sense of security (Warat & Krzaklewska 2016; Bhattacharya 2013). In startups, the feeling of uncertainty and responsibility for the risk taken is transferred to individual actors and their families. This model fits into the type of neoliberal economy, where the aim is to maximize market competitiveness, and work, due to factors such as uncertainty, lack of continuity of employment, limited level of protection or, for example, irregular remuneration – becomes a precarious one (Warat & Krzaklewska 2016; see Patrick & Elks 2015; Duell 2004; Kalleberg 2009). Due to cultural and biological conditioning but also specificity of work in startup, make them a space in which it is much easier to achieve success by practising the cultural patterns of masculinities described in the Connell concepts.

Statistics, referring to another important category for startups ecosystem, show that fields labeled “innovative” are mainly an area of men’s activity (see Młodożeniec & Knapieńska 2013; Glass et al. 2013). As mechanical force, computational rationality and technology experts (Lindberg 2012) dominate in the areas STEM, innovation has been permanently associated with hegemonic masculinity and their areas of activity. Authors such as Berglund and Thorslund (2012) believe that promoting men and certain forms of masculinity as the norm for innovation, and traditional male industries as places where they appear, minimizes the role of women and femininity by excluding them at work. As numerous studies show, the concept of innovation is strongly gendered, e.g. by creating a connotation between innovation and culturally understood masculinity (Blake & Hanson 2005; Marlow & McAdam 2012). Workplaces where actors are focused on caring, educating, and ensuring the durability of the social system, are much less often regarded as innovative. The effect of such a procedure is the exclusion of areas in which women have a numerical advantage and are the most active (e.g. education, health service, public sector) from innovation policy.

As already mentioned in the previous section, startups in the light of critical discourse analysis can be considered as an “extension” of an entrepreneur, while a number of terms describing activities undertaken in relation to startups refer to parental experiences. This thread can be interpreted in a differentiated way. On the one hand (taking into account the other elements of the discourse related to hegemonic masculinity and its patriarchal character), this narrative can be read as referring to the father archetype (which would symbolically strengthen the aforementioned male pattern). On the other hand, rhetoric in which there are threads of caring for a dependent start-

up (because it is “crawling”, is in an “incubator”) may be associated with hybrid masculinity, or even with culturally understood traditional femininity. The correctness of such an interpretation may additionally be supported by numerous fragments that appear in the discourse, encouraging startups to show cooperation, create wide networks of social relations, or care for their employees. Startups can thus potentially constitute a space that favours the weakening of hegemonic masculinity in industries with a high degree of technology and facilitate the inclusion of previously marginalized groups. However, it should be taken into account that the authors of the concept of hybrid masculinity consider this construct rather as a new dynamics of relations between the genders, which, however, does not radically change the current gender order, but only reproduce systems of inequalities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 247). Moreover, it obscures the specifics of existing hegemony, making current forms of domination much more difficult to grasp. In favour of this interpretation, there may be arguments present in the reports, where it is suggested to create new teams in order to gain a competitive advantage and knowledge of the “tacit” type, resulting from access to an understanding of the social context of potential customers.

The present and often mentioned in reports category of “expansion”, directed towards foreign markets, and considered in a structural dimension, may be interpreted as an incentive to dominate the economic space, and the dominance itself is one of the other practices that constitute hegemony.

In an economy based on expansion and international cooperation, Polish startup organizations, due to the high degree of monoculturality of the country and the subordinate status of Poland in the system of global economic and political forces, encounter more difficulties in achieving hegemonic status, compared to the countries of the Global North (Connell 2014). When analysing the reports, it can be seen that this status is reserved for organizations such as: “Facebook”, “Brainly.com”, “Apple”, “Twitter”, “eBay”, “Cisco Systems” and many others. Therefore, it seems more adequate to consider the relations between Polish startups (led mainly by men) and other actors playing in the field as relations embedded in the dynamics of complicit masculinity.

The results of the analyses showed that when we look at the discourse present in startups with sensitivity to gender issues, it turns out that this space, not only on the structural but also symbolic surface, is saturated with cultural patterns of masculinity that reinforce the gender order in a recursive and interconnected manner. Patterns of hegemonic masculinity are implemented by the biggest players in this field, i.e. companies that were startups in the past, and which over the years have achieved global success, usually measured by the company’s stock exchange value. Practices that social actors are encouraged towards in startups often take on a partially hybrid nature, however, it cannot be clearly stated whether they strengthen or perhaps destabilize the current gender order.

The topics discussed in publication probably do not exhaust all the possibilities of interpreting and explaining gendered the content of the reports. In order to examine more closely the masculinity patterns present in the startup discourse, analyses focused on individual, in-depth interviews with startup members, but also analysing the

content of formal documents (job advertisements, contracts, etc.), or the website of individual companies may turn out to be equally important. With reference to the postulates put forward by Ron Scollon (2001), it also seems valuable to undertake mediated discourse analysis, enriched with in-depth interviews and observations, in order to develop a much more holistic vision of the issues discussed. A valuable comparison would also be guaranteed by research on the non-discursive practices of social actors.

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MOTIVATIONAL BODYBUILDING VIDEOS AS A COMPONENT OF DISCOURSE INFLUENCING PERCEPTIONS OF MASCULINITIES

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ABSTRACT: The cult of a slim and beautiful body is no longer characteristic only for women. The male body is becoming more frequently subjected to the pressure of modelling. The use of different regimes increasingly intends to fulfil the requirements of attractiveness and physical perfection, also among men and boys. The discourse of disciplining the male body and its expectations also influence socially acceptable ways of performing gender. Employing a qualitative analysis of bodybuilding motivational films' content, the author points out the key elements of the body project image in such materials. The possibility of identifying bodybuilders with experts in body modification, resulting from the specificity of the discipline, allows one to believe that the regimes and training tools presented by them can influence the perception of the body modelling process by men. The author presents four elements used to develop an image of the male body project – (1) conditions necessary for the project, (2) tools used in the project, (3) ways of controlling and evaluating the project, (4) side effects of the project. Based on them demonstrates how motivational bodybuilding films can affect changing ways of performing masculinity.

KEYWORDS: masculinity, bodybuilding, body project, body modification, male body, bodily control

INTRODUCTION

One of the fundamental challenges for contemporary gender studies is to present femininity and masculinity to emphasize their flexibility and variability. An example of a broadly applied approach in the social sciences that underlines the individual's dynamic influence on the image of femininity and masculinity is the concept of gender performativity (West & Zimmerman 1987; Deutsch 2007; Butler 1990). Therefore, actors can actively effect (to some extent) cultural gender codes, possibly by contesting them. This approach emphasizes the variability of expectations concerning masculinity's presentation over time and concerning different individual activity fields.

It is emphasized that all practices, activities, and ways of using, presenting, and transforming the body, are gendered. Regardless of their level of complexity and the actor's intentionality or consciousness while performing them, all individual activities (including, for example, a manner of walking) can be described in relation to masculinities or associated with them gendered expectations (Bowman 2020: 402).

Berggren (2014), while describing the ideas of post-structuralist feminism grounded in assumptions of performativity and gender non-essentialism, and referring to authors such as Foucault (1990) and Butler (1990), indicates three fundamental attributes in relation to individual subjectivity: (1) way it is constituted, (2) incoherence, and (3) opacity (Berggren 2014: 363).

(1) The constitution of subjectivity is accomplished in discourse. Different discursive formations systematically constitute the objects they address. About gender, it can therefore be assumed that the expressions that describe it in the discourse are not the consequences of the existence of masculinities (and femininities), but are actively involved in the performative constitution of these categories. (2) The discourses operating in social space are not coherent with one another. The occurrence of competition and conflict between discourses influencing the dominant ways of performing masculinity can be considered inevitable. (3) Individuals functioning in a relationship of dependence on discourses cannot entirely distance themselves from discourses, which reduces the possibility of presenting them as rational actors (Berggren 2014: 363-365).

In this article, I will refer to one of the discourses influencing the image of masculinities in contemporary society – the discourse of disciplining the male body. The analysis of this discourse enables to present the physical ideals of the gendered male body and other expected characteristics that facilitate effective modelling of the body. The process of transforming the body always takes place in norms that are derived from socially accepted gender codes. This implies that expectations towards the male body also represent expectations towards masculinities presented through this discourse.

Within the discourse of disciplining the male body, I will concentrate on its most familiar component, according to Majer (2016) – exercising in the gym. I will introduce fundamental assumptions about the body as a reflexive project (Giddens 2001), as the foundation for understanding the process of body modelling and the pressures

to aestheticize it by men. I will then provide a characterization of men who regularly exercise at the gym (Maciejewska 2014). This will enable one to demonstrate the image of masculinity produced by long-term participants in physique exercise, who aspire to be bodybuilders, as one of the discourse's contributing parts.

In the following section of this article, I will briefly characterize bodybuilding as a form of professionalization of the process of body modelling that enables one to describe the individuals who practice the sport as experts at conducting body projects. The reference to bodybuilders potentially provides an opportunity to indicate a very explicit display of expectations of the male body (and consequently masculinities) because, as Bridges (2009: 86) suggests, athletes "make their living from displaying and performing gender".

This article aims to reconstruct the image of the male body project presented in bodybuilding motivational films as one component of the discourse of disciplining the male body. Its presentation will allow for an interpretation of the expectations associated with socially acceptable ways of performing masculinities prominent in this discourse.

THE BODY AS A PROJECT

Approaching the process of disciplining the body as a framework for presenting transformations of masculinity demands the assumption that the body can be presented as malleable, subordinate to the individual's will, and that it constitutes an essential element of the identity that the individual constructs and displays. This ensures that changes in the patterns of masculinities can be applied dynamically and that their consequences will be apparent in body transformation practices and physiques.

The body's portrayal can provide this as a reflexive project (Giddens 2001), which largely refers to the presentation of it as an element of individual identity. Therefore, it becomes a space for the expression of the self, symbolic communication and simultaneously requires work on it (Shilling 2003 in Staniec-Januszek 2019:131). The changing image of the individual's identity makes his body acquire a kind of openness. "It constitutes a space open to structuring and changes, which are the result of the individual's identity explorations and the valid cultural patterns related to corporeality." (Dziuban 2013: 79-80)

Giddens (2001:142) emphasizes that the individual is forced to update the project concerning social reality continually. The body remains in a state of constant "unfinished" or "incompletion". In regards to masculinities, this is an assumption that can cause tensions to occur. Body transformation expectations and bodily ideals that change over time can conflict with an individual's gender identity, mostly dependent on gender socialization. Being receptive to the dynamically changing attractiveness of specific images of men (and therefore the way the social environment will perceive the individual) must be continuously negotiated with the image of one's masculinity to avoid the risk of experiencing gender identity problems.

Such tensions relate to the potential dismissal of the pressures imposed on attractiveness and the inability to conform to media-presented models of the ideal body and

the corresponding shame or fear. This is significant because the contemporary, traditional masculinity model (Arcimowicz 2015:64) and the related low level of attention accorded to bodily appearance, weight or musculature, are increasingly irrelevant. An analysis of the discourse of disciplining the male body can therefore provide a closer look at the direction of change regarding male body image and the associated transformations of masculinities.

THE MALE BODY DISCIPLINING DISCOURSE

Anna Majer (2016), by examining the discourse of disciplining the male body based on one of the portals addressed to men confirms the aforementioned direction of reflection - body modelling is primarily intended to approach the ideal of beauty. Body efficiency and strength result from improving the appearance is an indicator of valued vitality rather than its goal.

The body is expected to be clean, fresh, and washed, free of excessive hair, unpleasant smell, pustules, spots, and other skin imperfections. A big issue is a baldness. Men should also have an attractive smile, have well-maintained teeth, be young and sexually capable. For this article's purposes, fundamental are those elements on which an individual can consciously influence by performing physical exercises, i.e. good physical condition, health, lean physique, and muscularity (Majer 2016: 187-203).

A lean body usually requires the individual to impose rigour on it and to transform it adequately. This distinguishes it from the skinny figure, which in the discourse analyzed by Majer was strongly criticized as non-masculine, constituting a defect and requiring work on it. A lean body is characterized by a proportional physique, low body fat level, clearly visible but not excessive musculature. It can also be referring to the former working-class tradition, which indicates as attractive a highly developed chest and shoulders, which are primarily a symbol of physical strength (Majer 2016: 193-196).

The elements connecting the components of bodily ideals are the intentionality of the undertaken activities and the requirement of complexity in body modelling. One should manage all areas in which an individual has the possibility to interfere. Simultaneously, in the case of patterns that are impossible to obtain or maintain for a long time, for example being tall or lacking signs of ageing, it is required to use techniques and tools that allow for masking imperfections (proper clothing, creams, hair colouring).

Besides, the broadest discussed way of disciplining the body in the discourse was physical activity, including exercise, sports, and an appropriate diet. Their function is to develop the musculature and counteract the fundamental barriers to a perfect body – obesity, health problems, low endurance, poor condition, and sexual performance, which are associated with a sense of shame and unattractiveness (Majer 2016: 203-216).

An essential element of the discourse concerning physical exercise was the indication of genetic predispositions specific to each individual (Majer 2016: 219). Certain muscle groups may, therefore develop more slowly or quickly deplete their growth po-

tential. Simultaneously, there is no direct indication that an attractive physique is not available to everyone. It is instead a demonstration of the variety of available methods and training plans, diets, and the need to adjust them individually.

All potential difficulties in disciplining the body – biological, psychological, and socio-economic (Majer 2016: 257) are presented as problems that can be counteracted by almost every individual, regardless of the circumstances. Physical activity is supposed to ensure that an individual can maintain an efficient, healthy, and well-cared body, therefore, mostly devoid of physical or aesthetic deficiencies.

Therefore, physical fitness is not identified in the discourse with the power to dominate other men, women, or the existence of so-called ‘bastions of masculinity’. Although it does not directly follow from Majer’s research, the bodily ideal enables one to indicate certain spheres of the individual’s life that may have been neglected before, which can also be included in a specific gender order.

Significantly, any sphere that might cause tension and the resulting sense of shame, of not conform to expectations, is presented as a form of individual differentiation rather than inequality. Taking the effort to discipline the body, even with unsatisfactory results, provides a basis for increasing self-awareness and exploring more individual means of body shaping, rather than achieving low status in a hierarchy. This is crucial because some of the consequences of achieving low results from the body-transformation process (particularly those related to sexual performance) could provide a basis for questioning an individual’s masculinity.

Simultaneously, in the discourse, there appear bodies defined as non-masculine. However, their evaluation stems from a lack of attempts to discipline or apply the process of transforming the body only to selected aspects. Individuals who take a comprehensive and intentional approach to body modelling may face criticism of their methods, but they are not expected to challenge their masculinity. This is significant because despite emphasizing the necessity of body modification, the models do not appear to be very oppressive towards the individual.

CHARACTERISTICS OF MEN WHO REGULARLY EXERCISE AT THE GYM

The disciplining of the male body, as Majer indicates, is mostly done through physical exercise in gyms. The necessity of constant, comprehensive, and intentional influence on the physique may suggest that in the case of a large proportion of men, participation in gyms is becoming an increasingly common practice. How physical exercising is presented in the discourse and the representations of individuals performing it can be contrasted with research on long-term gym members.

Research conducted by Tatiana Maciejewska (2014) indicates that disciplining the male body at the gym is a form of modelling the individual’s visual self-representation to inscribe himself in the traditional discourse of masculinity. Respondents emphasized the importance of male authority among exercisers, relations of power and subordination, and the reproduction of the principle of heteronormativity (p. 85-86), thus elements relating to the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995).

Physical exercises are presented as an activity that combines elements of slowly

and consistently improving one's personality and simultaneously acquiring characteristics that symbolically communicate superiority over other men and their bodies' potential danger (Maciejewska 2014: 89). Therefore, the body is a symbol of strength and a high position in the system of gender inequality. Simultaneously, its visual presentation is expected to emphasize dominance, including readiness for physical confrontation.

Frequent and enthusiastic display of musculature, and therefore constant evaluation of work on the body may be a form of distinct emphasis on one's gender identity and at the same time, in the case of unsatisfactory results, also a cause for anxiety. The untrained or insufficiently trained body is embedded with characteristics that indicate weakness, non-masculinity, non-heteronormativity.

The depiction of male discipline in the accounts of regular gym members is much more oppressive than Majer's discourse analysis presents. Conducting it in relation to the hegemonic masculinities generates additional tensions that male exercisers must confront. Highly valued dominance over other men (with less attractive physiques, less training experience) tends to generate insecurities that are less concerned with the body itself, but instead with the actors' masculinity patterns.

Maciejewska defines the affirmation of one's masculinity through a muscular body as "a link between traditional, hegemonic masculinity and modernity" (ibid.: 91). The more outstanding picture of the discourse of disciplining the male body can be interpreted as aligned with a changing social reality that is increasingly open to androgyny and more concerned with the male body and its attractiveness. In Maciejewska's narrative, however, there is an intense contestation of the transformations that could weaken male dominance.

By imposing on the description of the discourse of disciplining the male body the characteristics of individuals who regularly attend gyms, it is possible to provide a fuller picture of masculinity's transformations. From this perspective, it may be an interesting development to include in the description the characteristics of bodybuilders, and therefore those individuals who, both from the perspective of their status in gyms and the conduct of a reflective body project, would appear to be the most advanced, and so may be described as experts.

BODYBUILDING

The aim of specific bodybuilding regimes is to achieve a physique characterized by extraordinary muscle mass while maintaining adequate (often exaggerated) body proportions, symmetry, and definition (visible separation between the muscle bellies). Therefore, the final shape and level of 'development' of the body are not a result of adapting it to specific activities or lifts. The performance consists of its presence in the best possible shape during competitions (Richardson 2012a: 21).

Numerous comparisons of bodybuilders with Greek sculptures are essential in the literature on the subject. Therefore, the process of aspiring to beauty and ideal body proportions, characteristic for the early stages of bodybuilding development, was indicated. However, since the 1980s, the dominant image of a bodybuilder was no longer

identified with aesthetics, but rather with the desire to achieve an ever-larger body size. Athletes competing at the highest level illustrate the desire for a constant redefinition of what is considered possible in human physique development, not to conform to the canon of beauty (Liokafto 2017: 96).

The divergence from a narrative based on aesthetics concerning bodybuilders' bodies is particularly interesting from the perspective of the discussion of male body images and the results of Majer's analysis. The process of disciplining the body, in this case, seems to have a point where beauty and fitness are no longer relevant. The extraordinary body size is perceived as asexual. The athlete's ability to shape it and continuously increase his development potential begins to be a major category in the bodybuilding messages (Richardson 2012b: 146).

Therefore, it can be assumed that recipients of media materials containing bodybuilders' images will not consider them as direct references to socially expected ways of performing masculinity. Their significance will instead be derived from making credible the possibility of almost unlimited interference in the shape of one's physique. Simultaneously, transmissions presenting the process of body disciplining by bodybuilders may constitute a form of inspiration or instruction indicating specific necessary characteristics and practices that enable successful body shaping.

Recipients may interpret such messages as a form of reinforcement of their assumptions about their preferred gender performance. Representations of bodybuilding do not indicate the benefits of such an advanced body reshaping process; neither do they promote it as an aesthetic that conforms to the canon of beauty. The dominant cult of hypertrophy may inspire increasingly vast body disciplining practices without necessarily aspiring to achieve a bodybuilding physique.

From this perspective, deriving role models from bodybuilders' representations may exacerbate the tensions pointed out in discussing images of people who regularly exercise at the gym. Due to the niche nature of professionally practised bodybuilding, in the case of athletes for the vast majority of individuals, these will be physiques known only from the media. The hyperreal (Baudrillard 1983) myth of unlimited hypertrophy, which can be interpreted as a confirmation of the attainability of the expected physique by all men, can also generate unrealistic expectations of the body that symbolically indicate the hegemonic masculinity of a given individual.

The importance of the gym and exercising as fundamental implements for body shaping means that materials relating to bodybuilding can have a noticeable impact on how regimes are imposed on the body. Thereby, they may partially shape the discourse of disciplining the male body. Bodybuilding motivational videos are an exciting form of such messages. Their relevance will be necessary for those who regularly attend gyms. However, this type of material can also attract individuals who are just planning to begin transforming their bodies through exercise. Their appeal, therefore, cannot be reduced to merely reproducing or contesting hegemonic masculinity.

It is worth emphasizing that the athletes or bodybuilding federations do not prepare such videos, so they should not be considered as marketing materials. Their analysis cannot indicate if they present a real image of the practices being undertaken and the meanings given to them by the bodybuilders, nor will it make it possible to charac-

terize the community of practice of bodybuilders. The materials should be regarded as idealization and promotion of individual attitudes and values by their authors, which means the discipline's fans.

Analysis of bodybuilding motivational films, assuming that they present a certain depiction of disciplining the body as conducting a reflective project, allows one to interpret this type of material as referring to physical exercise and other spheres of individual activity. This enables the present a set of expectations that are not limited to bodily ideals, but more broadly to ways of performing masculinity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research material was collected using the most popular contemporary video sharing platform - YouTube.com. The criterion of popularity in selecting the medium was the intention to include in the research corpus materials with the most significant possible potential to reach the viewers. For this reason, it was not decided to use websites with bodybuilding themes, as it can be assumed that their recipients identify themselves as bodybuilders or aspiring to this status. Individuals looking for motivation or inspiration for exercises focused on improving body projects, rather than improving sports performance, will probably choose websites that give a sense of less formality or do not require significant cultural competence (for example, due to specific language).

The searched phrase was *Bodybuilding motivation*. The English term's choice was primarily determined by the intention to include the most famous content in the research corpus. The search mechanism does not require the searched phrase to be part of the film title, so it was decided to use the universal phrase available, which would be evident from the person's perspective by adding the video tag. In addition, the direct reference to bodybuilding made it possible to exclude materials relating to other disciplines from the results provided by the portal.

Two of the available search methods were applied during the selection of videos. The first one was the criterion of accuracy. The algorithm indicates the results best suited to the given phrase; the second criterion was the number of views (from the highest). Each time, the results were limited to the specified period (June 2018 – June 2019). The first twenty results from both searches were included in the research corpus. Video materials of the total length of about 3 hours and 10 minutes were collected in this way. The single material was between 3 and 10 minutes long.

A categorization key prepared under the inductive approach was employed to encode the collected videos. The specificity of the collected material forced separate coding of the visual and verbal layer of the message. This results from the way of creating this type of content. Films are formed by combining and reusing many short fragments from different sources. The athletes' speeches and fragments of interviews do not have to be directly related to the screen's characters. A standard procedure is also applying elements of motivational speeches, whose content is not related to sport.

In the qualitative analysis of content, a single video was taken as the analysis unit.

Since most of the content was not limited to the presentation of a single athlete, and the dynamic editing made it impossible to divide it internally for example into scenes justifiably; the materials were treated as closed units. The purpose of the analysis was to indicate the image of the male body project presented in this type of transmission. Therefore, the findings can be considered relevant regardless of how the recipients evaluate the physiques presented in the movies. The values and norms communicated in the videos relating to the body modelling process can be considered attractive and valuable by individuals who do not aspire to such far-reaching body transformations.

ANALYSIS FINDINGS

The video materials constituting the research corpus presented the bodies of various athletes in many contexts. The gym was the dominant one; however, it should be emphasized that exercising men's physiques depicted different periods of possible preparations for competitions. Thus they did not always match the images known from the contest stage. In the case of motivational movies, the competition period is not a dominant image; one can also get the impression that it is not a culmination point for the undertaken efforts.

This implies that the movies' events do not have to be presented in chronological order or refer to the same athletes. Performances on stage may be interspersed with training fragments during the period of mass gain (when the physique loses its definition), and the competitors do not have to appear in any other context. Therefore it is challenging to identify presentations revealing training and victories in the form of cause and effect. An exception to this is the few clips that relate entirely to the career of one athlete.

It is worth emphasizing the selection of music constituting the background for watched athletes. The primary practice for movies focused mainly on training or sequences presenting this activity is to employ active fragments of cinematic soundtracks. Sounds associated with heroic struggle scenes, sometimes culminating in the film, allow to build additional suspense and symbolically emphasize the importance of the body design. Fast editing reminiscent of music videos or film duels, matched to the music, the timbre of the voice, and the messages transmitted by the contestants, highlighted screams and sounds produced by the training equipment make it possible for the viewer to get more involved.

While other themes are displayed on the screen, music does not have such an important role. Importantly, in movies where the creators do not use fragments of athletes' comments or motivational speeches, there was neither dynamic music nor a cinematic soundtrack. Considering the criterion of popularity employed in the process of collecting materials, it can be presumed that the recipients of this type of movie vary in terms of expectations, and visible in some productions pathos is not a fundamental element.

The conducted analysis enabled to identify of four elements used to create a male body project. These are (1) conditions essential for conducting the project, (2) tools used in the project, (3) methods of monitoring and evaluating the project, and (4) side

effects of the project.

Conditions essential for conducting the project

One of the fundamental values emphasized in the movies was the work ethos. It is indicated as a necessary element, not only to succeed and achieve further milestones in the project but also to comply with the essential sacrifices and regimes imposed on the body. Therefore, its absence makes it impossible to start modelling the body in an advanced method that guarantees the expected results.

Bodybuilding project is portrayed as a superior element in the individual's values hierarchy. The necessary work ethos enables the realization of subsequent goals and stresses that body modelling should not be considered a hobby. *It is a work ethic and systematic, I am not a "genetic freak", I get up at 3 a.m. and train from 4 a.m. It is not something I have been doing for a year, I have been doing it my whole life (T12).* Therefore, transforming the body is not limited to cosmetic changes, and its importance should be considered central and have a significant impact on other spheres of individuals' activity. Simultaneously, indirect references to fatigue and the difficulty of incorporating body modelling practices into the daily routine show that undertaking a project requires permanent incorporation into one's daily life and full acceptance of all related inconveniences.

A long-term perspective is also emphasized. Focusing strongly on the work ethos allows one to think that body modelling is separated from temporary fashions and short-term trends. Full involvement in the project does not require specific goals. However, it demands a far-reaching commitment to the idea of constant, systematic, and slow physiological transformation. Significantly, there are many challenges associated with it, which should not only be accepted by individuals who transform their bodies but are an essential part of the whole process. The movies glorify the athletes' inconveniences considerably and emphasize their importance as a selection for the individuals starting to work on their bodies. *You have to sacrifice everything you believe in, lose everything you care about, and go beyond that (W4).*

The regimes imposed on the body and the related inconveniences presented in the movies go far beyond muscle sores, hunger-related to diet and body fatigue. The project will require an individual to sacrifice the small pleasures of everyday life and negatively affect his relationships with his environment, a possible feeling of loneliness and misunderstanding. Submitting to the process of body modelling means imposing on the sphere of free time the logic associated with work. Important in this context is that the transmissions do not indicate that this is a potential risk that the individual must take into account, but rather an immanent element of the process.

Another discomfort, which is permanently inscribed in the process of transforming the body, is the acceptance and glorification of the physical pain felt. *I love to work out, I love torturing my body and causing it pain (T11).* Transformation of the physique and related regimes are shown as a form of forcing the body to take a form that is not natural for it.

Directly presented difficulties that must be addressed by each individual conduct-

ing the body project references to torture, resignation from engaging and valuable leisure activities create an image of the beginning of the process of modelling the body, as a choice between absolute sacrifice or resignation. The decision should be definitive and binding in this case. Therefore the space allowing for testing the tools of body transformation or only their partial use is eliminated. *Either you decide to give everything you have or stay home (T1)*.

Furthermore, it should be emphasized that resignation from starting the project, even though it is associated with disapproval, is not associated with a significantly negative image. Body modelling allows for achieving one's full potential. *You have to be disciplined, and you have to sacrifice a lot to live like this, few people are willing to do it, few people can put so much into it (T9)*. Individuals who do not transform their bodies are described as average. They are not considered unattractive or poorly maintained, but cannot undertake the work required by the body project.

The decision to conduct the body project is also limited by the requirement to stay entirely focused during all body modelling activities. The videos emphasize this through numerous sequences in which athletes calmly and methodically prepare the equipment used in the exercises and calm down before the next series of repetitions. Work on the body is done by entering two states, dynamic and explosive, characteristic for the moment of exercise and static. The athletes prepare mentally and physically for the next effort.

The videos do not represent scenes in which athletes interact with other space users. *You need to be focused, you have work to do, they can talk and scream, but if you are working out you need to be focused, you will talk outside (T11)*. The only exception to this rule is the limited number of training partners or coaches, but also, in that case, the athlete does not directly refer to them verbally and does not maintain eye contact. Therefore, the body transformation practices are a sphere of activity of the individual, which should remain inaccessible to other people. There are numerous motives for going to the gym or crossing its threshold, as a symbolic disconnection from other responsibilities and complete dedication to modelling.

This way, the image of modelling the body as a "lonely path" is emphasized, but so is the necessity of constant control over every aspect of the project, full of immersion. Any external factors may be disturbances that will negatively influence the efficiency with which the individual transforms his physique. That is why such important and underlined in the videos are all the moments when, after performing a challenging exercise, often visible grimaces of pain and heard screams, athletes regain concentration and balance almost immediately.

Tools used in the project

The fundamental tools for body modelling are physical exercises. Strength training is presented in a manner that is primarily to evoke admiration and emphasize athletes' extraordinary strength. A vital element of these representations is that the creators never specify the actual number of lifted kilograms. Weights, which fills almost all the space available on the barbell, bending them and the sounds of the equipment

being placed back, symbolically communicate that one can observe the performance reserved for the strongest individuals.

More important than the number of kilograms appears to be the exercise method. Almost all series are presented in a manner that provides the impression of performing them on submaximal weights. The athletes often train until the muscle fails, that is, the moment when the next repetition is not possible; and beyond that when the next moves take place with the assistance of a training partner.

This is significant because the viewer's attention is focused on a sphere that is not easily quantifiable. The recipient observes a model in which expectations are not based on directly expressed numbers, which suggests that the goals should be regularly and consistently adjusted, and the focus on the load being used will only blur the image of the effort put in by the athlete.

Therefore, the efficient use of tools in the project is a prerequisite for the transformation of the body to take place following the potential and the desired pace of change. Significantly, modelling is also burdened with substantial inconveniences, the severity of which may increase with the degree of involvement and development of the body project. Their underestimation during the exercises is a reference to appropriate mental preparation, not to overcome them.

Another tool that allows the body project to be carried out efficiently is diet. The diet is presented as a form of significant sacrifice, which requires discipline and determination from the individual. In the process of body modelling, the pleasure of eating is, in fact, unavailable. During the day, the food consumed must provide the body with a precisely specified number of calories, micro, and macronutrients. This is associated with perseverance and the need to have the relevant competencies to control and modify the dietary assumptions constantly. *When it comes to diet, micro-improvement, and sacrifice, it separates gym rats from bodybuilders (W17).*

Regardless of the stage of body modelling, references to diet always indicate some challenges. During muscular growth, the volume is high: *10 - 12 meals a day, this is the time of mass gain (W16)*, when the level of adipose tissue is reduced, athletes complain of felt hunger continuously. In every case, the consistency and precision with which athletes approach the food are essential. The authors of the videos emphasize this by focusing the viewer's attention on plastic containers with self-prepared meals. The person eating, in this case, is less important than the food itself. *People ask me - how do you keep this form? It's easy; you have to eat like a dog (T9).*

Therefore, monotony in the diet is presented as a positive factor, which facilitates the consistent application of the regime. It is also an example of the primacy of the project over other areas of individual activity. While training takes place in a particular space and can be separated from other life fields, maintaining dietary rigour requires additional preparation and often interference with other practices. The videos present fragments in which the athletes interrupted their non-sporting activities to have a meal at the designated time, regardless of the place and circumstances in which they were placed.

Another tool inextricably associated with the body project is aerobic exercises. They are presented primarily in the form of walking on a treadmill or training stairs.

Significant in this respect is that such activities, although shown as necessary for body shaping, are primarily a sphere of mental development. Their specificity consists of the necessity to perform monotonous, non-engaging exercises that do not allow the body's potential or to test their limits.

An essential element of body modelling is the constant increase in knowledge regarding all the project's practices and activities. Athletes are largely presented according to the image of a self-made man. The videos do not refer to formal education, courses, or university studies, but rather show the need for specific know-how, the scope of which will strongly depend on the characteristics of a given organism, its genetic potential.

It is worth emphasizing that some elements could have been present in the messages, but the authors did not include them in any movie. There was no reference to the processes of medicalization and cyborgisation of the body in the analyzed material. This gives an image of projects which do not need anabolic steroids, implants, extensive supplementation, or special health care to achieve the assumed outcomes.

Methods of monitoring and evaluating the project

The way to control the level of involvement in exercises is to observe the body. The expected reaction is dizziness, nausea, and even blackouts. *If your body does not struggle back, it means that something is not right - you have not yet exercised hard enough (T12)*. Valuable are those activities that have been brought to an extreme form. Athletes are often portrayed in the movies when they move in a wobbly step after exercise or lying exhausted on the ground.

Another indicator of effectiveness in modelling physique is pain. What is important, it has no diagnostic function, so it does not indicate the risk of injury, improper form, or excessive fatigue. It is presented as a permanent exercise element because the relevant work to build muscles starts only when the discomfort starts to be noticeably unpleasant. *I do not count all squats, I start to count when I feel pain (T3)*.

Another temporary way to control the effects of work is to pose in front of the mirror after the exercise or training. What is important is that it is not only characteristic for athletes with low levels of body fat and does not require removing elements of clothing. The sportsman does not pose in front of the other exercising people, nor does the movies show their reactions. The presentation of the muscles is not intended to impress or to evoke a specific impression. Therefore, the body during modelling should meet the requirements and expectations set only by the person transforming it. The way it is valued in public space should not be perceived as significant.

The posing can also take place on stage, but its meaning is much more symbolic. The movies use almost exclusively fragments of Mr. Olympia's competition, one of the most prestigious. What is essential is that the participation in the competition or even the victory is not presented as a reward for the sacrifices or the crowning of a long work period.

The competition motif is also used in dynamic montages, in which heavy exercises with posing on stage are interwoven. Since both activities do not refer to the same

athlete, such a procedure can be interpreted in two ways. The first one is the need to have a point of reference in the project, other individuals, whose body confirms the availability of the effects assumed by the modelling physique. The second interpretation is the need to evaluate the project after a more extended period. This makes it possible to determine the effectiveness of the tools used and the extent to which the physique assumptions have been fulfilled.

Therefore, participation in the competition does not mean the end of the body project or even its interruption. It should be treated as a functional element of it, which does not require reducing or stopping the body's regimes. Instead, it is a moment to set even more restrictive forms of body modelling so that the physique can continue to develop. Therefore, victory and defeat are only indicators of the effectiveness of the tools used or the lack of it.

Also crucial for body project control is the fact that you should never be satisfied with your physique. Knowing one's weaknesses allows one to rationalize the project and make it easier to impose more regimes on the body. Following the logic of unlimited possibilities, satisfaction with the figure means withdrawal from the project, and therefore not reaching its maximum potential and symbolic inclusion into the category of ordinary people.

Side effects of the body project

The videos refer to possible side effects of the body modelling process, but their spectrum is quite limited. They are only injuries resulting from a specific way of training. Muscle tearing was indicated as particularly harmful because it disrupts the aesthetics of the body and leads to its imbalance. In this case, the viewer's attention is primarily focused on the injuries of the shoulder muscles, biceps, and triceps. This emphasizes the particular importance of muscular arms in the male figure.

Significant injuries are presented as elements that slow down body development but never completely stop it. The project is carried out despite all the difficulties. There are no breaks for convalescence, but almost immediately, alternative training methods are sought. The muscle damage is shown as a new body imperfection that has to be adequately worked out; medical treatment would stop the body transformation process.

The only exceptions to this standard are surgeries. When it is necessary to conduct them, the exercises are stopped, but the movie authors emphasize that this is the time to develop a new training plan and assumptions for other regimes, which will allow one to restore the proportions and desired appearance of the body in the shortest possible time.

Injuries that do not affect the body shape but only constitute discomfort during exercise are entirely underestimated. The pain they cause is an inherent part of the project and, as was indicated, must be accepted in order to achieve the full potential of the body. *The worst pain I ever felt was when a huge dumbbell fell on my big toe and broke it. This did not interrupt my training, I went back to the gym the next day and did some squats (W7).*

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The image of the reflexive body project presented in motivational bodybuilding films can be referred to as the process of transformations of masculinities, indicating how this type of content can influence individuals' interpretations of the significance, potential tools, and consequences of disciplining the body due to the pressures of achieving masculine body ideals. Therefore, by assuming that the discourse of disciplining the male body is one of the discourses shaping individuals' gender identities, it is possible to describe a specific segment of it that can influence the shape of socially approved ways of performing masculinity.

The work ethos, strongly emphasized in the films, provides a rebound of Majer's description of men's need to take a comprehensive and intentional approach to enhance their bodily attractiveness. Narratives based on strongly accentuated sacrifice and the imposition of a work-related logic on activity provide an image of the importance of the pressure of male bodily ideals. Striving to conform to them can be interpreted as a necessity and require a commitment on many levels. Therefore, the messages can be understood as emphasizing any areas in which there may be tensions in the individual related to not being able to fulfil a beautiful body's demands.

This provides an image of masculinities in which insecurity is permanently inscribed, related to the expectations concerning the manner of its performance. The disciplining of the body, which should not be considered a hobby of the individual but one of the key elements constructing his identity, symbolically may be interpreted as a strong pressure to constantly analyze the expectations concerning one's actions and to avoid any situation in which the actor would be exposed to social ostracism.

Simultaneously, underlying both the performativity of gender and the reflexive project of the body is the assumption of the subjective role of the individual. Both the modes of disciplining the body and the image of performing masculinities are not grounded entirely in the expectations and pressures of society. This is illustrated in the instance of motivational films by the possibility of negative relations with the environment, which involves non-participation in certain spheres of activity rather than exposing the actor to ostracism. Therefore, the individual may adopt a strategy of avoiding contexts in which gender performance patterns he finds attractive could be negatively evaluated. Furthermore, when it is not possible to meet external expectations, maintaining a coherent gender identity image may involve reflexive restriction of one's spheres of activity.

It should be emphasized that the narrative presented in the films does not present negative images of individuals who do not undertake or are not successful in disciplining the body. Failure to fulfil the expectations associated with the pressure to aestheticize the male body will therefore not be a foundation for undermining the actor's masculinity, symbolically linking him to femininity or inferior masculinity.

The other significant element of the narrative is the way emotions are expressed. Their depiction promotes withdrawal in the affective sphere. This is particularly interesting in relation to the previously mentioned tensions and insecurities inherent in masculinities' image. The recipient may have the impression that these are not ne-

gated, but their influence on the actor's way of functioning is intentionally minimized. Therefore, working on the body is presented as an area where there should be no room for uncertainty; simultaneously, it does not provide pleasure or pride. Compliance with social expectations is portrayed as a form of minimizing potential disadvantages rather than achieving distinct benefits.

Majer's emphasis on the complexity with which men should address body discipline, from the perspective of motivational films, may equally indicate an increasing number of tension-producing areas. They associate an intensified commitment to body discipline with an increasing number of inconveniences for the individual. Significantly, in the narrative, actors do not eliminate or overcome them but merely adapt to their occurrence.

In this regard, the element of continually interpreting changing expectations over time regarding how to perform gender is essential. The messages indicated the necessity of continuously expanding knowledge regarding body transformation techniques and adjusting the exercises performed to the body's current predispositions. One can also refer to the expectations and pressures changing in time about the ideals of male corporeality and the modes of performing masculinity. Awareness of them and constant monitoring enables one to function more efficiently and avoid the aforementioned negative judgments and ostracism. Their occurrence, however, should not be interpreted as a failure, but as a lesson that allows the individual to become more reflexive.

The last of the most important narrative elements is the low importance that the authors of the messages gave to mutual comparisons between men. The recipient may interpret this as a dismissal of the need for men to compete for both in terms of the attractiveness of their bodies and the types of masculinity presented. When made, the comparisons may be intended to discern the individual's inadequately addressed areas of his activities rather than to create a hierarchy.

The research indicates that the discourse of disciplining the male body portrays images of masculinities as strongly associated with the presence of anxieties and insecurities. The analyzed materials portray body projects in a way that relates to the negation of the process of increasingly subjecting the male body to evaluations in public space. Body modelling should be primarily a sphere of character improvement, secondarily of physique transformation. Therefore, its presentation cannot be motivated by the desire to gain benefits or impress other individuals.

The specific training methods emphasizing strength, the ability to control both the body and the surroundings, may indicate that the motivational films constitute a space for reproducing images culturally considered traditionally masculine. Simultaneously, the reproduction of male dominance is not alluded to by any means, nor is the attraction of hegemonic masculinity, which was a crucial element in Maciejewska's analysis.

The more appropriate interpretation, therefore, would suggest that the bodybuilding motivational films are a fragment of the discourse of disciplining the male body, which will indicate that men and how they perform their masculinities are adapting to, as opposed to rejecting, changing social reality as well as new expectations and pressures. References in the videos to culturally considered characteristics to be tra-

ditionally masculine will only be evidence of the slow tempo of the transformation process.

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MALE ALLIES OF POLISH WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION. ON THE EXAMPLE OF EDWARD PRĄDZYŃSKI'S AND EUGENIUSZ STARCZEWSKI'S PROJECTS

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ABSTRACT: This article presents an extract from the research on the male support of the emancipation of Polish women at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. In my consideration of the papers penned by authors who posited common and equal civil rights for men and women, I pay particular attention to Edward Prądyński's book published in 1873, and to the journalistic writing by Eugeniusz Starczewski from the end of the first World War. Their two projects for the emancipation of Polish women are diverse: while Prądyński's proposition was revolutionary, Starczewski's work was late and limited in its emancipatory outlook.

KEYWORDS: female emancipation, women's rights, support provided by men, emancipationists

INTRODUCTION

Polish women's struggle for labor rights, the right to education and suffrage was long. While they could study at the Jagiellonian University in Krakow since 1896, and earlier, they had an opportunity to work in specific professions, women in Poland won their electoral rights only in 1918. In the second half of the nineteenth century, informal emancipation initiatives of Polish women were active in Warsaw, Kraków and

Lviv; for instance, a group of female enthusiasts – Entuzjastki – gathered around the writer Gabriela Żmichowska. It was only after the revolution of 1905 that the women’s movement could operate in the form of legal, official organizations, and consequently women’s associations were established, such as the Union for the Equal Rights of Polish Women. In 1909, this union was transformed into the Polish Association for Women’s Equality and the Association of Polish Women’s Equality. These and more, formal and informal emancipation initiatives were supported by men – emancipationists and emancipators. Their work is an important part of the history of Polish women’s emancipation.

The overriding aim of this article is to present the research which was initiated as a part of the project titled “Men’s journalism and prose in favor of women’s emancipation and feminist movements of Polish women in the years 1842-1939”. The article consists of three parts. In the first part, I introduce the methodological foundations of my research on men working with emancipating women. Next, I present a general description of men supporting the emancipation of Polish women. I am interested in the opportunities they had for this type of activity, and the types and shapes of their work in a non-existent country. In the last part, I describe the pro-emancipation writings of two selected journalists: Edward Prądyński and Eugeniusz Starczewski. They both supported various projects for the emancipation of Polish women.

The full list of the publications by male allies is included in the anthology *Głosy sojuszników spraw kobiet. Pisma mężczyzn wspierających emancypację Polek w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku (Voices of male allies of women. Writings of men supporting the emancipation of Polish women in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)* (Duda 2020). The contents of the article are also supplemented by the volume *Emancypanci i emancypatorzy. Mężczyźni wspierający emancypację Polek w drugiej połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku (Emancipationists and emancipators. Men supporting the emancipation of Polish women in the second half of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries)* (Duda 2017). This monograph also includes theoretical considerations about men supporting women’s emancipation and feminism (Duda 2017: 23-30, 383-393).

A FEW REMARKS ON METHODOLOGY

The investigations of the texts and work of men who sought to support the emancipation of Polish women is treated here as a project at a crossroads of general history, women’s history, and history seen from the perspective of herstory and gender (cf. Tilburg 2000). It is an impulse to rewrite the history of culture, driven by two objectives. The first goal is to supplement existing knowledge on the women’s emancipation movement with information on the cooperation between women and men, or men and women, examined particularly from a gendered perspective. The second objective is to complicate current research in an attempt to assess men’s subjectivity and activism within the framework of the historical women’s emancipatory movements. Moreover, the goal is also to examine the effect of women’s independent work in the social structure which prevented them from playing public roles and limited their subjective and

direct influence on the shape of the politics of the partitioned country. The significant component of the second objective is also the question of an enforced, strategic character of women's coalition with social actors, who by laws and customs were provided with tools to regulate women's and men's lives.

Therefore, the research concerning men who supported women's emancipatory struggles can be included in a trend to construct history as an opportunity to revolt; it is a critical history, an anti-history (Solarska 2011). The unwritten history of male allies of Polish women's emancipation complicates mainstream history, in which the historiographic practice known as women's history is perceived as a revision, along with the whole emancipation discourse. Nevertheless, it does not mean that the result of such work is to lead to a revolution and to replace the fossilized historical movement, whose creators did not take into account the socio-cultural gender context in their research. Neither should the results of this examination be perceived as a supplement, or as in this case, a supplement to the supplement, as the history of the accomplishments of the supporters of women's emancipation could be perceived within the marginalized history of women's movements. Seeing it as a supplement would mean an acceptance of such a model of discourse about historical knowledge that is founded on hierarchical thinking, or constitutes an agreement for the existing contract that determines the importance of certain subjects, contexts and protagonists (Domańska 2006). Instead, I concentrate on the critical aspect of my research, which incorporates a disagreement to the existing social and narrative order created by the relations of power. Hereby, the history of writings and work of the authors that I investigate has a subversive dimension.

So far, the studies that have been devoted to women's literature and activism, presenting their literary disputes and worldviews, confronted women's pens against men's. It could have resulted from the polarization of journalistic opinions based on the slogan of »the battle of the sexes«, which, as a form of criticism, was used by the opponents of the emancipation movement all around Europe in the indicated historical period. The »battle of the sexes« metaphor has presented the relations between women and men in a patriarchal perspective, which assumes the gender and systematic subservience and subordination of women. In this optics, women's emancipation and the feminist turn which are to bring the equality of women's and men's rights, by the latter is perceived as a revolt, or as a war declared not only against the natural order, but also against men themselves; as a rebellion against established patterns, essence and binary order (Duda 2014). The historical research presenting the role of men in Polish emancipation and feminist movements in 19th and 20th centuries gives a chance to complement this simple thesis with the contexts that were so far unknown. Instead of opposing the roles and interests of women and men, this research emphasizes their cooperation, which went beyond social conventions that shaped gender relations at the time.

Conducting the study of Polish male supporters of women in their fight for equal rights, I rejected the Anglo-Saxon term "pro-feminist." What is more, I do not describe them as feminist men either. The historical considerations, not the ideological ones, were decisive in this case. Referring to men who supported the Enthusiasts and the

women's struggles for emancipation as feminist men or pro-feminist men would be a historical misuse. Using the practice mentioned above, such men can be defined as male enthusiast or male pro-enthusiast, male emancipationist or male pro-emancipationists, who approved of and supported women's aims, such as the rights to secondary and higher education, unrestricted career, and equal civil rights.

To find the right term for these male supporters, a dictionary that gathered the vocabulary of the period in which these men and women were active turned out to be the most important source. I decided to use *Słownik Języka Polskiego* [A Dictionary of the Polish Language] written by Jan Karłowicz, Adam Kryński and Władysław Niedźwiedzki (1900). The editors presented two terms that would describe men associated with women's emancipation issue and movement. The first term is "emancypant" [(male) emancipationist], that is, a supporter of female emancipation. The second one is "emancypator" [(male) emancipator], "krzewiciel emancypacji, oswobodziciel. Torował drogę, po której mieli stąpać przyszli emancypatorowie" [a propagator of emancipation, a liberator. He paved the way for future emancipators] (Karłowicz, Kryński, Niedźwiedzki 1900). Emancipation itself was defined by the dictionary as liberation from dependency, self-liberation, an equality of women, slaves, and landowners.

AN INITIAL DESCRIPTION OF MALE EMANCIPATIONISTS

At this point, it is crucial to explain what being a male emancipationist or emancipator meant at the time. A male supporter and propagator of Polish women's emancipation would be a proponent of women's education and career opportunities, their right to enter legal agreements, equality in marital and parental rights, equality in inheritance rights, and last but not least, equal rights in terms of public, official and political activity. Each of the above subjects was discussed separately. Education itself included such issues as compulsory education for girls, improvement of the curricula in private schools, organization of public and unpaid education, equalization of education levels between girls and boys, organization of education at secondary level, the ability to study at a university, to finish studies and to graduate. On the basis of this short and exemplary enumeration, it is possible to imagine the variety of emancipation projects that were supported by male emancipationists, or those which were collaborated and supported by male emancipators.

The brothers or husbands of suffragists were included in the circle described above. However, it is difficult to decide if the attitude of those men was influenced only, or particularly by their partners or relatives who fought for their own rights. The majority of male emancipationists graduated from higher education establishments, was of noble descent, lived in large urban agglomerations and had studied at several universities. In other words, they were representatives of intelligentsia. Nevertheless, among male emancipationists were also other urban citizens – craftsmen, salesmen, workmen, and household servants. The hypothetical group of supporters can be also extended to farmers. However, from the perspective of class, it is impossible to go further than speculation at this stage of research. Importantly, the archives do not possess any documents that would confirm emancipatory work of above mentioned

representatives in the studied period. It can be assumed just as well that such documents and fixed relations never existed.

The description of male emancipationists can be also complicated through the lens of politics. In this case, information about their political preferences and memberships will be crucial. Among the representatives of male emancipators were democratic liberals (Edward Prądyński), socialists, national democrats (Eugeniusz Starzewski) or conservatives. The biographical notes of authors whose papers I discuss in my research include information about their incarceration, serving a sentence for such misdemeanors as: taking part in protests organized against imperial reign, calling to insubordination against authorities, arranging underground education, arranging conspiracy, arranging the upspring, tolerating one's wife's damaging, patriotic activism, taking part in an upspring, as well as conspiracy and assassination attempt. The above list might imply their patriotic and pro-emancipation stance, showing that these attitudes were supplementary, not contrary to each other. However, it does not mean that women's emancipation associations and national or state interests always went hand in hand.

Equipped with social and cultural capital, education and an ability to act, male emancipationists left their mark on the society. Among those are texts, available for a wide circle of readers, which included lectures, speeches, press journalism, polemics, popular science papers, reports on journeys, international conventions and women's congresses, legal exposés, public letters, manifests and proclamations to men, as well as private documents, such as letters and diaries.

TOGETHER OR APART?

While illustrating the collective and public work of Polish male emancipation supporters, one should refer to *Liga Mężczyzn do Obrony Praw Kobiet* [The Men's League for the Defense of Women's Rights], which was established in 1913. The League was first mentioned in "Ster" magazine, where a text titled *Liga mężczyzn do obrony praw kobiet* was published in issue 19-20 of 1913. The article included information about the League itself, and a proclamation dedicated "to every kind of organization or association, male or female" (author unknown 1913: 117). The League functioned under the guidance of the presidium that included Bronisław Pawlewski, Witold Lewicki and Ignacy Drewnowski. In accordance to the information provided by Romana Pachucka, the ranks of the League were joined by "40 representatives of various clubs: members of the peasant party, progressives, socialist, national democrats and clericalists" (Pachucka 1958: 273). The reading of "Ster" presented the patterns of Polish men's work. What is more, issue 9 published in 1907 included information about men's league active in England (*Liga mężczyzn dla wywalczenia praw wyborczych kobiet w Anglii* 1907), while in the aforementioned issue published in 1913, there was an article about the convention of the International Men's League.

Beside the Men's League for Defence of Women's Rights, men were also active within women's organizations. In April 1907, *Związek Równouprawnienia Kobiet* [The Union for the Equal Rights of Polish Women], established by Paulina Kuczalska-Reinschmidt,

was legalized. Among men who participated in this organization were “those men who represented an ideology of social progress” (Pachucka 1958: 93). During that time (legalization in July 1907), women and men sat together in the board of management (Pachucka 1958: 93).

The reports written by Jadwiga Petrażycka Tomicka (Petrażycka-Tomicka 1931) state that 10% of members signed up on the list of the Union for the Equal Rights of Polish Women were men. They actively took part in rallies and debates in other, similar organizations. Men were not only present there, but also active.

It seems, however, that the activities performed by aforementioned male emancipationists and emancipators could not be defined only in terms of pro-women or pro(-)feminist social movement. The beginnings of such a movement were only becoming visible at this point, and started to take shape just before the outbreak of the Great War. The majority of the aforementioned men can be treated as satellites, alternatively as members of women’s social movements, but not as the representatives of men’s movements. The male emancipationists and emancipators were rarely engaged in describing their position. Their writings do not include private references or self-reflections. In that way, they do not meet the requirements that are laid down by Alice Jardine to contemporarily active male feminists (Jardine 2013). They were, however, focused on a cooperation beyond the gender divide, which yielded various projects.

INDIVIDUAL PROJECTS OF SUPPORT

In my research (Duda 2017), I study the work and writing of male emancipationists and emancipators between 1842 and 1918, which in Poland constitute three historical periods. Each of them was differentiated by dominating intellectual movements, which is evident in the arguments postulated by male emancipators. I took into consideration all three partitions¹, which involves a context of three different legal systems, economic environments, and educational opportunities. Such factors as male emancipationists’ background and social class, political views and political group they identified themselves with had a great impact on the variety of reforms they supported. Another important issue were the reforms which Polish women had fought for and which were brought into force. However, this final aspect is not characterized by a simple correlation between the greater possibilities and demands of more extensive reforms.

The projects created by Edward Prądyński² (*O prawach kobiety* [*On the Rights of a Woman*]) and Eugeniusz Starczewski³ (*Kwestia kobieca* [*The Woman Question*]) would be a good illustration at hand. I have chosen them as extreme and significant examples of an alliance between men and women in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, at

¹ The Third Partition of Poland (1795) was the last in a series of the Partitions of Poland and the land of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth among Prussia, the Habsburg Monarchy, and the Russian Empire.

² Edward Prądyński (1838-1895) – the author of *O prawach kobiety* (1873), *Kobieta i wymiar kary w społeczeństwie* (1874).

³ Eugeniusz Starczewski (1862–1927) – lawyer, publicist, liberal activist and politician.

the time when Polish women fought for their rights. The first text, published in 1873, was the fullest, the most cross-sectional exposé about women's rights. Prądzyński includes the whole range of reforms concerning education, work, family law and civil rights. However, it does not mean that he is a proponent of total freedom and subjectivity for women. The author wants to provide women all rights, although he sees marriage as a factor which limits their full independence. Prądzyński considers marriage as a contract of two parties, where equality in making household decisions will lead to an impasse. To avoid such a deadlock, according to Prądzyński, the legal rights of a married couple would have to be differentiated, in favor of the more socially and politically experienced man. Such a solution lead to a paradox in Prądzyński's vision, in which women, who practically possess all rights, loose them on behalf of their husbands, due to a contract fully based on gender.

Prądzyński completes his book with a summary and a list of answers to the question „czego kobieta ma prawo domagać się od prawodawcy, a czego od obyczajów?” [what can a woman demand from a legislator, and what from the conventions?] (Prądzyński 1875). For the sake of my research, I focus only on the civil rights, but Prądzyński's list mentions them only as his eighth point, which indicates how extensive the range of his work is.

After presenting the rights of a girl, a workwoman, a virgin, a seduced woman, a wife and a mother, Prądzyński focuses on “women of all status and all situations” (Prądzyński 1875: 313). Human dignity, a full use of her faculties and a wide range of available professional occupation are among the demands that such a woman can make, according to Prądzyński. All restrictions that exclude women from family councils should be repealed. The author postulates: „[w]stęp do urzędów i godności dla wyjątków nie obarczonych rodziną a posiadających stwierdzone uzdolnienie; w szczególności zaś szeroki udział dla młodzieży niewieściej w zawiadywaniu miłosierdziem publicznym i nauczycielstwem ludowym” [admission to the offices and positions of authority for those women who do not have a family but show relevant abilities; and especially, a high involvement of girls in the work related to public charity and education] (Prądzyński 1875: 314). He also advocates the right to vote “according to general rules” (Prądzyński 1875: 314).

Prądzyński's model is not entirely universalistic. He repeatedly proposes in his text that a woman, as a human being, should have the same rights that any man has or will have. This assumption is realized in the concept of suffrage. Whatever restrictions limit this right, it must apply both to women and men. Hence, the suffrage might be limited by one's class origins, education and possessed capital, even if gender is excluded from the repertoire of these potential limitations.

In accordance with Prądzyński's suppositions, the fulfilment of one's civil duties is the foundation of a title and the rights of a citizen. Unfortunately, this is only true in the case of men. Patriotic activities performed by a woman are not awarded civil rights. The nation demands from her social solidarity and love to Poland, as it is demanded from a man; however, it does not provide her with any rights, which results in an instability in her affections to her country, and in cosmopolitan vagaries. In Prądzyński's opinion, the solution is easy – a woman should be granted an opportu-

nity to fulfil her duties towards the country. Along with such duties she would receive her civil rights.

Women's duties towards the country would be fulfilled through managing and inspecting schools, teaching, founding nurseries and special schools, public libraries, and utilizing (in an indirect and direct way) her right to vote. In a word, a woman should have an ability to influence public matters. Only then she would become "a support and a partner for a man" (Prądzyński 1875: 223). On the question of how far women's emancipation should be allowed and which clerical posts should be taken by women, the author states that an experience gained by a woman who, like a man, does not meet any obstacles in her study or career, should be an indicator in this respect.

Prądzyński built a picture of an ideal environment in which a woman, after the law is changed, would not be an object of prejudice and would find no obstacles that were not the results of legal regulations and economic factors. This idealization is sustained by assertions that an emancipated woman is not going to undermine "men's attributes" (Prądzyński 1875: 220). She is to be concerned with public issues, to be interested in them and to gain education that could positively influence her role as a wife and a mother. The indicated roles result from her female vocation, which is perceived as a guarantee against women undertaking bureaucratic positions *en masse*. A bureaucratic career demanded "rutynicznego przygotowania" [routine preparation] (Prądzyński 1875: 228), this is why "tylko przy wyjątkowym uzdolnieniu i o niektóre tylko urzędy kobieta dobijać się będzie, mianowicie o te, które wrodzonym jej skłonnościami odpowiadając, lepiej przez nią aniżeli przez mężczyznę sprawowane być mogą" [women will be able to work in only in certain bureaucratic positions and only when they possess particular abilities; they will work only in these roles which, due to their natural abilities, would be better performed by women than by men] (Prądzyński 1875: 228). After presenting the comment quoted above, which both serves as normalization of the emancipation issue and a pacification of the readers, Prądzyński claims that the future cannot be forejudged: nobody knows what will happen, so we should not assume the worst.

In his book, several paragraphs before the aforementioned statement about the opportunities and abilities of women, Prądzyński provides examples of women exercising the greatest power in a country. Nevertheless, this does not mean that his argument is illogical or inconsistent. His opinion about the differences between women and men is founded on the belief that the upbringing of both groups influences their psyche. What is more, he values individual difference above generalizations about sexes; he wrote: *[j]ak są mężczyźni z mniej lub więcej kobiecym usposobieniem, tak są kobiety z pewnymi właściwościami męskiego temperamentu* [as much as there are men who have a somewhat female disposition, similarly there are women with some elements of a male temper] (Prądzyński 1875: 226).

It must be emphasized that for Prądzyński, the issue of rights is strongly related to the issue of duties, therefore, the answer to a question of what kind of rights women should possess is closely linked to their duties towards the country.

The issue of one's experience or its lack is for Prądzyński a decisive one when it comes to dividing women into two distinctive groups. The first one includes few,

unique individuals who, as a result of reforms, would be able to find satisfaction in a career, in bureaucracy or in politics. On the other hand, there is a majority of women who (still) do not have competences or abilities to hold any public office.

This assumption is repeated by Eugeniusz Starczewski in 1916 and 1917. Starczewski's writings offer a discussion with three emancipatory projects described in "Pokłosie Kobiece" [The Female Gleanings], which was a supplement to "Kłosa Ukrainie" [The Ukrainian Spikes] published in Kiev. Helena Pinińska, Amelia Grabowska and Ala Rosé-Drewnowska were the authors of those projects. In his discussion, Starczewski proposes women's citizenship, although he also presents a few exceptions. One of them forbids women to work as judges. In his opinion, being a judge demands impartiality and elimination of emotions, which, as the author conferred, would be difficult for improperly socialized and educated women.

According to Starczewski, only a woman who has fully eliminated her gender in the public space could become a full citizen. She is not limited by maternal issues or matters connected with children's upbringing and education – strictly speaking, socialization, which would prevent her from becoming interested in politics. A woman with a politically crucial role could not be governed by feelings.

The full citizenship was not equal to conferring citizenship [uobywatelnienie]. The women with conferred citizenship, except an opportunity or even an obligation of having a job and a career, essentially exist only in a private sphere as a partner. Ultimately, she is to become a wife and a mother, gaining control over her children and sharing the parental authority with their father. Unfortunately, in Starczewski's eyes, a full political equality is strictly connected to an elimination of woman's gender in a public sphere. Paradoxically, while Starczewski recommends such an approach to the future politicians when it comes to women's rights, otherwise he often addresses the issue of misunderstood freedoms and sectional interests, which, as he claims, were among the factors that led to the failure of the Polish state.

As Starczewski states, full civil rights, understood as "a participation in public issues" (Frevert 1997: 318) would be granted only to women who are ready for it – intelligent, educated and experienced ones. However, it does not indicate that Starczewski limits the rights only to this group.

The emancipation projects described by Prądzyński and Starczewski are divided by 43 years, in which a number of reforms were achieved by women (e.g. secondary, professional and higher education, making a career, an ability to lead associations and gatherings), as well as by the outbreak of the World War I. Since 1897 Polish women were able to study at universities in Galicia. This is an important milestone that could influence women's socialization and education. Nevertheless, this aspect was less crucial for Starczewski than his concern about the power and government of Poland as an independent country created at the end of the Great War. As it can be seen, the political context often had a pivotal meaning for the reforms supported by male emancipationists.

What is more, in a comparison of Prądzyński's and Starczewski's writings, it must be emphasized that the aforementioned statement given by Starczewski occurred 4 years after the establishment of the Men's League for Defence of Women's Rights and 11

years after Leon Petrażycki, in cooperation with “Rosyjski Związek Równouprawienia Kobiet” [The Russian Union for the Equal Rights of Women], proposed in First Duma an absolute admission of women to each stage of education, and a permission for them to work in bureaucratic professions. Such an action was supposed to guarantee a consistent influx of enlightened manpower which would be responsible for an introduction of a new system in the country. The recipe was clear: the bigger the selection among well-educated professionals, the better the chances for political reforms and for a war with the current political system, based on nepotism and self-interests. The freedom of education and access to work was to provide more dignified and brave people who would work for the common good. As Petrażycki stated, “Wykluczenie całej połowy możebnych kandydatów – kobiet, byłoby bardzo niemądrym trwonieniem i bez tego niezasobnych sił” [An exclusion of half of very able, potential candidates - namely women, would be an unreasonable waste of manpower, which is depleted anyway] (Petrażycki 1919: 9). As can be seen, the motivation to accept reforms was not based on an appreciation of the individual struggles and interests of women. The change of the law was to bring mutual benefits, for women and society. However, in Petrażycki’s speech, the individual interest of women was not acknowledged. A collective benefit remained a more convincing argument. The main and the most radical point presented by Petrażycki was to grant women the right to vote for the candidates to local governments and national representatives.

The above comparison of writings presents the differences between the emancipation projects supported by men in Poland. Their chronology was not related to the development of ideas of liberation and equality. The contrasted writings of the three Polish authors contradict the snowball theory. The ideas included in their writings are associated with the economic and political contexts that were important at the time when they wrote their works. Accordingly, Prądyński supported women who had to handle everything on their own after the economical and agricultural crises in the first half of 19th century. Petrażycki – with women’s voices - made a speech in the heat of the revolution in 1905, while Starczewski created his own project and indicated the real possibilities of Poland’s rebirth – and importantly, he did it on the verge of the revolution of 1917.

CONCLUSIONS

At the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the male allies cooperated with informal and formal associations of Polish women, supporting the struggle of women for the right to education, professional work and suffrage. Although they acted individually, they can be presented as partners of emancipated women or as collaborators of women’s associations. They supported various projects for the emancipation of Polish women. Some can be described as revolutionary; some, like Prądyński, were innovative for their times, others, like Starczewski, might strike the readers as late and limited in their propositions. Nevertheless, their presence and activity complicate the history of Polish women’s emancipation.

Personally, I find that the presentation of their activities has an ethical and activ-

ist dimension. It is important to shed light on this aspect of emancipatory history in the context of the protests and fights of Polish women in 2020 (i.e. Black Protests / Women's Protest). Many men participate in these demonstrations. Unfortunately, some of them seem to politically instrumentalize the Black Protests. They support a change of government, not a change in the abortion law (the main demand of the Women's Protest). Their activity resembles Starczewski's suppositions: a reconstruction of the state takes priority to the full subjectivity of women. Thanks to the history of emancipation, today's ally can find a basic model of supporting women (a form of Prądyński's project) or learn from the mistakes of its predecessors (Starczewski's beliefs). The knowledge of history of men supporting the emancipation of Polish women helps to avoid many mistakes getting repeated today by women's allies.

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MASCULINITY AS AN IDENTITY AND AS A CLUSTER OF TRAITS

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ABSTRACT: The paper presents the concept of masculinity within the non-binary and multilayered model of gender/sex traits. Within that model, masculinity is not a simple idea, but rather is fragmented into many traits in diverse clusters. The experience of transgender men and men with intersex traits suggests that self-determined male gender identity is a mega trait that is sufficient for being a man. However, masculinity is not only psychological, as the content of the psychological feeling of being a man refers to social norms about how men should be and behave. And male coded traits are described as traits that frequently occur within the group of people identifying as men. Therefore, I claim that there are two interdependent ideas in the concept of masculinity: the self-determined male gender identity (first-person perspective) and a cluster of traits coded as male (third-person perspective). Within non-binary model the interplay between the two interdependent ideas allows to include borderline masculinities.

KEYWORDS: spectrum of masculinity, borderline masculinities, male gender identity, non-binary model of gender/sex

The aim of the paper is to present the concept of masculinity within the non-binary and multilayered model of gender/sex traits (Ziemińska 2018; 2021). When sex/gender traits are fragmented into many layers and their forms are expanded into spectra, there is a risk that the concept of masculinity will disappear. This paper is an attempt to look at how masculinity can function as a gender concept when we go beyond the sex/gender binary. The concept of femininity I have discussed in (Ziemińska 2021).

EXPANDING BEYOND THE SEX/GENDER BINARY

The concept of masculinity is traditionally opposite to the concept of femininity, but recently obtained knowledge regarding non-binary people (identifying as neither female nor male; Valentine 2016: 6), people with intersex traits (born with a combination of female and male body traits or traits which cannot be identified as either; see Davis 2015: 2), and transgender people (not identifying with the gender assigned to them at birth; Beemyn and Rankin 2011: 1) shows that the two concepts, interpreted as a simple dichotomy or binary divide, are not adequate to describe some people and the diversity of the human experience (Świder & Winiewski 2017; Dynarski 2016).

Surya Monro (2005) discusses the following three ways to expand beyond binary genders: the expansion of the male and female categories, elimination of gender categories, and gender pluralism. The first strategy is an expansion of the binary genders without creating a third category. The elasticity of the *male* and *female* categories enables the inclusion of gender-diverse people, such as intersex people living as male or female, trans men and trans women, masculine women, and feminine men. According to Monro, this strategy is progressive but fails to include people who are simply in between maleness and femaleness and/or identify with neither state, such as people with non-binary identities (Monro 2005: 36).

The second strategy is to eliminate all gender categories. Indeed, some scholars write about eliminating gender categories from official documents (Nicholas 2014), as there are other means to check identity (fingerprints, facial recognition, and retinal scans). I agree with Monro that the strategy of gender erasure could be unfair to many people who experience essential gender identity as strong and clear feeling of being a man or being a woman. Such essential gender identities are also adopted by some intersex and transgender people who are very attached to their identity. In some parts of the world gender identity is an important component of personal identity, especially for the social individual; “gender is a pervasive and fundamental social position that unifies and determines all other social positions” (Witt 2010: 19). Additionally, gaining civil rights for gender-diverse people requires named categories and identities (Monro 2005: 37).

The third approach, which was adopted by Monro, is gender pluralism, which is the theory that there are more genders than male and female, and that there is a multiplicity of genders. Masculinities, femininities and gender-diverse identities are overlapping spectra of many identities (Monro 2005: 38). The list encloses identities under both expanded masculinity and femininity and “nonbinaried gender identities” (Monro 2005: 23). Binary gender identification is permitted under Monro’s gender pluralism if it is not framed as being better than a third gender, multiple-gender, or gender-fluid (Monro 2015: 50).

However, Monro clarifies that the strategy of creating a third non-binary gender category is unacceptable to her. A third gender is one of the many possible gender identities within her pluralism, but she rejects a third category as a strategy to expand beyond the binaries (her strategy is pluralism). To justify this decision, Monro states that some intersex and transgender people have warned academics that they are not

in favor of three genders (Monro 2005: 35). Indeed, this view is clearly expressed by, for instance, the intersex activist Morgan Carpenter (2018: 491). Monro is also concerned about the ghettoization of non-binary people (Monro 2005: 41). However, some intersex and transgender people with non-binary gender identities fight for non-binary legislation (Viloria 2017; Bergman & Barker 2017).

In my view, there are some disadvantages to limitless gender pluralism from theoretical and legal perspectives. A limitless number of genders leads to the negation of gender as a useful theoretical and legal category (Bennett 2014, 861). Gender pluralism is close to the second strategy (eliminating gender altogether), and Monro (2019) sustaining gender pluralism seems to accept such elimination at least on the theoretical level because she accepts that gender categories can be used strategically by individuals.

In some recent papers, there are only two strategies discussed: third gender category or the abolishment of sex and gender registration entirely (Quinan et al. 2020: 3). Peter Cannoot and Mathias Decoster (2020) argue for the abolition of registration of gender/sex, rather than expanding gender markers to third non-binary markers. Male/female and even male/female/other are gender regimens with harmful effects. “Given sex/gender’s fluidity, variances, and socially constructed character, the law will never be able to reliably document it – just as it cannot do so for race, religion, sexual orientation, or political affiliation” (Cannoot & Decoster 2020: 47).

However, even if we manage to eliminate obligatory legal gender registration, the gender/sex concept will still be needed in theory to describe human traits, and it is still crucial for expanding beyond the binary. At present, gender identities are important for people, and some people identify as non-binary; therefore, the introduction of a non-binary gender category as the third option seems to be a useful improvement. The existence of people whose gender identity is self-described as non-binary, neutral, or both female and male is enough reason to establish the third category of gender. Let us assume that there are women, men and non-binary persons. Additionally, for theoretical reasons, it is useful to have a non-binary model of multilayered sex/gender traits.

A NON-BINARY MODEL OF GENDER/SEX TRAITS

In my other works (Ziemińska 2018; 2021), I have presented several versions of a non-binary and multilayered model of gender/sex traits. What is called “sex/gender” (in Polish *pleć*) is, in fact, a cluster of traits. In the English language, the cluster is presented as sharply divided into two parts: biological “sex” and social “gender”, but in fact, there are more parts/layers that constitute the cluster. There are at least eight layers: sex chromosomes, gonads and the hormones they produce, internal and external sex organs, secondary sex characteristics that appear in the adolescence period, gender identity, legal sex/gender, gender expression and others.

A good example of the incongruence between the sex layers, at least when we presuppose the binary model of sexes, is the case of Maria Patiño, a Spanish athlete who published her private medical records (Patiño 2005). Some of her sex traits were of

such a nature that they are presumed to be exclusively male (sex chromosomes and gonads), and her other sex traits were presumably female. Chromosomes were the basis for her disqualification from female sports competitions in 1985, but her external sex traits are female, as is her gender identity. She is an example of a woman (I presume female gender identity as the criterion of being a woman) with some intersex traits. Patiño's case is a good example to show that having male chromosomes and male gonads is not enough to identify as a man and thus to be a man.

People with intersex traits have a combination of sex traits; some are culturally coded as male, some are coded as female, while some of them are neither clearly female nor male. There are two sources of having traits that are neither male nor female. The first is the combination of male and female traits, as in the case of Maria Patiño. Second, some single traits can have a form that is neither female nor male, such as having a gonad, ovotestis, with both ovarian and testicular tissue (Souter et al. 2007).

Therefore, an additional aspect of the model is that the sex/gender traits cannot be divided into two binary exclusive forms: male or female. Each layer can deliver an example of a sex trait that cannot be described by the binary concept. For instance, at the chromosome layer, the chromosome patterns are in some cases neither 46,XY nor 46,XX but a mosaic 47,XXY or a chimeric 46,XX/46,XY. Therefore, sex chromosomes are not good criteria for dividing people into two sex classes. At the gonadal layer in some intersex cases, instead of testes or ovaries there are ovotestes with both testicular and ovarian tissue. At the internal sex organ layer, a person can have a hemi-uterus and one seminal vesicle (Souter et al. 2007). At the external genital layer, a person can have genitals that can be described as micropenis with a vagina (Pisarska-Krawczyk et al. 2014). At the level of secondary sex characteristics, a person can have both breasts and facial hair (BBC 2016).

Moving to the gender layers, at the layer of gender identity, there are persons with non-binary gender identity, non-binary gender presentation, and who use non-binary pronouns *they/their* or others (Valentine 2016; Bergman & Barker 2017; Świder & Winiewski 2017). In some countries, such as Australia, a citizen can have the legal status of a person belonging to the third gender category (Bennett 2014; Carpenter 2018: 489; Quinan et al. 2020: 4). The existence of people whose gender identity is self-described as non-binary, neutral or both female and male is enough reason to establish the third category of gender. When gender identity is accepted as the most important gender/sex trait, to be a non-binary person is to have a non-binary gender identity (*non-binary* category as *identity*).

In this model of gender/sex traits, a person can have different clusters of traits, and some of the clusters are neither female nor male, even if the classes are expanded into spectra. To develop the theoretical model of sex/gender traits, the *non-binary* category can be used in expanded *technical* meaning to describe not only gender identity but any clusters of gender/sex traits that are neither female nor male (Ziemińska 2018; 2021)

However, it is important to avoid blurring non-binary gender identity with having neither female nor male sex traits. It is known that most people with intersex traits have binary gender identity (Schweizer et al. 2014) and that some endosex people (that

is, people who are not intersex) have non-binary gender identity (Valentine 2016).

TWO IDEAS AND ONE DEFINITION OF MASCULINITY

The fragmentation of the concept of masculinity within the non-binary and multilayered model does not negate its existence. Male gender identity plays an important role in the unity of the concept.

The relevance of self-determined gender identity was revealed by the experience of misgendering transgender and intersex people (Beemyn & Rankin 2011; Carpenter 2018). Misgendering is defined as failing to treat people as members of the gender with which they identify. Misgendering causes psychological harm (shame, anxiety, and depression), moral harm (undermining of self-respect), and political harm (oppression and domination) (Jenkins 2018: 4). People have realized that felt gender identity is crucial for personal integrity and social functioning. If so, gender identity deserves to be respected regardless of what other sex and gender traits a person has. I agree that we live in the age of gender self-determination (Cannoot & Decoster 2020: 27), and I assume the principle of self-determination of one's own gender and respecting felt gender identity of others.

Katharine Jenkins (2016) writes about gender as class and gender as identity as twin concepts. She defines being a woman as belonging to a particular class "on the basis of actual or imagined bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's role in biological reproduction" (Jenkins 2016: 408). And in her theory gender identity is characterized as an "internal map" to guide a person classed to a particular gender through social life. This map is the metaphor of gender identity. Jenkins advocates "using the term 'woman' to express the concept of having a female gender identity" (Jenkins 2016: 421) as this concept allows us to respect the gender identifications of trans people.

However, Jenkins (2018) makes further analysis of the concept of gender identity and presents two accounts of it: first, as self-identification by the act of expressing a gender identity or at least the disposition to do it; second, as the experience that social norms associated with the idea of being a woman in my social context are relevant to me (norms-relevant account).

The first account presents gender identity as the internal, psychological result of mysterious biological traits; there is no hint to some external, socially visible properties that underlie such self-identification. The second account openly determines gender identity as dependent on social norms about how women, men, or non-binary people should be and should behave.

The first theory is critical to current gender norms and easily introduces a non-binary identity felt by some people. According to this theory, a person's declaration of their own gender identity should be treated as authoritative, as people cannot be mistaken about their own gender identity at a particular time. This theory gives privileged access to one's own gender identity.

The second theory, accepted by Jenkins (and by me), presents gender identity as an embodied tacit map of internalized norms taken from society. The feeling of being a

woman is to experience that some norms are relevant for me, even if sometimes I have violated one, or even if I do not wish to comply with them.

The experience of social norms can be complicated, unclear and in flux. In the case of a trans man in the moment of beginning social transition and presenting himself externally as a man, the internal map socialized throughout life may be different from the conscious gender identity. Socialization is difficult to erase. Jenkins (2018) presents non-binary gender identities using the metaphor of radio channels. I can be tuned to a woman channel and later to a man channel; I can switch back and forth between them or simultaneously play the two, or I can play no channel at all.

Let us apply Jenkins' gender theory to masculinity. To be a man is first of all to have a self-determined male gender identity. However, the idea of masculinity as belonging to a class or as having a cluster of traits is still important for two reasons. First, there is a need to explain the content of felt maleness and masculinity. This identity is closely connected with the social pattern or social imagination of what it means to be a man (otherwise it would be an empty or unclear feeling). Therefore, this pattern needs to be described. Being classed as a man in a culture is often based on social norms of male body, behavior and, at the very roots, on an imagined role in biological reproduction (I argue against the binary division of reproductive roles in Ziemińska 2021). Second, the idea of masculinity as feeling cannot be applied to newborns and to people who are silent or unconscious. It is also hardly applicable to the theoretical description of the class of men. Even if we respect felt gender identity, we also need a description of men as a class to understand the context of felt male identity. So, gender identity is linked to gender as a social norm.

Indeed, the internal feeling of being a man is often connected with the desire of being treated socially as a man. The desire makes people express in masculine way, for instance, by wearing clothes and using language that are culturally coded as male. There is a spectrum of patterns of male expression and behavior (Connell 2005). So, male identity from the first-person perspective is often, but not always, connected with having some male-coded body traits and playing some male social roles (the third-person perspective).

I think that self-determined male gender identity is masculinity from the first-person perspective and that the cluster of male traits is masculinity from the third-person perspective. I would like to emphasize that the two perspectives are not opposite, but complementary. General knowledge of the world can be divided into first-person knowledge and third-person knowledge. Some information we obtain from our own internal experience, and some we acquire by authority of other people who create social knowledge of the external world.

Therefore, the two concepts of masculinity from the first-person perspective and third-person perspective are complementary: male gender identity deserves to be respected regardless of what other sex and gender traits a person has, but the idea of masculinity as self-determined identity takes its content from social norms of masculinity and cannot be applied to newborns and to people who are silent or unconscious. There is an interdependence and mutual reinforcement here: male gender identity is described by a cluster of male traits/norms, and the male traits/norms are described as

the traits possessed by the group of people who identify as male.

I suggest the following definition of being a man:

(M) S is a man if S is a human being with enough male traits, and the trait of having self-determined male gender identity is the sufficient but not necessary condition.

To be a man, it is enough to have male gender identity or to have a cluster of male-coded traits (a newborn is assigned male without declaring gender identity, and a transgender child declaring being a boy can have no male-coded traits).

BORDERLINE MASCULINITIES

The non-binary model of gender/sex traits with such flexible definition of masculinity is a useful tool to show borderline masculinities, whether it is an identity or a cluster of traits.

There are stereotypical male identities answering typical expectations for men in a particular culture, whether it is the past culture or the present one. There are also borderline male identities when the identity was discovered after some years of struggle with female socialization or interrupted by a short period of female transition as a child. A person with male-dominating identity combined with part-time female identity and cross-dressing is on the borderline of male and non-binary identity. “Male-bodied cross-dressers frequently see themselves as having a second, female self that is separate from their male gender identity. (...) In contrast, genderqueer individuals identify (...) as neither male nor female but as a different gender altogether” (Beemyn & Rankin 2011: 147).

The borderline masculinities are also visible when we talk about other layers of gender traits: legal gender, gender expression or the gender of language. A person can be assigned male at birth or assigned male after some years of female legal gender. There are fixed patterns of male naming and pronouns (he, his), but many aspects of male gender expression and external appearance (body shape, deep voice, facial hair) exist in grades.

The criteria for masculinity are also not internal and intimate traits, such as 46,XY chromosomes, testes or a penis. No anatomical part or fixed cluster of them is necessary or sufficient for being a man. Borderline masculinities at the sex layers are diverse clusters of male traits.

Good examples are men with Klinefelter syndrome. This group is often included in the group of intersex people because of atypical sex chromosomes (47,XXY and variant karyotypes) and body traits (sometimes breast development, scant facial hair, high voice). Catherine Harper writes about her interesting correspondence with the Klinefelter’s Syndrome Association in the UK. The association does not accept that Klinefelter’s Syndrome is an intersex condition and states that “these with Klinefelter’s Syndrome are born male” (Harper 2007: 156). The association emphasizes that people with the syndrome who do not identify male are “the exception rather than the norm” (ibidem). The reason for this reaction is that most members of the association identify

as male, and they are in danger of misgendering because of some atypical body traits. Therefore, the members call for their male gender identities to be respected. The explanation of such reaction is that the intersex condition was sometimes treated as an identity of being between a woman and a man. Today, we have two separate concepts: the concept of non-binary gender identity and the concept of intersex body traits. The distinction between sex and gender in such cases is very useful.

Sara Davidmann gives an example of transgender masculinity. A person called *Robert* was assigned female at birth but identifies as male, rather than female, and uses the male pronouns he/his. He has undergone top surgery and has testosterone injections to have facial and body hair, but he has no desire to change his genitalia. He lives as a man in society, and he is seen as a man (Davidmann 2010: 196). Robert's case contradicts the idea that male genitalia are necessary for being a man and that male gender identity is necessarily connected with the desire to have one.

Borderline masculinities are reason to think that self-determined male gender identity is enough to class a person as a man. It seems to be the best solution to the problem of which male trait is the most important. Felt gender identity is a special trait self-determined from a first-person perspective, but it can be expressed to external third-person observers who can register it as a male trait. This criterion respects transgender men, men with intersex traits, and cis and endosex men who have undergone surgery for some male traits.

CONCLUSIONS

There are two basic ideas of masculinity, male gender identity self-determined from the first-person perspective and a cluster of male-coded traits described from the third-person perspective. Male gender identity is sufficient for classifying a person as a man, but being a man is not only a psychological issue. The content of the psychological feeling of being a man refers to the pattern of male traits, at both sex and gender layers, that often but not always occur within the group of people classed as men. Therefore, male gender identity and a cluster of male/masculine traits are interdependent and complementary. *S* is a man if *S* is a human being with enough male traits, and the trait of having self-determined male gender identity is the sufficient but not necessary condition. The fragmentation of the concept of masculinity within the non-binary and multilayered model does not negate its existence but makes it clear that it has blurry boundaries overlapping with the spectrum of femininity and the spectrum of the non-binary. The flexible concept of masculinity expressed in definition (*M*) grips not only the cis and endosex persons but allows to include some borderline male identities with some female, intersex or non-binary traits.

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BETWEEN TRADITIONS AND TECHNOLOGY: POLITICAL RADICALISM AND THE SPECTACLE OF MASCULINITY IN CONTEMPORARY POLAND

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ABSTRACT: Radical movements of the Polish far-right consist, as elsewhere, mainly of young men. The strict gender binarism, the exaltation of men's power, homosociality, brotherhood, physical strength and subordination of women are omnipresent among 'angry white men' everywhere, Poland included. However, these general characteristics have always its local variants, trajectories, and particularities. This article is an attempt to explain the phenomenon of Polish radical right movements in its local context: cultural, social, economic. The article focuses on 'The March of Independence' – a cyclical celebration for radical groups, which proliferates the discourses of far-right radical masculinity. In the first part, the author focuses on the social and economic background, worldview and 'masculinist' ideology of Polish 'angry white men' (Kimmel 2013). The second part focuses on the historical and cultural coding of their 'aggrieved entitlement' (Kimmel 2013). The third part of the essay draws on Steve's Garlick (Garlick 2016: 163–193) concept of 'spectacular masculinity'. It analyzes how modern technology contributes to the construction of 'spectacular' masculinity among the participants of the march/members of radical groups.

KEYWORDS: masculinity, political radicalism, far-right movements, technology

Radical movements of the Polish far-right consist, as elsewhere, mainly of young men. The strict gender binarism, the exaltation of men's power, homosociality, brotherhood, physical strength and subordination of women are omnipresent among 'angry white men' everywhere, Poland included. Nevertheless, this general charac-

teristics has always its local variants, trajectories, and particularities. This article is an attempt to explain the phenomenon of Polish radical right movements in their local contexts: cultural, social, economic. The article focuses on 'The March of Independence' – radical groups' cyclical celebration, which proliferates far-right radical discourses, and the type of masculinity considered as 'traditional'. In the first part, the author focuses on the social and economic background, worldview and 'masculinist' ideology of Polish' angry white men.'

In contrast, the second part focuses on the historical and cultural coding of their 'aggrieved entitlement'. The crucial third part of the essay draws on Steve's Garlick concept of 'spectacular masculinity'. It analyzes how modern technology and social media contribute to constructing 'spectacular masculinity' among the participants of the march/members of radical groups.

In a recent survey (Center for Public Opinion Research 2016) the researchers discovered that the acceptance of radical nationalist organizations, as Radical National Camp (ONR) is considerably higher among young men than elsewhere in the society – almost 38 percent of young Poles approved their political agenda. Three-thirds agreed with the statement that the Polish nation had suffered more than any other nation, almost 68 per cent believed that they could be proud of national history and accepted claim that the Poles acted more nobly and worthily than the others. Polish history as a source of pride is considered to be very 'masculine' – Maria Janion, one of the most respected historians and cultural scholar, once noted that popular heroic vision of national history practically excludes women:

Polish national culture is outstandingly masculine. The pivotal role is reserved to the homosocial unions of brotherhood and friendship. These unions are emphasized throughout our history – from 'noblemen-brothers' of the XVII century, through romantic formations of male students (Filomatos), patriotic conspirators, Marshall Piłsudski's legions, the adorable uhlans, up to contemporary football hooligans. All these men communities contribute to Polish national myth. However, the homosocial character of these unions is usually marked with a hint of homosexual fascination. The latter is denied by ostentatious attachment to national heterosexual honour. Also, the Virgin Mary cult has to exclude homosexuality and set up masculine relations as exclusively brotherly ones – all the members of a group are brothers, children of the one symbolic mother. (Janion 2017: 267)

Today the pressure to exalt such masculine unions seems to be rising everywhere and seems to be a central issue for state's official policy – the recent example is new design of Polish passports; it features the image of exclusively masculine independence heroes. The main page of the new design also includes the motto 'God, Honour, Fatherland' which was the historical motto of Polish Army and, quite recently, was the

motto of ‘the Independence Day Parade’.¹ in Warsaw. Scholars (Tomczok 2019: 37–42; Gołuński 2019: 43–53) have observed and described an interesting phenomenon of “remilitarization” of Polish masculinity in popular culture, other authors (Olechnicki, Szlendak, & Karwacki 2016) analyze the popularity of military reconstruction groups and festivals in contemporary Poland. Scholars (Tomasik 2013; Janion 2017; Śmieja 2017) generally agree that ‘militarized’ masculinity model was dominant in Polish culture probably longer than in bourgeois societies of the West. Such ‘military masculinity’ monopolized hegemonic position throughout almost the whole 20th century. Prewar Poland celebrated Marshall Piłsudski’s legions and uhlans as those, whose efforts brought and defended the first independence (1918 – 1939), what entitled them to rule the country which was often referred to as “timocracy” (Leder 2014: 7; Miłosz 2008: 456). The cult of Marshall Piłsudski and his successor, Marshall Rydz-Śmigły, could be compared to Mussolini’s Italian fascist cult (Wójcik 1987). Postwar communists used this trust in army and military force to present them not as a means of oppression but as hereditary of Millennial statehood traditions, means of social advancement for young men from rural areas, an important element of country’s economy. Historians (Zaremba 2001; Dronicz 2002) agree that military service was highly valued *à l’époque* (young men could easily acquire new skills: driver, mechanic, electronics, etc.) and the army was granted with respect and confidence, especially in the 60’s and early 70’s, the golden age of ‘military patriotism’ (Polniak 2011). It’s the workers’ rebellion of 1980 and the Martial law introduced in 1981 and cancelled in 1983 that changed this unquestioned position of military-shaped masculinity and undermined the army’s position as the central institution of Polish statehood (Śmieja 2017: 302–317). Since then, the army and military masculinities have been losing its allure. The fall of communism in 1989 brought an opportunity to talk about the army and the mechanisms of forming military masculinity more openly and critically. Significantly, this period’s blockbuster movies (*Samowolka*, *Kroll*) dealt with bullying, humiliation, violence, and inhuman behaviour hidden behind the barracks walls. Their message was clear: institutional dehumanization was the unique mean for creating the “military men”. With its drill, the army served as a *pars pro toto* for the communist system as a system of oppression and regular violence.

With the fall of communism, the new economic opportunities opened, free market and freedom of working abroad made ‘masculinities in uniforms’ less attractive and, to some degree, obsolete. Heroes of global popular culture and the ideals of prosperous yuppie or ‘middle class’ man proliferated among young people – educational boom started, and thousands of young men studied the most popular fields: marketing, management, advertising, law (Szcześniak 2017: 40–143). Meanwhile, the new policymakers opted for the professionalization of military service instead of conscription.

¹ Since 2012 each year’s parade has its motto: 2012 (25 000 participants) “Let’s regain Poland!” 2013 (25 000 – 30 000 participants): “New Generation comes!”, 2014 (50 000 participants): “The Army of Patriots”, 2015 (70 000 – 100 000 participants): “Poland for the Poles, the Poles for Poland”; 2016 (75 000 – 100 000 participants) motto “Poland–the bastion of Europe”; 2017 (participants 60 000): “We want God!”; 2018 (250 000 participants): “God, Honour, Fatherland.”

[...] after 1989, the distance between the military and society started to grow, culminating in the professionalization of the army and the abolition of conscription and a replacement of defence training classes in schools with a less-militarized education for security. According to polls conducted by the IPC research institute for the Ministry of National Defense in 2013, only 9% of young Poles wanted to have a career in the military or were seriously considering it, while the percentage of those utterly uninterested in the military was the highest among the youngest members of the studied group. It seems Poles have ceased to perceive the duty to defend the country, featured in article 13 of the Polish Constitution, as a necessary and desired element of the social contract. Surveys performed for the *Rzeczpospolita* daily in 2014 showed that only 19% of Poles were willing to sacrifice their life or health for the country. (Grzebalska 2017)

At the beginning of Polish transformation, in 1994, Maria Janion noticed an even wider erosion process that traditional paradigms of Polish culture underwent. The intergenerational transfers of soldiery values were blocked:

The youth doesn't care much – and it is worth more in-depth consideration. Probably all these discussions between the combatants and the civilians are false? Youth watch with disgust the heroes of bygone wars with all their medals, bands and flags. Young people unconsciously feel that they shouldn't care, that it's not their business. (Janion 1998: 327)

Since then, however, the things have been changing, and more traditional vision of history, tradition and gender order is often considered more adequate and desired.

Some of the initiatives that contributed to this flourishing of memory – like the campaign “Let's rebuild the Home Army” (‘Odbudujmy AK’) which encouraged citizens to participate in the creation of citizens' territorial defence modelled after the central Polish resistance organization (Armia Krajowa, AK) – were practical and mobilizing in character. However, the militarism that stemmed from the Polish flourishing of memory was, in no small extent rather historical and nostalgic than active in character. It was more about building cultural identification with a particular vision of the past and legitimizing the national right's political project than about inciting actual military activities here and now (Grzebalska 2017).

Although masculinity is not at stake in recent Tomasz Plata's book (Plata 2017), the author claims that situation has dramatically changed in recent years and persuasively argues that traditional paradigms rooted in early 19th-century imagination have been reinvigorating after 2010 and, as the 19th century is marked by the loss of statehood and independence, patriotism and struggle against external powers are important elements of these retraditionalizations. It is rather apparent that we cannot revive the ideology without its (gendered) bearers. The traditionalized vision of masculinity has been gaining legitimization through historical imagination, which is a vision of a war-like, ready-to-fight/die man. Attempts to remilitarize young men and signs of their spontaneous retraditionalization are ubiquitously observable phenomena nowadays. There are a few areas where we can see these processes. The most interesting and the most noticeable, yet not analyzed sufficiently, is the popularity of so-called 'military

classes' in public high schools. The first 62 classes appeared in 1999 as an effect of the Ministry of Defense project.

However, nowadays no one has control over them, and their number continually rises – according to the Ministry of Defense data, there are almost 600 schools with military classes nowadays. Such education is widespread in less developed, rural and suburban areas and among working-class environments. Young people, mostly boys, believe that graduating them will allow them to start a professional career, become professional soldiers, policeman, etc. Their motivation is, as the survey says (Urych 2017: 148–177), at least practical and partly economic – stable professional position and guaranteed income are their general expectation. Such a career model is considered as social advancement and warrant of stable income. However, the truth is that neither army nor police favour military-classes alumni, who outnumber the real needs of the army or the police. Why, then, schools decide to offer, at least partly, baseless promises to young people? Such classes are trendy (3 to 4 candidates in 1 place) and by organizing 'military classes' schools counteract the demographic decline and the loss of working positions for teachers (Łydka 2013). The journalist Ewa Turlej, who specializes in education, alarms that paramilitary–nationalist organizations often infiltrate military classes. There are no specific data, but in one of Warsaw's high schools, the whole class enlisted to 'the Shooter' paramilitary group. The organization offers practical training in police or military actions. However, it simultaneously filters ideological message that underground defence forces should be formed and its members should be ready to fight either external or internal enemy (Turlej 2014).

Except pre-military training school curricula abound in particular patriotic activities and the officially approved cult of so-called 'accursed soldiers' (Smuniewski 2016: 39–54). Many students graduating military class without the possibility to start a career in army/police etc. is a shocking moment of truth. Instead of prestigious service, they are offered low-paid jobs in services or leave home to find a job elsewhere. For many of them, it is the moment, when they could feel for the first time the emotion wittingly named 'aggrieved entitlement': they felt they are entitled to serve Fatherland, but Fatherland can do without them easily and doesn't favor their school efforts and commitment.

Another essential factor of military 'remasculinization' is the politics of memory which is the milestone for Polish right-wingers' identity ideology. Since 2004 the issue of politics of memory is at the core of Poland's public discussions (Napiórkowski 2016: 361). Among the vast array of institutions and activities, I would like to focus on one institution whose influence on contemporary politics of memory is exemplary and served as a model for many other sources, institutions and activities. The Museum of Warsaw Uprising opened in 2004. It was created thanks to Warsaw's and Poland's former president, Lech Kaczyński, and since the beginning, it is marked by his political bias. The Uprising itself has numerous interpretations and it still provokes emotional reactions, so commemorating it should be, as I believe, very cautious, nuanced and balanced, yet we are offered only one vision of the Uprising celebrated in the Museum. The heroic one. This vision celebrates in the first place the military history, and those, who fought in the Uprising, and, at least to some degree presents the suffering of the

civilians not as an effect of political miscalculations, but as a proof of Nazi bestiality. According to a research (Napiórkowski 2016: 380)–many of the visitors leave the museum with a false conviction that the uprising was the victory, not the massacre and the annihilation of the capital with its inhabitants; the uprisers are presented as young, attractive, courageous, selfless, sacrificial and heroic ideals for contemporary youth. The Museum proved its effectiveness as the creator of the contemporary politics of memory. It initiated numerous popular films (*Powstanie '44*), TV series (*Czas Honoru*), music albums (*Lao Che*, 'Powstanie Warszawskie') and aesthetisation/gadgetization of memory (popular T-shirts, mural decorations and even blocks for children)–'remembering' became fashionable and attractive element of contemporary popular culture.

ONR (National Radical Camp) is a far-right organization claiming itself to be an ideological descendant of the anti-semitic political movement that existed before World War II (ONR shares the same name and symbols as pre-war political group). ONR attracted publicity in 2005, 2007, 2008 and 2009 for unauthorized marches during the anniversary of the anti-Jewish riots in Myślenice in 1936. In 2005 the group had a couple of hundred members. Since then, the organization has risen considerably. Today, it is a leading member of the March of Independence Association, a co-initiative of several different nationalist movements. Since 2010 the Association organizes nationalist parades on November 11 in Warsaw to celebrate Independence. On November 11 2017, 60,000 people marched in the Independence Day celebration co-organized by ONR among others, in 2018 the number reached 250 000. What is less known, ONR is also organizing marches and processions on the anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising. When anti-democratic organization of far right claims to be the hereditary of the Home Army it is, according to some experts (Olaszek 2017) parasitization of the memory. According to some experts (Olaszek 2017), the ONR parasitized the memory.

The unofficial form of remembering was gaining popularity and devouring more official and less politically involved ways of remembering to the degree that today it almost monopolizes National Day celebration in the Polish capital. The most exciting interpretation of this fact has been proposed by a historian and semiotics scholar, Marcin Napiórkowski (2016), who analyzed the Uprising's forms of commemoration and its political implications. He observed that under communism, the Uprising's remembering was forbidden or at least considerably limited in scope. The event itself was presented as futile; people were taught that the Red Army progress, not the Uprising, incarnated the sense of history – the sense that could not have been contradicted. Contrastively, the political and economic transformation with its neoliberal mantra dominated the 90's and the first decade of the 21st century. It was also presented as the incarnation of ubiquitous progress and inevitable historical logic coming to Poland from abroad. With famous TINA (there is no alternative) claim to be an universal economic and cultural model. However, in the second decade of the 21 century, the ubiquity and the impact of the belief in the neoliberal economy and liberal democracy as the embodiment of Fukuyama's end of history considerably weakened. They

both have lost part of its charm; the economic aims turned out to be challenging to reach. The democratic procedures appeared as alienating and ineffective in solving social or economic problems. When the logic of the victorious march of progress fails, the triumphant march stops and gives way to an emotional funeral procession and – according to Napiórkowski – the appropriation of the Uprising memory by those, who do not fit to the narratives of progress or, less metaphorically, those whose economic, social or cultural resources made them vulnerable to move downward social ladder (the only well-organized voice of the resistance against neoliberal economy was the voice of football hooligans – Antonowicz, Szlendak, & Kossakowski 2015). Such people turn to the past, not into the future; they search for the sense of being in the history or rather mythical vision of history not in everyday reality, nor unsure future. The admiration for the heroic commitment of the uprisers is seen as a miraculous panacea for dehumanized global capitalism and intangible sense of bureaucratic institutions. Napiórkowski didn't mention 'aggrieved entitlement' (Kimmel 2013) of men, but we must add masculinity to his equation as young men dominate the nationalists' parades. The ONR members are often recruited among football hooligans, who did not accept the neoliberal capitalism and liberal democracy. As the official ideology of the ONR is at odds with the ideals of the Home Army and Warsaw Uprising it has to be said that the ONR members exalt a particular form of belligerent masculinity they believe the uprisers embodied (and the liberal democracy together with neoliberal economy denied or made useless). According to the research (Malinowska, Winiewski, & Górka 2016) the participants of the March of the Independence share the similar social profile as the boys and girls from military classes – they come from small towns in provincial Poland, (85%), they're young, they're mostly men (but the March attracts many women and families either). They use some historical symbols to gain political legitimization and expression for their anger, their 'aggrieved entitlement' (both fascist, like the Celtic cross or Roman salute, and traditionally patriotic as 'Polska Walcząca' sign or emblems of 'the accursed soldiers').

The research on the march participants' convictions and preferences was carried out by the Center for the Research on Prejudices in 2015. The researchers managed to ask 296 participants to answer the questionnaires. Three-thirds were men, half of them between 21 – 30 years old and almost 30 per cent between 15 and 20, 6 per cent younger. Twenty-one per cent declared living in the countryside or rural area, but only 15 per cent lived in cities bigger than half a million. Eighty-five per cent of participants arrived at the march from outside Warsaw. The political views – 75 per cent declared 'conservatists' (32 per cent declared themselves as 'definitely conservatives') only 13 per cent liberals. However, 75 per cent believed in a free market economy, while only about 10 per cent accepted the ideals of the social welfare state. Almost 70 per cent accepted the view that Poland's economic situation is worse than in non-defined other countries.

Nevertheless, at the same time, they scarcely consider their economic situation as worse when compared with fellow citizens. That is probably why they accept 'patriotic' vision and deep conviction that they act in the name of the whole nation. What is impressive – a considerable number of interviewees accepted illegal action. Forty per

cent declared their readiness to participate in illegal demonstrations and marches, 35 per cent were ready to occupy governmental buildings, and 18 per cent accepted vandalizing public property. The researchers also asked the participants to answer right-wing authoritarianism questions (6 questions, RWA-scale; Altemeyer 1988). They have also been answering the *Social Dominance test* (5 questions, SDO; Sidanius & Pratto 1994). The results obtained proved that the participants had the higher level of AVO than their peers, SDO was also considerably higher: the march participants respect group authorities, strong leadership, tradition, their worldview is hierarchical, the world is seen as a place where stronger dominate over weak, inequality is natural and desired.

After interviewing the participants, scholars concluded shortly: ‘It seems that this hierarchical attitude, not authoritarianism itself, is a distinctive feature of the march participants’ (Malinowska, Winiewski, & Górska 2016: 13). When one is convinced that the world is a jungle where only the fittest survive, it is natural that they want to be healthy and play a central role in it. The Polish radical movement consequently struggles to gain a dominant position in the social and political scene. The occupation of central and symbolic places of the capital on November 11 and monopolization of patriotic, national symbols which mingle smoothly with fascist emblems and football clubs logos in the march visual aspect fulfils young men’s sense of power, mission and brotherhood. Simultaneously they leave little or no place for other ways of celebrating and understanding Independence, patriotism, attachment to the republican values (Olaszek 2017).

Young Polish sociologist Bogna Kociołowicz (2017: 65–76) has analyzed ‘the Independence March’ member-organizations discourse (official statements, websites, discussion groups, FB profiles) to reveal the vision of masculinity they embody. She described the ideal type of Polish Man as courageous and ready to defend the Fatherland and women, controlling women’s fertility as it guarantees the survival of the nation, homophobic and contemplating gayness (or gayness visual attributes) as useless in the highest vocation of a man: defence of the country. Such men are ‘true men’ in contrast with their ‘European’ counterparts, presented in propaganda materials as emasculated by gender education and ‘tolerantism’ wimp – the symbol and the reason for the decline of the West in Polish nationalists’ eyes. Last but not east, such traditional Man is attached to the Catholicism and embodies the tradition of ‘antemurale Christianitatis’ (Christianity is attacked from the Western secularism and the Eastern Islamism). To successfully defend women and Fatherland, men should work on their physical strength and sustain the cult of heroes embodying such virtues as courage and sacrifice for the sake of the country and the nation. Popular t-shirts, Internet graphics, mural graffiti, invade public space popularizing slogans as “Army of patriots”, “Poland–first to fight!”, “Death to the enemies of our fatherland!” Prevalent representation and identification unite contemporary radicals with the so-called ‘accursed soldiers.’ The Young radicals identify themselves as the inheritors of them. What can we learn about Polish angry Young men from that fact? The ‘cursed soldiers’ (*Żołnierze wyklęci*) is a term applied to various Polish anti-Soviet or anti-communist resistance movements formed in the later stages of World War II and its aftermath by

some members of the Polish Underground State. The clandestine organizations continued their armed struggle against the communist government of Poland well into the 1950s. The guerrilla warfare included an array of military attacks launched against the communist regime's prisons and state security offices, detention facilities for political prisoners and concentration camps set up across the country. No one denies the guerrillas' existence, but they did not call themselves 'accursed soldiers' (the term was invented in mid-90' by historians) and their fight, as described by historians, is highly controversial. First of all – they fought against the High Command in London orders which decided to stop any military action after January 1945. Secondly, a significant part of them were the groups of demoralized 'dogs of war' without any sublime ideology or sense of a mission, as documented by historian Marcin Zaremba (Zaremba 2012). Thirdly, the accursed soldiers committed numerous attacks, massacres and war crimes on civilians, Jews, Ukrainian and Belorussian minorities. Today the cursed soldiers, yet controversial, are officially celebrated on March 1 (National Day of the Cursed Soldiers), their struggle is popularized in schoolbooks and popular culture (Łabuszewski et al. 2016). Besides this official politics of memory, the accursed soldiers are the patrons of radical groups: these groups cherish their radicalism and the spirit of independence from external powers and commands, what is highlighted is the desperado character and the hopelessness of their struggle against the overwhelming powers of treacherous West and Soviet East. In contrast to the Home Army and Warsaw uprisers, whose social background is considered slightly elitist, 'the accursed soldiers' are believed to incarnate the people's will. And their social profile, more egalitarian, is considered to be closer to the profile of the radical right-wing movements as ONR. It was the Yalta treaty of 1945 that forced them to fight. Their situation is often compared to Poland's contemporary 'EU-occupation', which nationalist have to confront as it is seen as aiming at annihilation of Poland emasculating Polish men. The discourse of radical right confronts with women's mobilization (Black Protests, Women's Strike) against implementation of anti-abortion law. 'Black protests' gathered hundreds of thousands of people, mostly women, to resist. The far-right groups stand against 'feminists, lesbians and gays.' Far-right organizations actively supported conservative part of Polish society and the Polish Church in their struggle to enforce this law. On this basis, the radical movements present themselves as the protectors of 'traditional values', 'Christendom' and the Nation against morally corrupted West with its gender and sex education, the liberation of women and respect for minorities. Nationalists' websites, marches, FB profiles abound in slogans like *Here's Poland, not Brussels; here we do not support perversions*. Both liberal women and LGBT people are considered as the internal enemy. The participants of the March of the Independence set fire into Julita Wójcik's artistic 'Rainbow' installation. The eradication of LGBT symbol out of cityscape is seen as a major symbolic victory of the radical movements. The homophobic fury of the ONR is so frenzied that sometimes it simply becomes funny and subverts the strength of homosocial bonding. In 2013 the ONR demonstrated against LGBT parade in Warsaw – one of the slogans became famous and is often satirized and laughed at: *We want men, not fags* motto with horrible spelling mistake in a word 'mężczyzn'; (i.e. 'men') reveals surprisingly queer meaning and denounces miserable cultural cap-

ital of the banner-holders.

What is really desired are not the only men but also God as a metaphysical warrant of 'traditional values'. Each of the Independence Parades co-organized by the ONR has its leading slogan. In 2017 it was *We want God*, the 2018th year's march's motto was *God, Honour, Fatherland* (the same as in newly designed passports then). The slogan is deeply rooted in Polish history and for many years it was the lemma for the armed forces fighting with, considered as godless Nazis, and the Soviets. Indeed, religion, the Roman Catholicism, plays a crucial role in the concept of Polish far-right masculinity. Jasna Góra (Clara Montana) is a Catholic monastery with symbolic meaning in Poland (in 1656 the Poles successfully defended the cloister against the Swedish protestant siege and it was believed that the Holy Mary intervened miraculously to save its people). The monastery kept functioning during Poland's partition, during the German occupation and under communism – it is a symbol of the national idea's continuity and strength. Each summer, hundreds of thousands of people from around the country pilgrim to participate in religious celebrations and listen to the bishops' statements on current issues that traditionally accompany religious meetings. However, for seven years, the ONR has organized its pilgrimage to get the benediction from favourable bishops and priests. It is a true spectacle, where patriotic and religious traditions interfere with purely fascist iconography and requisites. The Catholic creed is an important ideological glue for ONR masculinist ideology. ONR manifesto accentuates it clearly².

The 'retrotopic' (Bauman 2017) model of masculinity, as it is celebrated by the radical groups and performed during their parades, is neither a simple repetition nor the full-scale reconstruction. It has to be said that the historical props and images function in radically different economic, social and, what is even more important, technological environment. The adequate description of this 'multiple' (Hardt & Negri 2004: 287) body of 'spectacular masculinity' is provided by Steve Garlick (Garlick 2016: 163–193). The Canadian philosopher described the emergence of 'spectacular masculinity' during 2011 worldwide riots (Arab Spring, Vancouver riots, protests in England after police shooting in London). He concentrated on the Vancouver riots of 2011 as they are easily compared with a similar event in 1994. The most crucial difference between the events was the use of social media: 'During the 1994 riot they had 100 hours of VHS tape, now with every teen holding a different kind of cell phone camera, they were dealing with 5000 hours of 100 types of digital video.'³ Compared to the 1994 Vancouver riot, Garlick comments, arguably the most distinctive feature of the 2011 version was the extent to which it was staged as *spectacle*. The attraction of the young men involved in the violence and destruction seemed almost as though they were performed for the sake of the cell phones that constituted their audience." (Garlick 2016:

² Deklaracja ideowa ONR. Retrieved November 2, 2021 (<https://www.onr.com.pl/deklaracja-ideowa/>).

³ Retrieved November 2, 2021 (<https://www.citynews1130.com/2012/06/13/the-riot-one-year-later-the-effect-of-social-media/>).

172)

To understand what is happening during such riots as in Vancouver or in Warsaw, we have to develop new modes of explanations:

Vancouver riot was an incident in which sport, technology and violence mixed in a complex interplay of factors that fostered the emergence of a spectacular mode of hegemonic masculinity. This does not mean that rioting or violence can be reduced to the influence of hockey culture, technology, or gender. On the contrary [...] these factors possess significant explanatory power only if incorporated into a complexity perspective that foregrounds the nonlinear circulation of affects that allows for emergent realities. (Garlick 2016: 165)

The 2011 Independence March in Warsaw initiated wide-scale rioting and looting – the TVN television car was burned then. The next year the riots, violence and looting were much more intensive and broader in scope – after the battle with the police 176 people were arrested. The symbolic burning marks the 2013 parade down ‘the Rainbow’ (the artistic installation on one of central Warsaw’s squares presumed to symbolize ‘gayness’, *pedalstwo*), burning down the kiosk in front of Russian Federation Embassy, attempts to destroy squat building ‘Przychodnia’. All these ‘spectacular’ events were reported or streamed immediately by the participants. Garlick suggests that social media are crucial participants in the riot, and photography, even if banal as technology nowadays, shouldn’t be underestimated, as it ‘includes the ability to stabilize identity in the face of an uncertain world, which has always been central to the appeal and promise of photography’ (Garlick 2016: 173). The circulation of photos is employed ‘toward the end of stabilizing the situation and [...], producing emergent masculinities that endured beyond the instant to claim some form of recognition and ontological security.’ (p. 175)

Polish radical movements intermingle with football hooligans organizations, so we should not be surprised that the expressions of ‘spectacular masculinity’ adapt forms and props from football stadium tribunes (club emblems, balaclavas, flares, however, banned, are an iconic element of the marches). Similarly, like in Vancouver, the Warsaw riot “was an incident [...] that fostered the emergence of a spectacular mode of hegemonic masculinity” (Garlick 2016: 165) – what was marginal and despised, for example, suburban football culture, became central and frightful. In the local Polish context, it is worth noticing that the liberal government started acting against football fans in 2007. The action reached a peak in 2011–2012 (UEFA Euro 2012 Cup was organized in Poland and Ukraine) – new football infrastructure pushed radical football fans out of the stadiums, which are no longer ‘territories for the expression of social discontent and arenas for articulating frustration and tensions located in social and economic processes of transition’, the stadiums were ‘the oasis for social and cultural activities of those who are excluded from modernization’ (Antonowicz, Szlendak, & Kossakowski 2016: 218). The key-role technology in shaping this form of expression of masculinity is, according to Garlick, photography circulating in social networks which turns riots into a direct media spectacle. Warsaw riot produced a ‘spectacular masculinity’ that, ‘via the digitized photographic image, secured its repetition in time but at

the expense of reifying its nature' (Garlick 2016: 178). Garlick claims that Vancouver riots (the event took place in the vicinity of the tv station building) that "participants appeared to desire just such a spectacle as they sought attention from the cameras and the assembled crowd" (Garlick 2016: 185).

Similarly, the tv crew car was burnt down the same year in Warsaw – and what could be more attractive to the media than attacking the media? According to Garlick, a photographic form of commemoration is a technology of nature, quite similar in its essence to gender (Garlick 2016: 176) as a technology of mastering nature. Spectacular media-narcissistic gender performances we witness during the *Independece Marches* have in their retrotopic attitude decidedly postmodern character:

Today, however, in the fluid and uncertain world of liquid modernity (Bauman 2000), the assumed guarantees of rational, techno-scientific control over the world appear no doubt for many men. The riot is both a symptom of this condition and a vehicle for restoring masculine power and ontological security. If hegemonic masculinities prescribe a position of power and authority over one's environment, today this imperative increasingly means attempts by young men to establish control over the city. From this perspective, young men burning police cars and looting or trashing department stores amounts to an implicit challenge to the control of the state and capital over the urban environment. [...] More than anything, the riot was a spectacle of masculinity. (Garlick 2016: 187)

The Canadian scholar concludes that these anti-capitalist and anti-modern modes of expression of masculinity are side effects of the modern economy. However, their violent revolt has not got revolutionary potential:

Men's violence expresses the desire for more control and greater ontological security than on offer in contemporary gendered, capitalist societies. However, instead of fostering relationality, creativity and the expansion of life, such violence is directed toward a negation of complexity and restriction of 'erotic' energy within the boundaries of gender, while deflecting attention away from the political and economic institutions that limit collective freedoms. On the other hand, participation in the riot, like Adorno's (1997) notion of "shudder" has an aesthetic dimension that momentarily re-enliven bodies suffering from the diminishment of their capacities under the standardization of gender and economic regimes (among others). (2016: 193–194)

To conclude briefly, the *Independence March* is a spectacular mode of hegemonic masculinity, or, to be more precise, of masculinity aspiring to hegemony through a wide array of means: historical claims and subcultural appropriations, violent demonstrations on the streets and the use of modern technology, which gives young men and participants a sort of positive and reinforcing feedback.

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