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ABSTRACT

Based on a case study of a street workout community in post-Soviet Dagestan, I show how young underclass men construct and negotiate their masculinities in a transitional society. Processes of deindustrialization and urbanization destabilize the gender order and problematize the legitimate ways of 'achieving' masculinity. Street workout athletes use the global cultural (post-sports) practice to articulate, prove and perform their masculinity styles and scenarios, which correspond both to the norms of the local and global hegemonic models. They pursue 'leisure careers' of professionally successful men and represent a strong, but not aggressive corporeality distancing themselves from marginalizing practices of street violence.

KEYWORDS
New sports; street workout; masculinity; habitual insecurity; post-Soviet Dagestan

Introduction

Since influential work of Connell (2005), young working and underclass men have been at the centre of the debate on youth masculinity as a group that reflects the gender-specific crisis trends associated with the changing global landscape of industrial relations (Nayak 2006; MacDonald and Shildrick 2007; McDowell 2002; Roberts 2014). Employment in the industry allowed young people to accumulate their masculine capital, which was based on the unconditional value of a patriarchal 'breadwinner' position, physical 'cruelty' and the sexual division of labour (Nayak 2006). Deindustrialization processes, both in the 'core' of the world capitalism and in countries of the post-Soviet 'periphery', undermine structural and cultural foundations of working and underclass hegemonic masculinities, problematizing traditional paths of 'becoming a man' inscribed in conventional trajectories of transitions from youth to adulthood (Tartakovskaya 2002; Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; MacDonald and Shildrick 2007; Nayak 2006; Walker 2016).

I focus on how young underclass men and adolescents construct their masculinities in the context of a crisis of institutions that ensure masculinity as they grow up. My case is about participants in the community of street workout in Makhachkala, the Republic of Dagestan and the third-largest city in the North Caucasus region of the Russian Federation. This republic, and the region can be characterized as a transit society, which in the last 20 years has undergone a large-scale structural transformation associated with the processes

of deindustrialization and urbanization. The region's peripheral position against the backdrop of the 'core' of global capitalism and the federal centre in Moscow gives this change a special dramatic character, revealing in the most radical form the contradictions of the patriarchal gender order.

Street workout is amateur gymnastics, which includes various exercises on street sports grounds. The choice of this subject is due to several circumstances. First, sports and outdoor activities are often the main cultural practice for male youth, especially for young working and underclass men. This is also true for this geographical context. Second, the sport has traditionally been seen as a social arena where transformations in masculinity become visible (Anderson 2010; Connell 2005). By analysing observations and interviews with street athletes, what masculinity scripts and styles they implement, and how they relate to the structure of opportunity, which is determined by the intersection of different stratification criteria (class, age and religion). Focusing on young underclass men reflects the idea that for this group of youth their gender identity is highly vulnerable, both because of their age and low social status.

Hegemonic masculinity, habitual insecurity and violence

The concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) remains the most influential theoretical framework in the debate about masculinity, despite criticism. It is claimed so, although most men do not conform to the hegemonic model. They support it, thereby developing complicit masculinity. Hegemonic regimes of heterosexual subjectivity are 'constituted by cultural elements which consist of contradictory forms of compulsory heterosexuality, misogyny, and homophobia' (Mac An Ghail 1996, p. 133). Connell's theory highlights the relationality of gender categories: hegemonic masculinity cannot be defined as a set of stable features but exists in relation to subordinate, complicit and marginalized masculinities. The four principles of traditional masculinity that Brannon (1976) formulated are widely known: 'no sissy stuff' – avoid everything feminine, 'the big wheel' – man succeeds and dominates other men, 'the sturdy oak' – be strong and do not show weakness and 'give 'em hell' – be strong and do not be afraid of violence.

In the context of the research question, it is important to conceptualize the perception and reaction of certain groups of men to crisis trends that question the legitimacy of the hegemonic masculinity. While gender researchers (Connell 2005; Nayak and Kehily 2013) criticize the thesis of a 'masculinity crisis', there is a significant body of empirical evidence that, subjectively, such transformations can be perceived as individual or group crises, generating social frustration (Ashwin and Lytkina 2004; Lindegger and Durrheim 2001; Yang 2010). An adequate concept that captures this phenomenon seems to be the 'masculine habitus' (Behnke and Meuser 2001). It is based on the idea of Bourdieu (2018) that the social existence of gender is linked to a certain type of habitus that works as a classification mechanism that 'allows' some practices and excludes others. Masculine habitus is the result of the naturalization of the gender order. Life following the male habitus gives rise to a sense of habitual security (Behnke and Meuser 2001), or security within a certain social order. The life situations of men differ depending on the extent to which this feeling is expressed in them. Since the concept of 'habitual security' is a kind of measure of 'self-conscious acceptance of his habitual fate' (Janning 1991, cited by Behnke and Meuser 2001), that is, conscious acceptance of gender order and its position in it. It can be useful for explanations

of why, in certain situations, transformations within a constantly changing gender landscape are perceived and described as problematic and 'crisis-like'.

Two possible 'responses' to the situation of 'habitual insecurity' have been most explored. The first is 'migration' to spaces where «the ability to define the meanings attached to behaviours, bodies and language forms a localized hegemony» (Matthews 2014: 6). The most important of such spaces is the sport (Anderson 2010), which naturalizes the symbolic logic of domination and difference in the bodies and, thus, supports, albeit to a limited extent, habitual security.

Second, it is a reference to various forms of protest masculinity, which Connell (2005) defines as marginalized masculinity, which 'picks up themes of hegemonic masculinity in the society at large but reworks them in a context of poverty' (114). Protest masculinity of socially deprived youth, according to Connell, is often expressed through direct physical violence against women and other men, which reflects claim to power where there are no real resources for power (111). Using the example of protest masculinity, the author illustrates the controversial connection between violence and hegemony: 'Violence is part of a system of domination, but it is at the same time a measure of its imperfection. A thoroughly legitimate hierarchy would have less need to intimidate' (84) Thus, the use of violence signals that hegemony is not stable and that the gender order is in crisis or transformation.

Makhachkala: past and present

The city of Makhachkala (former Port-Petrovsk) was founded on conquered lands and was developing as a colonial project. During Soviet times, Makhachkala went through forced modernization, becoming one of the leading industrial centres in the region. From the 1930s to the 1980s, the population grew by more than 10 times (Ibragimov and Magomedhanov 2009). The main social infrastructure, education system and basic industries created urban culture that was different from the traditional one, and a multinational composition of bright people appeared (Gadzhiev 2013).

Soviet modernization in Dagestan was consistently carried out in the cities exclusively (Lytkina 2010). Researchers define the Soviet gender order as ethocratic (Zdravomyslova and Tyomkina 2003). It means that the configuration of power relations was set primarily by the rigid framework of state regulation. The rural periphery, despite attempts by the state to speed up the transition to an industrial society, preserved many elements of the traditional way of life based on belonging to the religious-territorial community, extended family and customary law (Dudoignon and Noack 2014; Bobrovnikov 2001). The key principles of this structure were gender segregation, the subordination of women to men and youth to elders (Lytkina 2010). In the conditions of the village, only men could use Social lifts that were created during modernization through education and the development of new professions (Lytkina 2010). Thus, the institutions of Soviet modernization in the rural areas of Dagestan paradoxically worked to preserve the structures of the traditional patriarchate. The status quo between the city and the village was preserved due to the low rates of industrialization (Ilyashenko 2003).

The situation changed with the collapse of the Soviet Union: the breakup of industries, ensuing economic chaos and a difficult criminal situation provoked a massive outflow of the urban population (workers, employees and intellectuals) outside the republic and their replacement by immigrants from rural (mountainous) regions (Sokolov et al. 2017). By

2014, the share of 'new city dwellers' among residents of Makhachkala was, according to various estimates, from 4/5 to 6/7, while the population itself almost doubled compared to 1990 (Lobodanova 2015; Sokolov et al. 2017). The most obvious consequences of urbanization were the destruction of the existing urban culture and the crisis of the formal and informal institutions responsible for its production.

Uncertainty of the transition period is combined with low existential security. In the recent past, Dagestan was the scene of a full-scale armed confrontation between the jihadist underground and security agencies (*siloviki*), which was conducted by both sides with massive human rights violations (Sokiryanskaya 2019; Yarlykapov 2010). At present, this conflict is frozen, but the political, religious and economic contradictions that created it continue to have a significant impact on the situation in the republic. All this creates an extremely high level of social tension, which is further exacerbated by corruption and poor governance.

In conditions of uncertainty, there is a demand for systems of legal and moral regulation that offer clear and unambiguous rules of the game (Starodubrovskaya 2015). Islam has quickly filled the vacuum that emerged after the collapse of communist ideology, becoming the central axis of the social identity of the city and the republic (Kisriev 2007). Mass Friday prayers, the call to prayer by the muezzin, hijab on women turned from exotic to normal urban cultural landscape attributes. Religion provided the legitimacy of a conservative turn in the gender realm, but it also became the focal point of articulation of intergenerational conflict (Starodubrovskaya and Kazenin 2014).

At the same time, Makhachkala is the most 'advanced' city in Dagestan in terms of appropriation of global cultural trends coming from both the West and the East. Empirical studies of the cultural practices of Makhachkala youth demonstrate a wide differentiation of leisure styles and scenes: from 'authentic' athletes, football fans and traditional dancers to 'imported' anime fans, skaters, parkour enthusiasts and rappers (Omelchenko 2019).

All these factors form a very hybrid landscape of gender relations that combines the practices and norms of traditional patriarchy, the Soviet ethocratic model and the new neoliberal gender order.

Street workout

Street athletes of Makhachkala train at a typical school backyard, located on Askerkhanov Street. The sports equipment they use – horizontal bars, parallel bars, monkey bars, stairways – were installed in the mid-80s of the last century. Training is carried out three to four times a week and lasts around an hour and a half. After a 15-min warm-up, the participants split into groups: beginners work out the so-called 'base' – pull-ups, push-ups on the bars, push-ups from the floor, while experienced athletes practice complex acrobatic and power elements.

Due to social networks and TV, the site on Askerkhanov Street obtained a certain reputation. At almost every training session, the community is replenished with new faces – schoolchildren and students of Makhachkala colleges and universities. Often, fathers and grandfathers themselves bring 5- to 7-year-old children to the site. The reasons for such popularity are visual attractiveness and a low entry inquiry. Unlike formal sports clubs, training here is free and aspiring athletes can join them at any time of the year without qualifying tests.

A street workout became a separate sport style in the early 2000s among African-American youth from poor areas. It gained global popularity because of the videos from the YouTube network. For the older generation of workout enthusiasts in Dagestan and the post-Soviet space at all, the interest in this discipline began with watching the video 'Hannibal for King and Barilla' [https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=RqutrplfF8s]. In this video African-American athlete Hannibal Tyrone Lanham from New York (pseudonym – Hannibal for King) demonstrated what would later become the classic workout routine: Muscle-up, front lever, horizontal push-ups, push-ups from the bar and back lever.

This bodily discipline refers to so-called post- or new sports practices, the typical features of which are the emphasis on 'grassroots' participation, an ideology that combines individualism, hedonism, self-realization, freedom, extreme, broad inclusiveness, lack of competitiveness and aggressiveness characteristic of mainstream sports (Wheaton 2004). In the Western context, the neo-tribal and non-competitive nature of new sports practices prevents recreation of gender hierarchies and, hence, opens the way for new individual masculinity styles, that obtain inclusiveness towards other male and female participants (Atkinson 2010; Wheaton 2004; Thorpe 2010).

In the former Soviet Union, the street workout has turned into a social movement with regular open free training for everyone, show performances in educational institutions and active work with young people. A 'healthy lifestyle' is the ideology of the movement and it involves giving up smoking and alcohol, a healthy diet and physical activity.

The Dagestani workout community was founded in 2013. Over the past years, the core of the most involved athletes has been formed (8–10 people). Partner communities appeared in other cities of Dagestan: Izberbash, Kaspiysk and Derbent. The number of those who attend training irregularly varies depending on the season. The peak of attendance is during autumn, spring and the first month of the summer, so the number of simultaneously training athletes can reach 100. During July–August and December–February, no more than 20–25 athletes train at the same time.

Among participant low-resource young people dominate numerically. They can be divided into three groups: (a) children of parents engaged in the low-skilled precarious job in housebuilding, trade, private delivery, beauty industry, (b) sons of the 'new poor' (Yaroshenko 1998) – the mass intelligentsia plunged into poverty by the reforms of the 90 s and (c) rural young people studying at universities and colleges. Among those who have already graduated from the educational track, unemployment or occasional employment is the norm.

Hence, the street workout deviates from the ideally typical understanding of the 'new sport' described above (sports for the white middle class), since this physical activity has left the African American ghetto and is mainly engaged by socially and economically substantial youth. In my opinion, we can observe an appropriation of certain elements of the culture and ideology of middle-class youth by young underclass representatives.

I conducted my case study in September 2016 and April 2017. I provided a participant observation, which in total took two months, engaged in training sessions, and interviewed community members and their inner circle. 17 semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 teenagers and young men aged 14 to 25 years.[1] Twelve of them live in Makhachkala, four in the satellite city Kaspiysk. Throughout the study, a field diary was kept in which community practices, occasional conversations with its participants and the researcher's

reflection on the observed interactions, as well as on his appearance in the field, were recorded in detail. The analysis of the collected material was carried out in two stages. At the first stage, key topics of analysis were identified. Within each topic, open line-by-line coding was carried out in the logic of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 2017) to excerpt hidden categories.

Marginalization

> One of the trainees mentioned that his uncle was educated without appearing at the university since his father [the respondent's father] simply paid for it. Another athlete said that no one here, after getting a higher education will work in his profession, because there are no such jobs. "Let's say S. [one of the trainers] graduated in economics, but nobody needs economists. I asked why he studied then. - Well, for a show. When you marry your son it is so fashionable to say, he graduated in law or medicine there. And he really cannot treat people. Q: And if you leave? A: Those who leave, yes, they really learn and find a job. Q: Why don't they leave then? A: Do you know our system? When you're 20 they find you a girl, her parents get her married and 'bichuesh' [bum around] with her here. (Field notes).

In the cited conversation above a crisis scenario of 'achieving' masculinity is given: hard to find a job, formal and needless education, marriage only after parents allowance that leads to a lifestyle that is described with a verb '*bichuesh*' (from the slang 'bich' – a degraded person who does not have a permanent place of residence and work). To understand what meaning this scenario has for the group of young people under my study, it is vital to put it in the context of the socio-economic transformations that are linked with deindustrialization and urbanization.

In the late-Soviet society, deindustrialization led to the elimination of the economic basis of social mechanisms that turned village people to the urban citizens with education and employment in production. It also provided a soft age transition from school to work that was predictable and stable, having a planned economy in the background. Urbanization has sped up fragmentation of a traditional extended family that was still existing in rural areas, replacing it with a nuclear type and undermining the sacred authority of elders over youth (Starodubrovskaya and Kazenin 2014). Children of first migrants are usually more educated than their parents. They have to shape their values and meanings in a culturally heterogeneous city environment with no support from the family elders with no resources or social capital (useful contacts) to make it in a city.

The move to the city accelerated the process of decomposition of the traditional extended family, which entailed the redistribution of power relations and responsibilities. The nuclear family monopolized the raising of children. The spouses and fathers were assigned the role of a sole head and 'breadwinner'. However, the fact that this was happening in a period of economic turbulence significantly limited the ability of most ordinary men to support their families. New economic reality demanded to switch from learning to work to learning to serve (McDowell 2000). Many of them just were not ready for such changes due to the honour code and deep integration in structures of industrial society (Lytkina 2010; Starodubrovskaya 2019). Commonly, women had to master new competencies in trade and services and to take places on the labour market (Sirazhudinova 2013). That alone makes men suffer from double marginalization – 'from both work and household' (Ashwin and

Lytkina 2004), as in city space a housekeeper role is symbolically 'privatized' by women and is associated with services consumption that is distanced from the area of 'work' (Lytkina 2010)

The current situation has all the signs of social anomy (Starodubrovskaya 2015). Mechanisms of compulsion are still there: following the rule 'submit but not obey', young people frequently get (sometimes even buy) higher education diploma just because it is their parents' will — 'it is so fashionable when you marry your son to have him graduated from the law or medical department'. They also get married on the ones their parents choose – 'you are introduced to your future wife when you're 20'. Nevertheless, they do understand that in conditions of the imbalanced industrial economy and particular regulations, chances on a labour market will not be determined – 'no one here, after getting a higher education will work in their profession, because there are no such jobs'. Marriage, which in the context of traditional society is considered one of the central events of the life cycle, seems for them to be a short game, depriving the young man of his mobility, and hence, the opportunity to get beyond the vicious circle of unemployment, poor education and dependence on parents.

Thus, the feeling of habitual insecurity is the result of both the intergenerational and gender dynamics of the post-Soviet Dagestani society. It arises as a reaction to the tension between the need to obey the will of the 'fathers' and the understanding of the actual use-lessness of their instructions.

Leisure careers

An escape from the 'vicious circle' of marginalization that is inevitable for society is due to the possibility to perform a 'leisure career' that will be accepted by both inner and outer circle members. The academic literature uses this term 'leisure career' to define a form of serious leisure routine that needs to have a particular classification and long involvement (Stebbins 2001) or 'dominant modes of free-time, leisure activity and socializing engaged in by a person and how they change or persist over time' (MacDonald and Shildrick 2007: 341). I use the word 'career' to highlight that in specific circumstances, leisure becomes a substitute for employment as a time spending procedure. It has great social value and possibilities to realize the scenarios of a male professional career. In the context of my case study, such an idea is supported by Respondent 1's case. He is 21, from a large family, his father is a small entrepreneur and mother is a masseuse. Respondent 1 has graduated from technical school and decided not to continue his education or work, as he says – he wants 'to spend the whole day doing something I like' (workout). He also told that he could go away, but:

> You know, I don't want to travel or something if to leave then n to leave for good, and to make it right I have to properly finish my work (Respondent 1).

This 'work' does not pay him money, although it helps to acquire masculine 'capital' that provides habitual security and open access to the identity of professionally successful men in case of a deficit of economic and cultural resources. Street athletes are acting in frames of the same neoliberal logic of individual 'work of self-production' (Maguire 2008) investing time and efforts in their bodies to make them a meaningful asset of success and

health and to inscribe it in prestigious areas of bodily consumption. Social media play an important role in the creation of masculine 'capital':

> Now I'm planning to shoot a training video. And so we constantly have video. Performance - video. We have our operators, with photos, sort of. We constantly shoot a video. We are active, we can say we have a social network in Instagram; we have a profile on Instagram. A channel and this Vkontakte group. We constantly do this kind of PR move. (Respondent 2)

Video-blogs/diaries become the athlete's self-narrative built up as a progressive movement from one achievement to another. Such videos provide them with recognition in the transnational virtual network of street workout fans. An ideal, but not attainable option for my respondents' careers is a monetization of traffic generated on Internet sites and social networks. However, already at this stage, limited popularity brings benefits in the form of paid trips to Russian and international competitions and useful social connections:

> Then somewhere in 2013, or in 2014, I was invited to a competition in Tula by the Tula Federation of street workout. <…> And I went there first to Pyatigorsk, and from there with the guys from Pyatigorsk we went to Tula by train. I performed there, got experience. Of course, I didn't get a prize because then I wasn't in good physical shape. However, I performed with dignity, talked to the guys from Russia, they came from Moscow, from other cities (Respondent 2).

At the same time, street workout fans seek to adapt masculine neo-liberal physicality to the values of a 'parental' culture. They regularly demonstrate concern for the physical and moral 'health' of the so-called 'younger generation' (children and adolescents), arranging regular master classes and demonstrations in universities, colleges, schools and villages. The training itself is positioned as a social patronage for children and adolescents from low-income families:

> The only thing that we want young people to do is to spend their free time, not necessarily doing sports but to learn something there, that is, something good, not just walk stupidly on the street, smoke outside garages, this is what young people do now,. For example, financially, a large family cannot enroll their children in training, cos you have to pay for training and it is also not cheap; the equipment costs money. (Respondent 3).

Here, the interests of street workout fans are intersecting with the state program for physical education 'Ready for Labour and Defence (*Gotov k trudu i oborone,* GTO)'. It was created in the 1930s of the twentieth century as one of the 'steering wheels' of total mobilization of Soviet youth (Kozlova et al. 2016). In 2014, Putin revived the GTO system by issuing a specific decree. In Dagestan, as in Russia, the street workout movement and the GTO promoters closely cooperate: they hold joint events and open new sports grounds. Street workout fans have been recruited as trainers and instructors by government agencies, and their communities have become a kind of unofficial GTO branch. Such cooperation provides support from the local milieu and the state to the participants, putting the 'work' they do into the 'state's mission' frames.

Violence dilemma

The destruction of local communities was another consequence of urbanization. In these communities, boys and adolescents learned how to 'be men' under the guidance of elders.

Such communities were strictly homosocial, including all men who lived in the same village. The growing-up model that has developed in such communities conformed to the standards of 'militant' masculinity and cultivated qualities such as physical strength, the ability to endure pain and the ability to 'stand up for oneself' (Rogozin 2007; Solonenko 2012). These skills had to be honed in fights with peers or during wrestling training sessions.

In the big city, the older generation continues to transmit the principles of 'militant' masculinity, thereby allowing the violent behaviour of adolescents and young men toward each other:

> Well, yes, it's possible with us, since youth and childhood they have taught us like this. Take my father, he goes like, don't be afraid of anyone there, fight if something happens. We were brought up there like this, you see, they make a man out of you here, on the spot. If there isn't enough strength there, if there's a bigger opponent confronting you, take a stick and hit here, there (laughs). <…> Well, my father has brought me up like this. If they are older than you, don't be afraid. If you don't have enough strength, take a stick, hit on the head with a stick (laugh), but next time he won't bother you. (Respondent 3).

However, the way of city life and the predominant anonymity of relations between its inhabitants exempts adolescents and young people from the control of elders. Unlike a village, where 'everything is in sight', in the city, the implementation of the scenarios of becoming a man unfolds at a stage separated from home and parental attention by both spatial and temporal boundaries. After all, the street is not only 'where', but also 'when': a 3- or 4-h interval, which begins when school hours end and expires with the parents returning home. This is the time when adolescents are left to themselves and involved in 'doing nothing' (Corrigan 2002):

> Respondent: Well, I don't know, for me the main purpose of life was to fight and beat someone. Then I changed, you see.

> Interviewer: Listen, but why did you fight? Or was it just necessary?

> Respondent: Well, you know, probably, from idleness there, I don't know, like, you walk along the street, yes, there is a gang of scumbags, and they go like - Why are you looking at me? - And they start to fight. (Respondent 4).

The 'street' becomes a synonym of danger, of uncontrolled violence and moral decadence, where fathers and sons are alike as nowhere else. While 'fathers' are concerned with the loss of control over the upbringing process, 'sons' are anxious and bothered by the problem of vindicating the masculine status in circumstances of the growing density of violent contacts with hostile 'others', which is normal for urbanized societies. Such anxiety is strengthened with an understanding that street violence is only a part of the already formed violence landscape in Dagestan in front of which every young man or adolescent appears to be practically defenceless.

Sports violence is seen as an alternative to street violence in Dagestan. The specificity of this region is that until recently martial arts and mainly wrestling were an absolute institution through which every teenager or young man had to pass to achieve masculine status (Rogozin 2007; Solonenko 2012). Because of the system that supplied the Soviet Union with high-quality freestyle wrestlers, the Dagestani athletes have dominated this sport for many years. Over the past decade, they have been actively 'exploring' another market of sports violence – MMA (Mixed Martial Arts), where they also achieve outstanding results. In a

society where most social elevators are 'broken', sport is also a relatively honest path of meritocratic mobility: athletes are respected, they are often elected and appointed to government posts. It is the wrestlers, in the context of Dagestan, who most closely embody the features of local hegemonic masculinity.

However, some informants, including those with experience in martial arts, question the ability of sport to normalize violence, as both the sport and the street are a system of 'connecting vessels'. Strong competition in sports, which is also partly tied to access to economic resources (coach fees, equipment, other costs) leaves a huge number of young people with a setup fighting habitus and unfulfilled ambitions regarding masculine status. So, the violence from wrestling clubs is transferred to the streets. However, street violence is considered by the respondents themselves as an attribute of social ill-being, which only can be 'exchanged' for the marginal social status of hyper-masculine '*bydlo*' [cattle] or '*otmorozok*' [thug]. In other words, the protest masculinity scenario is implemented, which picks up themes of hegemonic masculinity, but does not bring a patriarchal dividend in the form of social prestige and respect, as it has a strong association with poverty, lack of education and communication skills.

Another issue is an early injury prone and disability that lead to social stigma, and that is a high price for young lads for an attempt to enter the real men world. Many of my respondents turned to street workout for reasons of injuries that closed options for a professional career in sport:

> No, wrestling, you know, I did wrestling in my school years, when I went to school in the village, I did wrestling for two and a half years. Well, then, I started having some health problems, especially with the spine, so I left and gave my strength to studying. (Respondent 5).

The solution that is taken by the street workout participants is in the creation of a homosocial milieu that is segregated from the street, corresponds to conventional visions of true male company, and at the same time is more inclusive than conventional wrestling communities are. In this milieu, young boys and teenagers are learning how to be a man under supervision from the elders during the time gap between school and home. Athletes recreate a typical for sport society roles, rituals and slang repertoire. Time spent on the sports site is defined as a training session, having particular timing and consisting of a warm-up, main routine and cooling down period. Two coaches lead training sessions. They introduce newcomers to basic exercise routine and support discipline, preventing disturbances during the workouts and punishing troublemakers. There are penalties in the form of push-ups for being late, obscene language and other disturbances. The training process provides regular and compulsory reiteration of norms that is an inevitable condition for 'doing gender' (Butler 2011).

Homosociality has a dual meaning. First, women are not allowed to participate in training together with men in public spaces:

> Our mentality does not allow us to train with girls. Moreover, in Islam, too, it is very wrong prohibited. If a girl wants to train, please train at home, or, in the morning when there is no one on the playground. But with us - not. (Respondent 6)

This exclusion follows Dagestan's practice of segregating 'male' and 'female' training spaces, which can be seen in fitness clubs, where there are separate male and female visiting days. In addition, prestigious wrestling communities that serve as role models are, by definition, male.

Second, on the symbolic level, homosociality is cemented by homophobia, which is not only against homosexuality as such, but against every form of behaviour that can be defined as deviation from the heteronormative cultural norm. A specific test for normality in the society is an attitude towards the subcultures popular with contemporary youth such as goths, emos and anime fans:

> Interviewer: Well, let us say, young people from Moscow and say Dagestani, is there any difference between them? Essential or all the same? Have you communicated there with the local guys?

> Respondent: Well, of course, I communicated in principle with those who … who have similar tastes, but when you walk there on the streets, in the subway, you see all sorts of faggots who dress like idiots, well, all sorts of neformal [=subculural youth], but different, of course.

> Interviewer: Well, neformal people, who do you mean?

> Respondent: Yes, all sorts of, well, how are they there, goths, perhaps, there is emo, you know, earrings there, hairstyles. There are such, you know, pieces of iron in the navels on the whole body. (Respondent 7).

Even though athletes express the whole range of attitudes towards religion (from deep religiousness to agnosticism), the atmosphere is set by practicing Muslims, hence providing the company of friends with elements of a religious community (jamaat). Islam's dominance in the training space is strengthened with visual elements (the presence of a prayer rug), with performance elements (regular joined and individual Muslim prayers) and with behavioural norms forbidding, for example, to swear by the name of Allah on insignificant matters. These features are corresponding with the dominant cultural imperative in Dagestani society: an athlete is an example of physical and moral normality. And after re-Islamization, the moral normality can only be associated with religion. Often, it is the current and former wrestlers that become the unofficial leaders of the 'moral majority' who advocate the radical desecularization of public life. Islam is the link between the understanding and ways of being a man and regional (Dagestan) identity.

The violence issue within the community is solved with the postulate that strength is separated from violence and played out in public as a self-sufficient staging, accessible for others to look at. At each training session, there is a certain number of spectators who do not participate, but simply watch and evaluate the skills of athletes. Demonstrations that often attract many observers are often held as part of citywide celebrations.

The street workout is not restricted with formal regulations or the competitive ethos of institutionalized sports. It provides its participants with significant freedom in choosing masculine images. For my respondents, it is a way to perform healthy, strong corporeality and *is not associated* with violence or the risk of injury. The body of the street workout participant is greatly dissimilar from those samples of 'heavy' corporeality (rather strong than beautiful), which are exhibited by wrestling practitioners. It is described as slim, flexible, light, aesthetically attractive, which generally corresponds with the images of the fitness culture. However, such a body remains strong. The incorporated masculine capital ('strength'), which acquires its features during training sessions, has a value and weight in the field of martial arts. Symbolic and infrastructural connection with the *GTO* system that has been historically set up and developed as a system of pre-war youth preparation, helps modern young workout participants to implement their own design of masculinity so it

opens an access to features of the patriarch system and at least partially blocks its risks and costs. It is a form of complicit masculinity, comfortable for those young men who do not fit into the rigid framework of wrestling masculinity.

Styles of masculinity

Sportism, homosociality, religiosity, homophobia, orientation both to local or global recognition and the principle of strong corporality not related to violence, set a multidimensional normative value space and at the same time act as resources for constructing a wide range of masculine styles.

'Traditionalists' consider a career in the 'traditional' way, that is, through professional employment and the creation of a family. Many are simultaneously engaged in martial arts, but in general, strong physicality does not have independent value and is perceived, above all, as a requirement of the youthful age stage, which is removed at the later stages of growing up. A possible professional track in the conditions of rampant unemployment for these individuals is service in the army under contract, and here, as they consider, skills acquired in the street workout will be useful to them. 'Traditionalists' are religious, but they strive not to go beyond the 'flags' of those manifestations of religiosity that are considered conventional.

'Defenders of the Faith' construct their masculinity through adherence to Islam. They perceive formation of strong physicality as part of strengthening their 'iman' [level of faith]. It is considered their duty to protect the faith, including criticism and incorrect statements by non-believers or atheists. Concerning fathers and children, they take the position of 'I submit, but I do not obey'. They are critical to the government and the official Islamic institutions. One of the ways to articulate their masculine identity is the demonstrative ignorance of the imposed, as it seems to them, the division into 'correct' and 'incorrect' versions of Islam. They take the most uncompromising position on the issue of gender segregation and alternative youth cultures.

'Freestylers' view community membership as a launching pad for an individual career in a low-competitive sport. The lack of overregulation, openness to innovation and the possibility of individual self-expression through the design of their style are appreciated. The main masculine 'capital' is a skill, which is revealed in the performance of complex and aesthetically attractive elements. 'Freestylers' want to achieve recognition on a global scale, so they do not exclude the possibility of migration. Freestylers position themselves as believers, but not as religious people.

'Boys from college' are focused on educational and professional mobility. The stylistic features of this group are determined by the peculiarities of its core, which is made up of teenagers from families of the impoverished mass intelligentsia. The masculine capital for them is education and intelligence, which is not identical to having a diploma. Their educational trajectory most often includes an intermediate stage: after the 9th grade, they go to vocational education institutions ('college' in Russian) to bypass the corruption barrier when entering a university. Among them, there is a widespread opinion that professional self-realization is possible only outside of their republic. Many of them are from divorced families with a working mother. Such families are stigmatized as 'inferior' in Dagestan. The joining of the street workout community is partly due to the desire to overcome habitual insecurity caused by double stigmatization – like the children deprived of a 'real' male upbringing, and those whose growing up scenario does not fit into the traditional frame of

male hegemony based on strength and physical superiority. Workout training helps college boys develop a compensatory identity.

Conclusion

Makhachkala's workout community can be described as a case of localization of global cultural trends. The global post-sports practice is borrowed and redefined to express the values and norms of the local hegemonic masculinity model.

The street workout training sessions are used by young underclass men and adolescents for constructing new masculine identities in the situation that problematize traditional ways of becoming a man. This situation appeared as the result of urbanization, deindustrialization and political destabilization of the North Caucasus in the post-Soviet period. Street workout, for the reason of unavailability of major paths such as education and work, became an alternative space for self-fulfilment. It allows a leisure career that in turn helps to give to global and local challenges an appropriate masculine answer. On one hand, athletes are providing 'self-development' by committing to the neoliberal principle of masculine subject responsibility for their own body production. On the other hand, they support an image of social inspectors of physical and moral 'health' of growing men, which correlates with the understanding of 'elders' authority', a dominant trait in Dagestan society.

The community of street workout functions as a 'school of manhood' that repeats the major features of prestigious sports communities – discipline, female exclusion, religiousness and homophobia. In this community, boys and adolescent youth from underclass families learn the basics of traditional hegemonic masculinity based on body capital (strong body). However, they learn it in relatively comfortable conditions, isolated from the street influence. At the training ground, a contradiction is resolved between the requirement to 'be strong', which is presented to young people by the 'parent' culture and the excessive violence that they encounter when trying to implement such missions defined by this culture. The street workout allows a variety of masculine styles that are attractive to low-resource youth, and some of these styles are not allowed to meet the most toxic norms of the local gender order. Young men choose their masculine styles relatively freely using social, cultural and economic resources that they possess. 'Traditionalists' are oriented towards creating a family and fulfilling the breadwinner role, 'religion defenders' construct their masculinity through religious principles maintenance in everyday life, 'freestylers' want to professionalize in a less competitive sport, and 'boys from college' are chasing the career that overcomes social stigma through the negotiation of compensatory strong masculinity.

Note

1. — List of cited respondents (all males): №1 — 21 years old, №2 — 23 years old, №3— 15 years old, №4 — 14 years old, №5— 22 years old, №6 — 19 years old, №7 — 23 years old.

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