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1. Introduction

I am retroactively writing this passage, looking back at the previous two years. To say that much has changed in this timeframe would be a major understatement. There are, however, despite the rapidly shifting nature of our lives, some constantly relevant guiding beacons which remain significant throughout our current times.

Firstly, climate change, or as it is called with increasing frequency, climate crisis. For decades, the ecological impact of the fossil fuel industry, of animal agriculture, of infrastructure development, of fishing have all been well documented, just to name a few. While the climate crisis has been a force which has constantly weighed on my conscience, the (in)famous 2018 IPCC report, which asserted that, in order to prevent the catastrophic prospect of runaway climate change and ecological collapse, the average global temperature rise compared to pre-industrial levels must not exceed 1.5 degrees Celsius (UNFCCC 2018), has further exacerbated this feeling I've had for years. It was around this time when new grassroots movements such as Extinction Rebellion (XR) and Fridays for Future (FFF) have emerged as newcomers to the climate activism scene, effectively mobilizing a much younger generation of activists, who were born into the rampant devastation of the environment on the behalf of the incumbent decision-makers. The veterans of Greenpeace (GP) have also noticed the uptick in the interest towards climate activism. Not much later, XR and FFF chapters have started sprouting across the world. My story, and subsequently, the main area which has inspired my master's thesis, pertains to the climate movement in Hungary: a loose affinity group of individuals across a handful of local environmental NGO chapters: XR, FFF and GP. With myself being a member of our local Hungarian XR chapter in Budapest almost since its inception in February of 2019, I have had a multitude of interactions and experiences within the movement. I have always been fascinated by

social dynamics and social phenomena, especially in their capacity to influence societal change, what motivates people to act, how communities form etc.

This interest of mine serves as a good segue for the second “guiding beacon”. Before the IPCC report of 2018, I have been vegan for two years, and I have been actively participating in Hungarian vegan and animal rights activist circles. Given the environmental impact of the consumption of animal products, I argue that veganism is also a conscious effort against climate change. There, I have noticed that vegan men were (and still are to this day) the minority compared to vegan women. In my conversations where my food choices inevitably get brought up, I was intrigued by how there was a lot of emotional and cultural attachment to the consumption of animal products, especially meat, which was much less pronounced when talking to non-vegan women.

While these topics have interested me for longer, one thing has constantly gnawed on my mind: Why are men less likely to become vegan? I have suspected social factors to be at play, but I wasn’t aware of the severity and depth of the phenomenon. A 2019 study written by Janet K. Swim et al. (2019) has found that men and women engage in different so-called pro-environmental behaviors (or PEBs for short), which are individual and/or collective actions one takes in order to help the environment. Gender roles are ascribed to actions and behaviors; for example, the usage of canvas bags and the consumption of “green” products is associated with feminine gender roles, and actions such as “changing furnace filters or caulking windows” is ascribed to masculine gender roles (ibid.: 2). Interestingly, participating in green activism (or more precisely, “being a member of an activist group or protesting”) is, according to Swim et al. (2019: 2), associated with being masculine and pertains to male gender roles. Furthermore, engaging in PEBs is influenced by one’s fear of being perceived to engage in acts which make

one appear to be like the opposite sex. When this fear is felt to be warranted, men are less likely to behave in a pro-environmental way, such as using reusable bags, not eating meat or buying green products (ibid.: 3).

Being fascinated by the results of this paper, it has shaped my understanding of green activism, and has inspired me to focus on the unique interactions between environmental activism and gender roles and/or expectations. It is from mainly this curiosity that this thesis has taken its shape.

In the following passages, I shall outline the precise research questions that I endeavor to examine and find answers through the research and analysis detailed in the present thesis.

1.2. Research question(s) and relevance regarding development studies

My thesis revolves around the masculinity image of male climate activists: how their upbringing, socialization and other influences have shaped and informed their navigating through their lives as a man, and on top of that, a climate activist. My hypothesis is that participation in environmental organizations has a positive effect on male climate activists' perceived notions of masculinity, or to put it simply, what it means for them to be a man: they become more accepting along the lines of gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, and therefore are becoming more effective agents of change regarding both social and ecological justice. Coupled with Swim et al.'s observation regarding the participation in protests and activism, the stage is set for a very rich environment for research. With such a wide range of activities that perspire in environmental organizational contexts (for example, attending meetings, flash mobs, banner drops, artistic expression, street performances, distributing stickers, printing and disseminating flyers etc.), there are many forms through which pro-environmental behaviors can emerge.

In combination of the aforementioned factors, my main research question can be formulated thusly:

In what ways does being a climate activist subjectively influence the masculinity image of men in Hungary?

Alongside this inquiry, a multitude of questions arise which may serve to underline and guide the present thesis in its endeavor to seek answers:

- What does it mean for Hungarian climate activist men to be a man?
- How has becoming a climate activist changed, if at all, their perception of masculinity?
- What are the positive and negative images of masculinity that they have held in the past, and/or still hold in the present?
- How do climate activist men in Hungary relate to their peers within the movement?
- In what ways does environmental activism shape the disposition towards gendered expectations, and the perceptions thereof, for men?
- What are the implications of masculinities in climate-NGOs in regard to International Development (e.g., their impact on gender equality, gender politics, climate justice and their relevance in feminist studies)?

These questions aim to elucidate the relationship between the motivation towards engaging in pro-environmental behaviors and the individual, and as an extension, subjective sense of masculinity, be it in terms of the individual himself, or of others. The present thesis, through combining the aforementioned research questions, endeavors to show the multifaceted ways through which the participation in environmental activism, being part of a greater movement in

service of fighting against climate change, shape and inform the behaviors and attitudes of climate activist men.

In which ways does International Development as a discipline become relevant in terms of this topic? First and foremost, the issue of climate change is a global one, and quite possibly the largest in our lifetime. It has been the main focus of several United Nations agendas for decades, evidenced by the Kyoto Protocol of 1992, the Millennium Development Goals of 2000 (MDGs), the Sustainable Development Goals of 2015 (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement of 2015, to name a few.

The SDGs in particular are of high relevance, especially in the context of International Development: bridging the gap across the myriad fronts of inequality across multiple disciplines, be it economic, political, social or ecological (e.g., poverty, gender inequality, climate change, world hunger, inadequate water supplies etc.), it sees these issues as inexorably linked to one another, and prescribes policy decisions to effectively mitigate and prevent negative outcomes, as well as foster positive change. The climate crisis exacerbates already existing inequalities, such as between Global North versus Global South, race, gender and age (see *Climate Change and Social Inequality* 2017).

Goal 5 of the SDGs focuses on gender equality, albeit with the deliberate intention to address the inequalities that women and girls face in the world. While on a surface level there is nothing wrong with this approach and the aims of this effort is undoubtedly noble and a positive outcome, there may be some discursive pitfalls to the omission of men in the discourse surrounding gender equality. It is my conviction that, firstly, the attitude of the privileged side (men in this case) has a large impact on the legitimization of the strides towards equality surrounding the unprivileged group, and secondly, the privileged have a role in creating and shaping society in a more

egalitarian image: after all, the presence of cisgender and heterosexual allies at LGBTQIA+ pride events bolsters their popular support, the same way white people attended Black Lives Matter rallies and protests across the USA, the UK and other parts of the world. So, too, appears the need for feminist men to advocate for women's issues. Reading through a part of the literature surrounding environmentalism and gender roles, the status of people's perceived notions of masculinity and femininity affect and oftentimes outright hinder types of behavior that would otherwise be beneficial to society. PEBs are merely a fraction of this phenomenon. To give a taste of the person whose work this thesis draws the most from, let us turn to a quote from Raewyn Connell regarding international development:

Yet the evidence on global dynamics in gender is growing, and it is clear that processes such as economic restructuring, long-distance migration, and the turbulence of "development" agendas have the power to reshape local patterns of masculinity and femininity (Connell 2005; Morrell and Swart 2005). There is every reason to think that interactions involving global masculinities will become of more importance in gender politics, and this is a key arena for future research on hegemony. (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 850)

The "development agendas", such as the MDGs and SDGs hold within themselves the potential to influence gender relations worldwide. Global effects have local impacts, and vice versa. While contemporary development agendas have a tendency to center women's issues and subsequent gendered expectations regarding womanhood and femininity (a trend, which is absolutely warranted considering the disproportionate amount of privilege in favor of men, which is especially more pronounced in the Global South), there is a strong case to be made to critically examine masculinity and men's issues, if for nothing else, then, to incentivize men towards becoming strong allies of the marginalized groups outlined in previous paragraphs, as well as passages as they follow in this thesis.

1.3. Reflecting on my personal situatedness

Giving thought to one's situatedness within research; that is, considering the influences one may have on their relations to the subject matter and the studies they conduct; is an endeavor worth critically dealing with. Given that the present thesis examines a niche and focused constituency, namely adult climate activist men in Hungary, to which I personally belong to, it especially stands to reason that this state of affairs ought to be at least given a glance.

Before giving an account on my situatedness, let us first take a look at the work within the literature of social sciences, which give credence to the importance, or even the necessity, of a critical epistemological reflection in this regard:

Donna Haraway, a prolific feminist and postmodernist scholar, has argued in her seminal paper "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" (1988) that the traditional notion of objectivity (i.e., a centralized understanding of knowledge which stands above all other knowledges) is historically a product of white, androcentric and capitalistic society, and as such, it privileges the perspectives and knowledges of the people who belong to these identity groups to the detriment of those who fall outside of its purview (Haraway 1988: 576-580). Her formulation holds that, in order to genuinely serve the cause of objectivity (that is, to epistemologically get closer to "the truth"), the researcher ought to "situate" oneself, and acknowledge themselves as a subject in their research and their subsequent interpretation, so as to make clear the fact that no claim to absolute objectivity can be made (ibid.: 584-587). Through the means of this elaboration, any pretense of objectivity can be avoided (which first and foremost served the interests of a Western and male-dominated academia, and on a larger scale, Western and male-oriented society as a whole), thus giving rise to multiple knowledges, each gaining purchase in part through their situatedness, becoming

horizontally linked and thus all open to critical examination and interpretation, dispelling potentially embedded and ingrained dogmas (ibid.: 587-590). Tying this thought back to my thesis, I, as well as the literature the thesis references, writes about masculinities plurally, rather than singularly.

In a similar fashion, Carolyn Ellis et al. write about the usefulness of describing and analyzing one's personal experiences regarding specific cultural phenomena, which is known as the method of autoethnography (Ellis et al. 2011). There is some overlap between Haraway (1988) and Ellis et al.'s (2011) goals, in that their methods both serve to uproot and open up the possibilities of conducting research in a way that is different from the aforementioned rigid, "canonical" structuring of so-called "objective" knowledge (ibid.: 273-275). In this autoethnographic approach, Ellis et al. argue that the usage of "personal experience" (in reference to the researcher's accounts) in order to gain insight into "cultural experience" (i.e., the knowledges of the constituency to be analyzed and interpreted) is indispensable in terms of its importance (ibid.: 276). To this end, the vivid and evocative description and illustration of both phenomena serve the ends of qualitative, ethnographic analysis, and to make it richer (or as Ellis et al. put it, "thicker") (ibid.: 277). Furthermore, it enables the body of research to emerge dynamically: it serves as a conduit for allowing and fostering the emergence of an unfolding story or narrative (ibid.: 278). While the present thesis does not consciously use autoethnographic analysis as its main method, the qualitative part is bolstered by the insight its epistemological underpinnings provide.

To underscore the importance of mindfulness regarding such epistemological approaches (as discussed above and later in the qualitative analysis), it is important to constantly assert and be aware of one's subjectivity and situatedness: Lapadat (2017) describes the very real pitfall of

writing autoethnographically as a single researcher. While the method's usefulness in terms of giving new perspectives from which to analyze a given phenomenon through personal experience is useful, it might in turn become rigid and self-serving if not critically examined (ibid.: 596). In order to ensure such reflection, Lapadat argues that through the inclusion of multiple researchers (through it becomes what she calls "collaborative autoethnography"), such problems could be addressed (ibid.: 600). Because this thesis is written by only one person, I open myself up to the possibility that such pitfalls may show in my analysis.

What follows next is an account of my situatedness, which serves to elucidate the aspects of my identity, my socialization and my experiences which I deem relevant to me in writing this thesis. This account is by no means exhaustive. To give an analogy, it's akin to attempt playing chess with oneself: one already knows the moves of the other color, making it nigh impossible to meaningfully engage in the activity in a way that the full experience of multiple participants may give.

I am a cisgender man, who was born in Germany to a German-Hungarian family and raised in Hungary after moving there when I was three years old, where I grew up and live my life when I'm not studying in Vienna. Because of the bilingual nature of my socialization and learning English from an early age, coupled with the rapid advancement of internet technology, I spent a lot of time in front of screens in one way or the other. When it was in front of the TV, it was mostly German, and when in front of the computer, it was mostly English. As a result of this sort of multilingual everyday life, there were (and still are in a vestigial sense) some mannerisms, especially when it comes to speech, which have hindered me in being able to fully consider myself to be "in the know" regarding Hungarian popular culture, and as a result, regarding my contemporaries. Given these circumstances, on a subjective level, I feel as though I'd been raised

by the internet rather than by anything or anyone else. I am a Hungarian citizen with permanent residency in Hungary, the overwhelming majority of my friends are Hungarian, and yet there is a certain *je ne sais quoi*, the feeling of being Hungarian “but not really”.

I am an active member of Extinction Rebellion Hungary, in fact, I joined not much after it was founded by some friends and comrades of mine. I know most of the participants I have asked to interview or fill out questionnaires from my everyday life. Speaking anecdotally, the inclusive nature of climate movements has helped me be able to have honest and profound discussions with my peers, and to effectively communicate boundaries and topics which fall outside of either side’s comfort zone.

As previously mentioned, I am a cisgender man, going by he/him pronouns. On top of that, I am aromantic and asexual: I don’t experience sexual and/or romantic attraction towards any people. The reasons why this is an important point should be evident: allosexuality and alloromanticism (i.e., experiencing sexual and/or romantic attraction towards at least one gender, respectively) are the norm in society globally speaking, and being an outlier in terms of life experiences, desires and life goals which are considered significant by an overwhelming majority of people (e.g., dating, romance, marriage, sex, having children etc.), it makes for a unique circumstance to say the least. If nothing else, it stands as a reminder that there is a myriad of differences between people.

I am white. Most of the climate movement in Hungary consists of white people demographically. While there have been strides made towards actively becoming more heterogenous, especially through the inclusion of the largest minority, namely Roma people, this is a phenomenon that, in later chapters when looking at subaltern masculinities, will become relevant. In this sense, because Roma people are also Hungarian, and with such a significant constituency missing from

the analysis, let this passage serve as a caveat and an opportunity for both further research as well as for making progress in the movement by the organizations themselves.

This paragraph could go on for even longer, and as fun as though it might be to indulge, the aforementioned topics more or less inform all the ways through which I relate to my environment and to the people around me. The purpose of this chapter is to showcase the ways my interactions with the participants may be informed and/or influenced, in order to ensure some level of epistemological transparency.

1.4. Masculinity studies

While the concept of subjective masculinity pertains specifically to the field of psychology, the following expressions surrounding the question of what it means to be a man are largely terms which are used in the field of men's studies, gender studies, and in a broader sense, social studies. This chapter outlines the relevant underpinnings regarding masculinity, especially in the context of Hungary.

1.4.1. The importance of masculinity studies today

The reasons for critically examining masculinities¹ in present society are ever-increasing: the relations between men and women, men and men, and women and women are in constant flux, and yet, the notion of an overarching patriarchal power relation still remains:

Today, as in the past, men generally hold political, economic, and religious power in most societies thanks to patriarchy, a system whereby men largely control women and children, shape ideas about appropriate gender behavior, and generally dominate society. (Lockard 2015: 88)

¹ The plural form signifies the existence of multiple masculinity types, as masculinity is not a single, monolithic entity.

This conclusion is one that has been cemented and underscored by both theoretical and empirical study. The present thesis acknowledges the necessity of feminism and the struggle against unequal and hierarchical power relations in the name of social justice. At the same time, as notable scholars in the field (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005), I reject the essentialization of oppression along gender lines: one does not automatically become an agent in perpetuating inequality. Rather, it is a relation emerging from social constructs, societal organization and socialization, to name a few factors.

In effort to tie maleness and manhood to politics, right-populist movements and governments appeal, sometimes similarly to one another, to the gendered expectations of both men and women. The usage of “us versus them” rhetoric, of “national identity”, of religious traditionalism and exclusionary definitions around which groups of people belong to the nation according to the government and their constituency all erode the social fabric of an inclusive and progressive society (Barát 2021: 67-72). Erzsébet Barát argues that, in order to effectively combat the patriarchal power relations enforced by the right-populist inclinations of governments (namely focusing on Hungary and the Fidesz-KDNP coalition, examined in the next chapter), there ought to be an understanding that masculinity which positions itself as a potential force for progressive change, fosters trust between progressives, feminists and allies in a horizontal fashion, and which includes, rather than excludes, in order to ward itself against right-populist rhetoric to take hold in progressive movements, as was the case with the term “gender ideology” (ibid.: 74).

The field of masculinity studies, then, has the potential to meaningfully contribute to the academic discourse surrounding feminism and gender equality, and as a more ambitious goal, to meaningful social change. To this end, we must then take a look at current and contemporary circumstances which inform the way masculinities are being talked and written about in the

specific context of Hungary. This is by no means an exhaustive review, rather, it serves to showcase the cornerstones which are most relevant to the thesis at hand.

1.4.2. Masculinity in Hungary: over ten years of Fidesz

The incumbent Fidesz-KDNP coalition in Hungary has been in power since 2010. This means that the people who have turned 18 years old in the recent years have had this right-populist government for the majority of their lives. It is no doubt, then, that its existence has shaped the attitudes and dispositions of men in Hungary. Speaking from personal experience, as someone who considers himself to be progressive and actively engages in activities in the name of social (and later, environmental) justice, this influence has become increasingly disheartening.

Finnish sociologist Katinka Linnamäki (2021: 33) argues that Fidesz, in its right-populist appeal to “protect traditional values” from (neo)liberal currents, it fosters a certain type of masculinity, which then becomes hegemonic: The masculinity that Fidesz appeals to, is family-oriented, ethno-nationalistic, upholds religious tradition, and conforms to traditional gender roles. In short: illiberal, both in conviction as well as in behavior).

There are some elements of political significance downstream from this preferential disposition of the Hungarian government towards the type of masculinity described in the above paragraph: the aforementioned constellations, among other factors, contribute to the fact that “men are roughly 40% more likely to vote for the far right than female voters” (Kinnvall 2015: 523). Simply put, right-populism requires the continuous appeal to the fears and insecurities of men in order to secure its voter-base. In the case of Fidesz, it has done so by positioning and posturing its masculinity image as one which protects the Hungarian nation from the increasing societal and cultural pressures of (neo)liberalism (Linnamäki 2021: 29).

In a nutshell, this is the kind of masculinity that the Hungarian government (which has become synonymous with the Fidesz-KDNP coalition in the past decade thanks to its two-thirds majority in Parliament) sees as preferable, and as the core demographic for its constituency.

This chapter has served to emphasize the necessity to change the dominant notions of masculinity in society, as their current form serves right-populism. Thus, through means outside of government entities, namely NGOs and CSOs, positive social change may arise, alternative masculinities may gain significance, and as such may serve as a mitigating force against the gender imbalance in voting for right-wing parties. However, this is an uphill battle on multiple fronts: Fidesz has had a history of antagonizing and delegitimizing NGOs and CSOs (Szuleka 2018), and in the specific context of climate organizations, which appeared as a force for addressing an issue that was, up until recently, only represented in a nongovernmental way, Fidesz has started to incorporate environmental protection in its rhetoric (Hoerber et al. 2021). It will be interesting to see what changes, if at all, the upcoming 2022 parliamentary election will bring in Hungary. Until then, the next chapter focuses on the epistemological underpinnings of the methodology used in the upcoming interviews with climate activist men. We shall see some overlap with some of the aforementioned phenomena under the current Hungarian government.

2. Methodology

Having laid out the broad topics concerning the research questions within the present thesis, as well as outlining the situatedness of myself and of the Hungarian climate movement, we must now look at the methodological considerations in order to effectively seek answers to said questions.

2.1. Mixed methods

As the title of this thesis suggests, the following research uses a so-called “mixed methods” approach: it incorporates both qualitative (i.e., the research and subsequent interpretation of semi-structured interviews) and quantitative (i.e., a questionnaire which serves as a means to operationalize factors concerning masculinity, which can then be interpreted).

What is the value of using a plurality of methods instead of a singular one? As M. L. Small (2011: 61) details, mixed methods analysis, at least on a foundational level, has been around since the 1950s. The rationale at the time, which still holds up today, is that conducting both qualitative and quantitative evaluations within a given field of research allows for their strengths to complement each other, and for their weaknesses (especially regarding their gaps and limitations) to be mitigated (ibid.). Contemporary considerations even go further and argue that a mixed methods approach “might constitute an alternative, not merely derivative, methodological strategy” (ibid.).

In terms of motivation as to why a researcher would want to use a mixed methods approach, Small argues that two key justifications are given within the body of available literature. First, confirmation (sometimes also called “triangulation”), meaning that different approaches yield results similar to one another, regardless of the diversity of methods (i.e., semi-structured

interviews versus a questionnaire) (Small 2011: 63-64). In this regard, the underlying motivation remains focused, perhaps to a fault, as, according to its critics, it leaves out the importance of elucidating the strengths and weaknesses of the respective methods used (ibid.).

The second aspect to consider is “complementarity”. Using a mix of methods allows for the filling of gaps left in the considerations of the respective approaches if they were to be used independently, allowing for the generation of a larger amount of meaningful data (ibid.: 64-66). This approach seems to also be more empowering in the context of constructivist lenses of analysis, as complementary approaches regarding methods are used “when [researchers] are reluctant to limit the kind of knowledge gained to what a type of data can produce” (ibid.: 64).

Another factor worth considering is the question of order, or, in another word, sequencing: If a researcher used a multitude of research methods, in what sequence do they conduct them? The first answer would be to do them one after another, in other words, sequentially (ibid.: 67). This approach allows for “space” between the different methods, and as such, provides a platform for reflection and the construction of new hypotheses before continuing with the next study (ibid.). On the other hand, “concurrent designs” collect data with a multitude of methods at the same time (ibid.: 68). This is especially useful when conducting research that is time-sensitive, and wants to gain insight into a phenomenon in a specific timeframe.

Which approaches, then, complement the present thesis’s objectives the most? This question cannot be answered conclusively by virtue of its timing. Even though foresight would be useful in this regard, one can only be equipped with the ability to infer based on the researcher’s appraisal before going ahead with their analysis, and with hindsight after the fact. Whatever the case may be, application of a mixed methods approach and its usefulness has been well

documented. It is within this context that the present thesis utilizes its methodological underpinnings.

2.2. Qualitative framework

Due to COVID-19, in-person interviews are to be avoided entirely, if possible. This in and of itself is a phenomenon which warrants further inquiry. However, it is not the purpose of this thesis to elaborate on the impacts of socially distanced online-interviews regarding qualitative methods of social science research.

In the end, as Charmaz's constructivist Grounded Theory (2006) outlines (which is the main approach used in the qualitative analysis), meaning is ultimately constructed through interaction: both I and the interviewee have different notions and values which we connect to a given phenomenon. That is not to say one has inherently more truth value than the other, but rather, we are getting closer to that "truth" that critical realist ontology holds.

In all likelihood, this will hold true to phrases such as "man", "masculinity", "climate activism", "gender identity" etc., and while analyzing the data of the interviews, whose main component in regard to Grounded Theory is coding, I ought to be aware of the influence I have on the process not just as a researcher and interviewer, but also as a male climate activist. My mind does not exist in a vacuum and is constantly shaped by societal influences, whose impacts I can never objectively observe in their entirety, nor is it my desire or duty to do so, rather, it is an ideal to strive towards in order to account for the many gaps which may form within the research.

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2.2.1. Interview questions

Following Charmaz's (2003) and Roberts's (2020) outlines for writing interview questions for semi-structured sessions, I've deliberated the following inquiries:

1. How did COVID change you and/or your organization?
2. Can you describe your interactions/experiences with non-male climate activists?
3. Can you describe your interactions/experiences with other male climate activists?
4. What does it mean for you to be a man? How would you describe it?
5. Who are/were the male role models in your life? How do you look back at past role models?
6. How has being a man shaped your interactions within your climate organization?
7. Can you describe how you've spent your time before becoming a climate activist? How would you describe the person you were then?
8. Why did you join your organization?
9. What kind of activist work do you do within the organization?
10. How have your interactions in general changed outside of the organization after joining?

The aim with these inquiries (in roughly that order) is to establish a free-flowing rapport before asking pointed questions about more sensitive matters. Since COVID is the main force which has shaped the lives of people in the last year, it seems natural that people would have opinions about

it and have at least a couple of points through which they might candidly reveal the impacts it had on them personally, as well as their environmental organization. Another note worth considering is that participants may not feel comfortable about disclosing sensitive information even after assuring them that their footage would only be used for this thesis, and as such some questions fill the need for having something to “reach back” for, as it were.

Since the interviews are semi-structured, this guide serves not as a rigid, pre-defined list of inquiries which all need to be tackled in its duration (in this case being 30-45 minutes each). Remaining flexible is one of the advantages of a semi-structured interview, and being an adult male climate activist myself, it behooves me to use an approach which best ensures a type of interaction that strikes the balance between structured (i.e. not going in “blind”) and free-flowing conversation.

2.2.2. Grounded Theory and its methodological underpinnings

As for qualitative, interview-based data collection and research analysis, the first question to be addressed is the matter of approach: as previously outlined, the phenomena to be analyzed (pro-environmental behavior, climate activism, motivation, subjective and hegemonic masculinity) are quite broad and general, making the consolidation of a singular definition difficult. That is not the aim of this present thesis. Rather, it is to understand how meaning is formed when talking about the aforementioned concepts with interview subjects. This kind of epistemology necessarily becomes plural by virtue of asking multiple interviewees, each with their unique understanding of these phenomena.

For this reason, a relativistic ontological approach fits this type of research, as it allows for all interpretations of subjective experience to be incorporated into the process of analysis as salient

data points (Levers 2013). This does not invalidate the importance of ontology at, all, rather, it acknowledges the limitations of what we as humans are able to perceive as existing (O’Grady 2002).

While there may be overarching shared social phenomena that impact a given constituency, their interpretation of an experience of said social effects and impacts may indeed have a high amount of variance. This difference (or dissonance, depending on the disposition of the given social scientist conducting the research) is especially salient within the concept of symbolic interactionism (Charmaz 1990), which is a key factor in Grounded Theory.

Grounded Theory draws from pragmatic epistemological thought, which holds that action, interaction, experience, influence et cetera all derive meaning from their use in a given context, meaning that it’s malleable to the extent of its spectrum of uses. As such, Grounded Theory draws from philosophies within social sciences which have almost a century of tradition (see Dewey 1929; Meade 1934).

Grounded Theory as a method is not uniform in its utilization: Levers (2013) outlines 3 distinct ontological and epistemological paradigms regarding its usage in the context of the “force versus fit” debate within the discourse:

Firstly, the postpositivist paradigm, which entails that there exists an absolute truth, but it cannot be ascertained and/or reached by science as it stands right now.

Secondly, the interpretivist paradigm, which also holds that the aforementioned absolute truth cannot be captured, and reality can also only be represented and interpreted. Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm acknowledges that the scientist’s disposition towards the world factors heavily into their conducted research.

Thirdly, the constructivist paradigm, which asserts that knowledge is shaped and formed by the interactions between the scientist and their subjects. It holds that the interpreter is not an objective examiner of phenomena, rather, they are also actively influenced by the phenomena in question, and as such is all the while subject to it. From these interactions, an understanding is constructed “brick by brick”, and since the observer plays a role in influencing the observation and vice versa, the findings are not discovered, but constructed. (ibid.: 3).

All three of these Grounded Theory paradigms are well-established within social science literature, encompassing decades of extensive and documented usage. As scientific consensus validates these approaches, it is at the social scientist’s discretion to choose one paradigm along their preference in terms of ontological and epistemological disposition (ibid.: 3). As such, I am personally opting for the third approach, namely constructivist Grounded Theory, as it is my conviction at the time of writing this present thesis that a shared approach towards knowledge-construction lends itself well to navigating and maneuvering rapidly emerging unforeseen circumstances (included, but not limited to the recent developments in regards to the COVID-19 pandemic). Due to this fact, it especially behooves my study to explicitly take into consideration the epistemologies of my fellow green activists within and without XR.

Another concept worth mentioning is the notion of emergence. As Levers writes:

There seems to be a generalized agreement that emergence refers to an entity that is “more than the sum of its parts.” The summation takes on novel properties and traits that do not exist at a lower level and is not necessarily predictable (Jost, Berschinger, & Olbrich 2010). For example, a snowflake is an unpredictable pattern that emerges from frozen water particles, the flight pattern unpredictable from a flock of birds, or a hurricane unpredictable from air and water molecules. (2013: 4)

While emergence is a broad philosophical concept with many relevant perspectives in regard to science, the most important section pertaining to the present thesis is its salience regarding

Grounded Theory. Key components to examine are whether or not the observer is a separate outside entity independent of the given analysis, or are they rather an integral and inexorable part in the process itself, linked to the input, output and throughput of the research. At this juncture, Levers (2013) examines the emergence of each paradigm previously mentioned, i.e., postpositivist, constructionist and interpretivist, respectively. Coinciding with my previous decision of choosing the constructivist paradigm for Grounded Theory, utilizing constructionist emergence seems like a good fit:

Although the researcher is not fully external to the process of emergence because she is actively constructing the theory, she is not part of the constituent elements in that she acknowledges a world that exists outside of her mind. There is a relationship that exists between the constituent elements and the emergence through her, yet she is not a constituent element. She is external to the data yet internal to the emergence because there is a relationship between the data and the emergence through the researcher. The data influence how the researcher constructs the emerging theory and the emerging theory influences how the researcher interprets the data, and all of this process is influenced by societal structures. (Levers 2013: 5)

The way Levers describes constructionist emergence is in line with Charmaz's (2006) description of her paradigm having a "critical realist ontology and a relativist epistemology" (Levers 2013: 5), and as such fits the aforementioned paradigm, whose meaning I've circumscribed in a previous paragraph.

In summary, there are a multitude of different methodological approaches within Grounded Theory, along with another set when observing the emergence of data. As far as its relevance to this present thesis, my choice rests with constructivist Grounded Theory in combination with Constructionist Emergence as outlined by Levers (2013), as these approaches fit my ontological and epistemological convictions and beliefs, specifically ontological critical realism with epistemological subjectivism, with the focus being on knowledge being something that is

constructed through interactions between observer and subject. The subsequent qualitative analysis shall be conducted in accordance with this paradigm.

2.3. Definitions

This chapter deals with the concrete definitions and phrases used in the pertaining literature regarding the qualitative analysis. Note that these are in no way exhaustive, as the term “hegemonic masculinity” alone nets 63 thousand results on Google Scholar (in quotation marks, as of 5th of May 2021). Rather, this section endeavors to provide a baseline understanding of the key concepts and the conflicts between them within the scientific literature, which are relevant to this thesis.

Another point worth mentioning is that the literature review required for outlining the definitions below was deliberately done after the Grounded Theory analysis following Charmaz’s outlining of the conduct (2006). Doing research in this sequence ensures the removal of some levels of bias on behalf of the researcher, allowing for the theory to earnestly emerge from the data itself.

2.3.1. Masculinity/Men’s studies

What does it mean to be a man? This is the central question laid at the heart of men’s studies (which is a term used virtually interchangeably with masculinity studies) (Brod 1987; Gottzén et al. 2020: 1). It has undergone decades of research across multiple disciplines, including (but not limited to): psychology (Kupers 2005), child and youth studies (Gottzén et al. 2020), health (Stillion 1995) and care work sociology (Bjørnholt 2014). Merely taking a cursory look at the array of fields present, it follows that it is interdisciplinary at the very least, and also has had recent transdisciplinary applications as well, such as in the tourism sector (Porter et al. 2021).

Masculinity studies have come a long way since its initial theorization in the 1980s:

“The dominant narrative of the field, often found in textbooks and reviews, is that men have been at the (center) in mainstream social science and humanities scholarship for a long time, but this place has been mostly taken for granted and an ‘absent presence’ where they have not been studied as gendered beings. It was not until the 1970s, when feminist and gay researchers started to theorize the role of men and masculinity in society, that an explicit inquiry into men as men and masculinities started on a broader scale. Masculinity studies was founded by a group of primarily White, pro-feminist men in the U.S., U.K. and Australia in the 1980s – most of them social scientists and sociologists. Throughout 1990s, the research area grew considerably, developed new topics and theories and spread into a variety of social sciences and humanities disciplines, as well as to different regions of the world. Masculinity studies is today a well-established part of interdisciplinary gender research. The last decades have been characterized by an increased empirical diversity and development of new theoretical perspectives. Since the early 2000s, a growing number of masculinity scholars have integrated theoretical insights from contemporary ‘third wave’ feminism and its poststructuralist and postcolonial influences. Queer and sexuality studies have also been of great importance, and the study of intersections between social categories such as gender, class, ethnicity, race, embodiment and age has emerged lately. According to this story, the field was primarily developed in Anglo-American settings, but there is now scholarly work from all parts of the world, including the global South.” (Gottzén et al. 2020: 1)

The point of this thesis is precisely to contribute to this “empirical diversity”. My hypothesis is that climate activist circles provide a unique opportunity to examine opportunities for radical, and, dare I say, revolutionary change.

2.3.2. Hegemonic masculinity

What is the “ideal” masculinity image in a given society or social group? What aspects constitute its inner and outer properties? How do other masculinities affect, influence and conflict with it, and vice versa? These, among others, are the questions which Raewyn Connell’s definition of hegemonic masculinity endeavors to examine.

Starting in the 1980s, she first used it to theorize a model explaining the role of men and the inequalities within their ranks stemming from their male socialization in Australian high schools (Connell et al.; 1982). Drawing from the Gramscian definition of “hegemony”, i.e., a means through which class relations stabilize, which was, in the early years of conceptualizing the

theory, an effort of transposing this view onto the male sex (Connell & Messerschmidt; 2005, p. 831). Having gone through much critical analysis in the following decades, it has continued to stay relevant to this day (Vescio & Schermerhorn 2021). Terry Kupers describes Connell's postulation thusly:

“In contemporary American and European culture, (hegemonic masculinity) serves as the standard upon which the "real man" is defined. According to (R. W.) Connell, contemporary hegemonic masculinity is built on two legs, domination of women and a hierarchy of intermale dominance. It is also shaped to a significant extent by the stigmatization of homosexuality. Hegemonic masculinity is the stereotypic notion of masculinity that shapes the socialization and aspirations of young males. Today's hegemonic masculinity in the United States of America and Europe includes a high degree of ruthless competition, an inability to express emotions other than anger, an unwillingness to admit weakness or dependency, devaluation of women and all feminine attributes in men, homophobia, and so forth.” (Kupers 2005: 716)

The term has been one surrounded by controversy throughout the 1990s and 2000s. The seminal paper written by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) chronicles in detail the types of criticism levied at the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and at the same time strives to reconcile and reconstitute the term in order to account for its prior shortcomings. The concept itself has evolved and is still being evolved to this day.

It is worth noting that there is no one singular masculinity, but rather a plurality of different masculinities, all interacting with each other in different ways. One cannot point at a single man and say that he is the singular bastion of hegemonic masculinity. Instead, it is a model which can be used to indicate “widespread ideas, fantasies, and desires” (ibid.: 838). Masculinities can be observed and delineated across smaller groups, such as pubs and school classrooms (ibid.: 840). This point becomes especially salient when considering avenues for social change: a given collection of men within institutions, organizations and social spaces can represent their own hegemonic masculinity, and as such gain bargaining power in the confines of broader societal structures (see Yang 2020: 328).

Finally, gender, and as an extension, hegemonic masculinity, too, is relational: in contrast to essentialism (i.e., the notion that there are fixed tenets of any given identity which exist independent of social phenomena and interactions (Howson 2005: 38), relationality is defined as acknowledging the construction and interconnectedness of interests and identity, which can be sorted along individual/personal and collective lines. These two rough groups (which can be further broken down, but for the sake of this thesis, these two levels shall suffice) are in constant interaction: the individual shapes the collective and vice versa. None of the two exist separate from each other. At the same time, as relationality appears in Connell's literature, there is a clear hierarchical structure between individual and collective. What a relational analysis allows is to approach social phenomena without resorting to "determinism, essentialism and, ultimately, functionalism" (Howson 2005: 38). By using a constructivist Grounded Theory approach, it stands to reason that I ought to avoid essentialist notions wherever possible.

With the researcher who coined the phrase herself admitting the vast plurality of usage enabled by the concept of Hegemonic Masculinity (ibid.), this thesis is therefore better served if its aspects would be compared with the Grounded Theory conceptualization that arose from my interviews.

2.3.3. Hegemony

In order to understand hegemonic masculinity, we must also take a look at Connell's Gramscian influences, which have constituted as a springboard for her analysis, and, to this day, serves as a point of controversy and contention within the literature of masculinity studies.

Above all else, Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony is a theory of cultural domination (as opposed to overt, violent coercion) which requires the active consent of a given society. This

consent is represented by socially influential institutions, such as the press and the media. The use of force becomes legitimized through the consent of said majority, which is an amalgamation best described by the umbrella term “civil society” (Yang 2020: 324). What falls under this label is a factor of time and location, and is another prominent point of contention: its arena serves as an abstract place of struggle which is precisely hegemonic in the Gramscian sense.

In a simplified way, one aspect of Gramsci’s hegemony concept is force plus consent. Another one is the supremacy and prevalence of a dominant narrative within a given group (in the case of Gramsci, it was social class), to the point where that narrative stretches further than the boundaries of the original group and thus becomes the dominant interest insisting that its aims are in line with every other group it encompasses, and uses the nexus of the aforementioned force plus consent to become hegemonial (ibid.). This relation indicates the constant flux of groups striving to become hegemonic, which brings with it the perennial need for self-assertion and redefinition through tactical concessions in order to maintain a hegemonic position, or else the hegemonic class loses the consent of its subordinate groups.

To better understand the process of maintaining a given hegemony, Yang describes it akin to a box on a ladder: its contents are ever-changing, and depend on external factors and the relationships between the dominant and subaltern (i.e., nondominant) groups. What goes into the box is ultimately a product of ongoing struggle and the desire to become the new hegemonic group (ibid.: 325).

The point of contention within masculinity studies is the possibility of the existence of a hegemonic masculinity which is progressive and devoid of reactionary tendencies. According to Yang, who takes Gramsci’s original formulation of hegemony as outlined above, it falls under the purview of possibility:

“In short, hegemony is a relation between different social groups, and attention to the mechanism by which one group subordinates others with force and consent is crucial for clarifying what constitutes hegemony. The reorganization of civil society under the leadership of the communist party can make socialist ideology hegemonic—and for Marxists like Gramsci, socialist hegemony does not carry the negative connotation that masculinities scholars often attach to hegemonic masculinity.” (Yang; 2020, p. 324-25)

Therefore, from a socio-economic class perspective, a socialist hegemony can be theorized. As an extension, Connell’s reliance on Gramscian thought implies the existence of a nonpatriarchal hegemonic masculinity.

2.3.4. Patriarchal dividend

What are the incentives for men belonging to subaltern masculinities to consent to hegemonic masculinity? According to Connell’s theory, even though there are relations of subordination between given masculinities, they all benefit from the fact that hegemonic masculinity, as it currently stems, maintains and reinforces patriarchy, subordinating women, and as an extension, femininities (see entry on femininities). While all men receive some modicum of positive outcomes through the upholding of patriarchal relations, they do not benefit equally: some strata of men belonging to certain masculinity groups get less of a share from this dividend (e.g., marginalized and subordinate masculinities, see definitions related to these two phrases), but they nonetheless are content enough in the context of patriarchy to consent to its hegemonic functioning (Howson 2005: 63).

Connell calls this phenomenon the “patriarchal dividend” (Connell 2005: 79), and through this lens, there exist ways through which the contents of Yang’s “box” change over time, they nonetheless do not serve to abolish patriarchal relations (Yang 2020: 325). Moving forward in the sphere of social justice, an incentive stronger than the patriarchal dividend is required to bring into action an alliance of a diverse set of masculinities which form a new hegemony over reactionary and violent ones. Even the earliest formulations of Connell’s theory in the 1980s have

contained within them a revolutionary sense of optimism, a possibility of the existence of a hegemonic masculinity within a “feminist utopia”, where the dividend gained from consenting to this kind of hegemony far outweigh the benefits of sexist and patriarchal attitudes which subordinate women (ibid.: 328).

2.3.5. *Complicit (protest) masculinities*

This is the point at which showcasing the various types of theorized groups of masculinity gains salience. To this end, Richard Howson’s masculinities schema serves this need.

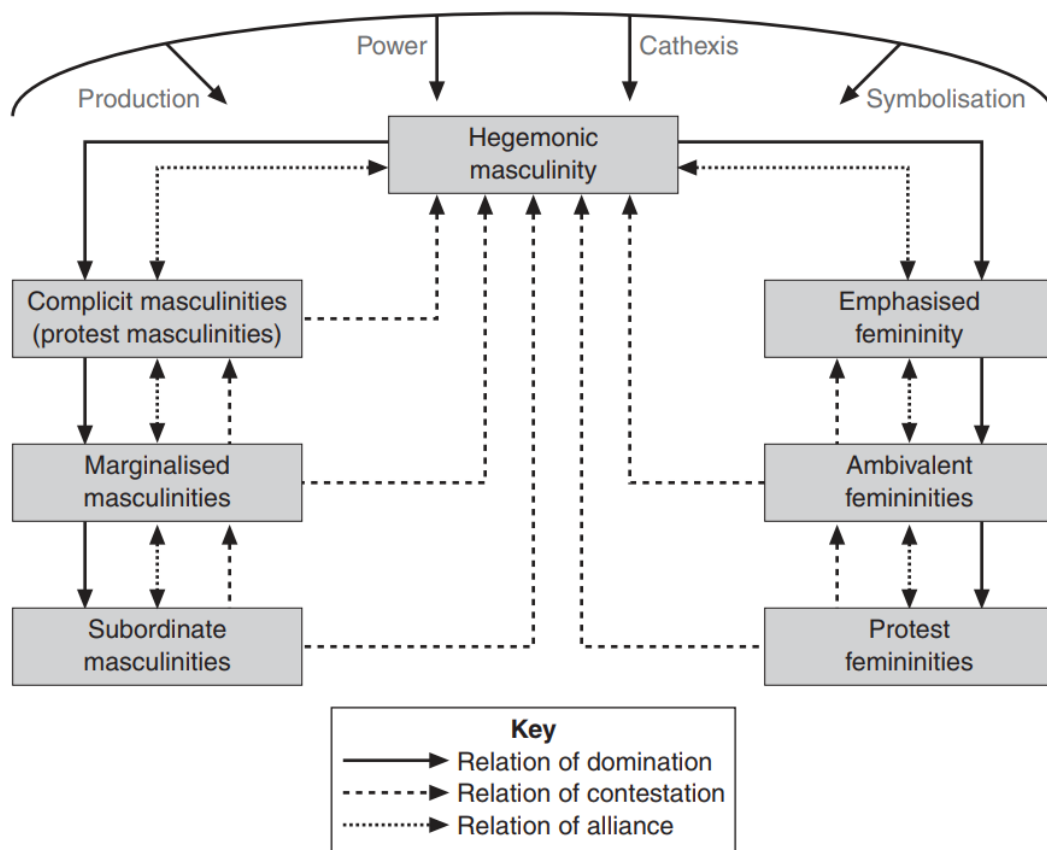


Figure 1: *Masculinities schema (unabridged)*. Howson 2005: 59

This theorization of hegemonic power relations within masculinities (and femininities) drives home the point that they are all relational and are, as an extent, in constant flux. What follows is

the outlining of each bracket within masculinity (putting less emphasis on femininities, see chapter on limitations).

Complicit masculinities (also described as protest masculinities, both appear interchangeable) are where the majority of men reside: while they do not represent all notions of hegemonic masculinity, they nevertheless maintain that at least some tenets of it are worth striving for in some ways, in an a priori sense, and as a result deem its existence to be justified, at least as a point of reference (Howson 2005: 65).

If one were to have the task of having to sum up complicit masculinity in one word, it would be “compromise”. It borrows aspects and properties from other subaltern masculinities (and femininities), amalgamating a set of characteristics which, depending on the disposition of the person conducting the analysis (optimistic vs. pessimistic), can be understood as either reinforcing or weakening the hegemonic masculinity of the status quo (ibid.: 65-66).

The label of protest masculinities represents more the optimist side of interpretation: harnessing the progressive (and occasionally revolutionary) potential of taking inspiration from subaltern groups, due to its close proximity to hegemonic masculinity in the hierarchy (see Figure 1), it has the potential to subvert aspects which are harmful towards women and femininities, forcing the current hegemony to make compromises which benefit the subaltern groups as a whole.

2.3.6. Subordinate and marginalized masculinities

Looking back at the relationality of masculinities, hegemonic masculinity is constantly driven to define itself, and as a result also defines its counterpart(s). What we may understand as properties of hegemonic masculinity (i.e. physical strength, appearance, speech patterns, authority etc.), either the lack of these or the presence of their opposites are what constitute the characteristics of subordinate masculinities. Howson provides the example of homosexuality in this context:

“the characteristics inherent to the practice of homosexuality mark these men with a visible form of non-masculinity or effeminacy that blurs the required clear-cut gender delineations. So, for example, dress sense, speech and demeanour, as well as overt sexuality, are the manifest symbols that contain such characteristics as expressiveness and emotiveness, passivity and domesticity, weakness and lack of authority that are anathema to the dominative masculine hegemony.” (ibid.: 62)

Subordinate masculinities are defined as a deviation in cathectic (i.e. focused on emotional energy) relations and attributes relative to practices in hegemonic masculinity. For example, in heterosexuality, the object of cathectic desire is the feminine and the associated feminine traits as an extension. Male homosexuality is a reversal of this affair, shifting its cathectic focus towards the masculine. This, coupled with decades of practices now understood as pseudoscience have cemented the hegemony of heterosexuality, casting out homosexuality as being deviant and subordinate (ibid.: 62).

Subordinate masculinities are defined as being borne out of gender relations, be it pertaining to identity, sexual orientation or attraction. This is what sets it apart from marginalized masculinities. The attributes ascribed to marginalized masculinities, on the other hand are decidedly non-cathectic, and are derived from other relations stemming from social structures and constructs, such as economic class, and race (ibid.: 63).

Any given hegemony relies on the existence of subaltern groups. In the case of masculinity, these are, along Howson's categories; complicit, marginalized and subordinate masculinities. This, again, stems from hegemony's relationality and constant need for self-definition and authorization. It is therefore not in the interest of hegemony to do away with subaltern groups. Rather, it needs it to survive, lest it is left with no "other" to compare itself to (ibid.).

2.3.7. Hybrid masculinities

The discourse around hegemonic masculinities and masculinity studies as a whole has evolved since 2005, and as such, further elaborations have appeared following Howson's (2005) seminal work. One of the more recent terms, which is at the same time highly relevant to this present thesis is the concept of hybrid masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, 2018), which posits that characteristics and attributes from marginalized and subordinate masculinities (and occasionally femininities) are incorporated into the "identity projects" of privileged men not commonly associated with subaltern groups (i.e., young, heterosexual and white men) (ibid., 2014: 246).

Here we can already see the problem deemed inherent by those who theorized hybrid masculinities: while taking "bits and pieces" (Demetriou 2001: 350-351) of subaltern masculinities may blur the lines of hegemony, it does not necessarily challenge it, or worse, actually reinforces it by making it more malleable, allowing it to adapt to social change. Furthermore, by centering young, white and heterosexual men and their ability to pick and choose from subaltern masculinities negates the ascendancy of the members of the subordinate and marginalized groups, or worse, ascribes only the bad characteristics which become more concentrated within them through the cherry-picking process of hybrid masculinities.

To give specific examples: male grooming practices, fashion sense, crying in public, men's pro-feminism etc. all stem from a desire to distance oneself from the perceived hegemonic masculinity exerting its dominance over other forms of masculinity. However, through the lens of hybrid masculinity literature, this distancing actually maintains the regressive characteristics of the present hegemonic masculinity by allowing a multiplicity of traits to exist within it, posing as a point of recuperation and restructuring of previous ideals (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 251). The pertaining literature therefore draws into question the liberatory potential of mainstreaming a multiplicity of masculine properties previously associated with subaltern groups.

Personally, I find this reading to be pessimistic, and Yang (2020) agrees: the “box” always has been a hybrid of characteristics, and the potential for it to maintain existing hierarchical power relations “should not dissuade us from recognizing the progressive potential of hegemony. Hegemonic masculinity is constantly renewed from above, because if it does not hybridize and make concessions to people mobilized by feminism and gay rights activism, an antisexist, egalitarian, and queer masculinity may take over their hegemony” (ibid.: 328).

At any rate, the available work on hybrid masculinities serves as a mirror for the grimmer side of patriarchy being seemingly infinitely malleable, conceding on more stylistic grounds rather than substantial ones. Bridges & Pascoe ultimately conclude that the true liberatory potential of hybrid masculinities “remains to be answered” (Bridges & Pascoe 2014: 256).

2.3.8. Inclusive masculinities

This phrase could be seen as the optimistic side of the coin it shares with hybrid masculinity theory: Eric Anderson (2009), who coined the term, explained it as a theory whereby the possibility of a masculinity exists where homophobia (i.e. general distrust and resentment

towards homosexual individuals, especially men) and so-called “homohysteria” (i.e. the system through which men are constantly policing each other and themselves in order to not be perceived as homosexual) (ibid.: 85-101) are absent, thus greatly increasing the opportunities for men to engage in activities which were previously avoided for fear of being lambasted as gay and/or effeminate. Furthermore, the opposite also holds, namely that one’s heterosexuality doesn’t need to be continuously asserted.

2.4. Quantitative framework

In order to approach my research question, the second part of my thesis is going to be a quantitative analysis through the use of a questionnaire consisting of indices and scales from existing literature pertaining to the quantitative evaluation of phenomena associated with masculinity. Note that since the two analyses (the other being the Constructivist Grounded Theory-informed qualitative analysis of interviews) are so fundamentally different in their theoretical and methodological underpinnings, it stands to reason to treat them as separate entities, coupled only through the research question which they both are expected to advance.

Although both approaches deal with a seemingly similar topic within masculinity studies, the definitions being used are not necessarily interrelated. Connell’s (2005) theory of hegemonic masculinity, which serves as the main inspiration for the qualitative analysis, examines and tries to make sense of the relationality of the strata of men’s behavior and their interactions with femininities and patriarchy.

The concept of subjective masculinity, on the other hand, which is going to be the main focus of the quantitative analysis is, in a nutshell, focused on explicitly tying experiences, tendencies and

behaviors to one's gender, which is, according to the scientific literature (Wong 2013), an action accomplished independently on an individual level.

While this seems to be the most salient distinction, further elaboration is required, which I shall lay out in the following passages.

2.4.1. Subjective masculinity

Prior to the “deep dive” into the literature surrounding the concept of hegemonic masculinity, I was laboring under the assumption that the term “subjective masculinity” is used more frequently in masculinity studies (and academia in general). However, that turned out to not be the case after the fact. As such, the focus may have skewed down the line in terms of this thesis.

The concept of “subjective masculinity”, as it is used in academia, is in fact barely a decade old, Y. Joel Wong coined the phrase when he looked at the then-existing qualitative research available on interviews conducted with men where they were asked what it meant for them to be a man (Wong et al. 2011: 237). The “gap” in research at the time was that these qualitative studies all had results which covered a much larger spectrum of association within the open question of connecting experiences to masculinity than what could be quantified via then-available scales.

The need for an operationalizable scale to measure and determine thus arose, where concepts previously tied to masculinity in interviews could be expressed in numbers. As previously mentioned, this is a large spectrum, and therefore must combine a multitude of variables and topics, which in turn ought to be explicitly put in relation to men's subjective experiences of what it means for them to be a man.

Wong et al. also note the distinction between “subjective gender definitions” and “subjective gender experiences”. While the former deals with an abstract and collective approach towards

gender, with statements such as “it is important for men to be tough”, the latter focuses on the individual’s personal experiences through the use of first-person language (e.g., “as a man, I must be tough”) (ibid.: 237-238). Through precisely this distinction, we can see that this quantitative approach lends itself well to the role of a complementary analysis to the qualitative analytical counterpart of this thesis.

2.4.2. The Subjective Masculinity Stress Scale (SMSS)

Y. Joel Wong has now worked on the subject of subjective masculinity for more than a decade. Regarding the methodology of the present thesis, it utilizes the scales and indices used in Wong’s Subjective Masculinity Stress Scale (2013). It can be used to measure “the frequency of stress associated with men’s subjective masculinity experiences” (ibid.: 150) through a combination of existing scales pertaining to the assessment of masculinity experiences with the qualitative aspect of directly asking participants about what it means for them to be a man. Then, the results are compared with some of the scales listed below. Given the fact that my interview questions in the qualitative analysis examine precisely the question of what it means for participants to be a man (see “Qualitative analysis”), this part is partially covered in an angle that, while fundamentally different from Wong et al.’s approach (which consists of writing 10 sentences starting with “As a man...” and allowing participants to freely fill out the rest, and afterwards give an answer as to how stressful the aspects that they have cited are to them on a five-point Likert scale). I argue that freely associative questions in in-person interviews allows the participants to give answers more intuitively in a “hip-fire” fashion. While the argument could be made that through the induction of such a redundancy could prove beneficial in term of comparing the results between the written and spoken form, I’d stress the fact that I know most of the participants from my day-to-day life,

and the last thing I would want to do is to annoy them with repeating questions, souring our relationship.

The caveats listed in the explanatory text that participants receive may have primed them to paradoxically overthink their responses:

Respond as if you were giving the answers to yourself, not to somebody else. There are no right or wrong responses. Don't worry about logic or importance, and don't overanalyze your responses. Simply write down the first thoughts that come to your mind. (Wong et al. 2013: 155)

Furthermore, I take issue with the number of sentences one needs to provide. What if one can't come up with ten answers? What if a man genuinely has zero "personal experiences" that he ties to masculinity? For these reasons, I am going to ultimately refer to the responses of my interview participants when addressing their relevance to the scales.

2.4.3. Gender Role Conflict Scale (GRCS)

The first scale that I've used in my quantitative analysis consists of 37 items, which are purported to measure "gender role conflict". It is quite an old scale, originally created to quantify "college men's fear of femininity" (O'Neil et al. 1986).

It has four subscales (e.g., restrictive affectionate behavior between men), and the items are assessed on a six-point Likert scale, where "1" means "strongly disagree" and "6" means "strongly agree". Higher scores indicate a higher level of gender role conflict, which are associated with "negative mental health outcomes" (ibid.: 150). A sample item is, "Making money is part of my idea of being a successful man."

2.4.4. Conformity to Masculine Norms Inventory (CMNI-46)

This is a 46-point inventory consisting of nine subscales (e.g., risk-taking) which measure the extent to which men conform to masculine norms. Answers are mapped onto a four-point Likert scale where 1 means “strongly disagree” and 4 means “strongly agree”. A sample item is, “I never share my feelings” (ibid.).

2.4.5. Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRSS)

This is a 40-item scale examining sample events which are associated with producing gender role stress. It is measured by a seven-point Likert scale, starting from 0 which means “not stressful” and 6 means “extremely stressful”. Higher scores are indicative of a greater amount of gender role stress. A sample item is “Telling someone that you feel hurt by what they said.”. This scale is shown to be associated with levels of self-reported stress (ibid.: 151).

2.5. Participants

This chapter focuses on the participants in both analyses. First, I will outline the process and considerations pertaining to the reaching out to my constituency for the interviews through which I conduct my qualitative analysis. The same goes for the quantitative part.

2.5.1. Interview subjects

In late autumn of 2020, I have announced my intention to conduct semi-structured interviews ranging between 30 and 45 minutes in length with adult male climate activists through social media, specifically through a Facebook group of a 2020 green summer camp, which is still being used as one of the key conduits through which workshops and online events are announced, as it contains a diverse set of Hungarian NGOs and climate activist groups. From here, I have gotten

about half of the 11 interview subjects for my research. The rest were either approached by me privately, or vice versa.

I have allowed for all participants who identified as a male climate activist to be subjects of my qualitative analysis. Interestingly, the question of which organization a given male activist belongs to is rather malleable, which I'm going to go into detail as to how Hungarian male climate activists perceive their involvement in the broader climate movement.

I've had at least some baseline interactions prior to conducting the interviews with all subjects, with varying levels of rapport and trust. I consider some of the participants to be my friends, others as acquaintances, and a couple whom I would best describe to be work colleagues.

Adulthood, especially the early years between 18 and 24 have especially been at the forefront of my mind: what does it mean to be an adult? Looking back to when I was 18, I can say with certainty that I was more of a child than an adult at that age. I don't say this as a way to detract from my younger peers, but to acknowledge that there is a wealth of life experience that has happened at least in my life which have fundamentally impacted who I am today. As the analyses in this thesis will showcase, a good number of participants were barely 18 years old at the time of their participation, and the aforementioned age gap of about five years will have indubitably influenced the way I interact with my fellow male climate activists.

The same can be said when it comes to older members; to say that there are significant generational gaps would be an understatement. There are attitudes and approaches from older members that younger folks never considered, and vice versa. Since I've had significant personal grievances pertaining to ageism both towards younger and older people, I felt the reason to mention this sort of dynamic as well.

2.5.2. Questionnaire participants

For both the quantitative and qualitative study in the present thesis, I have used the Facebook group of the 2020 Hungarian Greenpeace summer climate camp to reach out to my constituency and thus gather participants for my analyses. The initial call to fill out the survey has resulted in about 6 people giving their time to answer the points laid out in the questionnaire (a point that was likely influenced by the ongoing COVID-pandemic). Dissatisfied with the low number of participants, I have started to personally reach out to the people whom I have interviewed. Through these exchanges, some of them have said that they were uncomfortable with answering questions related to sex and sexual behavior, a point especially salient in the Gender Role Conflict Scale. Therefore, these items were changed from being obligatory to being voluntary, so as to ensure the satisfaction and comfort of my fellow male climate activists.

Furthermore, alongside the aforementioned scales and inventories, I have also added questions pertaining to demographic data, such as age, level of education, climate organization membership, income bracket, relationship status, and identifying with the LGBTQIA+ label (the last part being optional, for reasons which are similar to the ones already mentioned).

2.5.3. Demographic breakdown

The survey was conducted through Google Forms, with a total of 13 responses, including myself. The response to the membership question resulted in an almost even split between XR and Greenpeace activists. The average age is 28 years, with the median age being 24 years.

As for highest achieved academic grade, there is an even split between having at least a college education (at least a Bachelor's degree) and having at most a high school diploma, with 7 and 6 participants, respectively.

Taking a look at marital status, the mode of the survey is “single”, with 8 participants answering accordingly, and the rest (5 people) were in a relationship or married. As for income levels, all but one participant has declared their household to be subjectively in at least the “middle class” bracket (i.e., top 60%).

Of the 10 participants who were willing to give an answer, 4 of them consider themselves to be a member of the LGBTQIA+ community. Interestingly (and perhaps understandably), there aren't many sources for evaluating LGBTQIA+ demographics within countries, much less in climate activist groups. A 2016 blog post from Dalia Research claims that “5.9% of Europeans identify as LGBT when asked directly, ranging from 7.4% in Germany to 1.5% in Hungary” (Dalia Research 2016). If we were to hold this information to be true, that would mean that the limited responses that my survey has gathered shows an almost sevenfold increase relative to the EU average, and a whopping 26,6 times compared to the data collected in Hungary. If one thing can be said for certain, it is that the Hungarian climate movement has an overwhelmingly large constituency of LGBTQIA+ people compared to the national average.

2.6. COVID-19's influence on research

The multifaceted and detrimental impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic that has affected individuals, organizations, institutions, and systems both domestic and international, is a well-documented phenomenon (Klenert et al. 2020; de Moor et al. 2020). Its effect has also inevitably manifested in the sphere of social sciences and anthropology, interrupting, delaying and outright making impossible the original methodological intentions of experts in the field (Kraus 2021).

As for climate NGOs, especially fledgling grassroots groups, such as XR and FFF, have been noted to be inexperienced, having a constituency of largely young adults and adolescents as their

core demographic, who have little to no prior experience in civil activism, in spite of endeavors to broaden their horizons (Fischer 2019; de Moor et al. 2020: 3). They are a product of “political momentum” (de Moor et al 2020: 2), and are therefore especially vulnerable to fade back into obscurity.² Due to the restrictions necessitated via COVID-19, this time is best served by “taking stock” and thinking about “long-term mobilization”, as on-the-ground activism is off the table for the time being (ibid.: 5-6).

In terms of being affected, the present thesis does not form an exception: methodological and directional changes (or sacrifices, if one were to be more pessimistic) were in order. However, COVID-19 is not an explicit focus of it, and I merely intended, through this short passage and throughout the other chapters, to indicate the palpable influence the pandemic has had, and still continues to have, on this thesis and the scientific literature as a whole. That being said, this is not the central point of interest regarding this present thesis, though it shouldn't be left unmentioned. Think of it like the advent of the industrial revolution: though not as rapid, it was a large paradigm shift for society at large, shaping and revolutionizing many fields of study down the line, such as sociology, economics, psychology, chemistry and so on.

² Think back, for example, to the Occupy Wall Street movement in the USA, or the Yellow Vests in France. The latter have become active around the time XR was conceived.

3. Qualitative analysis

This chapter deals with the research process, the findings and the interpretations of the constructivist Grounded Theory-based approach to the semi-structured interviews as laid out in chapters 2.2. and 2.3.

By utilizing a qualitative analysis software called “MaxQDA”, I have followed the process laid out by Charmaz (2006): initial open coding of transcripts supplemented by memos have laid out the foundation upon which further theorizing arose. This step is especially predicated on the researcher’s given current disposition, and as such, any given code could have undergone multiple iterations before becoming the “final” data point to contribute to the emerging theory.

Combing over the transcripts multiple times coupled with a generous amount of in-vivo coding, a handful of key concepts and relationships between them have emerged (or, to be more precise, became the product of mutual deliberation of both myself and the participant). In the following passages, inspired by a study which utilized constructivist Grounded Theory in the context of meditation (Van Gordon et al.; 2018), I am going to present my findings in a “hierarchical thematic structure” consisting of “master themes” and “sub-themes” (ibid.: 14-15).

Master theme 1: Motivations for getting involved in climate activism

I’ve asked all participants to reflect on their reasons as to why they decided to join their respective green organization.

Sub-theme 1.1.: “Wanting to do something”

The avoidance of idleness and complacency in the face of worsening affairs is a feeling which has manifested in all participants. Their journey can be summed up with having heard about the problems associated with climate change at an earlier time in their lives, upon which they don’t

act on immediately, but becomes “activated” at a later time through another related event or phenomenon (e.g. Greta Thunberg and the FFF movement gaining publicity for participants 8 and 10). The theme of “being aware” of the problem at an earlier time is consistent, but it needs a more concrete “push” for men to become involved with green issues.

Sub-theme 1.2.: Company

Most participants in our interviews talked about wanting to be in a group with other people. The various reasons they have given are as follows:

- Being able to more effectively work towards inducing change, for which one needs a group of like-minded people with whom one can co-operate (Participant 3).
- Having a place where people “are on the same page” in regard to the severity of climate activism and the required “background knowledge”, which means that they don’t feel like they have to always start from square one (Participant 9). In seemingly paradoxical fashion, what has been strongly at the forefront for then-aspiring climate activist men was the strong sense of “openness” and “patience” that led up to them joining climate organizations in the first place (Participants 4, 5, 6 and 8).
- Climate activism seemed like a “cool” thing for some participants (e.g. 5 and 7), observing the more dangerous and “militant”-looking actions,³ but also sometimes just by virtue of the topic of climate activism, that it’s something associated with the “in-crowd” (Participant 1). The former variant may cause an initial feeling of fear, which comes from assuming that these activists would be “violent” in regard to their activism, which is a misconception that may be alleviated by organizing info-events and meetups (Participant 4).

³ This has been more commonly associated with Greenpeace Hungary.

- Having a place where one can air out their feelings regarding climate anxiety, which is a topic that isn't "taken as seriously as it should be" by their peers and family members (Participant 2). Within these climate activist groups, they can finally "be themselves" and admit their fears and frustrations they feel in the context of climate change. It is, to put it shortly, "therapeutic" (Participant 2).

Master theme 2: Interactions with fellow climate activists

The dispositions of any given organizations' members and activists greatly inform the willingness of participants to stay. This master theme corresponds to participants' perceptions regarding their interactions with their peers involved in climate activism.

Sub-theme 2.1.: Seeing no difference between genders

Some participants (2, 3, 4, 9 and 11) reported no difference in their interactions alongside gender lines. For them, it is simply not something they consciously think about in the majority of their lives. That is not to say that they aren't aware of the disproportionate pressures that women face, rather, it is to "treat them as equals" without any special considerations. Sometimes, this has meant that they would have been "less observant" (Participant 4) or that they are "unable to see gender to a fault" (Participant 11), citing interactions within their activist organization where they were reminded of the less visible manifestations of everyday sexism (Participant 4).

...(W)e were with a team on a get-away, and there, one of the main trainers was a woman, and one of my trainer colleagues has emphasized that the trainees, as in, the people who were participating, are getting such a good female leader model. These things generally never come to my mind, because I honestly don't care what someone's gender is, but it's a really good point all the same, by the way, and I think it's really important for women to have (these role models). – Participant 9

Sub-theme 2.2.: Sensitivity

It is easier for some participants (1, 5, 6 and 8), talking about their feelings is easier with climate activist women than their male counterparts: these conversations tend to be “easier-flowing” (Participant 1), and the expectations for men to be stoic and unemotional (Participant 2), as well as to not cry (Participant 6) means that they have associated these biases with other fellow men, both inside and outside of climate activism, and as such they confide more easily in women around them when it comes to more sensitive topics.

For participant 5, there is a more generalized sense of being understood, which is not tied to gender: he feels that he can “tell anything to anyone” within the climate organizations.

Sub-theme 2.3.: Jokes

The question of humor is a decisive factor in the functioning of all the given organizations that participants are involved in. While there may be concerns raised about “political (in)correctness” (Participants 4 and 11), these tend to be kept in line by the members, without becoming “harmful”. All participants have said that the sense of humor does not correlate with one’s gender in their own experience, rather, it’s more of a function of one’s demeanor.

Master theme 3: “What does it mean for you to be a man?”

This is the cardinal question which my thesis ultimately aims to analyze in detail. The aim was to capture whatever spontaneously came to mind upon hearing this inquiry (whose timing was a source of contention, as I shall detail in the following passages).

Sub-theme 3.1.: “Can we return to this later?”

All participants had a sense of surprise when I asked them this question, regardless of its timing or delivery (e.g. in some cases, I’ve tried softening its impact by prefacing it how it is a seemingly random inquiry). Some participants nonverbally conveyed a sense of “being caught with their pants down”, and that they had shown a sense of embarrassment because of the absence of a pre-constructed, well-thought-out answer (Participants 2 and 10). Even after returning to the question at a later time, this sense of unpreparedness was still existent, albeit not as intense.

Sub-theme 3.2.: Physique

For many participants (1, 3, 5 and 8), physical strength plays a key role in defining their subjective masculinity. Participant 5 went on to extrapolate a sense of duty arising from this “fact”, which places him into the role of protector in contrast to the “other genders”.

Some Participants (1, 2, 3, 6 and 7) talked about this trait more in the abstract sense, as in it is something that a man is “supposed” to be in good physical condition, as a sort of societal expectation levied against them. They didn’t pass a value judgment on this phenomenon, that is, they didn’t say whether this was right or wrong, it is “just the way things are”.

Sub-theme 3.3.: Opposing perceived conventional masculinity

All participants mentioned a type of masculinity which they don’t adhere to and find to be undesirable. The common themes that arose from my interviews are as follows:

- Macho-ness: Some participants explicitly used the word “macho” when describing this “other” kind of masculinity (e.g. 2 and 3), which correlates with a sense of male chauvinism that all participants denounce as being harmful. For Participant 2, this

“macho” attitude is associated with the “current political leaders”, namely the members of the incumbent *Fidesz* party, and as such, is not necessarily associated with a good physique, but rather through people’s actions and decisions.

- Institutional male chauvinism and misogyny: All participants opposed what they perceive as the “conventional”, “archetypal” or “traditional” family model, with the example being more pronounced in my interviews with older individuals (Participants 2, 3, 4 and 6). For some participants (2, 3, 6 and 8), this model coincided with the expectations and worldview of the current Hungarian government, emphasizing the restrictions on women’s autonomy induced by incentivizing them to stay at home and raise children (Participants 2, 4 and 6), as well as in the workplace, e.g. the “glass ceiling” (Participant 2). “Aggression” (Participants 2, 4, 6, 9 and 11), “ego” (Participants 6 and 9) and “non-virtuous” competition (Participant 2) are also widely denounced by the interviewees, with a distinction being made between the socio-political scale (with Participant 2 explicitly associating these labels with “capitalism”), and the individual level. The latter point becomes salient through the self-described “progress” and “evolution” of climate activist men upon becoming involved with green issues, as described in later sub-themes.

Sub-theme 3.4.: Male role models

Male role models in the present and past, both real-life and parasocial have had an impact on the socialization and disposition of all participants. While the range of given examples is broad, some key similarities can be distinguished:

- Paternal family figure: this isn’t necessarily always a given participant’s father. Sometimes, it can be a grandfather, too (Participant 11). “Being there” to “push” them, to “strive towards greatness” are consistent themes, which are more pronounced

in some participants (3 and 4). Inversely, Participant 8 talked about the absence of paternal family figures, that both his father and grandfather's influence was missing, and as such has "missed out" on "typical" experiences, which sometimes translates into a sense of alienation from his peers.

- Historically significant figures: this descriptor casts a wide net and can be categorized along their types. These include philosophers (Participants 3 and 11), writers (Participants 3 and 9), political activists (Participant 11), and natural historians such as David Attenborough (Participant 5). Their favorable characteristics include "changing the world" (Participants 3 and 5), "calm power" (Participant 11) and "lifelong dedication" (Participant 5).
- Sports: Some participants (1, 3, 4 and 7) have talked about their experiences in taking up sports. Instructors and coaches were cited as major influences and role models among interviewees:

(My judo teacher) was earnest and wise, and he always seemed like he was in harmony with himself and knew to consider his words carefully, all the while being a calm person.

– Participant 1

I had a Belgian coach, I used to play korfbal a lot before messing up my knee, and he was an older guy, who also showed self-consciousness through sports, and what's interesting is that, when I used to play for the Hungarian national team, this Belgian dude didn't speak a fucking word of Hungarian, but came down to oversee the training, and he knew everything about everyone. (...) I'd known everyone there for years, and how the fuck did this guy figure all this out, despite not understanding a single thing of what we were saying, and he said that one's behavior in sports, the body language, the immense number of nonverbal things he could put together and... this is great knowledge. – Participant 4

Some positive traits were not associated with any one given person, but were rather mentioned as descriptors for a collective of role models:

...(H)umility, self-reflection, perseverance, honesty, confidence, striving to be confident, empathy, solidarity. These are important things, and also that truth is a very

complicated thing, we ought not to separate the world along the lines of cowardice and braveness, because you will deprive yourself from understanding, or the possibility of understanding. – Participant 11

Master theme 4: Changes after joining a climate organization

All participants vividly described the process of changing as a person upon becoming an active member of their given environmental organization. The majority of participants explicitly had no prior experience with any involvement in volunteering (e.g. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8), and moving forward, climate activism was the “gateway” for other forms of social justice-type activism (e.g. 5, 6, and 8).

Sub-theme 4.1.: Encountering positive traits

Some participants have emphasized how there are many “good people” in climate organizations (Participants 1, 5, 6, and 8). They have used the following expressions to describe what they felt from their future organizations as a whole, as well as from individual activists:

- Diversity: having people “from all walks of life” is consistent across select green organizations (notably XR and Greenpeace). This fact has given participants (e.g. 5 and 6) more confidence in joining, as well as more opportunities to interact with people outside of their “bubble”:

(...) What has really captivated me in volunteering is that a lot of people see things a lot differently, they’ve come from different places, are of a different age, and everything is completely different, but there is one thing that binds us together, and what really fascinated me was that I’ve thought of ourselves as being good people, as in, that they sacrifice their free time to do something, to help... – Participant 6

- Nonviolence: Some participants (e.g. 5 and 6) have pointed out that their organizations’ dedication towards nonviolence in both action and communication has been especially formative in regards to their values and beliefs.

[B]efore getting acquainted with activism, I didn't, for example, pay attention to things like nonviolence and nonviolent communication. For example, there is a lot of quarreling in the family, even to this day, but ever since I became an activist, and have become familiar with the definition of nonviolence, I'm trying a lot harder to communicate nonviolently in the event of a debate, so that it doesn't devolve into a shouting match. – Participant 5

[F]acebook has always shown me the Greenpeace info day (event). 'Ah, I'm not going', I said to myself, they are, like, violent, hanging off of bridges and everything, I'm a much softer spirit, I'm not aggressive, I'm certainly not going to these shouty types (laughter). And the event was shown to me over and over again, so I said 'fine', this can't be a coincidence, I'll go and check it out. So I went, and as it turned out, it's a nonviolent organization... – Participant 6

Sub-theme 4.2.: Maturing

For some participants (e.g. 1, 4, 5 and 9), their involvement with their respective climate organizations have been described as having an influence on their “maturity”, be it through individuals or the group in its entirety. For Participant 4, joining Greenpeace has become synonymous with “growing up”:

...I didn't take on larger responsibilities or larger roles in life. You know, this is the big difference between being an adult and being a child, that you are really cognizant of the consequences of your actions and you wear these with pride, and for me it was Greenpeace that was there in my becoming older and more mature, and not just that it was there, but I have also met with people, who have helped me in many aspects, that taking responsibility, making choices, and it's all a big experience... so for me, I have changed in a lot of ways since I've been here... – Participant 4

3.2. Theory building

After laying out the relevant observations by showcasing a streamlined version of associations constructed through my interactions with the interviewees, now comes a “tricky part” of building theory: staying true to the nature of Constructivist Grounded Theory, this is the part where “the researcher may have a theoretical grasp of the material. But he or she may not have formed the analysis into an argument or presented it as a problem of interest to colleagues or practitioners for publication” (Charmaz; 1990: 1169). As such, the formulation below is one exclusively grounded

in the interviews and the coding process itself, without explicitly and deliberately reaching for already existing theories. Naturally, I had to have a cursory understanding of masculinity in order to formulate this thesis's central research question, and on top of that, I am myself a climate activist man, so these circumstances inevitably manifest in some way within this analysis. Nevertheless, the first passage is as much of an "untainted" series of recollections and hypotheses that I can muster.

3.3. Emergent theory

Participants were clearly different people before joining their respective climate organizations, manifesting in terms of confidence, maturity, openness, empathy and tolerance. The interviewed climate activist men are cognizant of the societal expectations levied on them, be it during their formative years (e.g. don't cry), during their adolescence (e.g. be strong, be a ladies' man etc.), or early adulthood (e.g. marriage plus having children). While not all participants have individual male role models who they either look up to or have looked up to, they all could list positive traits and virtues which they associated with being a man (not necessarily with masculinity). Some of these characteristics (e.g. being "calm and collected", physique, protectoral role, rationality etc.) fall into the purviews of conventional hegemonic masculinity. Upon getting involved in climate activism, participants reported the (internal) virtues they believe to be important in men (though not necessarily exclusively defined by them as male traits), such as patience, levelheadedness, empathy, ambition and honesty. Interviewees report to be able to live by these traits more sincerely when participating in their respective climate activist groups, compared to their school, family and/or workplace environment. They either report an equal 50-50 split across gender lines in their organization(s), or a small but noticeable majority of non-male activists, which they find to be disappointing at best, and undesirable at worst.

They reject some parts of what they perceive as “hegemonic” and/or “conventional” masculinity, clearly defining themselves as the type of men they aren’t (i.e. “macho”, conservative, traditional, chauvinistic etc.). Desirable traits are picked and chosen (informed by role models), amalgamating in individuals with time across key moments, such as joining a climate organization. Masculinity is not something that merely arises from existing as a man, but through virtues, which make them stand out and be memorable, leaving “their mark on the world”. This (i.e. enacting one’s will upon the world) is inhibited in part by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

To thus formulate the problem: climate activist men consider certain virtues to be desirable from the perspective of masculinity. They also have a concrete “antithesis” as to what they consider to be an undesirable masculinity image. Both possess traits which can be considered “hegemonic” in their nature, i.e. physical strength, protection, perseverance, rationality et cetera. Striving towards incorporating these properties into themselves, climate activist men navigate a landscape that is in relation to achieving social and ecological justice, becoming more involved in political activism during the process as well. In a nutshell, climate activist men see their organization as a place where they discover ways through which they can become more virtuous.

3.4. Synthesis

This section is dedicated to showcasing the points where the Grounded Theory analysis of this thesis meets with the pertaining scientific literature. While some of the phenomena outlined can be corroborated and/or explained directly through the literature of masculinity studies, some concepts synergize with paradigms outlined by other branches of scientific inquiry, and others may not be completely explained by any existing body of literature. It is because of this reason why I was initially drawn to Grounded Theory as my chosen methodology. Furthermore, the themes outlined above may not pertain to any relevant literature at all, and therefore merely exist

within the Grounded Theory. That is not to say that their existence is superfluous, but rather highlight the potential for further elaboration.

3.4.1. Compassion

Through my collected data, it has become evident that compassion was one of the key components frequently cited as a characteristic through which climate activist men define themselves.

There is a substantial body of literature within the studies dealing with hegemonic masculinity which examine traits which are more conventionally associated with femininity: Eric Anderson's book "Inclusive masculinity" (2009) looks at previous theories which posited some explanations. Specifically, men tend to avoid these behaviors and traits for fear of appearing womanlike, and as an extension, homosexual (ibid.: 34), which, as defined previously, is in the realm of subjugated masculinity (Howson 2005: 62). The part that becomes interesting as a result is the fact that, according to the accounts of several interview participants, their climate organizations focus on standing up for social justice issues as well. This, in turn, appears to take out the wind from the sails of homophobia-informed avoidance of traits traditionally associated with women and femininity. If there is no fear from being called gay for deviating from hegemonic masculinity, then the men involved in that given group feel freer to adapt properties outside of it.

Looking at the masculinities schema (Figure 1), in the relative hegemonic masculinity of the climate organizations that participants are members of (i.e., XR, FFF and Greenpeace), the role of cathexis, and as a result, the component of homosexuality becomes removed from the equation. Given that during the time of first involvement regarding the respective climate organizations, compassion was the most pronounced object of amazement, it can be interpreted in a way that seeing climate activist men giving each other "carte blanche" to engage in behaviors which fall

outside of the purview of hegemonic masculinity. Waiting for this “okay” sign in this case is necessary precisely due to the cathectic nature of the interactions pertaining to subjugated masculinities.

Turning back to the relevance of relationality, “the general tendency to help others appears to deteriorate with age” (ibid., p. 81), and climate activism can serve as a strong case for “helping others”, and as demographics show a tendency of attracting younger and younger climate activists (Fischer 2019; de Moor et al. 2020: 3), the relevance of environmental NGOs and CSOs in the context of fostering compassion therefore becomes more and more pronounced, and this virtue of taking action in the face of suffering is at the forefront of what it means to be a man for numerous interview participants. However, there is no literature) as of writing this thesis which examines climate activism as a “compassion-based intervention” in order to promote compassion in teenage boys in masculinity studies. Through the formulations of my emergent Grounded Theory, it would be fruitful to engage in exploratory research in this direction, especially by examining young adult men who have been participating in climate activism since their years of adolescence. Another interesting intersection worth noting is the increasing tendency for climate organizations to consider environmental issues to be inseparable from social justice issues (e.g. XR/Extinction Rebellion 2019).

Connell even had a chapter in her book *Masculinities* (2005) exploring the liberatory potential of environmental organizations through the lens of masculinities: many of the phenomena she cites (e.g., solidarity with others, moral charity, personal relationships and cultural ideals) are also reflected in the accounts of my interviewees (p. 125-128). The last paragraph speaks volumes of the opportunities present within environmental organizations for men and masculinities, and as an extension, women, femininities and feminism:

“Even without feminism, these themes of Green politics and culture would provide some challenge to hegemonic masculinity, at least at the level of ideas. Dominance is contested by the commitment to equality and participatory democracy. Competitive individualism is contested by collective ways of working. Organic ideologies are not necessarily counter-sexist, as many countercultural women can testify, having been defined as Earth-Mothers and left with the babies and the washing-up. But the emphasis on personal growth tends to undermine the defensive style of hegemonic masculinity, especially its tight control over emotions. The environmental movement, then, is fertile ground for a politics of masculinity. But it does not make an issue of gender, and produce an explicit masculinity politics, unaided. That requires the impact of feminism.” (ibid.: 128)

For the time being, I argue that by incorporating a focus on social justice within climate organizations, it allows for more progressive (i.e. more “feminine”) characteristics to be put into the “box” of hegemonic masculinity (see Yang 2020) by destigmatizing deviance in this regard.

3.4.2. The role of protector

The emergent Grounded Theory shows the expectation and desire to protect others to be strongly associated with masculinity in the opinions of participating climate activist men. Note, however, that this is not necessarily a blanket notion of “having to be strong”, but a rather more specific sense of taking on a role to protect “the weak”, “the vulnerable” and “the marginalized”.

The key element warranting distinction, however, is that some interviewees explicitly associate a sense of duty with their innately superior strength that stems from being a man. That duty is then subsequently defined as the responsibility to “protect marginalized groups”. Interestingly, even though the interviews had an explicit focus on gender, participants (especially members of XR) associated marginalization with multiple categories, which they see to be interrelated, namely sexual identity, sexual orientation, race, and social class.

Reaching back to Connell’s seminal work on Hegemonic Masculinity, which draws influence from Gramsci, Richard Howson’s (2005) book exposing the less sound aspects of the initially

formulated framework indicates how the concept is, true to social constructivist notions and Marxist analysis, a product of its socio-politico-economic circumstances:

For example, the marginali[z]ation of working-class masculinity in the current situation was driven by changes in technology, education and work practices that gave rise to middle-class and professional masculinities which, in turn, emphasi[z]ed career and status achievements, intellectual ability, determination for success, fatherhood and breadwinning, as well as a new emphasis on fashion, grooming and appearance. The effect of re-configuring the traditional hegemonic ideal based on hard work, toughness, and/or a carefree homosocial existence was that for many traditional working-class men the new emphasis left them confused and in a tenuous position with regards to their own sense of identity and place. (Howson 2005: 63)

This in turn indicates the inherent malleability of Hegemonic Masculinity. Its relevance in regard to the protector role delineated by the interview participants arises from the interviewee's distinctions from a "macho" type of masculinity which they unanimously oppose. However, some characteristics of the seemingly "hegemonic" notion of masculinity manifest in what they see as a desirable masculinity image. Thus, the "re-configuring" present in Howson's (2005) book is observable precisely through the notions of "toughness". The way through which this happens is an interesting process, which has been admitted by pertaining social science academics to be complex (Wernick 1994: 51). Such changes in what is (or more precisely, becomes) hegemonic is in constant flux. In this instance, it might be that the middle-class masculinity outlined in the previous quote is, in fact, the new Hegemonic Masculinity, and the interviews participants are, in actuality, distancing themselves from a subordinate type (again, the "macho" variant), which is misattributed as hegemonic. If that is actually the case, then Hegemonic Masculinity appears to manifest in more slippery and intangible ways than previously thought.

The relationship between hegemonic and complicit masculinity is markedly complex, as it contains both directly opposing aspects, and at the same time legitimizing and synergistic

tendencies. While it can be argued that the aforementioned compromises meaningfully dilute Hegemonic Masculinity, it synchronously holds that their proximity is overtly close enough so as to not appear as an active challenge, therefore helping to maintain the domination of Hegemonic Masculinity (Howson 2005: 65).

Where do the statements from the interview participants fit into this issue? To answer this question, we have to keep in mind the fluidity and complex interactions which happen on any level between the theorized strata of hegemonic masculinity (see Figure 1). While the amount of information which can be deduced from taking the sentences and expressions used in the interviews at face value is limited, it nevertheless lends itself well to being a good jumping-off point: the “protector role”, which coincides well with Howson’s notion of “toughness” (2005: 63), in the sense that it stands in contrast to a “newer” sense of an idealized masculine image, indicating a proclivity towards the importance of physical strength in the “old”, working-class masculinity. I argue that the way this physique-informed role of protector appearing in our dialogues becomes, in the eyes of some participants, reshaped as a tool for furthering progressive issues, and the extent to which physical strength serves this end ultimately rests on the agent’s ability and disposition to wanting to move beyond “compromise”, and towards actively challenging them (Howson 2005: 65). Ultimately, bodily physique gains purchase as a means of maintaining/recuperating Hegemonic Masculinity only if the man’s action and behavior stops at complicity. It remains to be seen whether or not it does, and this is where merging social justice issues with climate issues may be a catalyst for a paradigm shift in defining maleness, especially if the other masculinity strata (namely marginalized and subordinate) are also involved, ensuring an intersectional approach. What this looks like in practice, especially in the Hungarian climate

activist movement, remains to be seen, as demographically, there is an overrepresentation of a white, educated, middle-class and heterosexual backgrounds amongst men.

I elect to remain optimistic in this regard, which is coincidentally a topic of controversy within the literature in masculinity studies: to what extent does Connell's Gramsci-inspired formulation of Hegemonic Masculinity lend itself to envisioning change? Yang (2020: 319) showcases the "pessimistic tendency" stemming from Connell's way of theorization: the pitfall here is the assumption that hegemony necessarily upholds and legitimizes reactionary thought (e.g., patriarchy), and is therefore an inexorable part of hegemony. This is, however, not in line with Gramsci's original formulation of hegemony, as Yang points out, using Burawoy's (2003) analysis as a jumping-off point:

In short, hegemony is a relation between different social groups, and attention to the mechanism by which one group subordinates others with force and consent is crucial for clarifying what constitutes hegemony. The reorganization of civil society under the leadership of the communist party can make socialist ideology hegemonic—and for Marxists like Gramsci, socialist hegemony does not carry the negative connotation that masculinities scholars often attach to hegemonic masculinity. (Yang 2020: 324-25)

Through this lens, the reformulation and challenging of current hegemonic masculinity on a societal level (Hungary in this example) becomes not only possible, but also desirable from a civil society perspective, of which climate organizations are undoubtedly a part of.

3.4.3. "I'm not like those other men"

A majority of interview participants have consciously separated their definitions of what it means to be a man from what they perceive to be the dominant and harmful concept reinforced by the current political system in Hungary. How can this distancing be understood in the context of a hegemonic masculinity framework?

As Howson (2005) argued, an educated, professional middle-class masculinity has taken over the position of being hegemonic, dethroning the physique-oriented, “macho”, rugged working-class masculinity. In this sense, the new hegemony becomes framed as more desirable, progressive and egalitarian in the eyes of the male white middle-class populace. However, by deposing the former, according to Bridges and Pascoe’s (2018), the demographical shift centers race, sexual orientation and social class, and through this process, previous and current marginalized masculinities (i.e. nonwhite, working-class, LGBTQ+ etc. masculinities) get caught in a crossfire: while overt homophobia, sexism and racism get pushed out from the “box” of hegemonic masculinity (Yang 2020), it does not necessarily, in turn, put the aforementioned strata into the box, sans bigotry, or worse, it ascribes malice to nonhegemonic groups (e.g., insinuating that reactionary values are inseparable from being working-class or nonwhite).

Given that climate activism tends to be a community of largely white, middle-class individuals, failing to include men from nonhegemonic strata may prove itself to be a serious obstacle regarding the progress on social justice issues. Again, referring to the more optimistic and revolutionary point of view held by Yang (2020) and Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity necessitates constant concessions, which, if done in the direction of progressivism, it shifts it closer towards a society as envisioned by advocates of social justice and subaltern groups. To this end, distancing from traits, rather than groups of people, becomes imperative, and this diversity of “nonviolent masculinities” is a catalyst for a substantive shift (Yang 2020: 328).

I continue to interpret this shift in an optimistic way: given the steps needed in order to create multiple nonpatriarchal hegemonic masculinities within civil society (i.e., bringing in not just subaltern properties, but also the people within), I see a big potential for change to emerge from mainstreaming social justice narratives in the climate movement. At the same time, there must be

a sincere effort to not just talk about inclusivity in the sense that it was merely a personality trait or a bullet point in the house rules, but also as a continuous and good-faith effort on behalf of all participants (not just men) to welcome the marginalized and subordinate members of society along the lines of ethnicity, sexual identity, sexual orientation, social class, level of education et cetera.

3.4.4. The virtue of rationality

Rationality has been cited as one of the key virtues of being a man by a handful of interview participants. It's just something a man "has to be", namely being rational. Connell theorized that through the "rationalization" of society via advanced capitalism (i.e., the focus on increasingly complex technological advancements and the constant need for engineering more sophisticated means of production) cements the rationality of boys and men as the trait through which the domination of women becomes legitimized, favoring "technical reason" as the driving force behind production (Connell 2005: 164-165).

As such, through the process of technical knowledge and the increased value put on credentials has embedded rationality into hegemonic masculinity. Where does this trait fit into the "masculinities schema" (Figure 1)? It's certainly not a cathectic element, so this rules out subjugated masculinity. Irrationality isn't being used as a form of protest (that I know of, neither in any pertaining literature that I've read, nor by the interview participants), so this leaves us with the category of marginalized masculinities. The demographics of the interviewees can be seen as bimodal: younger (barely 18 years old at the time of conducting the interviews) have just graduated from their respective secondary educational institutions, and older climate activist men who have at least a bachelor's degree in a given field.

The point in question that arises in the context of the organizations to which the interviewees belong (XR, FFF and Greenpeace) is that whether or not the nexus of knowledge, expertise and rationality can be considered as a hegemonic masculine trait. Along Connell (2005: 164-165)'s argument, this may be the case. I remain unconvinced, however, since the aspects of the Gramscian force and consent are seemingly absent: there doesn't seem to be an interplay between rationality and irrationality (regardless of it being situated within masculinities or femininities), only as an extension of the othered "macho" archetype previously outlined. While it may be the case that if the two points were to be combined, hegemony would apply as an extension. Yet, I feel as though these two phenomena are entirely separate entities. There also appears to be a lot more acceptance when it turns out that an aspiring climate activist man isn't well-versed in the various minutiae of individual lifestyle choices and their impact on the environment (e.g., Participant 6). There is no obvious force being used within the green organizations which would suggest a hegemonic relationship between climate activists (regardless of gender) who, say, avoid using plastic or are vegetarian/vegan, and those who don't and/or aren't.

Then again, the possibilities of proving such a relationship from only being able to take the words of the interview participant at face value and comparing it to the relevant literature are limited. It would be interesting to conduct a follow-up research based on participant observation.

To conclude this point of comparison: although rationality is declared by some participants to be a hallmark of being a man, it does not manifest in hegemonic ways, only perhaps in an abstract sense: the deemphasizing of intelligence and technical knowledge can be seen as a hegemonic force, but this also provides further challenges which fall outside of the scope of this thesis. More research is required.

3.4.5. *“I don’t see gender.”*

A good number of participants, especially those who struggled to come up with an explanation in regard to the question “What does it mean for you to be a man?” have talked about how gender does not play a role in their interactions with their fellow climate activists. How can this notion, if at all, be explained by the theory of hegemonic masculinity?

Looking back at the emphasis on the relationality and nonessentialism of Connell’s concept (2005), it follows that no trait or attribute is an absolute part of any masculinity and/or femininity. At the same time, hegemonic masculinity theory necessitates a construction of an “other”, which becomes the reference point against which an individual or a collective define themselves. Therefore, this type of gender ambivalence can potentially go both ways: towards liberation, or towards regression. Let us look closer at the notions used in the interviews:

Participant 3 talked in length about actions and characteristics which are commonly associated with men, and almost immediately afterwards he gave a counterexample of a woman doing precisely that, indicating the nonessentialism of masculinity and femininity.

Participant 4 talked about the interactions within his organization (Greenpeace) through his wife: she explained how there are a lot of ways that sexism manifests in a seemingly egalitarian setting, citing the phenomenon of constantly being interrupted by men while she’s speaking. This recalled interaction seems to perfectly elucidate the relationality of hegemonic masculinity: by encouraging practices through which becoming mindful of the latent and tacit manifestations of sexism is incentivized, the “box” of hegemonic masculinity can be filled with attributes which lend themselves to weakening patriarchal tendencies (Yang 2020: 325).

Note how it needed the perspective of a woman for a climate activist to become aware of this set of affairs. “Gender blindness” is a prevalent force in society, and as an extension, within various organizations and interpersonal relations as well (Whitehead 2001). There seems to be a collective willingness to address this issue: through relevant workshops, members of Greenpeace through the accounts of Participant 4 have become increasingly sensitive to the biases that they may hold.

Through a pessimistic lens, this can be seen as merely making a concession on behalf of women in order to maintain the other aspects of patriarchal hegemonic masculinity. Another perspective might be to put it into the category of complicit masculinities: while being ostensibly non-sexist, men uphold the hegemonically masculine notions of subjugating women. This approach in turn begs the question: What, then, are the “meaningful” ways through which one can engage in behaviors and actions that “effectively” oppose patriarchy? I take issue with the “Catch 22” nature of this assessment the same way Yang (2020) does. Furthermore, this aspect showcases the efforts of both men and women in the shaping of hegemonic masculinity, with both being active agents of change. De-emphasizing gender differences become insidious only precisely when nobody raises it as an issue. When it cannot be used as an excuse for not dealing with issues of sexism, then it may become a unifying force in hegemonic masculinity as well: if the potential of men actively standing up for women’s issues becomes a hegemonic property, it can upset the dependency on the “patriarchal dividend” stemming from the subordination of women. Again, referring back to Yang’s insistence on further elaborating on Connell’s Gramscian roots, much can be gained for men as well if women’s liberation and “achieving a feminist utopia” becomes their focus (ibid.: 328).

To sum up, de-emphasizing gender is merely a means. Its impact can be observed through the ends it serves. If the removal of homophobia and homophobia opens up the liberatory potential of subjugated masculinities (Anderson 2009), then the active removal of sexism (as opposed to just being “non-sexist”) may open up even more avenues for nonviolent masculinities to flourish.

3.4.6. Male role models

Having a person or persons to look up to is an oft-cited aspect of socialization (Tarrant et al. 2015). Given the accounts of the interview participants, there is a wide array of types present. Worth noting, too, is the change in role models throughout time. A climate activist might have had one type of role model earlier in life, and another one in the present. While the person embodying the position of role model may change, their traits are still carried within the interviewees, seemingly synthesizing and reconciling their priorities around the topic of being a man.

Participants also talked about the importance of joining the climate activist movement in their reassessment of masculinity. A possible explanation for this is that, upon encountering the hegemonic masculinities of the given environmental organization, their priorities shift to be in accordance with the community’s position, in true relational fashion (Connell 2005).

While Tarrant’s conclusion indicates more pessimistic underpinnings, namely that the focus on male role models for young men and boys is detrimental in the ways that it individualizes a societal process and oversimplifies an otherwise broad and intersectional analysis of discourse (Tarrant; 2015: 74-75). Again, as I did in a previous chapter (see “The role of protector”), I acknowledge the importance of incorporating not just subaltern masculinities, but also specifically the men who are associated with that label in order to decenter whiteness and cis-

heteronormativity, which, according to the literature, fosters the hegemony of inclusive and nonviolent masculinities (Yang 2020: 328-330). However, I see this as a pathway which inspires optimism, as this serves as an interesting opportunity for climate activist circles to embody the characteristics of a diverse set of male role models, and as a result further inhibit the patriarchal tendencies of hegemonic masculinity. That is not to say that it serves as an end-all-be-all method, but rather as one tool in the toolbox of positive change. Furthermore, the lack of relevant literature warrants further research into the nature of this topic.

3.5. Qualitative analysis conclusion

I have started the process of qualitative analysis by conducting 11 semi-structured interviews with adult male climate activist members, where I came prepared with a list of questions that I have thought would serve well in understanding the experiences of the interviewees with masculinity and what it means for them to be a man. Prior to committing to a deep dive into the literature pertaining to masculinity studies, I have used the method of Constructivist Grounded Theory outlined by Charmaz (2006), and started coding the transcripts, focusing on finding relevant points echoed throughout the participants' accounts. After weeks and months of analysis, I have collected master themes and subthemes along the body of data that my work has generated.

My findings reverberate the theories pertaining to hegemonic masculinity. By reading more and more into the body of available literature, it has become evident that there is much discussion and criticism that surrounds this area of study. My determination to make sense of the discourse has not faltered in the face of this challenge, however, and I was able to showcase the parts where existing theoretical pieces serve as an explanation for the phenomena that my interview participants were talking about. In general, the strongest point of contention was the optimistic

and liberatory potential of fostering inclusive masculinities, and through revisiting Connell's original hegemonic masculinity theory's Gramscian roots (Yang 2020), this positive approach has gained more purchase. If climate organizations follow through on their desire on promoting issues of social justice as well, its intersection with environmental issues provide fertile grounds for societal shift, potentially upsetting the current patriarchal influences of hegemonic masculinity, replacing it with a multiplicity of inclusive, nonviolent masculinities.

4. Quantitative Analysis

This chapter focuses on the evaluation and interpretation of the quantifiable answers given by participants through the questionnaire outlined by chapter 4. As mentioned there, As previously mentioned, even with an abridged version, the scales used in my survey alone result in 123 individual questions, which would be, on one hand, a gargantuan task to analyze for one person, and on the other hand, to showcase and interpret all of them individually would take an immense amount of space. Instead, in regard to the length of the present thesis, I endeavor to cluster the findings according to the individual scales utilized by Wong et al. (2013) and highlight data that are most relevant to the inquiry of subjective masculinity. Given the non-zero amount of omission, explanations are to be provided in terms which will hopefully come across as understandable.

4.1. Gender Role Conflict Scale

This scale is clustered into four factors: one, success-power-competition; two, restrictive emotionality; three, restrictive affectionate behavior between men; and four, conflicts between work and family relations. Given the fact that a non-negligible number of participants were 18 years old when filling out the survey, it is fair to say that such questions would be of less relevance in terms of usefulness. As such, what follows is the analysis of items more general in their nature, so as to provide relevant results pertaining to every participant's experiences.

Factor 1: success-power-competition

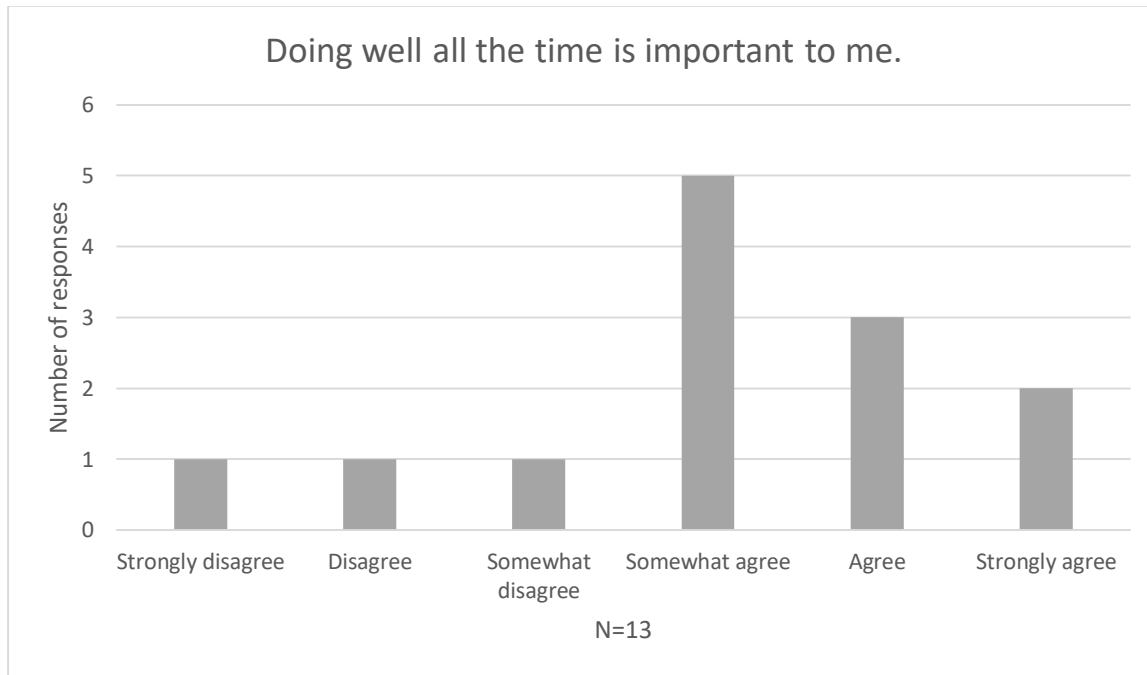


Figure 2: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 1, item 6 (“Doing well all the time is important to me”)

10 of 13 participants at least somewhat agreed with the statement “Doing well all the time is important to me.” Note that this question does not explicitly tie the statement to masculinity. Then again, an argument can be made that the specific context of the rest of the survey may predispose participants to respond in manner that corresponds with their sense of masculinity.

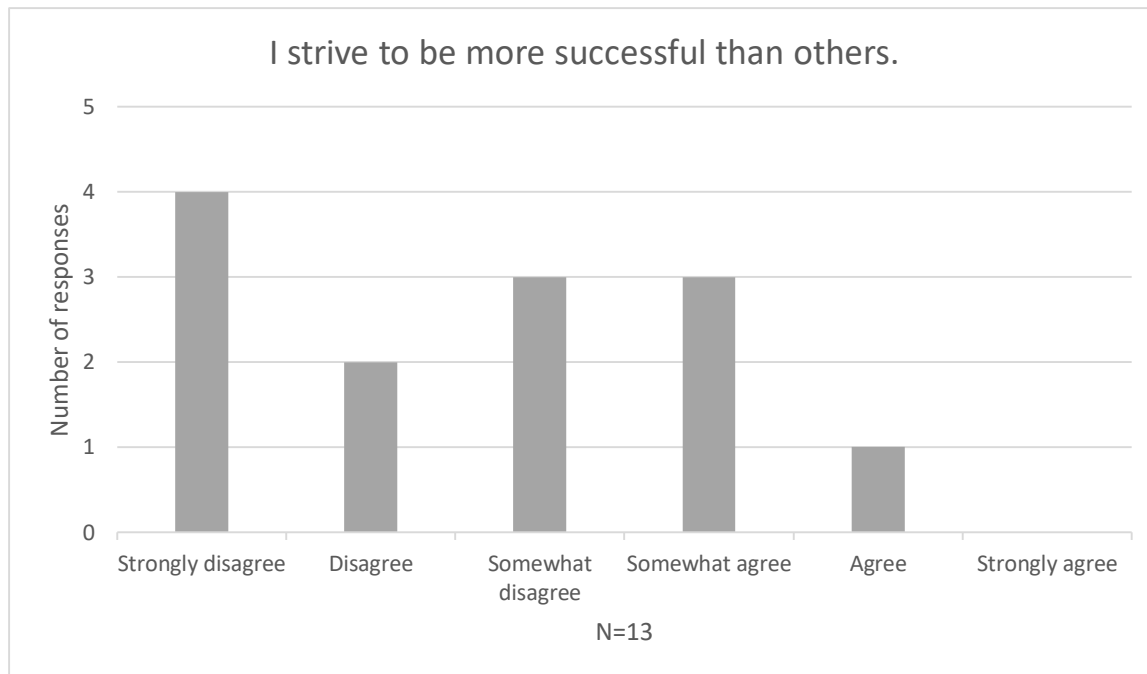


Figure 3: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 1, item 10 (“I strive to be more successful than others”)

9 of 13 participants at least somewhat disagreed with the statement “I strive to be more successful than others”. These responses suggest that success in male climate activists is considered to be less of a relational factor regarding their peers but is more likely has its source in self-comparison, i.e., being in relation to oneself at a different time. This conclusion can be underscored by the previous figure (Figure 2); the differentiation between “doing well” and “to be more successful than others” is salient in the minds of the given constituency.

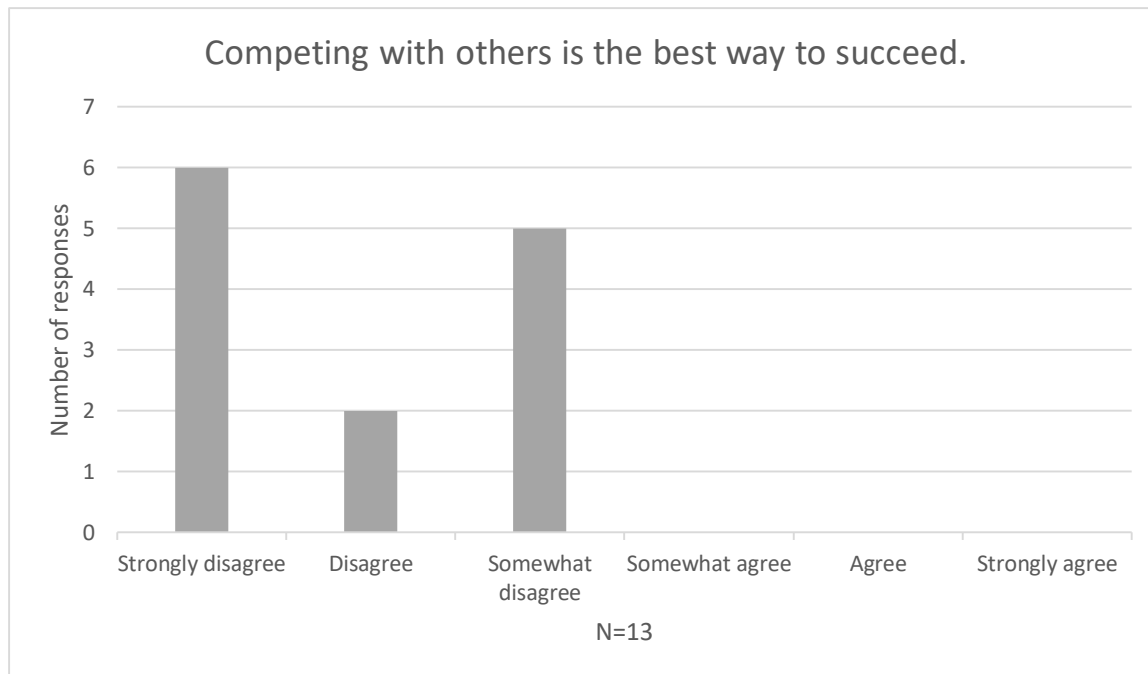


Figure 4: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 1, item 8 (“competing with others is the best way to succeed”)

This figure further illustrates the clear separation of success and its relation to others: all participants at least somewhat disagreed with the notion of “competing with others is the best way to succeed”. While success may be important in the lives of male climate activists, it seems to be rather independent of others, both in relation to their being and towards their performance.

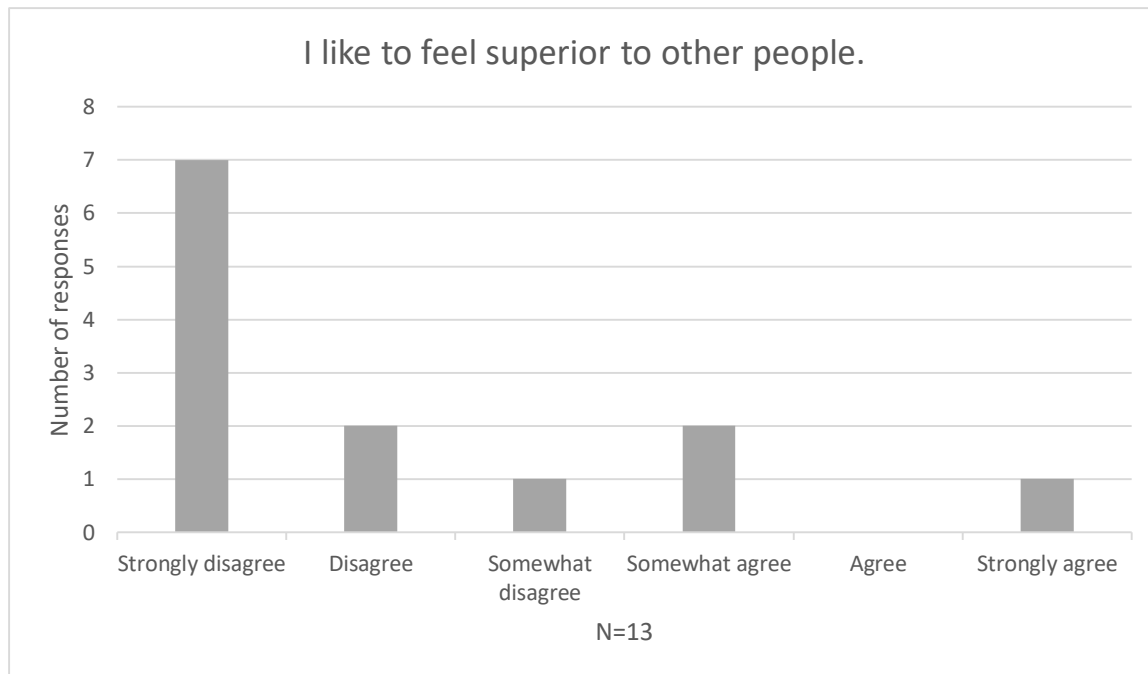


Figure 5: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 1, item 13 (“I like to feel superior to other people.”)
 “Strongly disagree” is the clear singular mode when it comes to the responses to the statement of
 “I like to feel superior to other people.”.

Based on these 4 figures, it is interesting to see the delineation and the reconciliation between these phenomena: success is important, yet not necessarily related to the performance of others, especially in terms of wanting to feel superior to them. At the same time, there is some factor common in the participants to “do well all the time”. The synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data is going to follow in a later chapter.

Factor 2: restrictive emotionality

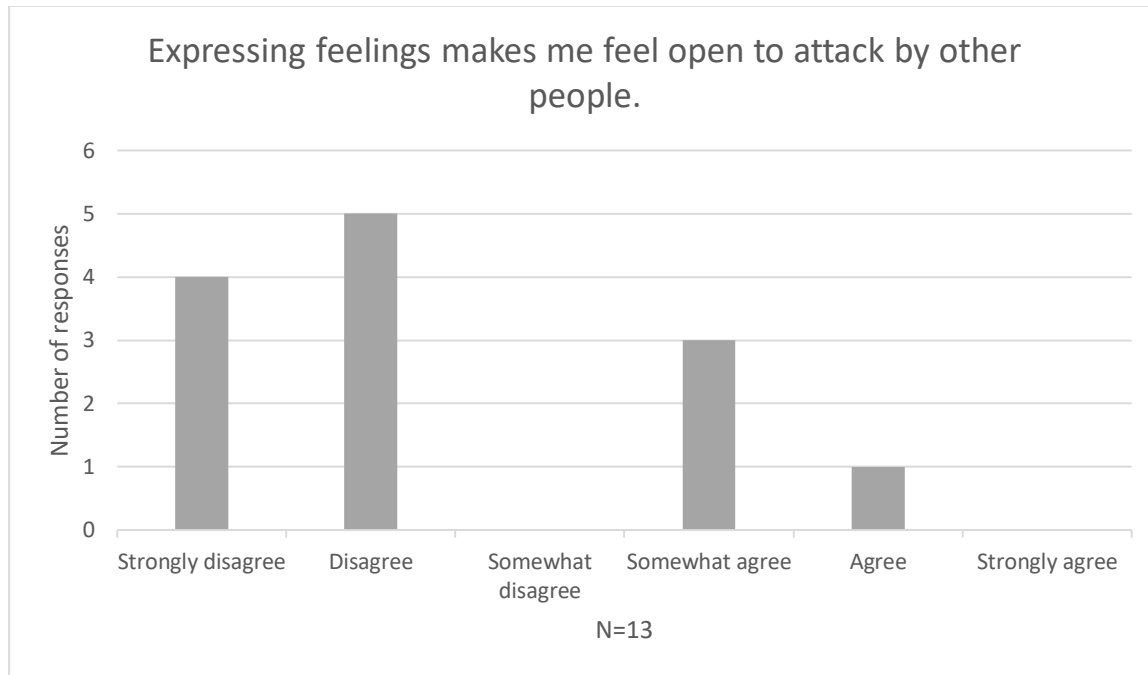


Figure 6: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 2, item 3 (“Expressing feelings makes me feel open to attack by other people.”)

The majority of participants (9 out of 13) at least disagreed with the above statement. The question doesn’t specify the type of person to express feelings towards, making it a more general statement: the majority of survey participants can therefore be considered secure in their ability to express their feelings without the fear of potential repercussions, independent of context.

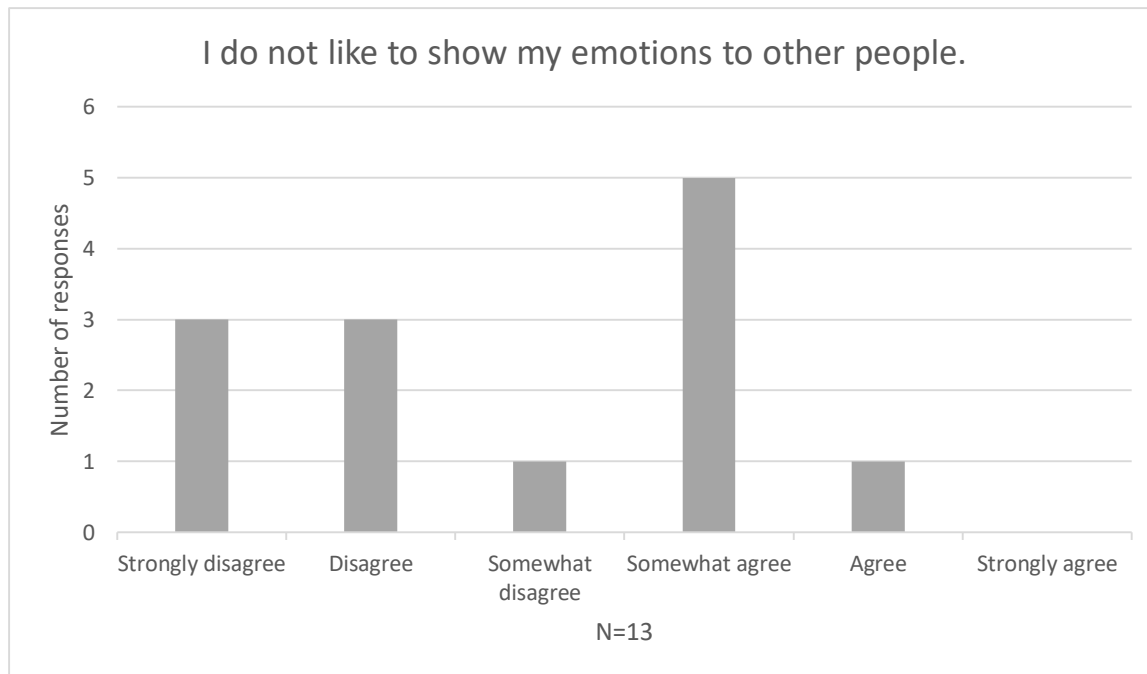


Figure 7: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 2, item 9 (“I do not like to show my emotions to other people.”)

Responses are at an almost even split on the above point: 6 vs. 7 between “at least somewhat disagree” and “at least somewhat agree”. This gives some context to the previous point (Figure 6): while not necessarily omitting the expression of their emotions for fear of making oneself open to attack, there is a light sense of wariness in half of the participants in spite of the previous observation. Note, however, that among participants who are on the disagreeing side have a stronger sense of negation towards the statement, indicating that they do like to show their emotions to other people. This point becomes especially salient when considering the next factor.

Factor 3: restrictive affectionate behavior between men

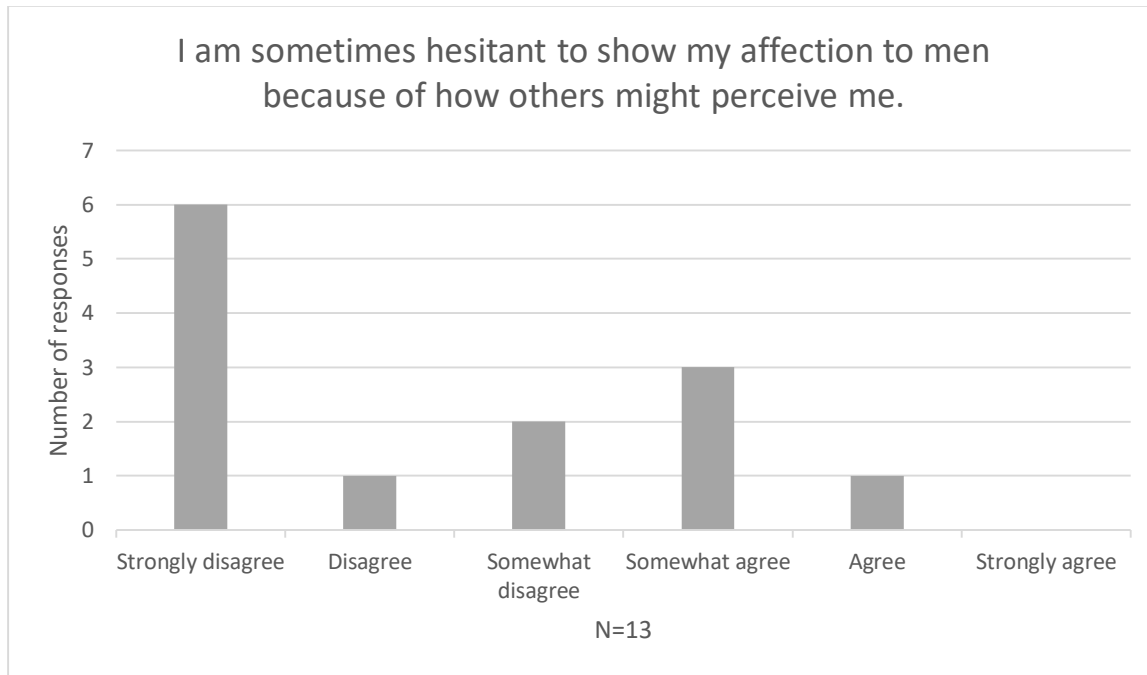


Figure 8: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 3, item 6 (“I am sometimes hesitant to show my affection to men because of how others might perceive me”)

9 of 13 participants at least somewhat disagreed with the above statement. An important aspect worth noting is the usage of the seemingly neutral word “affection”: an argument could be made that some participants would interpret this word as pertaining to activities that may be considered to be homosexual by outside observers. Furthermore, I have opted to use the word “törődés” as the translation of the word, which, alongside the main meaning of “affection” has the connotation of “care” as well, which is a phrase that is saliently distinct in comparison to “affection”. All things considered, the mode of “strongly disagree” is by far the most prevalent answer.

Factor 4: conflicts between work and family relations

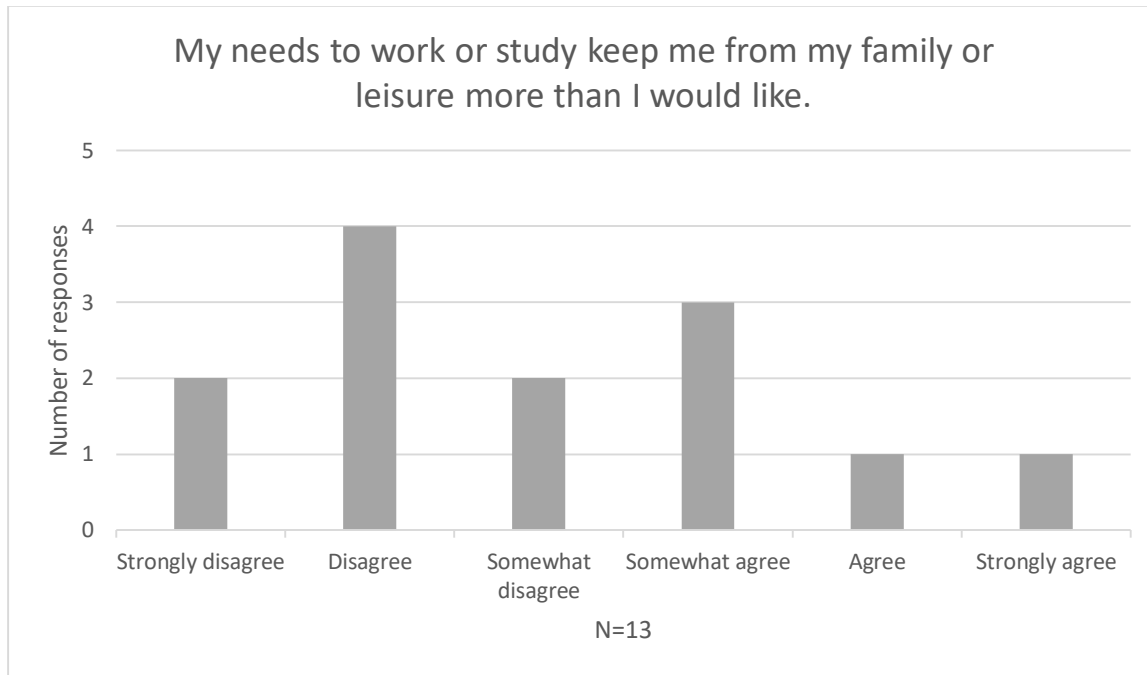


Figure 9: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 4, item 4 (“My needs to work or study keep me from my family or leisure more than I would like.”)

8 out of 13 participants at least somewhat disagreed with the statement shown above. It would be interesting to see this spread in comparison to other NGOs, as well as the difference between full-time employees versus volunteers, but that falls outside of the scope of the present thesis.

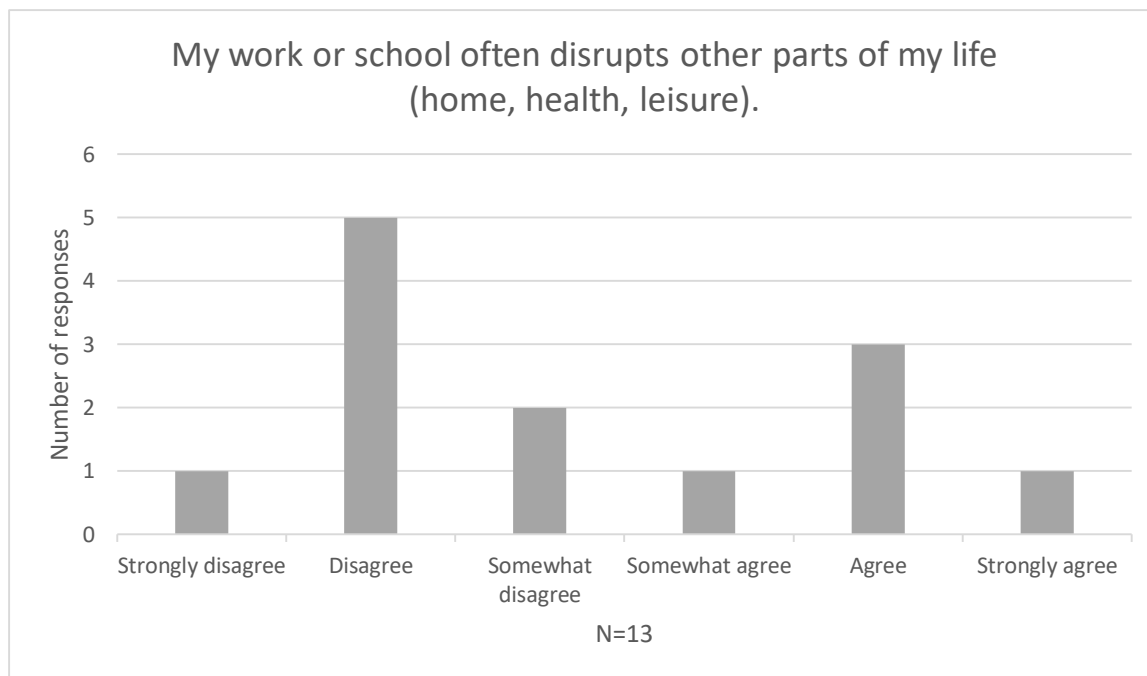


Figure 10: Gender Role Conflict Scale, factor 4, item 5 (“My work or school often disrupts other parts of my life (home, health, leisure).”)

8 of 13 participants somewhat disagreed with the above statement. In combination with the previous figure (Figure 9), the work-life balance appears to be in good standing order for the majority of the climate activist men who have filled out the questionnaire.

4.2. Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale (CMNI-46)

This scale is divided into 9 subcategories, and uses a four-point Likert scale for evaluation. Items within factors are worded similarly in a deliberate effort to tease out the more niche differences between responses based on the phraseology of the statements (e.g., “hate” versus “don’t like” versus “it bothers me” etc.). Since some items essentially repeat the notions of the previous scale (e.g., emotional control, winning, primacy of work etc.), the following section is going to focus on items which contribute new ideas to the present process.

Winning

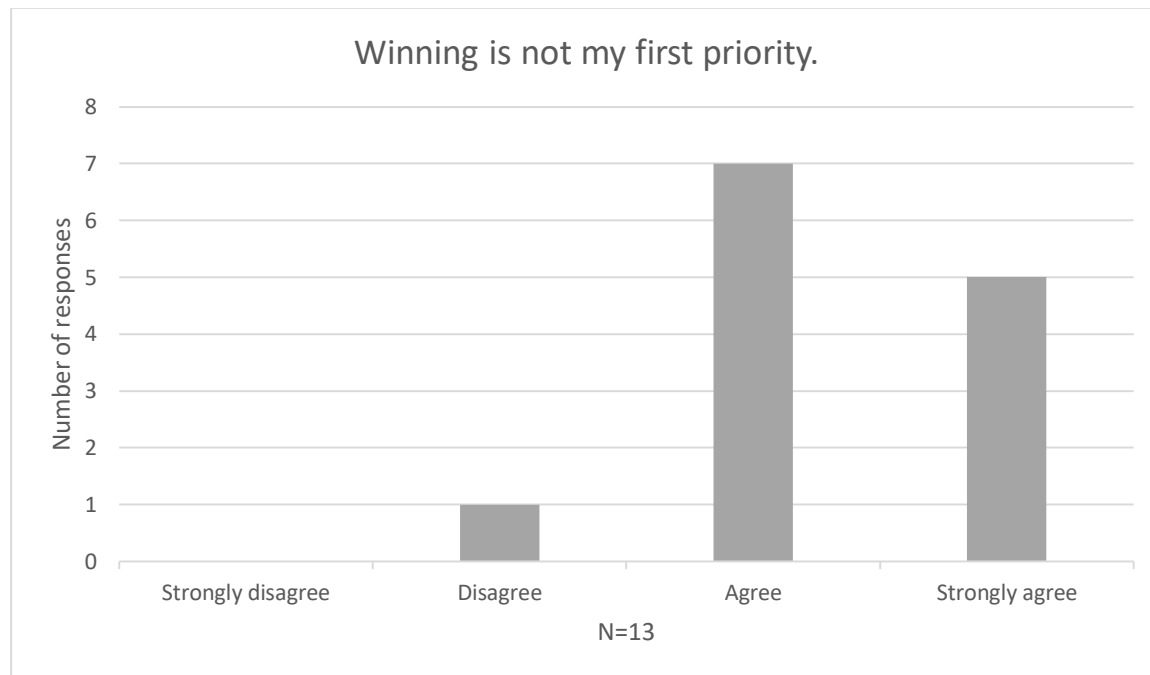


Figure 11: Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 2, item 2 (“Winning is not my first priority.”)

All but 1 participant at least agreed with the statement “Winning is not my first priority.” This does not necessarily mean that it is of no significance in their lives, but rather that it is something that is of secondary, tertiary or lower grade of importance.

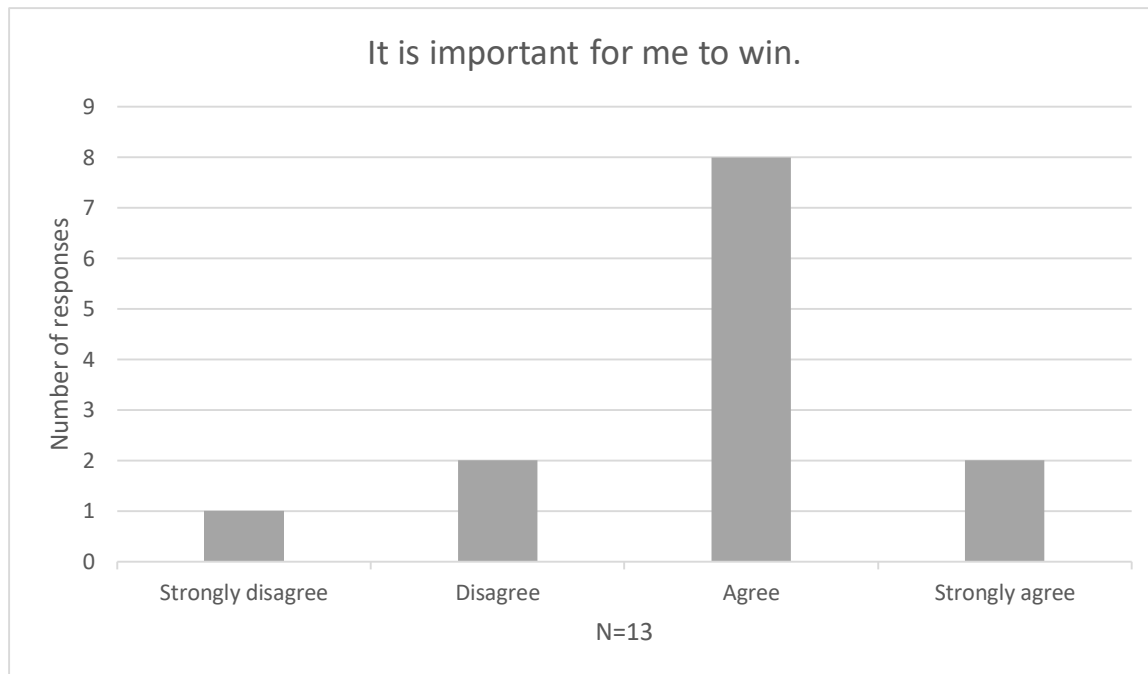


Figure 12: Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 2, item 4 (“It is important for me to win.”)

10 of 13 participants at least agreed with the above statement. Combined with the previous figure (Figure 11) we can see that, while an important factor all the same, winning is not an end-all-be-all main priority.

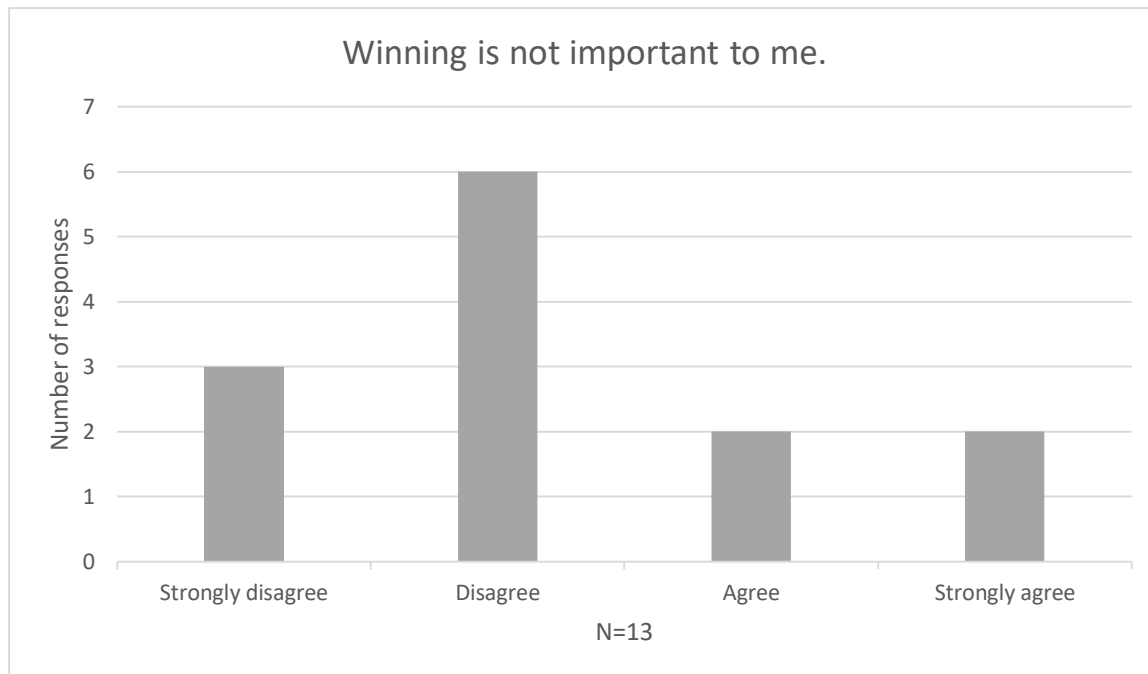


Figure 13: Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 2, item 6 (“Winning is not important to me.”)

9 of 13 participants at least disagreed with the statement shown above. While not as clear-cut as the previous results, a pronounced majority still emerges. When we look at this subsection’s combined results, we can say that the importance of winning is not insignificant to the extent of irrelevance, but it is not the main priority in the lives of the climate activist men who have filled out the questionnaire.

Self-reliance

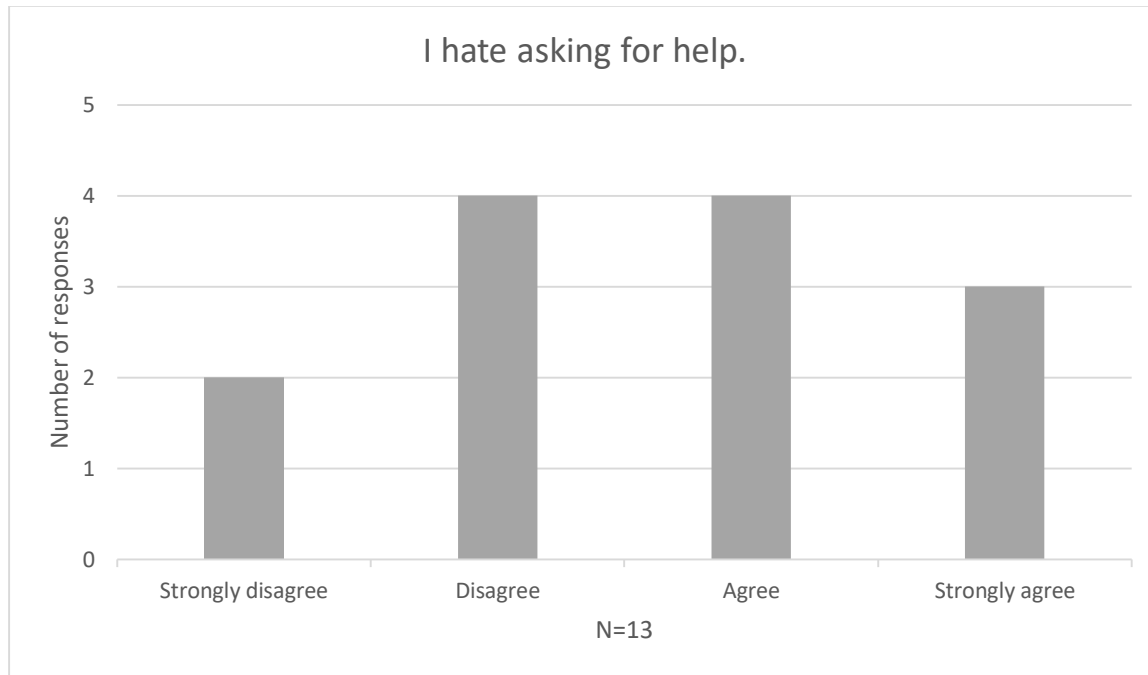


Figure 14: *Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 5, item 1 ("I hate asking for help.")*

We can see an almost completely even distribution between agreeing and disagreeing with the strongly worded statement above. Being a climate activist man therefore has no discernable correlation with one's negative disposition towards asking for help.

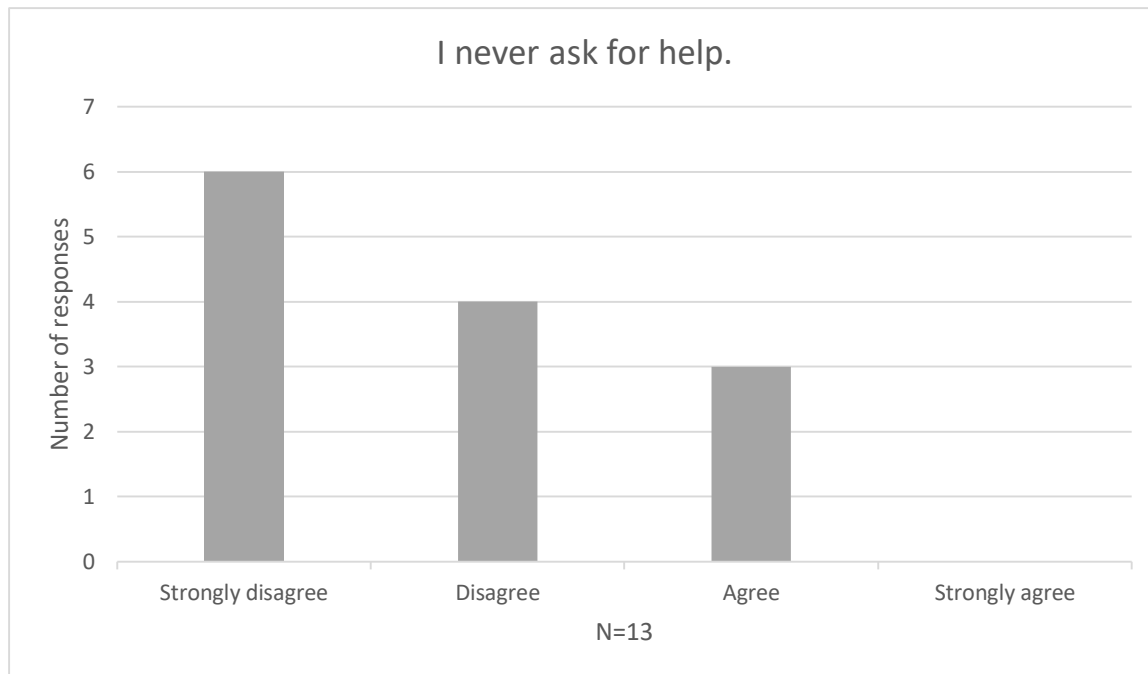


Figure 15: Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 5, item 3 (“I never ask for help.”)

10 of 13 participants at least disagreed with the statement “I never ask for help”. Note the absolute nature of the word “never”, and that in spite of this fact, some participants have opted to agree with the statement. In tandem with the previous statement (Figure 14), some participants, while hating to ask for help, don’t necessarily never ask for it.

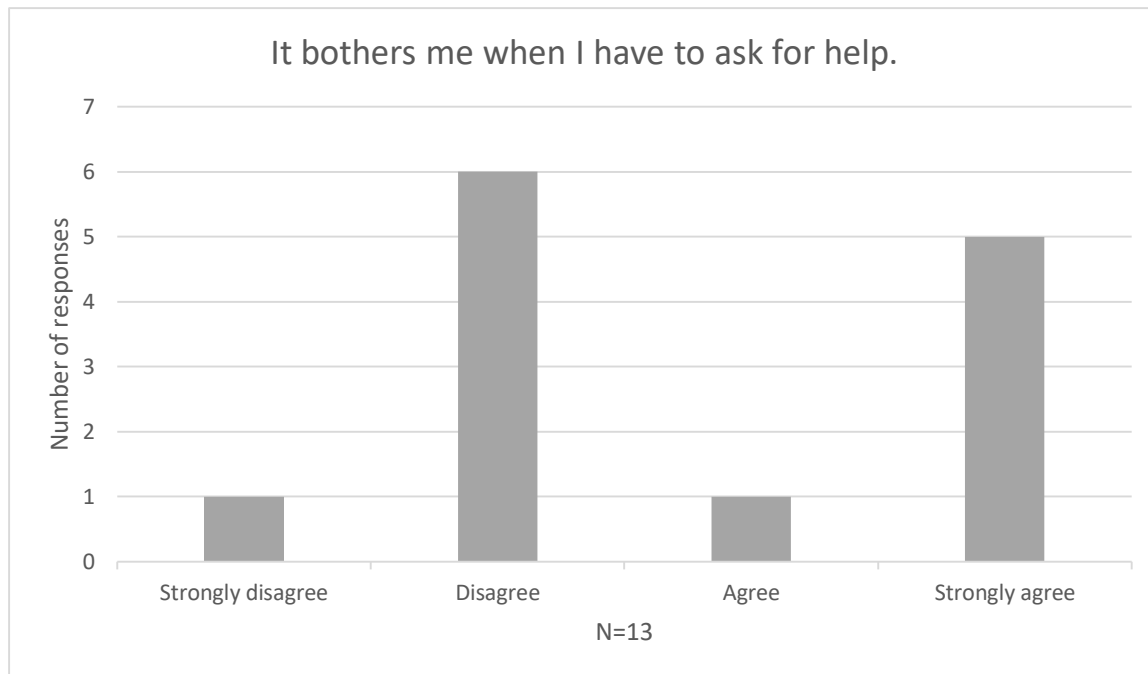


Figure 16: Conformity to Masculine Norms Scale, factor 5, item 5 (“It bothers me when I have to ask for help.”)

In the context of the previous graphs (Figure 14; Figure 15), there is a noticeable change in responses, namely a bimodal distribution between “disagree” and “strongly agree”, leaving an almost even 50-50 split. Being a climate activist therefore has no correlation with the negative feelings arising from having to ask for help as a man.

4.3. Masculine Gender Role Stress Scale (MGRS)

This scale measures how stressful a given situation is, with answers given on a six-point Likert-scale. While it is the oldest of the three scales used, it is also the broadest and most versatile, as it asks about a variety of economic, social and health issues. The scale has 40 items, and it isn’t divided into categories.

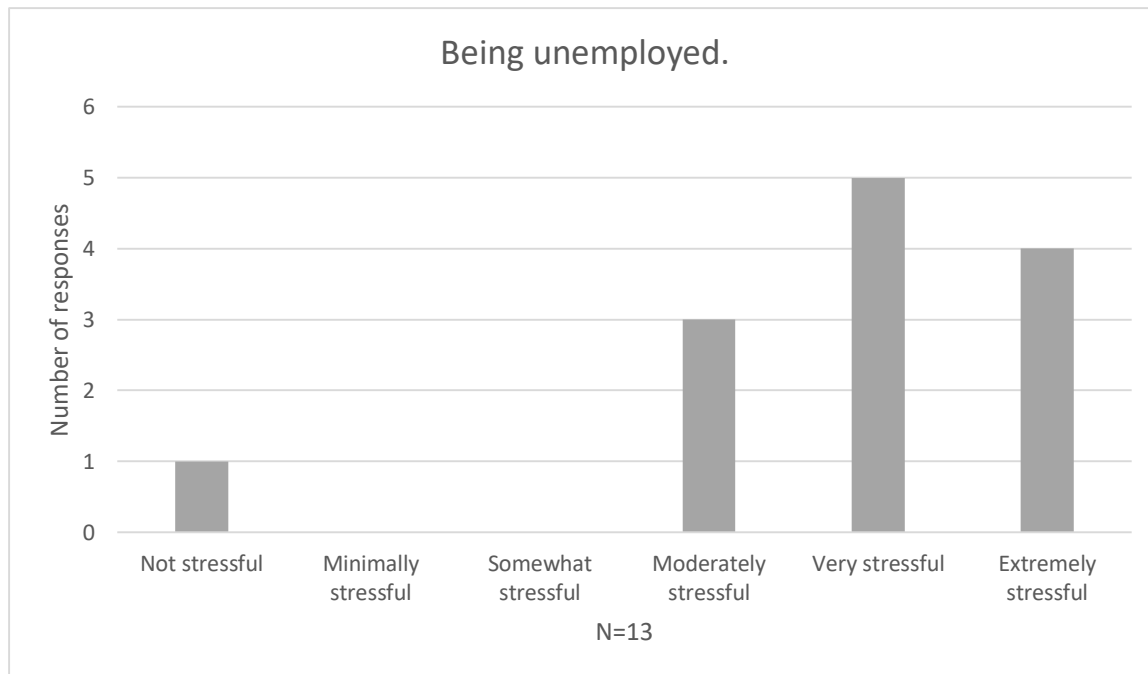


Figure 17: Masculine Gender Roll Stress Scale, item 5 (“Being unemployed.”)

With the exception of one participant, all have found the idea of being unemployed to be at least moderately stressful. It seems as though while climate NGOs allow for and encourage egalitarianism in social issues, the economic side of the equation still leaves climate activist men to be stressed about the prospect of being without a job.

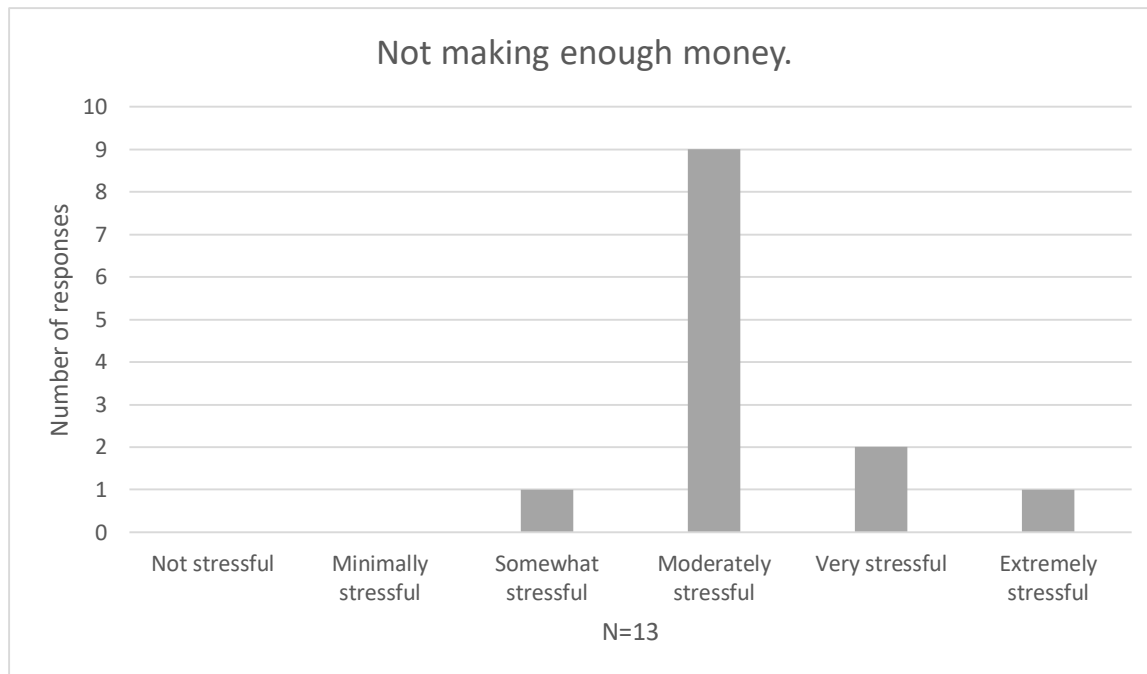


Figure 18: Masculine Gender Roll Stress Scale, item 10 (“Not making enough money.”)

All participants found the idea of not making enough money to be at least somewhat stressful, with the majority (n=9) declaring it moderately stressful. Two things are worth noting here: one, the ambiguity of the phrase “not enough”, which is left open to the interpretation of the individual participants. Two, the notion of not making enough money (whatever threshold the given participants have envisioned for themselves) is less stressful than unemployment.

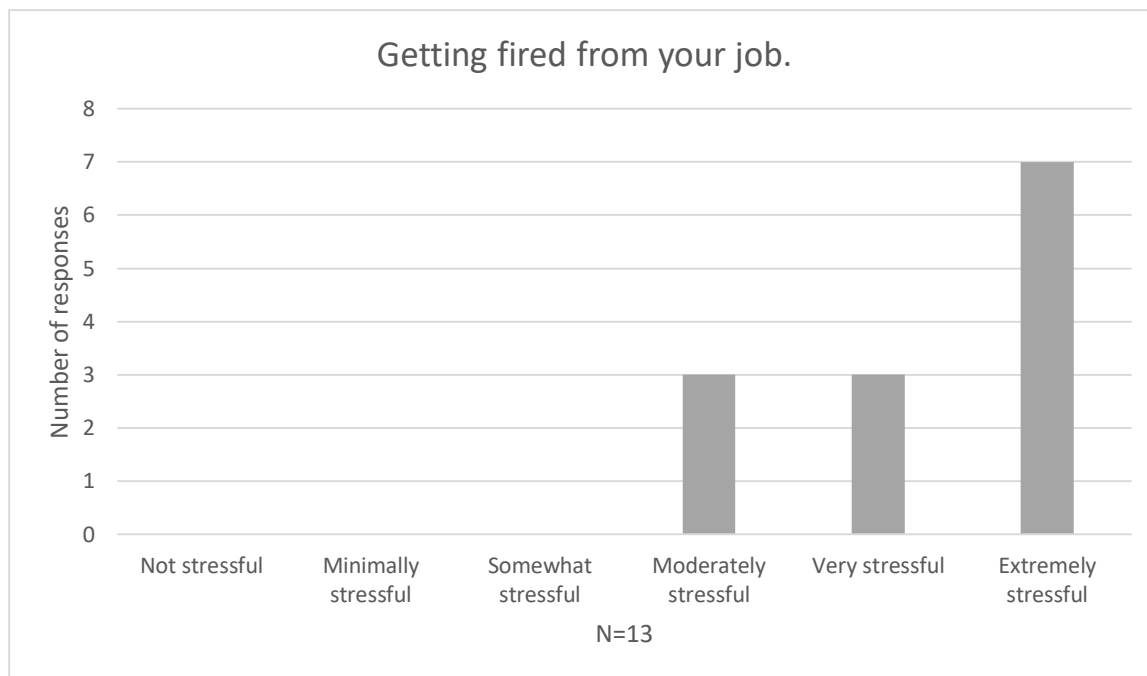


Figure 19: Masculine Gender Roll Stress Scale, item 40 (“Getting fired from your job.”)

All participants found the imaginary situation of getting fired to be at least moderately stressful. About half of them have answered with “extremely stressful”. This, coupled with the previous items from this scale (Figure 17; Figure 18) indicates that anxieties of economic and/or career-focused nature are saliently stressful for male climate activists. The idea of getting fired from a job is more stressful than the concept of unemployment itself, and even more stressful than not making enough money.

4.4. Quantitative analysis: conclusion and discussion

In terms of evaluating subjective masculinity, the scales used and outlined by Wong et al. (2011; 2013) were used to assess and quantify the scale of agreement and the stress associated by the climate activist men who participated by filling out the questionnaire. The charts which showcase the results (Figures 2-19) have been selected based on their salience in terms of their outcome, as

well as based on their relevance in the context of answering the research questions laid out in the present thesis.

Participants have a sense of wanting to do well all the time, which, according to the majority of the responses, is independent from the success of others. When it comes to the best way to succeed, participants unanimously disagreed that competing with others would be their preferred method. This point is further underscored by the participants' stance against wanting to feel superior to others. On average, they don't think that showing emotions would leave them open to attack but aren't conclusively fond of showing emotions to others either. The gender of the person to be shown affection towards is not an issue for participants when it comes to outside perception and are comfortable showing affection towards other men. On average, the participants' work-life balance seems to be in harmony in their view. As for winning in general, the climate activist men who participated, while thinking that winning is important (and, on the other hand, not unimportant), it is also not their main priority. As for asking for help, while not conclusively for or against the prospect itself, they don't reject it outright, opting to do so even if they have mixed feelings about asking for help. Stressors brought forth by economic aspects such as unemployment, being fired and/or not making enough money were consistently shown among participants to be stressful.

Note that the conclusions outlined here are borne out of a large spectrum of factors: the quantitative (and indeed, the upcoming qualitative) inquiries serve both as cross-section analyses, showcasing the attitudes and dispositions of participating male climate activists at a given time, which is, suffice it to say, turbulent and uncertain.

5. Combining the studies and discussing their place in international development

This chapter focuses on the potential intersections between the quantitative and qualitative parts of the present thesis. The aim is to draw attention to the overlaps and, on the flipside, the gaps between the two approaches. Given the vast differences in their underpinnings, it would be especially interesting to take a look at the similarities in their results.

5.1. Similarities

Both the quantitative and qualitative analysis featured questions that focused on the interactions between male climate activists and other men. While the questionnaire asked broader questions, not specifying any one man to think about while the participant gave their answer, the interviews had an explicit focus on the interaction between both fellow climate activist men, and those who are not part of the movement. Looking at the answers given in both approaches, climate activist men don't have trouble opening up and expressing their feelings to other men. In the interviews, however, there was some emphasis put on the fact that it is easier for the participants to talk about their problems regarding their emotional state to fellow male climate activists. This was overshadowed in the minds of some participants by their accounts of having an easier time with this matter when talking to women, independent of their participation in climate movements.

Another similarity is the talk about losing the ability to act and to work: the quantitative study included questions which focused on one's work, specifically how stressful it would be for them to lose their job or to be kicked out. The majority of responses pertaining to both these situations were that they are more stressful than not. In my interviews, it has become clear that the inactivity brought forth by COVID-19 has had a profound impact: it was as though activists were laid off, unable to work, with some even losing their jobs outside of climate NGOs. Work and the

financial security that is downstream from it are important for the participants, and being forced into precarious circumstances has weighed especially on their conscience. The notion that men have to be the breadwinners of their respective households appears to have been dismantled to less of an extent than other social equality-type topics.

Competition and winning is another aspect which was brought up in both approaches: how its importance shapes the experiences and behaviors of men. The quantitative survey indicated that, while not the number one priority for participants, it is also, on the flipside, not unimportant to them. This is interestingly contrasted by the findings of the qualitative research, namely that participants have routinely ascribed competitiveness to the men that they actively want to distance themselves from. As a reconciliatory point, the commonality in this instance is that winning ought not to be seen as the end-all-be-all factor of life, and that this line of thinking would be, according to the participants, be “unvirtuous”.

Lastly, the notion of doing well is something that is consistently detached from the performance of others around the participants. While the survey asks questions directly to provide answers to this end, the interviews have landed on similar topics through the participants’ volition and deliberation. The qualitative part has the advantage of being able to ask about the participant’s past, which has allowed me to gain insight into the shifts in participants’ attitudes regarding the concept.

To sum up this part, we can see that there is some overlap between the two studies, and both have their advantages in giving nuance regarding the answering of the research questions outlined in the present thesis. In the next passage, let us look at the limitations of the approaches used.

5.2. Limitations

As discussed in an earlier chapter regarding COVID-19 and its force as an agent of disruption and a catalyst for change, the two approaches used in the present thesis are a result of a kind of “salvage mission”: while the methodological underpinnings and a part of the literature review were already underway, the subsequent lockdowns from the pandemic have forced some measure of recalculation and redesign: originally, participant observation would have been the main methodology used in answering the questions surrounding masculinity in the climate movement, with semi-structured interviews and surveys serving a complementary role.

While the approaches ultimately decided upon while writing this thesis have proven themselves to be useful, there is still the uneasy feeling of “what could have been”, which is a process that, like many similar thought processes, require mourning. Even as we are approaching the end of the thesis, this task still seems to be difficult.

The first obvious limitation regarding the findings is that the quantitative analysis had a low number of participants. This just goes to show that even the search for survey participants through previously reliable outlets has become exponentially more difficult. A higher number of participants would have given assurance for more definite observations and interpretations regarding the given answers pertaining to each question. If nothing else, doing good by the results and continuing with work in good faith despite the low turnout can be considered to be a badge of honor.

Secondly, in the context of Grounded Theory work, while boasting a number of advantages, such as leaving out a significant amount of bias out from the researcher by prescribing the postponing of a thorough literature review, ensuring the relevance of the results to an extent, this blessing can

be considered to be a double-edged sword: without a firm grasp of the relevant literature, there is the threat of treading on unknown grounds without proper footing. On a personal level, on one hand, it has felt uncomfortable to be under the veil of ignorance for an extended period of time, and at the same time it felt empowering and liberating to know that whatever observations I may have, they would gain their worth on the basis of my interpretation, which Grounded Theory values in and of itself. Moving forward, it would be interesting to see a qualitative analysis which uses a different approach, and to compare the results alongside it.

Lastly, the fact that I have at least some sort of relationship with almost every participant, be it a fellow activist member, a friend or acquaintance, this dynamic has definitely impacted the results of the analysis. To combat this, I have deliberately distanced myself from the transcripts by starting the coding process after some time has passed. In a different way, the fact that I know the interview participants may have contributed to a better sense of security and rapport. I have contacted male climate activists outside of the circles that I am active in. However, they unfortunately either didn't respond, or did so after I was done with the qualitative analysis.

With this chapter, I hope to have given insight and elaborated on the various aspects which may have had an impact on the quality and on the outcome of this thesis.

5.3. Implications in international development

In what ways are the results of the present thesis relevant to the field of development studies, and international development in general? The most immediate answer is the insight it provides into the motivations and behaviors of male climate activists, especially through the use of Gramsci's theory of hegemony: Connell (2005) and Howson (2005) have both shown that the interactions between different types of masculinities can be mapped onto the labels that Gramsci originally

laid out to describe relations between political actors. The two analyses conducted in the present thesis show that the question of work and employment is one that is a significant factor for participants: the prospect of losing one's job, becoming unemployed or being kicked out are all things which are the most stressful phenomena according to the questionnaire that this thesis utilized.

Secondly, it showcases the ways through which civil society, NGOs and CSOs can meaningfully oppose masculinities which institutions consider to be hegemonic, for example, the Hungarian government. De-emphasizing macho-ness, fostering compassion, trust and inclusivity are all factors that appear as solutions for positive change. What remains as a gendered burden, it seems, is the expectation towards men to be the breadwinners of their household, and the prospect of losing one's gainful employment causes enormous stress. Therefore, it would be interesting to see if the introduction of policies designed to mitigate the economic stress that an individual might potentially face in times of uncertainty, such as a universal basic income, more equal distribution of wages, paid leave etc. would impact the attitudes of male climate activists.

6. Conclusion and avenues for future research

The present thesis has endeavored to outline and elucidate the masculinities within the Hungarian climate activist movement, specifically through the gendered experiences of male individuals through their reflection of what it means for them to be a man. The quantitative analysis resulted in outlining key stressors of participants, such as asking for help, wanting to win, losing their job, expressing their feelings, showing their emotions to other men and so on. The results of the quantitative part corroborate some tendencies within the qualitative analysis, which were categorized as outlined by existing bodies of text within Grounded Theory methodology. To do what's right, to be a protector of marginalized demographics, to be logical and rational, and to be physically strong were all points that reverberated in the majority of participants. These themes mapped onto existing research in masculinity studies, especially in its contrast between hegemonic and subaltern, as well as other, more niche directions. Environmental organizations serve as a conduit for allowing potential members to engage in activism that aligns with their notions of conscientiousness, co-operation and solidarity. The male climate activists who have participated in the studies all strive and actively fight for social justice, and oppose the constructed masculinity of the Hungarian government, as well as its effort to enforce gender roles on men and women alike. Participants reported that they have picked up some of these notions and convictions somewhere during their involvement in the climate movement.

While some form of directionality could be ascertained in terms of change regarding the joining of an environmental organization, these dynamics warrant further research, perhaps with different methodological underpinnings, which may once again be hopefully available and feasible with the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. It would also be interesting to see the changes concerning shifts in political attitudes (such as the EU and the Hungarian government engaging in steps to

combat the climate crisis), as well as to holistically look at Hungarian climate activist men, not just from the “big three” (XR, FFF and GP), so as to get even more generalizable results. Furthermore, the comparison across different countries and regions may also prove themselves to be fruitful and salient.

With the present thesis, my hopes have been to inquire about and elucidate connections that weren’t represented in prior research, and to foster discussion which can have a positive impact on the way we perceive and interact with studies which focus on men and masculinity. Rest assured, it will be interesting to see how the fields of climate activism and masculinity studies continue to intersect, and what questions they may endeavor to pose and to answer. I hope that this thesis is able to meaningfully contribute to the discourse within the aforementioned fields of study, and that, combined with theorizing, policy decisions can be made to further benefit the causes of environmental activism, of feminism, of gender equality, of social and of ecological justice.

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Abstract

This thesis is about what male climate activists in Hungary think what it means for them to be a man. Pro-environmental behaviors (PEBs) manifest along gender expectations, and climate activism consists of a large spectrum of interactions. This thesis consists of a cross-section mixed method analysis through the use of two methods. Firstly, a set of 11 interviews with male climate activists in Hungary analyzed through the method of Constructivist Grounded Theory. Recurring key themes and subthemes were then interpreted, and subsequently compared with prominent lines of reasoning within the field of masculinity studies, especially through R. Connell's concept looking at masculinity through a Gramscian lens. Secondly, a quantitative analysis by means of a questionnaire which combines questions and situations that are traditionally considered to be stressful and/or deviate from traditional masculine expectations. Results are then discussed in the context of development studies.

Die vorliegende Masterarbeit behandelt die Frage, was es heißt für männliche Klimaaktivisten, ein Mann zu sein. „Pro-environmental behaviors“ (PEBs) sind durch Gender-Erwartungen geprägt, und Klimaaktivismus besteht aus einer Vielfalt an Interaktionen. Diese Arbeit besteht aus einer Mixed-Methods Querschnittanalyse durch zwei Methoden. Erstens, ein konstruktivistischer Grounded Theory-Ansatz in der qualitativen Analyse von 11 Interviews mit Klimaaktivisten in Ungarn. Wiederkehrende Themen und Unterthemen wurden anschließend interpretiert und mit prominenten Argumentationen im Bereich Männlichkeitsstudien vergleicht, besonders R. Connells Konzept, was Männlichkeit durch einen gramscianischen Ansatz interpretiert. Zweitens, eine quantitative Analyse mithilfe einer Umfrage, die Fragen und Situationen beschreibt, die aus der Hinsicht traditioneller Männlichkeiten stressvoll sind bzw. davon abweichen. Die Ergebnisse sind im Rahmen der Entwicklungsstudien diskutiert.