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## Men, Masculinities and Physical Violence in Contemporary Europe

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## MEN, MASCULINITIES AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN CONTEMPORARY EUROPE<sup>1</sup>

The aim of the paper is to present and analyse the intersection between men, masculinities and physical violence in the comparative, European dimension as this issue is still too rarely raised in the existing literature dealing with issues on both violence, and men and masculinities. The presented findings result to a large extent from research conducted by an international team of researchers within the PROGRESS *The Role of Men in Gender Equality* project (2011–2012). The paper presents analysis regarding connections between perpetration of violence and the character of traditional, hegemonic masculinity; data on the scale and types of violence perpetrated and experienced by men from different European countries; analysis of the position of men as a victims of (physical) violence; and a presentation of the forms of men's (social) activism against (male) violence.

Keywords: physical violence, domestic violence, hegemonic masculinity, subordinated masculinities, male victims, perpetrators, men-to-men violence, Europe

### INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that in many European languages violence is a “feminine” word (*die Gewalt* in German, *ta przemoc* in Polish, *la violence* in French, *la violencia* in Spanish), in reality violence has a male face. This is especially visible in the contexts of interpersonal physical violence and domestic violence, which are perpetrated mainly by men (see Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis 2000; Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013; Hearn 2009; Katz 2006 etc.). Researchers working on men and masculinities issues (mostly from the *critical studies on men and masculinities* field) claim that traditional, dominant masculinity, understood as a historical and societal construct (Connell 1995), is inextricably bound to violence (Hearn 1998; Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis 2000; Whitehead 2005; Forster 2007) and that “Masculinity is a common factor among men who commit offences of

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<sup>1</sup> It must be mentioned that the paper's findings are based on an analysis conducted during the realisation of the project “Role of men in gender equality”. The project has been prepared for the European Commission, DG Justice – Unit D2 Gender equality (contract ref. no. VC/2010/0592) and supported by the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS (2007–2013).

violence” (Whitehead 2005: 419). According to Jeff Hearn (1998), the intersections between men, masculinity and violence are based on several grounds. Firstly, men belong to the social category that is associated with power, therefore men’s violence is seen “as an expression of the power and control that men exert over women in the society” (Gondolf 2002: 9). Secondly, being violent is socially accepted for men and is seen as a certain way of being a boy and/or man. Moreover, men control violent (state) institutions. They thereby create a certain image of violence, which is not seen as negative but very often if not purely positive, then at least a justified phenomenon (military, media, sport) (see Hearn 1998).

Nevertheless, in many cases the idea of connecting violence to gender is neglected or at least unrecognised. In mainstream discourses the prevailing view is that violence is a gender-neutral phenomenon that is not connected to any gender, as both men and women are believed to be equally inclined to become either perpetrators or victims of violent acts. Such a standpoint seems to be undermined almost exclusively by feminist and *critical studies on men and masculinities* scholars and activists (see Hearn, Novikova, Pringle, Šmídová et al. 2013), which is reflected in the situation where the bulk of social research on violence remains gender neutral, and data on gendered impact regarding perpetrators (and, to a certain extent, victims) of violence is rare. Therefore, the main goal of this paper is to present evidence that violence is not a gender-neutral phenomenon and is strongly connected to male habitus (Bourdieu 2002), as “men’s violence is one of the most massive global social problems. The range and amount of men’s violence need to be recognised, including violence to women, children, men (other men, each other, themselves), transgender people, older people, and their interconnections” (Hearn, Novikova, Pringle, Šmídová et al. 2013: 11). However, the demonstration of the intersections between men, masculinities and violence cannot be limited to the issue of violence perpetration, as men are also victims of violence that, according to the data presented in this paper, is predominantly men-to-men violence. A further aim of the article is to prove that men-to-men violence is a certain type of gender-based violence that is not only intra-gender (men to women, women to men, transgender) but also an inter-gender phenomenon. Finally, the third aim of the paper is to show that men are not condemned to play the roles of either perpetrator or victim of violence and can reach beyond this binary by undertaking social actions leading towards ending male violence<sup>2</sup>.

## METHODOLOGICAL CHALLENGES AND DATA

Two main challenges connected to research into the scale of physical violence – its perpetration, roots and influence on the victims from a comparative European perspective – are: 1) a lack of relevant and reliable data (see Hagemann-White, Kelly, Römken and Meysen 2010: 30) and 2) methodological differences in research conducted in a variety of European

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<sup>2</sup> The analysis presented in the paper concerns only one type of violence: interpersonal, physical violence. This is connected to the fact that data on other forms of violence, especially in the European context, is difficult, if not impossible, to collect. Therefore, types of violence such as emotional and psychological abuse, economic violence, incest and sexual abuse (except rape) will not be analysed.

countries. These problems are especially visible in the research on domestic violence, where even definitions of this form of violence may vary, and the cultural context of each country/region influences the research design. In their report *Comparative reanalysis of prevalence of violence against women and health impact data in Europe*, produced within the Coordination Action on Human Rights Violations (CAHRV) project, Schröttle, Martinez, Condon, Jaspard et al. (2006) investigate the chances and obstacles for a post-hoc comparative analysis of studies on violence against women within Europe. This includes Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) as well as other forms of violence against women. Not surprisingly, the authors find that methodological differences between national studies hamper comparative analysis. Thus, “appropriate analyses were possible only for five national prevalence studies, although a total of at least 19 such studies have been carried out in EU countries” (Schröttle, Martinez, Condon, Jaspard et al. 2006: 37). Additionally: “even if methodology between studies were absolutely identical, there would still be cultural and societal aspects that may lead to different understandings of questions and to differences in reporting” (Schröttle, Martinez, Condon, Jaspard et al. 2006: 38). The problems become even bigger when it comes to questions about perpetrators. Some studies phrase their questions (or some of them) in such a way that violent acts with female perpetrators are excluded, while others allow for both male and female perpetrators. When it comes to IPV, even the report itself leaves open the question of which kinds of relationships (only heterosexual or also homosexual?) the studies discussed are actually dealing with. Consequently, it is unclear whether the perpetrators are all men or include some women.

In this context, research on the intersections between men, masculinities and violence in Europe seems to be a backbreaking task and, not surprisingly, there is little systematised knowledge about the situation in Europe in general and the differences between and within the European countries in particular. One of the attempts at filling this knowledge gap was undertaken by the team working on the European research project *The Role of Men in Gender Equality* (2011–2012):

This project was the first systematic research study of all European Union member states and associated European Free Trade Association states regarding men and gender equality in the fields of education and paid labor, the involvement of men in care and domestic work responsibilities, men’s health, gender-based violence, and men’s participation in gender equality policy. The main objective of the study was to gain better knowledge on the role and positioning of men concerning gender equality (Scambor, Bergmann, Wojnicka, Belghiti-Mahut et al. 2014: 552).

Intersections between men, masculinity, violence and gender equality was one of the issues researched in the project, and the presented article is to a large extent based on its findings. In order to obtain well-founded background knowledge about the character of the presented phenomena, triangulation of the data and methods (Konecki 2000) was applied. First of all, in 31 of the European Union and EFTA countries qualitative national reports were compiled by experts working on the issues from the area of (critical) men and masculinities studies. In this way, basic knowledge on the current situations in the regions was collected along with information on the most important trends and challenges. Secondly, a quantitative data set at the European level (Eurostat, European Working Conditions Survey etc.) was gathered by the

project team. Moreover, in 2011 and 2012 three workshops and one conference were organised in Brussels, Belgium. The workshop and conference participants were international experts (researchers, practitioners, policy makers) whose input led to the enrichment of the analysis conducted in the project (see Scambor, Bergmann, Wojnicka, Belghiti-Mahut et al. 2014). Nevertheless, it must be noted that data gathered by The Role of Men in Gender Equality project team does not cover all European states, particularly as country data regarding violence perpetration or victims of physical violence is rarely or never gender specified. Moreover, in some national data collections, gender of both the victims of violent acts and its perpetrators is used as a variable only in the context of domestic violence and when the perpetrators are women. This is the case for the statistics published by the Polish police, where data on the male percentage of suspected violent crimes can be found under the statistic entitled female violence (Polish Police Statistical Division 2014).

## RESULTS: MEN AS PERPETRATORS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

According to the data gathered by the team of *The Role of Men in Gender Equality* project (Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013), men are the perpetrators of 79.2% to 100% of assaults, 84.6% to 100% of serious assaults, 95.2% to 100% of rapes and 71.4% to 100% of homicides<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 1.** Male percentage of convicted crimes by different types of crimes and by country, 2008\*<sup>4</sup>

Country	Assault	Serious assault	Rape	Homicide
Austria	90.1	90.3	100	71.4
Bulgaria	97.2	96.9	100	93.7
Cyprus	100	97.1	100	92.9
Czech Republic	–	91.4	99.4	84.7
Denmark	89.2	89.9	100	93
Estonia	98.8	94.7	–	–
Finland	87.1	84.6	98.2	92.5
France	92	87.6	95.2	88.4
Germany	91.9	90.6	99.6	88.3
Greece	89.2	95.3	100	–
Hungary	79.2	92.7	100	80.1
Iceland	90.1	96	100	100

<sup>3</sup> All statistics refer to convicted criminals.

<sup>4</sup> Data for crimes committed in both the public and private spheres.

**Table 1** cont.

Ireland	86.3	88.2	100	100
Italy	87.5	–	98.9	97.1
Latvia	94.8	88.3	97.7	92.9
Lithuania	90.4	89.8	99	91.3
Netherlands	88.9	–	100	92
Poland	94	87.7	99.5	85.9
Portugal	83.3	91.8	100	94.2
Romania	96.4	97	100	93.3
Slovakia	91.2	–	100	90
Slovenia	92.9	97.7	100	90.9
Spain	–	90.7	100	91.3
Sweden	87.5	93	99.6	92.6
Switzerland	82	87.7	99.9	94.5
United Kingdom	91.1	87.7	98.9	92.1

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database; Code: c000026; \*Assault: Cyprus, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005, Estonia 2001; Serious Assault: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005, Estonia 2001; Rape: Cyprus, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Czech Republic, Portugal 2005; Robbery: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005; Theft: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005, Estonia 2001; Drug Crime: Cyprus, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005, Estonia 2001; Homicide: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece 2007, Iceland 2006, Portugal 2005; not all figures are available for all countries

This thesis of the male character of physical violence perpetration has also been confirmed by the research team from the Fundamental Rights Agency, who conducted a multi-country study on violence against women in the EU and found that: “The majority of physical and sexual violence reported in the survey was carried out by male perpetrators” (2014: 51) and: “The vast majority of the perpetrators of the most serious incidents of sexual harassment across all perpetrator groups are men. For example, perpetrators from the employment context are male in 86% of cases” (2014: 113). Moreover, transnational findings on the gender of physical violence perpetration are mirrored by the national data. For example, in Poland (2011) men constitute a vast majority of alleged perpetrators of homicide (88.6%), assault (91.1%) and rape (98.5%) (Polish Police Statistical Division); in Germany in 2014 men represented 80.6% of those alleged of assault (Polizeiliche Kriminalstatistik 2014: 15); and in Sweden in 2013 men represented the majority of those alleged of homicide (87.3%), assault (82.2%) and rape (98%) (Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention 2014).

In general, regarding research on the perpetration of violence (Hall 2002; Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013) and the data presented above, men form the majority of the perpetrators of physical and sexual violence. The violence perpetrated by men occurs in both

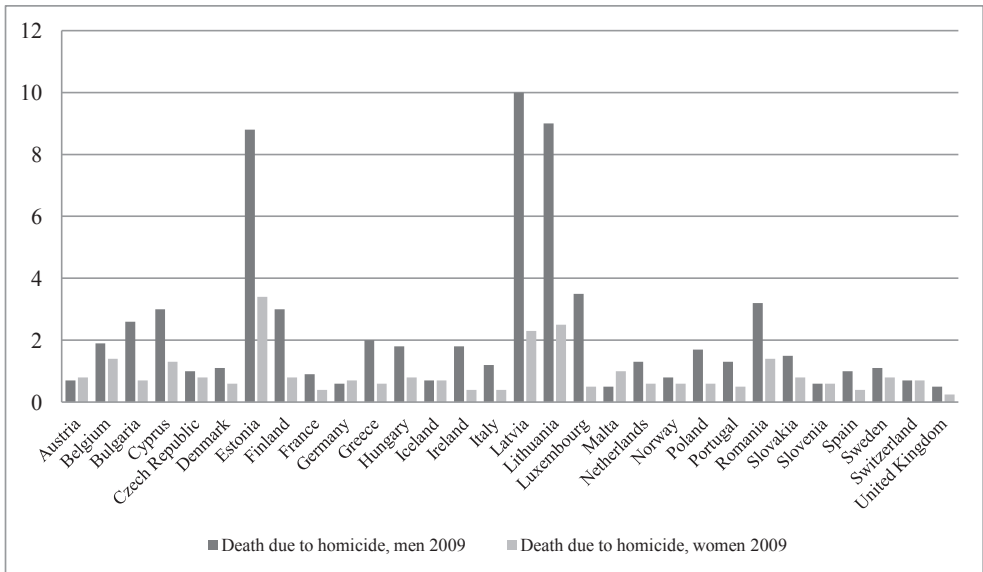
the public and private spheres and affects victims (known and unknown to the perpetrators) of all genders. Despite this fact, the gender of perpetrators seems to be taken into consideration mostly in the case of IPV, one of the major social and public health problems worldwide (World Health Assembly 1996). According to the research team from the Fundamental Rights Agency one out of three women in the European Union have suffered physical and/or sexual violence in their lives since the age of 15 (2014). This type of violence has been defined as gender-based violence with male perpetrators and female victims, mostly thanks to the efforts of feminist and women victims' movements. Moreover, many researchers define this type of violence as the most common form of male violence. This is reflected in the data gathered by *The Role of Men in Gender Equality* project team (Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013) as well as in data from national agencies. According to the European research project, in 66% (Bulgaria) to 96% (Poland) of cases of intimate partner violence in EU27 countries, the perpetrator is a man (Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013).

It is also important to underline, once again, that despite common beliefs in some countries or among certain social groups (e.g. men's rights activists), domestic violence is not a gender-neutral phenomenon and is not symmetrical (Puchert and Scambor 2013; Kimmel 2002; Johnson 2006 and others). Although acts of violence committed by women occur in every European country, the scale of this problem cannot be compared to the problem of male violence against women. According to data supplied by national experts taking part in the above mentioned project, the percentage of male victims of violence in intimate relationships ranges from 0.8 % in Iceland to 27 % in Latvia (Scambor, Bergmann, Wojnicka, Belhiti-Mahaut et al. 2013) and hence:

Overwhelmingly, it is men who use violence against women partners, not the obverse [...]. That is not to say that no women has ever been violent. Obviously, this is not true. The main pattern of violence among intimates, however, is one of violence perpetrated by men against women. Of course, individual cases of women's violence exist, but such cases do not alter the fact that the overall pattern of intimate violence is dominated by men as abusers and by women as the abused (Dobash, Dobash, Cavanagh and Lewis 2000: 3).

## RESULTS: MEN AS VICTIMS OF PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

The overrepresentation of men in the group of physical violence perpetrators does not preclude the thesis that a significant number of physical violence victims are also men. In fact, according to the European data, in certain types of physical violence a predominance of male victims over female victims can be observed. One example is homicide, where in only three EU27 countries, namely Malta, Austria and Germany, the number of female victims is slightly higher than the number of male victims. In three other countries (Iceland, Switzerland and Slovenia) this number is even, but in the remaining 21 cases the number of male victims of homicide is higher than the number of female victims. Moreover, in several cases, such as Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Luxemburg, the number of male victims is at least triple that of female victims (see Fig. 1).



**Figure 1.** Death due to homicide, assault, by gender, standardised death rate by 100 000 inhabitants, 2009\*<sup>5</sup>

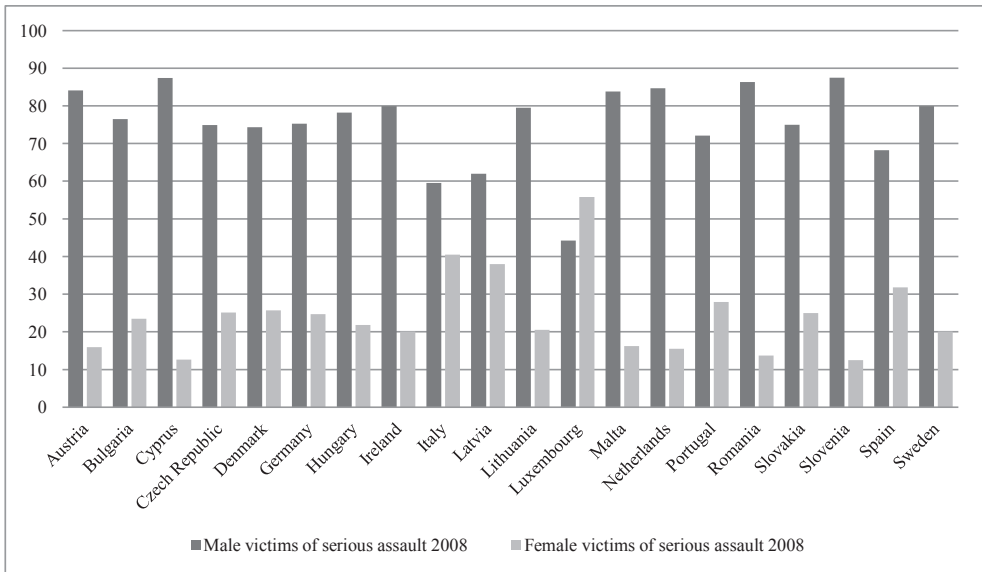
Source: Eurostat (online data code: tps00146); extracted on 12th April 2012; \* data Belgium 2005, Switzerland 2007, France, Italy 2008

The gendered imbalance in the number of victims can also be noticed in the case of serious assault. According to data presented in Figure 2, men in the EU and EFTA states represent 44.2% to 87.5% of victims of this type of crime (Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013). The only European country where the number of female victims of serious assault is higher than the number of male victims is Luxembourg. The European data is also mirrored in the national findings.

Although European statistics do not distinguish the social spaces in which certain types of crimes have been committed, national findings prove that men are much more likely to become victims of physical violence perpetrated in the public sphere (streets, bars, public transportation, schools etc.). This is the case in Germany, where: “The findings of this study, like other studies, indicate that the majority of physical violence against adult men occurs in the public sphere” (Jungnitz, Lenz, Puchert, Puhe et al. 2004: 7), in Poland, Denmark and Estonia (see Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013), and in the United Kingdom, where: “According to Kershaw, Nicholas & Walker (2008) men are approximately twice as likely than women to become victims of violent crime also in United Kingdom. Hughes, Church and Zealey (2009) reported that ‘73% of all homicide victims in England and Wales 2007/08 were male’” (Raine and White 2011).

<sup>5</sup> Data for all types of homicide (public and private sphere).





**Figure 2.** Male and female percentage of victims of serious assault by country, 2008\*<sup>6</sup>

Source: UNECE Statistical Division Database; Code: c0000269; \* Serious assault: Cyprus 2007, Latvia 2002, Luxembourg 2006, Netherlands 2003, Portugal 2005; not all figures are available for all countries

Moreover, it is possible to designate certain types of men, or rather groups of men, who are more likely to become victims of physical violence than others. First of all, the risk group consists of men who do not fit into the category of heterosexual masculinity. The main representatives of this group are men who define themselves (or are defined by others) as gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual and/or queer. According to the national data, in many European countries, namely Germany, Poland, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom (see Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann 2013), non-heterosexual men are at the forefront as victims of homophobic attacks:

A YouGov survey commissioned by Stonewall in 2008 (Dick 2008) found that overall around one in five gay men had been insulted/harassed because of their sexual orientation. It was further reported that gay men were over 2.5 times more likely than lesbians to be the victim of an incident involving a physical assault. Moreover, gay men were more likely to become victims of a hate crime committed by someone they didn't know (Raine and White 2011).

Furthermore, heterosexual men who do not fit into the norms of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995) are more likely to become victims of men-to-men violence than men who can be described as members of the dominant male group in a given society (in the European context white, heterosexual, healthy, middle-class, middle-age men). Such men might belong

<sup>6</sup> Data for all types of serious assault (public and private sphere).

to certain ethnic groups, be asylum seekers or refugees, have migration backgrounds or be members of minority religious groups. Moreover, other risk groups consist of homeless and disabled men as well as men living in institutions (prisons, reformatories, shelters, boarding schools). Last but not least, older men and younger men are more often victims of physical violence than middle-aged men. Older men and younger men are vulnerable to both domestic violence and physical violence in institutions. According to a German pilot study on violence against men, “in childhood and adolescence the risk for men of becoming the victim of violent acts is far greater than in adult life” (Jungnitz, Lenz, Puchert, Puhe et al. 2004: 6), which makes schools and other educational institutions for young people places with a very high violence risk factor. Therefore, childhood in connection with public institutions seems to be a dangerous mixture in regards to not only physical violence but also other forms of abuse, including sexual. Some data show that the risk of becoming a male victim of sexual assault increases for boys in boarding schools, reformatories and orphanages.

## RESULTS: MEN’S ACTIVISM AGAINST (DOMESTIC) VIOLENCE

Since both perpetrators and victims of physical violence are men themselves, preventing male violence and supporting actual or potential male victims of violence should be considered an important step on the path towards gender equality, together with actions that aim to combat violence against women and children. Furthermore, the cliché that men are not vulnerable, and the corresponding idea that men’s injuries or harm are nothing to worry about, belong to the same traditional image of masculinity that is the basis of men’s violence. This cliché is itself an aspect of an unequal gender order and needs to be overcome. Deconstructing hegemonic masculinity and disconnecting (and thereby combating) physical violence from masculinity are some of the main goals of contemporary pro-feminist and anti-masculinist social activism (see Messner 1997; Clatterbaugh 1997; Gambil 2005; Wojnicka 2012): “Among the range of groups and campaigns enacted by men in the name of progressive gender agendas over the last three decades, anti-violence work has been the most persistent focus, has attracted the largest involvement, and has achieved the greatest international participation” (Flood 2005: 458). One of the most recognisable male anti-violence initiatives is the *White Ribbon Campaign* (<http://www.whiteribbon.ca/>), the roots of which are described by one of its founders:

In 1991 a handful of men in Canada took the first step down a pathway whose future we did not know: we decided we have a responsibility to organize men to speak out against violence against women. We knew that most men in Canada were not violent towards women, but we also knew that the vast majority of us remained silent. Through our silence, we allowed the violence to continue. We adopted a white ribbon as a symbol. Wearing the ribbon would neither be an act of contrition, nor a symbol of misplaced guilt; it did not indicate that the wearer was a great guy. Rather, wearing the ribbon was a personal pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women. It would be a catalyst for discussion and soul-searching. It would be a public challenge to those many men who may use violence against a wife, girlfriend, family member or stranger. It would be a call on our policy-makers, opinion leaders, police and courts to take seriously this national and international epidemic. And it would be an act of love for the women in our life (Kaufman 2001: 46).

Today, the *White Ribbon Campaign* is an international organisation focused on promoting men's engagement in anti-violence activity all around the globe, including Europe. Another important player in the global scene of male pro-gender equality movements, focusing both on combating male violence and protecting male victims of gender-based violence, is *MenEngage*, an umbrella organisation of NGOs working with men and boys to promote gender equality. Some of the most important issues for the organisation are ending violence against women and girls and reducing forms of violence among men and boys (<http://menengage.org>). The European representative, *MenEngage Europe*, has at the moment (June 2015) 40 members from 20 European countries. The above-mentioned initiatives focus mostly on male violence prevention and conduct educational activities that aim to deconstruct traditional forms of masculinity strongly connected with the use of physical violence. Simultaneously, Europe is a territory where post-factum work on (male) violence is being conducted, as in 2009 the first transnational network for organisations and professionals working with (male) perpetrators of domestic violence was established. One of the main goals of *Work with Perpetrators – European Network (WWP-EN)* (<http://www.work-with-perpetrators.eu>) is to promote a gender perspective in work with batterers, and since the vast majority of domestic violence perpetrators are men, issues regarding the intersections between men, masculinity and violence are taken into consideration in *WWP-EN* activities. Since 2009 the network has been steadily growing and today has 35 members from 21 European countries.

However, the *White Ribbon Campaign*, *MenEngage Europe* and *Work with Perpetrators – European Network* do not cover the whole spectrum of European initiatives aimed at male violence prevention, as there are a growing number of male groups, campaigns and organisations acting on the national level. Among them informal groups, foundations, associations, networks and umbrella alliances dedicated to combating male violence can be found. One of the most active European regions regarding the number of male anti-violence initiatives is Northern Europe, where the ideology of gender equality is part of the official national policy:

In Sweden the F-word is respectable to the extent that even a former male prime minister and the conservative male minister of finance can call themselves “feminist”. The national and regional context is characterised by, amongst other things, state feminism and a qualified consensus on the value of gender equality as a political goal and general norm, which tend to generate a broadly positive place for men in and around feminism (Hearn and Holmgren 2009: 404).

The landscape of Scandinavian male organisations focusing on preventing gender-based violence consists of the Swedish *Män för Jämställdhet (Men for Gender Equality)*, the host of the first *MenEngage Europe* meeting organised in 2009, *Risikkrisiscentrum (The National Association of Swedish Crisis Centres for Men)*, the “*What men?*” group from Finland (Harjunen 2007) and *Reform – Ressurssenter for Menn (Reform – Resource Centre for Men)* based in Oslo, Norway. In Central and Western Europe, profeminism/antimasculinist male initiatives are represented by the German *Männer Gegen Männer-Gewalt (Men Against Men's Violence)*, the Austrian *Verein fuer Männer- und Geschlechterthemen Steiermark (Association for Men and Gender Issues)* and *Move Ireland*. Southern Europe is represented by two main organisations from Italy and Spain:

[...] there are currently two profeminist associations contributing to raising antiviolenace awareness among men: *Maschile Plurale* (MP, 2007, Rome) and *Asociacion de Hombres por la Igualdada de Genero* (AHIGE, Malaga, 2001). Like other profeminist organisations of this kind, both MP and AHIGE started from men's willingness to take action against phenomenon of male violence against women, and their antiviolenace commitment constitutes the core of their goals (Nardini 2013: 3).

Last but not least, in Eastern Europe one can find several male initiatives that aim to combat gender-based violence. It should be noted that in this region profeminist/antimasculinist activism is a rather fresh (Ruxton and van der Gaag 2012; Bergmann, Scambor and Wojnicka 2014) but blooming phenomenon. Among these initiatives, the Polish *Głosy przeciwko przemocy* (*Voices against violence*) and *Mężczyźni przeciw przemocy wobec kobiet* (*Men against violence against women*), the *Stop-ferferoszak* (*Stop male violence project*) from Hungary and the *Liga otevřených mužů* (*League of open men*) from the Czech Republic can be singled out.

## DISCUSSION: THE INTERSECTIONS BETWEEN MEN, MASCULINITIES AND PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

According to the data presented above, the vast majority of physical violence perpetrators in Europe are men. Since men's inclinations towards using physical violence do not lie in human nature (see Rand, Green and Nowak 2012) and cannot be compared to women's, they must be connected to the specific model of masculinity that dominates in a society. Pierre Bourdieu's (2002) classic work on male domination stressed that masculinity is a certain type of social interaction where violence seems to be one of the most important relational elements. Thus, masculinity is a historical and cultural concept, where aggression, physical power and violent behaviours play an important role in its creation. Therefore, physical violence can be seen as one of the most prominent elements in the "masculine games of competition" (2002) men take part in in their social lives. Moreover, playing "the violence game" is crucial for the reproduction of masculine domination, as violence, or even the threat of it, is used as a tool in disciplining and subordinating women and other men who do not fit into the norms of hegemonic masculinity. Men internalise the basic rules of "violence games" in the process of socialisation. The schoolyards are the first arenas in which boys learn how to play the game and, in other words, how to become men and how to legitimise "masculine domination". The role of other men in the process of masculinity legitimisation is especially important as: "[...] manliness must be validated by other men, in its reality as actual or potential violence, and certified by recognition of membership of the group of 'real men'" (Bourdieu 2002: 52). That need for recognition might be a reason for the large proportion of physical violence acts that are perpetrated by men in public spaces. As was shown above, men are the vast majority of perpetrators of assaults, serious assaults and homicides, which largely take place in public space. Moreover, very often this type of violence is perpetrated by groups of men, not individuals. Thus, such behaviours can be seen as a manifestation of masculine status, which needs to be confirmed by other men and the most infallible form of it, capability of use of violence. Furthermore, men playing "violence games" acknowledge

aggression and physical strength as positive aspects of male identity and generally support the violent behaviours of other men. According to Jackson Katz, male support for violence is not limited to men-to-men violence but in many cases refers to violence against women:

In spite of significant social change in recent decades, men continue to grow up with, and are socialized into, a deeply misogynistic, male-dominated culture, where violence against women – from the subtle to the homicidal – is disturbingly common. It is normal. And precisely because the mistreatment of women is such a pervasive characteristic of our patriarchal culture, most men, to a greater or less extent, have played a role in its perpetuation (Katz 2006: 9).

Katz claims that male violence against women is still a common social problem because the majority of men, as products of patriarchal culture in which physical power and male aggression are seen as beneficial rather than destructive for society, do not recognise it as problematic and do not take actions to terminate it. In his perception, all men are responsible for combating this type of violence, as violence is generally a male problem and concerns not only those who are perpetrators, but the whole population of men who benefit from the patriarchal dividend (Connell 1995).

Along with domestic violence, the woman “issue” in connection with male violence is visible in the context of “heroism”. The notion of heroism, according to scholars researching masculinities and violence, plays a significant role in creating male identity:

[...] diverse versions of heroism represent a single form of masculinity, enacted variably according to social positioning, but linked by a common core of transcendental courage in the face of danger. The boy may become the man by transcending his fear of suffering harm or death through courageous acts. The man may affirm his claim to manhood in the same way (Whitehead 2005: 413).

Thus, for many men (and boys) interpersonal violence and physical confrontation with other men can be very attractive ways of proving and/or expressing their manhood. The use of physical violence caused by the need to defend one’s honour, especially in dangerous circumstances, has the highest value in the “masculine games”. A man “defending” a woman’s life, body or honour (with or without her consent) or a man fighting for his family’s “good name” is usually perceived as a hero and as the one who makes the grade. In this context, physical violence is not only normal and acceptable but also a glorified and desirable behaviour. However, violence in the name of honour is almost exclusively connected with men, not women.

Moreover, according to Whitehead, male violence can be “inclusive”, implying that those involved, even if they are portrayed as enemies in a particular act of interpersonal violence, are “worthy opponents” in the male games of competition and deserve to be called men.

The ideal of heroic masculinity is often associated with aggressive bodily display where the objective is not to employ the body in actual violence but to use it as a means of intimidation. Yet the perpetration of and participation in violent encounters are equated with masculinity, regardless of the outcome, even the scars and wounds of the “loser” may be useful for display and status conferring among some young males (Dobash and Dobash 1998: 15).

At the same time, violence can be “exclusive” when the main goal of certain forms of interpersonal violence is to intimidate the opponent and devalue his masculinity. The exclusive role of physical violence is especially visible in cases of violence against men representing marginalised social groups. Data presented in the previous section shows that men who do not fit into the dominant images of masculinity have more chances of becoming victims of physical violence perpetrated by men who reach the (masculine) expectations. Men from subordinated, marginalised groups also take part in the “violence game”, but in contrast to dominant, hegemonic men, they often play the role of Non-Man, the antithesis of the Hero (Whitehead 2005). As masculinity is not a monolith (Connell 1995), men differ from each other, and the differences are based on race, class, sexual orientation, age, (dis)ability, education, migration backgrounds etc. However:

To recognize diversity in masculinities is not enough. We must also recognize the relations between the different kinds of masculinity; relations of alliance, dominance and subordination. These relationships are constructed through practices that exclude and include, that intimidate, exploit, and so on (Connell 1995: 37).

Therefore, the inclusion of an intersectional approach (Cershaw 1993, 1989; Phoenix 2008; Berger and Guidroz 2009) in analysing men, masculinities and physical violence seems to be crucial, as masculinity in intersection with other dimensions of inequality such as ethnicity, migration background and sexuality creates different meanings and interpretations of the role of violence in men’s lives. It is not a coincidence that there are particular groups of men who are more likely to be either perpetrators or victims in the context of men-to-men interpersonal violence. The first group usually consists of men who can be described as dominant in the particular society or social group. The “prototype” of a perpetrator in Europe would be then heterosexual, of reproductive age, relatively healthy, white and Christian. On the other hand, among male victims, men from so-called marginalised groups: non-heterosexual, elderly, from ethnic and religious minorities, with some sort of disability, homeless etc. can be found. Last but not least, men who engage in activities aimed at combatting male violence can also be seen as representatives of certain masculinity types. In their case, however, factors such as class, race, ethnicity or religious/migration background do not play a certain role. Instead, particular values and attitudes to gender roles as well as certain rites of personality may connote the notion of inclusive (Anderson and McGuire 2010; Anderson 2013) or caring (Hanlon 2012) masculinities: “Caring masculinities are, then, a refiguring of masculine identities away from values of domination and aggression and toward values of interdependence and care” (Elliott 2015: 17).

Obviously, the “ideal types” of male victim and perpetrator are not present in every violence configuration. Not only can men from marginalised groups be perpetrators of physical violence against dominant men, but men can also be victims of violence committed by women. Moreover, men positioned in similar social settings are also entangled in diverse intra-group dominance/violence relationships. However, the data presented above allow for the drawing of a pattern where dominant, traditional men personify perpetrators and marginalised men, along with women, are usually the victims of physical, interpersonal violence. Thus, the term

“gender-based violence” is not limited only to opposite genders but can also be used in the context of violence perpetrated and experienced by representatives of one gender. Men’s violence can therefore be seen as both a result and a precondition of certain aspects of gender inequality. Men’s violence is a product as well as a means of gender-specific socialisation and other societal practices that contribute to the reproduction of “masculinity as violence”.

## CONCLUSIONS

The variety of relations between men and violence shown in the study reflects the diversity of existing masculinities: perpetrators usually represent a traditional, hegemonic, dominant form of masculinity, victims can be connected with subordinated, marginalised and feminised representations of manhood, and men who act against violence can be representatives of caring or inclusive masculinities. This variety becomes even more apparent when masculinity intersects with ethnicity, race, disability and sexuality. Belonging to certain social groups and/or social categories influences the position of men in violence relations as “[...] men’s violence is not a ‘thing’; nor is it simply a collection of ‘incidents’. It is social structures and social processes, sometimes over a long period of time” (Hearn 2009: 133–134).

The analysis presented in this paper shows that in Europe (EU and EFTA countries) men make up the vast majority of physical violence perpetrators – both in “street violence” and in domestic violence against women. On the other hand, a significant number of European men can be labelled as victims of certain forms of physical violence, which to a large extent is perpetrated by other men. European data show that men are more likely to become victims of acts of physical violence committed in public space than in the private sphere. This is an important finding considering the still lively discussions on “gender symmetry” in the case of domestic violence (see Kimmel 2002; Johnson 2006 *versus* Straus 1999; Archer 2000). The collected data prove that “gender symmetry” in domestic violence is a false assumption, and that acts of physical violence against men committed by women are marginal compared to such acts perpetrated by men. This led to the assumption that men-to-men violence is one of the most serious but not properly recognised social problems. In public discourse men-to-men violence is very often portrayed as gender-neutral and the issue of power relations between men is not explored. Therefore, one of the most important tasks for ongoing studies on men and masculinities is to underline the gendered character of this form of violence. The gender of perpetrators should be taken into consideration both in scientific analyses of the phenomenon and in anti-violence activism and policies, as hegemonic, dominant masculinities are one of the central variables in violence analysis. The gender of victims should be also taken into consideration, not only in the case of intimate partner violence (which is often the only form of violence framed as gender-based violence) but also regarding male victims of violence committed by other men. Such a strategy will help shift the focus from the less common but more discussed problem of male victims of domestic violence committed by women, to the more common but less discussed problem of male victims of violence committed by other men.

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#### MEŹCZYŹNI, MĘSKOŚĆ I PRZEMOC FIZYCZNA WE WSPÓŁCZESNEJ EUROPIE

Celem artykułu jest przedstawienie oraz analiza relacji, jakie zachodzą między męskosciami, mężczyznami a przemocą fizyczną we współczesnej Europie. Tego typu tematyka, w wymiarze europejskim, wciąż jeszcze należy do stosunkowo rzadko podejmowanych problemów badawczych, zarówno w literaturze na temat przemocy, jak i studiach nad mężczyznami i męskością. Prezentowane wyniki w dużej mierze oparte są na badaniach przeprowadzonych w ramach unijnego projektu programu PROGRESS „Rola mężczyzn w osiągnięciu równości genderowej” (2011–2012). W artykule przedstawione są: analizy odnośnie do związków między stosowaniem przemocy fizycznej z tradycyjną, hegemoniczną męskością; dane na temat skali oraz rodzajów przemocy popełnianej i doświadczanej przez mężczyzn w krajach Unii Europejskiej oraz Europejskiego Stowarzyszenia Wolnego Handlu; analizy sytuacji mężczyzn będących ofiarami przemocy fizycznej, a także prezentacja form społecznej aktywności mężczyzn ukierunkowanej na walkę z (męską) przemocą.

Słowa kluczowe: przemoc fizyczna, przemoc domowa, męskość hegemoniczna, męskości podporządkowane, mężczyźni ofiary przemocy, sprawcy przemocy, przemoc między mężczyznami, Europa