

Men's Pro-Gender Equality Initiatives in Europe

Povzetek

Evropski aktivizem moških za enakost spolov

Glavni cilj prispevka je predstavitev nekaterih trenutno obstoječih evropskih pobud, ki so usmerjene k poglobljanju enakosti spolov in ki jih vodijo moški. Pojav bomo analizirali skozi njegove tri pogloblitve dimenzije: transnacionalne mreže, nacionalne krovne mreže ter skupine in organizacije na nacionalni ravni. Večina izsledkov, ki jih predstavljamo, temelji na rezultatih evropskega raziskovalnega projekta z naslovom *Vloga moških pri enakosti spolov*, ki smo ga ob podpori Evropske komisije izvedli v letih 2011 in 2012, pri njem pa je sodelovalo 31 evropskih držav. V prispevku uporabljamo tipologijo MA'AM, ki se je za analizo sodobnih moških družbenih gibanj razvila v kritičnih študijah moških in moškosti.

Ključne besede: antimaskulizem, altermaskulizem, moški, enakost spolov, Evropa

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Abstract

The main goal of this paper is to present contemporary men's initiatives aimed at increasing gender equality in Europe. The particular phenomena will be analyzed in three main dimensions: transnational networks, national umbrella networks and national groups and organizations. The vast majority of the paper's findings are based on the results of the European research project "Role of men in gender equality" (EC PROGRESS Programmed) conducted in 2011 and 2012 in 31 European countries and framed with the usage of the MA'AM typology of contemporary men's social movements developed within the critical men and masculinities studies approach.

Keywords: anti-masculism, alter-masculism, men, gender equality, Europe

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Introduction

For more than 20 years, Europe has been a terrain of growing activity of men's initiatives aimed at increasing gender equality and tackling discrimination against women (and men), with a special emphasis on combating gender-based violence. Such initiatives belong to a larger group of men's social movements that emerged in the 1960s and 1970s, first in North America, shortly after in Western and Northern Europe, later in Central and Southern Europe, and recently in Eastern European countries (Wojnicka, 2012). These particular initiatives can, to a large extent, be framed as men's answer to the emergence of the second wave feminist movement. Men's movements consist of a variety of social phenomena, gathering men (and women as well as transgender persons) with different ideologies, values, goals and methods of acting, but all of them play an important role in influencing politics and discourses on men, masculinities, fatherhood and gender equality. One of the most significant types of these initiatives is that which gathers men interested in acting for increasing gender equality, challenging existing power relations and deconstructing hegemonic (Connell, 2005) and toxic¹ forms of masculinities, usually linked to violence perpetration. Moreover, the engagement of men in the quest for gender equality recently started to be acknowledged by European Union policymakers and stakeholders. In 2001, the first EU Conference on Men and Equality was held in Örebro, and the need to reach out to men in developing gender equality was stressed (Hearn, 2001). The issue has been raised since then by the Advisory Committee on Equal Opportunities between Women and Men, and expressed in the Roadmap for equality between women and men 2006–2010 (EC, 2006), in the European Commission Strategy for Equality between Women and Men (2010–2015), and in the recent Strategic Engagement for Gender Equality (2016–2019). In the above-mentioned documents, specific areas where men's issues are crucial have been identified and these include: struggling against gender-based violence, the role of men and fathers in the reconciliation of work and private life, men's health issues, boys as the majority of early school leavers and, last but not least, men as fathers in relation to problems such as gaining custody rights.

Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to map the most significant European men's initiatives that aim to increase the level of gender equality in the region. The analysis is primarily based on the findings from the European research project "Role of men in gender equality" (2011–2012) and is supplemented by extensive literature research. Moreover, pro-gender equality men's initiatives are defined

¹ Toxic masculinity is a form of hegemonic masculinity that "(...) delineates those aspects of hegemonic masculinity that are socially destructive, such as misogyny, homophobia, greed, and violent domination; and those that are culturally accepted and valued" (Kupers, 2005).

within the theoretical framework of contemporary men's social movements called MA'AM and are analyzed in three main dimensions: transnational networks, national umbrella networks and national (in)formal groups and organizations. Since an analysis of all national groups, organizations and networks exceeds this paper's capabilities, I will limit myself to the presentation of several groups, organizations and networks characteristic of each of the European gender regimes (Sümer, 2009).

Theoretical and methodological framework

Among men's social movements and initiatives in Europe and beyond, one can find a variety of informal and formal groups, organizations and networks. Therefore, in order to analyze the character, goals, values and methods of activity of these movements and initiatives in contemporary societies, it is necessary to apply a coherent and detailed framework or typology. One of the most popular typologies of men's initiatives is based on Kimmel's framework of historical men's discourses on feminism (2005), which includes anti-feminist, masculinist and pro-feminist male responses. His proposal has become a foundation for the framework that divides men's social initiatives into the three above-mentioned types. In a nutshell, the members of anti-feminist social movements claim that men, not women, are victims of gender-based discrimination. Pro-feminist movement activists, on the contrary, are allies of the feminist movement and their primary aims are fighting for women's rights and struggling against gender-based discrimination. Finally, masculinist men's groups and initiatives gather men who claim that contemporary society is feminized and there is a need for its re-masculinization.

However, a Kimmel-based typology is not the only way of framing men's social activism. In fact, attempts to develop such a typology have been undertaken since 1980. Astrachan (1986) conducted a study on American men's social movements and grouped men's social movements into three main categories: pro-feminist, the "non-guilt wing" movement, and the divorced men's movement. Clatterbaugh (1997) divided American men's social initiatives into eight different perspectives, namely conservative, pro-feminist, socialist, men's rights perspective, mythopoetic, homosexual, Afro-American men's perspective and Christian evangelicals. Similar approaches can be found in the frameworks introduced by Flood (1998) and Newton (2005), who divided American and Australian men's initiatives into four main categories: the anti-sexist movement, the men's liberation movement, the men's spirituality movement (mythopoetic movement) and the men's and father's rights movement (1998); and the black men's movement, the homosexual men's movement, the pro-feminist movement, the mythopoetic movement, the fathers' movement and the Christian men's movement, represented mostly by the Promise Keepers activists, respectively (2005).

Nevertheless, all the above-mentioned typologies draw on research on American and Australian men's social movements and, therefore, this particular cultural and societal context seems to dominate the field. The first European attempt to frame contemporary men's social movements was undertaken in 2013 (Scambor et al., 2013; Bergman et al., 2014), when the wide range of men's groups, organizations and networks were framed as either balanced or unbalanced men's politics. The European typology draws on the theoretical model of the politics of masculinities introduced by Messner (2000). The model is shaped by three main categories, namely, costs of masculinities, men's privileges and differences among men and, according to Messner, men's social initiatives can be defined on the basis of their approach to each of these categories.

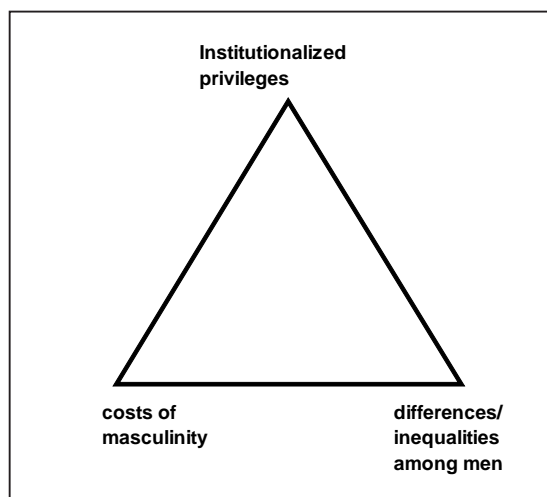


Figure 1: Terrain of male politics (Messner, 2000)

The model specifies the location of particular types of male initiatives in relation to the political ideologies promoted by their actors, while the particular location of a given phenomenon indicates the intensity of sharing a certain ideology or approach. The smaller the distance from a given vertex of the triangle, the higher its intensity and vice versa – the closer the location is to the center, the lower the connection of the given phenomenon with a particular approach. Furthermore, groups located closest to the center of the figure present higher inclinations for entering into coalitions, which may increase their political possibilities (Messner, 2000).

In this context, actors from balanced men's initiatives:

(...) focus on gender disparities and men's privileges and try to minimize cost and disadvantages for men (e.g. concerning health) at the same time (...) The differences between men become clear by specifying subgroups according to other social categories (e.g. men's health is strongly influenced by education

and social class). In this view, it may be in the interest of not all, but of many men to change the existing gender regimes and the dominating masculinity concepts. (Bergmann et al., 2014: 66)

Unbalanced politics on the other hand are dominated by discourses and social activism that underline costs of masculinity and neglect the existence of men's privileges as well as differences among men.

The most recent attempt to frame (European) men's social initiatives draws on research conducted on contemporary Polish social movements (Wojnicka, forthcoming). This typology can be seen as a synthesis and follow-up of both the Kimmel-based framework (2005) and Messner's model of male politics (2000). The MA'AM typology consists of four different groups of men's social movements, namely, masculist, alter-masculist, anti-masculist and masculinist movements. While masculist, anti-masculist and masculinist initiatives can be seen as equivalents of anti-feminist, pro-feminist and masculinist perspectives respectively, the alter-masculist category is new and can be seen as a unique, (Eastern) European contribution to existing knowledge. The main focus of alter-masculist actors are costs of masculinities, but at the same time, unlike members of masculist groups and organizations, they do not deny the existence of men's privileges and they admit that women are also victims of gender-based discrimination. However, they tend to limit their activity mostly to the struggle with the costs of masculinity and are not willing to resign from reproducing the less hegemonic, complicit forms of masculinity (Connell, 2005). However, unlike masculist actors they are rather flexible in terms of gender role definitions and are willing to (re)negotiate the gender contract. Last but not least, they are open to cooperation with other social movements and, depending on the situation, they are able to ally both with feminist/anti-masculist movements and also masculist/masculinist ones.

To sum up, contemporary men's initiatives consist of a large number of groups, organizations and networks with different gender equality ideologies, masculinities politics, values, goals and methods of acting and can be framed as balanced or unbalanced in general (Bergmann et al., 2014), and masculist, alter-masculist, anti-masculist or masculinist (Wojnicka, forthcoming) in particular. For the purposes of this particular paper, however, I will focus only on alter- and anti-masculist initiatives, as together with the feminist movement they play an important role in achieving gender equality in contemporary European societies.

In terms of methodology, this paper draws primarily on the results of the European research project entitled "The role of men in gender equality" (2011–2012) (Scambor et al., 2013) founded within the EC PROGRESS Programme. Over two years, an international team of researchers conducted both quantitative and qualitative analyses of the role of men in achieving gender equality in EU and EFTA countries. In the first stage of the project, country reports (n = 31) were written by national gender and policy experts. Furthermore, this body of national data (both

qualitative and quantitative in character) was supplemented by centralized data on the European level (Eurostat, European Working Conditions Survey, etc.) as well as by findings from the CATI interviews conducted with a group (n=4) of international experts from non-European countries (Australia, Brazil, Canada, USA), which enabled a broadening of the European perspective and a comparison of the situation in other regions. Last but not least, three workshops with gender researchers and stakeholders and a final conference were organized in 2012, which enriched the heuristic basis of the study and allowed important feedback to be received from the group of international experts (Scambor et al., 2014).

Men's initiatives for gender equality in Europe

Since the beginning of the 21st century there has been an observable increase in men's social activism aimed at fostering gender equality at the transnational, national and local levels. In almost all European countries, anti-masculist and alter-masculist informal and formal groups, organizations and networks can be identified. Among their most popular activities are anti-violence work (both prevention and work with perpetrators), pro-gender equality awareness campaigning, and educational projects, fostering engagement of men in childcare and care work as well as work with boys and youngsters.

Transnational networks

One of the most recognizable global initiatives aimed at engaging men and boys in the struggle against male violence against women is the White Ribbon Campaign (WRC). The campaign was initiated in 1991 in Canada as a reaction to the mass shooting of 14 female students from the University of Montreal (Kaufman, 2001). Over the years WRC has spread to over a dozen countries, and is now the most powerful initiative of men who actively oppose gender-based violence.

The main goal of the network is to stop any kind of violence against women. Members of the network educate young men and boys and try to raise public awareness of the problem. The campaign is conducted in cooperation with women's movements, the corporate sector, the media and social partners who are interested in making an end to violence against women (Scambor et al., 2013: 143).

In Europe the campaign has been present since the late 1990s. In 1998 it was initiated in the UK, in 2000 in Austria and in 2005 in Poland, and over the years it has become a semi-institutionalized action as many governments and transnational institutions actively support the campaign and its goals. Among them, the European Institute for Gender Equality, which encourages European politicians to officially support the campaign, can be singled out. According to EIGE data, more than 20 European countries actively participate in WRC actions (EIGE,

2016). Another significant transnational men's network that operates in Europe is MenEngage Europe, the regional branch of the

(...) growing MenEngage global alliance, gathering nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) from all over the world with the support of international agencies such as UN-Women, and connecting initiatives, campaigns, and grassroots groups involved in engaging boys and men in gender justice. (Nardini, 2016: 244)

The European network was initiated in 2009 during a meeting between the representatives of 25 men's groups from the continent and started to grow rapidly after two subsequent meetings organized in 2013 and 2014 in Amsterdam and Zagreb. At the moment MenEngage Europe gathers over 40 members from more than 23 European countries. Among them, the most prominent and active groups such as Man for Change and White Ribbon (the United Kingdom), Män för Jämställdhet (Sweden), eMANcipator (the Netherlands), Männer Gegen Männer-Gewalt (Germany), StatusM (Croatia), Asociación de Hombres por la Igualdad de Genero (Spain), Centar E8 (Serbia), Men's Development Network (Ireland), and Promudo (Portugal) stand out (Nardini, 2016: 244).

Moreover, Europe is an arena where not only preventive but also post-factum work with men who perpetrate gender-based violence is being conducted. In 2009 in Berlin, Work with Perpetrators – European Network (WWP-EN) was established. The network gathers organizations and professionals working with (male) perpetrators of domestic violence, and among its main goals is the promotion of the gender perspective in work with perpetrators. At the moment, WWP-EN gathers over 40 members from more than 20 European countries. Among them Dissnes – Institut für Forschung und Bildung e. V. (Germany), Conexus (Spain), RESPECT (UK), Association for Men's and Gender Issues (Austria), WAVE (Europe), AtV (Norway) and many others can be named. Last but not least, one can identify a number of European research networks organized by scholars and practitioners working on widely defined men and masculinities issues. The first research network CROME: Critical Research on Men in Europe was established in 2002 and its main goal was "to provide data resources and other information about critical research on men and masculinities as well as to develop theoretical and empirical outcomes on men" (Bergmann et al., 2014: 74). A handful of researchers who have been active in CROME since 2010 have continued their work in the informal, multidisciplinary, multi-agency network Men and Gender Equality in Europe, in which the main aim is supporting the development of research on men, masculinities and gender equality in Europe.

National umbrella networks

Besides transnational activism, in several European countries national umbrella networks that gather other (smaller) local groups and organizations can be identified. One of the most significant is the German initiative *Bundersforum Männer*, which has been active since the late 1990s. The forum is based in Berlin and officially is part of the *Heinrich-Böll Stiftung*. It gathers male initiatives that seek gender equality. The main aim of the network is to "(...) sensitize for a plurality of masculinities, to call attention to male problems with patriarchal costs and privileges, and to change gender relations" (Kastein, 2016: 2). Similar national networks also exist in other European countries. In Austria, for instance,

(...) some of the relevant actors in the field of men and gender equality can be found in counseling centers and men's initiatives that emerged in the mid-80s. AMOE, a working platform of men's counseling centers and men's centers in Austria is a non-formal umbrella organization and a country-wide network of centers that offer counseling, personal development/education and contact/communication. (Bergman et al., 2014: 75)

Among other national umbrella networks working on men and masculinity (and gender equality issues) is *alter-masculist Männer.ch* from Switzerland, which

(...) refers to itself as an "umbrella association" and lobby for nationwide men's and father's organizations; it tries to influence political decision-making processes, specifically on the federal level (...), is strongly reminiscent of the feminist slogan "the private is political" or "the personal is political" [but] includes victimizations of men, a typical and frequent strategy of rather anti-feminist discourses. *Männer.ch* demands appropriate political framework conditions, so that the man can be more than a wallet and a 'Sunday father' at home. (Kastein, 2016: 5, 11)

In general, the main areas of interest characteristic for the regional national umbrella networks are male roles in family and work, fatherhood and grandfatherhood, (male) violence (against women), custody issues, health and sexual diversity among men and so-called "men's politics" (Kastein, 2016).

Another country in which national umbrella organizations can be found is the United Kingdom, where in 2007 the *Coalition on Men and Boys* was formally established. The coalition consists of several NGOs and groups such as *Action for Children*, *Bradford University's Research Unit on Men and Masculinities*, the *Fatherhood Institute*, *Men's Advice Line*, *Men's Health Forum*, *Relate and Respect*, and it actively participates in the *White Ribbon Campaign*. Among the networks' main goals are: fostering public discourse on men and boys' issues, acting for

increased gender equality and providing support for increasing gender-sensitivity and responsibility among boys and men, especially with regard to combating gender-based violence and tackling gender-based discrimination (Scambor et al., 2013: 214). Last but not least, the Southern gender regime is represented by the Spanish umbrella organization *Movimiento de Hombres por la Igualdad* (MHE), which connects actors engaged in different forms of pro-gender equality initiatives from the whole country. Among them are

(...) nonprofit organizations such as AHIGE (*Asociación de Hombres por la Igualdad de Género*) with delegations in almost every Spanish city; the Men for Equality Forum from Seville; communities such as *Heterodoxia: Comunidad de Hombres por la Igualdad*; government-led projects to involve men in gender justice initiatives such as the *Gizonduz* project from Basque Country; and locally based men's collectives and smaller groups (such as *Aliats del Feminisme* and *Homes en Dialog* from Barcelona). (Nardini, 2016: 246)

The main fields of the Spanish movements' activities include the promotion of gender justice, advocacy, educational actions, awareness-raising public campaigns, combating gender-based violence and the promotion of so called "new masculinities" (Nardini, 2016).

Besides Central, Western and Southern gender regimes, another region, namely Northern Europe, is an arena where other specific networks, which at the same time can be defined as semi-transnational and semi-national, can be found. *Nordisk forening for forskning om menn og maskuliniteter* (NORMAS) is a research network founded in 2009 that gathers scholars working on men and masculinity issues primarily, but not exclusively, from Scandinavian universities and research centers. The main goal of the network

(...) is to strengthen networking, research and collaboration across the Nordic countries. Among the active members of the association there are both female and male scientists who promote and spread scientifically based research on men and masculinities, which again contributes to progressive social and cultural change, equality and diversity. (Scambor et al., 2013: 213)

At the moment, however, NORMAS limits its activities to two, namely, organizing scholarly conferences on men and masculinities issues and publishing the scientific journal *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*.

National groups and organizations

Last but not least, in almost all European countries one can find formal and informal groups, foundations, associations and independent male actors who act for (broadly understood) gender equality. However, in a paper of this length it is impossible to describe and name them all. According to the authors of the most recent report on European men's pro-gender activism, one can identify "(...) 241 organizations² and 67 individuals includ[ing] academics, trainers, consultants, journalists and politicians involved directly or indirectly in work on men and gender equality in Europe" (Ruxton and van der Gaag, 2012: 26). Moreover, the highest number of such initiatives has been found in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Finland, while the lowest number has been found in the countries from Eastern Europe. The majority of them work broadly on gender equality, with a sub-focus on men and masculinities issues, violence prevention, fatherhood/caregiving issues, men's health, LGBTQ issues and education and learning. Their methods of activity include:

(...) individual counselling; group work with men; group work with men and women; men as allies to women/women's issues; research; policy/political engagement; campaigns; networking; media work; publications, information/awareness raising, law/rights, training. (Ruxton and van der Gaag, 2012: 29)

Therefore, in this sub-section I will present some examples of men's initiatives that can be found in the remaining European gender regimes, namely, in selected Northern, Eastern, and Southern-Eastern countries.

As already mentioned, among the countries most abundant in men's pro-gender equality initiatives, Sweden and Finland can be singled out. One of the most recognizable Swedish anti-masculist organizations, and one of the most active members of MenEngage Europe, is *Män för Jämställdhet* (Mfj). The group was founded in 1993 and to this day their four local branches can be found in Stockholm, Malmö, Gothenburg and Umeå. According to its members, Mfj "(...) is a non-profit, feminist organization working for equality and against male violence. We want to break the link between masculinity and violence and change the prevailing norms of masculinity."³ The activity of these Swedish actors concentrates on violence prevention, transforming toxic and hegemonic forms of masculinities, training men in order to increase the level of gender equality in Sweden and beyond, boys work and work with young fathers, among others (Ruxton and van der Gaag, 2012: 31).

² It should be noted that in the study not only social movements and social initiatives but also official governmental groups and bodies dealing with men and masculinities issues, as well as research centers, were included.

³ See *Män för Jämställdhet*. Available at: <http://www.mfj.se>.

Another representative of pro-gender equality initiatives in the Nordic region is Kriisikeskus Mobile, a Finnish organization focused on counseling men who experience emotional difficulties such as feeling alone and unsupported, dealing with life crises or complicated personal situations or who are willing to be advised by a professional advisor (Ruxton and van der Gaag, 2012: 28).

In the Eastern European countries, the number of male initiatives focused on pro-gender activism is much lower, although since mid-2000 this type of activism has systematically grown. In Poland, for instance, one can find a number of informal groups and independent actors, but also the formal organization Głosy przeciw przemocy (founded in 2016), that can be defined as anti- and alter-masculist. The first Polish informal men's group, Mezczyźni na Rzecz Równości, was established in 2005 and gathered members from several Polish cities interested in activism aimed at combating gender-based violence and tackling discrimination against women. The group was active for several years, and after its disintegration members shifted their activism into different forms in other organizations or as individuals. Today, among Polish anti-masculist and alter-masculist actors several types can be identified:

(...) the first type are men who are active in feminist organizations such as *Fundacja Kobięca* "eFKa" or *Feminoteka* (both organizations regularly publish articles and essays written by pro-feminist men). Others work in foundations and associations which act against discrimination of LGBTQ people, such as KPH or the *Miłość bez granic* group. Many pro-feminists cooperate with NGOs dealing with social inequality and exclusion, or promote human rights and civil society (*Towarzystwo Interwencji Kryzysowej*, Amnesty International, *Fundacja Krytyki Politycznej*). Last but not least, a large group of pro-feminists are men who are not active in any social organizations. For them feminism is an important element of everyday life and helps them to create their individual identities. These men try to spread gender equality ideas and values in everyday life and in interpersonal relations in private and public life. (Wojnicka, 2012: 31)

Another example of Eastern European men's initiatives can be found in a few other countries in the region. In the Czech Republic there is *Liga Otevřených Muzů*, a formal men's organization whose main aims are: promotion of quality of men's lives through support of gender equality from a men's perspective, preventing gender-based violence, and work with male perpetrators of violence.⁴ In Hungary there is a group called *Stop Ferfieraszak* "(...) whose main target is awareness raising about domestic violence and other types of male violence with publications, books, flyers or film club etc. The project runs a hotline to support also men who

⁴ See *LOM – Liga Otevřených Mužů*. Available at: <http://ilom.cz/>.

wish to change the violent behavior in their own lives.” (Kutrovátz 2013: 1)

Last but not least, Southern and Eastern Europe is a terrain where a number of pro-gender equality (male) groups have grown on a regular basis. The majority of groups from the region belong to the MenEngage network. Among them Albanian Counseling Line, Counseling Line for Men and Boys, Association XY (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the already mentioned Status M from Croatia can be singled out.

Conclusions

Men's initiatives aimed at increasing the level of gender equality exist in almost all EU member states as well as other European countries and take a variety of forms – from informal, detached and unstructured groups to the large and globally recognized networks and campaigns. A growing number of European men are engaged in the quest to achieve gender justice and act to end (male) violence against women, children and other men, tackle discrimination of women, try to deconstruct toxic forms of masculinities and search for new ways of being men, including those which go beyond gender binary. One of the most significant successes of such groups is the growing interest in the issues connected to the role of men in gender equality. Within the last ten years the number of male pro-gender initiatives in Europe has doubled, and the main actors have managed to gain the attention of European policymakers. Today their efforts are supported by EU officials who recognize the role of men in achieving these important goals, which is expressed in the growing numbers of social and research initiatives directed at men and gender equality. Nevertheless, such support is not sufficient and there is still a lot to do in terms of institutional support on the transnational, national and local levels. Moreover, to this day a critical mass of men actively engaged in this type of social activism has not been reached, and Europe (as much as other regions) is still a terrain where gender equality activism has a mostly female face. Additionally, in spite of the existence of MenEngage Europe and WWP-EN, as well as a few national networks, the majority of the groups work in isolation and do not collaborate with each other. This situation results in a lack of knowledge and experience transfer, as some initiatives that are repeatedly duplicated do not significantly influence social change. Therefore, increasing this (trans)national cooperation is one of the most important tasks to carry out.

Another weakness characterizing many of the presented initiatives is the lack of the intersectional approach (Hill Collins and Bilge, 2016) in their everyday activism. The majority of the European actors are young/middle-aged white men from the social middle class (Wojnicka, 2012; Kastein, 2016; Nardini, 2016), who do not put enough effort into engaging men with different social backgrounds in their activism. Hence, another task is to strengthen the intersectional perspective in their social activism. This can be achieved not only by expanding the movements'

recruitment territories, but also by strengthening the cooperation between activists and researchers from the field of critical men and masculinities studies and feminist scholars. Last but not least, many European actors have a tendency to focus on a rather narrow but 'safe' spectrum and concentrate their work on men's violence prevention, challenging masculinity patterns or promoting new forms of fatherhood. As much as these types of initiatives are still greatly needed, there are a large number of social problems that are caused by and affect men, but are not dealt with by the anti-masculist activists. As a consequence, these problems are often taken over by masculist and masculinist groups and initiatives, whose understanding of gender equality is far from that expected. Therefore, not only alter-masculist but, most of all, anti-masculist actors should not avoid so-called controversial topics such as custody issues, violence against men, and men's health, and should bring these topics into a reasonable discourse (Scambor et al., 2013). This task should go along with increasing cooperation between anti-masculist and alter-masculist actors, who tend to discuss such issues on a more regular basis and in this way make the latter more gender-aware, thus strengthening cooperation among actors from both types of men's movements.

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