#Karlmennskan

Raising awareness of toxic masculinity through hashtag activism in Iceland

Þórdís Ylfa Þórsdóttir

Supervisor: Annette Hill

Examiner: Deniz Duru

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on #Karlmennskan activism and experiences of participants in the activism. #Karlmennskan is a hashtag activism that started on Twitter in Iceland in March 2018. The main focus was to bring awareness to toxic masculinity and to show how it can be harmful to both men and women. Toxic masculinity is something that has been discussed a lot in Iceland over the past year, the concept is both toxic for men and women as it is about how men often have the need to dominate others, and it also put pressure on men to behave and look in a certain way. This activism started a half a year after the #MeToo movement, as men in Iceland realized that they needed to change something among themselves. The aim of this thesis is to get a better understanding of how participants have experienced toxic masculinity and why they decided to participate in this activism. To do that, ten qualitative interviews, with men who participated in the activism, were conducted.

Results from this thesis indicate that #Karlmennskan activism was important to the participants and it enabled them to be more open with their emotions. They seemed to experience social media as a potential digital platform to bring awareness and change ideas in society about men and masculinity. They also seemed to look at this activism as a continuation of other feminist social movements like #MeToo.

Keywords: Toxic masculinity, hashtag activism, social media, Twitter, Iceland

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Introduction

Toxic masculinity is something that has been discussed a lot in Iceland over the past year, for example how ideas of toxic masculinity might prevent men from doing something that they would want to do (Ísland í dag, 2018). "Toxic masculinity involves the need to aggressively compete and dominate others and encompasses the most problematic proclivities in men." (Kupers, 2005: 713). Twitter is a platform that has been used a lot in for hashtag activism and social media movements (PettyJohn et al. 2018). One of the most significant recent movement on social media is the #MeToo movement that started in October 2017. The movement gained worldwide attention. Survivors of sexual assault shared their stories to draw attention to "rape culture, misogyny and harassment" (Mendes et al. 2018, 237). The #MeToo movement was about "exposing systems of oppression and privilege of which sexual harassment and assault are cause and effect" (Rodino-Colocino, 2018: 97). About half a year after the #MeToo movement, in March 2018, one Icelandic man wrote a Facebook post where he encouraged men to share their experiences about how norms in society have stopped them from doing something or made them do something that they did not want to.

> All the dads that didn't know they may hug their children. All the guys who didn't study because it wasn't cool. All kinds of games that boys aren't supposed to play, fields of study that aren't realistic options. Behavior, interests, and skills that were never developed. Feelings that weren't expressed. Emotions that were never discussed (Þorsteinn V. Einarsson, 2018).

This was the post that started the #Karlmennskan (masculinity) hashtag activism. Þorsteinn said in a newspaper interview that "this is primarily about how toxic masculinity has prevented us from doing what we really want to do" then he went on and talked about how the activism was nevertheless about supporting women in their battle, for example through #MeToo. He said that it was to see how willing men are to reveal themselves and their masculinity and stand by the feminist movement against toxic masculinity. Þorsteinn argues that "something is standing in our way. In this gendered reality that we live in our opportunities are impaired and by this, I want to draw attention to it and show how toxic masculinity has been in our way since we were boys" (Sigurþórsdóttir, 2018). Even though the #Karlmennskan was smaller than other movements it became quite big in Iceland and looking at weekly input to the hashtag there were around 300 stories posted, but the distribution of the hashtag was broader where the hashtag was touched upon approximately 4 million times. News outside of Iceland talked about it, and Þorsteinn said that he had not expected to be this big (Ísland í dag, 2018)

Background of social media movements in Iceland

Iceland has had some social media movements in recent years that have started on the internet. One of them is the kitchenware revolution, which happened after the financial crisis in October 2008. It all started with a man who on October 11, 2008, was playing the guitar and singing songs in front of the parliament. In these songs, he showed his anger against the bankers and the politicians. There were only a few people who had joined him. It was not until someone recorded it and posted it online that people started to notice it and join. Thousands of people came together in front of the parliament and protested. With the movement, people wanted to change the political system in Iceland. In the end, the movement was successful. There was an election, and a new government was generated. Throughout the movement, there were protests where people came together outside. The internet also played a huge role, 94 percent of Icelanders are connected to the internet so even though people could not make it to the parliament everyone could participate in discussions and comments on the internet (Castell, 2012). It was revealed in Icelandic news 10 years after this movement that the movement had increased cohesion among people, the anger was channeled in these actions (RÚV, 2018).

Another new movement is the Free the nipple movement, which is a worldwide movement. The movement happened in 2015 in Iceland, 100 years after Icelandic women got the right to vote. Young feminist women used social media, mostly Twitter and Facebook, to organized activities where feminism was the main focus. It was a movement under the hashtag #freethenipple, and it was about women owning their bodies, taking them back from oppressive structures of patriarchy. Women shared pictures of their breasts on social media as a revolt against social values that were considered unfair for women. It started on social media, but it also moved to offline spaces where women came together and walked topless downtown in Reykjavik, for example. They also got a lot of coverage in mainstream media. They managed to have their voices heard with this movement (Rúdolfsdóttir and Jóhannsdóttir, 2018). #Freethenipple movement is similar to #Karlmennskan activism in a lot of ways. They both started on social media; both got a lot of media coverage. They were also both criticizing some ideas about gender and patriarchy even though they were doing that from different perspectives and in different ways. "#freethenipple opened up opportunities for feminist activism among young women and girls" (Rúdolfsdóttir and Jóhannsdóttir, 2018:147). Looking at #Karlmennskan is interesting as it is small-scale hashtag activism with the potential to become a movement.

Aims and research questions

The aim of this thesis is to examine participants in the #Karlmennskan activism in Iceland, to get a better understanding of how they have experienced toxic masculinity and why that is a problem for them. To find out why they decided to participate in this social media activism. Building on these aims the three following research questions will help constructing a foundation for this thesis.

- What are the reasons interviewees in the study participated in the #Karlmennskan activism?
- How do men in this case study reflect on toxic masculinity in Iceland?
- In what ways do the interviewees understand hashtag activism as a contribution to societal change regarding toxic masculinity?

Following this introduction, the thesis will look into previous academic literature, which will focus on four primary areas, masculinity, gender and media, social movements and hashtag activism and finally media power. These things will be discussed in relation to the thesis and why these areas are relevant. Following that, there will be a reflection on methods and methodology where two methodological approaches will be discussed, case study and profeminist standpoint. The chosen method, qualitative semi-structured interviews, will be discussed followed by how the research was designed, sampling, ethical considerations and the process of analyzing the data. Following that comes the analysis chapter, which focuses on five main themes and subthemes under these five themes. The main themes are toxic masculinity, reacting to toxic masculinity, contexts to toxic masculinity, media power, and social movements, hashtag activism, and awareness. After going through the analysis of the data concerning these themes, a conclusion chapter will take together the key findings where the three main research questions will be answered.

Literature Review

This chapter will look into the theoretical concepts that are relevant to this case. These concepts are needed to help with the analysis of the data. This chapter has been divided into four main chapters and sub chapters where the concepts will be introduced. The first chapter is about masculinity where concepts from Kupers (2005) and Seidler (2005), of hegemonic and toxic masculinity will be presented. These two concepts are crucial to this case as the hashtag activism was about brining awareness to toxic masculinity and how it can affect people, both men and women. Under these chapters' concepts like entitlement, misogyny and emotions will be covered because these were things that came up when interviewing the participants. Then comes a chapter about gender and media with a focus on representation of the genders in the media and gender stereotypes. Stigma in relation to stereotypes will be discussed. Next chapter will focus on social movements and hashtag activism to explain better what a social movement is and what hashtag activism is, this case is about hashtag activism which aims to become a movement. The fourth chapter is about media power which is relevant to this case because the interviewees expressed how they think media can have both bad and good power like Corner (2011) wrote about. The last sub chapter will be about recognition and voice where Couldry's (2010) ideas will be discussed like how the internet has increased opportunities for people to let their voices be heard.

Masculinity

Reeser (2010) talks about masculinity and how masculinity is something that might seem simple to people. People can name a lot of things that they think are masculine and also what they believe is not. Masculinity is the opposite of what is feminine. Reeser (2010) argues that "Even if many of us would agree what masculinity is when asked, we may not necessarily think about it consciously as it passes by us invisibly and we take it for granted in our everyday lives" (2). In recent years new foundations have been appearing that make it harder to have those common sense beliefs about gender. This is, for example, sexual politics, patriarchy, homophobia and transgender identities. These foundations have been going against the masculinity norms and do not fit within the stereotypes of masculinity. They show how important it is to study masculinity (Seidler, 2006). Reeser also noted the history of masculinity and how it is clear that masculinity and what is considered masculine has not always been the same. It also depends on the society and culture what is deemed to be masculine and what is not. Men in the European Renaissance were often writing about their love for each other

intimately, that was not thought of as feminine or homosexual at the time. That would not be considered masculine today in the western world. In the nineteenth century, some men emphasized on being stylish, look good and thought a lot about physical appearance in general. Those men were called dandies. People today might look at them as more feminine than masculine but at that time this was just something that a man could be, it was only one type of masculinity. It also depends on culture, men in India are for example seen holding hands and showing more physical affection with each other, more than in America for example. Reeser argues that studying masculinities can be more difficult and complicated than it might seem at first (Reeser, 2010). The following chapters will go deeper into hegemonic and toxic masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity

The term hegemony stands for dominance of one group over another (Bates, 1975). The hegemonic masculinity approach came from Australia and was first used in a field study that looked at social inequality in high schools in Australia. The results from this study showed that there was not only social hierarchy but also gender hierarchy (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that "Hegemonic masculinity was understood as the pattern of practice (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity) that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (832). According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) "hegemonic masculinity was not assumed to be normal in the statistical sense; only a minority of men might enact in it" (832). They however argued that it was "certainly normative" (832). Hegemonic masculinity is therefore a desirable way of being a man, and everyone has to position themselves somewhere around the concept (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005). MacKinnon (2003) argues that "though not all men practice it, it would be fair, nonetheless, to observe that most men benefit from hegemonic masculinity" (10). Hegemonic masculinity might give ideas about what it is to be a "real" man. In the gender structure, there are benefits of being either a "real" man or woman. It is therefore not surprising that some men follow the hegemonic norms if that is what it takes to be considered real (MacKinnon, 2003).

Toxic masculinity

Toxic masculinity is a subset of hegemonic masculinity and sociologists started talking about in the 1990s (Haider, 2016). With the concept of toxic masculinity, the focus is on the harmful aspects of hegemonic masculinity. Those things are for example homophobia, abuse, sexism,

selfishness and misogyny. Kupers (2005) describes toxic masculinity as "those aspects of hegemonic masculinity that foster domination of others and are, thus socially destructive" (717). Seidler (2006) made some points about emotions, and he said: "that emotions such as sadness, fear and vulnerability cannot be acknowledged within a dominant male culture that still defines emotions as feminine" (12). The only emotion they are often able to express is rage. There is a pressure to seem strong, and everything that has been considered feminine is negative in a man. There can be a lot of competition between men, and they want to have power. This is today's manifestation of hegemonic masculinity. The concept is stereotypical, and this is not how all men are, and they do not have to relate to all of these things. Men often feel though that if they are not like this other will look at them as less of a man, because they are not like the hegemonic masculinity would describe a real man (Kupers, 2005). Seidler (2006) discusses male violence and how that can be a way to show power. "Real men do not allow themselves to be bossed about by women" (39) men should always be in control and to do that they sometimes their last resort is violence, to show their power when men suppress their emotions that is also another form of violence against themselves. Seidler (2006) argues that for men "emotions indicate a lack of self-control and thereby a threat to male identities" (19). His key point is that the pressure of always being in control of other links to the pressure of being in control of themselves and their emotions. In the case study we'll find that men involved in this awareness campaign reflected on this pressure.

Anderson (2014) wrote about entitlement and argued that "entitlement reflects the belief that a person deserves a set of outcomes because of who they are or what they have done" (88). Men in this case study talked about entitlement as a part of toxic masculinity. "Studies consistently find that men have a stronger sense of entitlement than do women" (Anderson, 2014: 88). She (2010) also talks about "overconfidence" and that "men give higher estimates of their ability than do women, and men's self-estimates tend to be independent of their actual ability" (88). Her point is that entitled people feel like they are deserving of good things coming their way and they are often egocentric. She argued further that "perhaps it is not surprising that men believe they are worth more than do women. Society rewards them accordingly" (2010: 90). This was followed by arguing that "both women and men seem to go along with men's overconfidence and inflated entitlement, consequently men are led to see their level of deservingness as fair and equal even when, objectively it is not" (92). Kupers (2005) talks about misogyny and respect. Entitlement can be related to the respect that Kupers argues to be a "very important factor" when men have the need to be respected that can be toxic (2005:

717). Anderson argues that "modern misogyny is expressed in people holding different attitudes toward women who are seen as feminine […] versus women who are not" (107). She argues that women who are feminine are not as threatening as women who are not feminine (107). Brandt wrote about popular culture and gender and show that misogyny can also come up in movies or television. Brandt (2014) claims that popular tv shows can often show sexist stereotypes, they argue that these stereotypes "offer problematic notions of masculinity as well as femininity" (113). Popular culture can affect how people view masculinity and femininity, "in our culture, social constructions create a gender binary where masculinity and femininity are seen as polar opposites" (Leavy and Trier-Bieniek, 2014: 4). Sexist representations in television can be linked to what Kupers (2005) says about toxic masculinity that aspects of hegemonic masculinity like "misogyny, homophobia, greed, and violent domination" are "culturally accepted and valued" (2005: 716).

A study on masculinity from 2009 examined emotions and masculinity amongst American high school boys. Specifically, how it is amongst friend groups and peers. The results showed that the boys acted according to what they thought their friends would see as masculine. They wanted to be viewed as manly. They did not want to show emotions. One of them said that if they would be vulnerable and show their emotions, especially so-called soft emotions like sadness, they would always be made fun of by someone, or even be labeled as gay or girly, so they did not share their fears or struggles with their friends. Some of the boys said girls were able to get emotional support from their friends and therefore had it easier than the boys (Oransky and Marecek, 2009). Oransky and Marecek (2009) noted that "this finding echoes other studies of teenage boys in the United States and the United Kingdom, which have found that boys' efforts to establish their masculinity include assuming a stoic front and avoiding actions that their peers associate with either femininity or homosexuality" (235).

Gender and media

Gender and sexuality are important aspects of how we think of our own identities. "With the media containing so many images of women and men, and messages about men, women, and sexuality today, it is highly unlikely that these ideas would have no impact on our own sense of identity." (Gauntlett, 2008: 1). Gauntlett (2008) talks about why these media influences are important, he talks about how people consume a lot of information daily from all kinds of media sources like TV, the internet, advertisements, movies, music, and other popular culture. "It seems obvious and inevitable, then, that we will be affected by these experiences somehow.

The media shows us situations and relationships from other people's points of view" (2). He then talks about some of the media around us and what information we are getting from it. There are many images of "good looking" people and it is likely that people compare themselves to those images they are seeing of others. In romantic movies, people learn a lot about interaction and how people interact with friends or lovers. Most heroes in movies are similar, confident and strong, these heroes are made attractive to us. Magazines also try to tell people some good tips on how to live their best lives (2008: 3). Gauntlett writes about how in the past men were much more visible in the media than women, they were shown as the strong, fearless and smart men. Women were shown as stereotypical housewives that were feminine and took care of the home and husbands. According to Gauntlett in today's media men and women are almost equally visible but men might still be slightly more prominent. The genders are not represented as stereotypically as before. The concept of selling beauty is still visible, the people who are seen in the advertisements are fit and good looking, so it seems that there are not only women who feel the pressure to look good. Gauntlett (2008) argues that "Every male film star today has to have a good body, just as women have to. So, you might say that it's a pressure that our culture puts on people these days, but it's not just limited to women" (86). Gill (2007) also talks about the male body in media and argues that "the portrayal of men has changed" in advertisements where a "toned, young body" is emphasized" (2007: 97). Gill talks about how in the 1990s studies of gender and media started to change when concern about masculinity started to increase. There had been more interest in how women are represented in the media and people were only interested in looking at men if they were seen as a problem but today there is more interest in looking at all types of masculinities and looking at men as a gendered group as well. The masculinity that is represented in today's media is restricted and is often related to hegemonic masculinity which is the dominant masculinity but not the most widespread. It is common that men look at this way of masculinity as desirable since it is what they see in the media and feel pressured to relate to the values of hegemonic masculinity (Gill, 2007). Discussion of gender representation in the media was something that came up in the interviews.

As we can see from both Gauntlett and Gill the media can have impacts on our gender identity. A study from 2011 in Iceland looked at a book called Gillz's Manners (Mannasiðir Gillz) the goal of the study was to do a discourse analysis of the book and capture the ideas of masculinity in the book. The book is written by a popular Icelandic sports scientist. He is well-known in Iceland, for example as an author, actor, DJ and he has been prominent in the media, both

television and radio. He has around 25 thousand followers on Instagram so there are a lot of people who he can influence. This book got a lot of attention in the media and he also made a TV show based on the book. People have had debates whether this should be taken as a joke or if he is serious about this. He has been accused of misogyny and has talked disparagingly about feminists. He claims to respect women but that does not come across in his work. His work has been glamorized in the media and by other well-known people. This study found that his idea of masculinity was really focused on being good looking. He also focuses on sex, being in control and not to show emotions. According to this study, this book seems to be encouraging toxic ideas about masculinity. The book was one of the most sold books in Iceland in December 2009 and Icelandic mainstream media has talked a lot about it and therefore validated his ideas (Jóhannsdóttir and Hjálmarsdóttir, 2011). Men in this case study discussed this Icelandic author and how he has contributed negatively to the idea of masculinity and how he is not a good role model for young men in Iceland.

Stereotyping and representation
"A stereotype is a simplified, and possibly exaggerated representation of the most common typical characteristics associated with a category" (Woodward, 2004: 52). There are specific stereotypes about the genders but not everyone fits those stereotypes, people are different and there are many types of women and men. There is diversity but stereotypes often put pressure on people to fit in a preconceived box. Woodward argues that "stereotypes are usually either positively or negatively biased, although different people may hold very differently valued stereotypes" (2004: 52). She also talks about how "positive stereotypes […] often encourage identification. Negative stereotypes, on the other hand, are associated with prejudice" (2004: 53). Woodward (2004) talks about stereotypes of masculinity and femininity and says that "stereotypes do not just shape the way we perceive other people; they also shape the way we behave" (53). Kupers writes about how hegemonic masculinity is the stereotypical masculinity and men feel the pressure to fit within it, but the reality is that most men do not fit with all of the characteristics, but they are afraid that others will look at them as less of a man. Not fitting in a stereotype often comes with the risk of being stigmatized (Kupers, 2005). Goffman (1963) wrote about stigma and said: "when a stranger comes into our presence, then first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes" (2). People often have the need to categorize others and these stereotypes of gender often start early, when we are growing up. Leavy and Trier-Bieniek (2014) argue that the colors blue and pink can be used as a "simple example of how gender is socially constructed and learned through the socialization process"

(4). Gender norms are learned through other people, but the media also plays a big part. "Gender roles dictate what is considered acceptable for men and women in terms of behavior, career, parenting, style of dress, and so on" (Leavy and Trier-Bieniek, 2014: 5). How the genders are represented in popular culture and media is likely to affect people's ideas of masculinity and femininity in some ways. In the 20th century, men have been shown as strong and active in advertisements while women have been shown more as an object. The representation of men in popular culture creates a stereotype that becomes a desirable way of being a man. People classify the gender of others often through how they behave and how they present themselves. Men often present themselves in a masculine way, based on what is reputedly masculine (Leavy and Trier-Bieniek, 2014).

There have been done some researches on media discourse about men. There have been questions about how masculinity is represented in popular media and how that relates to men's health. Gough (2006) researched discourse about men's health in the media. There has been more and more focus on men's health and the media has said that there is a crisis in men's health and that men do not do enough to care for themselves. After analyzing media articles this study found that articles about men's health are stereotypical, "Men's health discourse […] tends to rely on taken for granted stereotypes about masculinity which construct all men as essentially and always uninterested in caring for their health" (2485). They talk about hegemonic masculinity as described here earlier, men are therefore not willing to seek help because they follow these masculine norms that they live by (Gough, 2006).

Social movements and hashtag activism

"Social movements have been, and continue to be, the levers of social change" (Castells, 2012: 218). Mario Diani wrote about different approaches that have been made by different writers. She found that there were three main elements that have been established when looking at the concept of social movements. Those elements are contacted network with opponents. There is a shared identity and there is also an issue or struggle going on, and the goal is to change that or make it better (Diani, 1992). Scholars have defined social movements differently Castells (1997) defined social movements as "purposive collective actions whose outcome in victory as in defeat, transforms the values and institutions of society" (3). Diani (2000) defines it as "networks of informal relationships between a multiplicity of individuals and organizations, who share a distinctive collective identity and mobilize resources on conflictual issues" (387). McCarthy and Zald (1997) define social movements as "a set of opinions and beliefs in a

population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure and/or reward distribution of a society" (1217-1218). What these definitions all have in common is that the goal is to pursue social change and change power relations. Hara and Huang argue that technology has been a part of social movements even before the internet. With the emergence of the internet and social networking, sites technology has made social movements easier. Social media sites have become a big platform to reach a lot of people and start social movements online. Now there are not only activists participating in these movements, it has been easier for people to let their voice be heard. The internet is capable of bringing people together. People who share similar interests, values or goals can connect through the internet and that is why the internet can be useful in online social movements, collective identities and solidarity can develop quickly with the help of the internet (Hara and Huang, 2011).

Twitter has grown a lot since it started in 2006, it has now become a popular social media platform. Twitter can be used in different ways by different users. There have been done some researches on how people use it. Twitter users can use a hashtag #, in front of a specific word to connect to other tweets that are talking about similar things. With the hashtags, the tweets get organized into groups based on the hashtags (Small, 2010). Gill and Orgad (2018) argue that "social media in particular have become a major focus of interest with work on feminist and queer digital activisms opening up new questions about social movements, practices of critique and 'call out', and new affective ties and solidarities" (1314). Activists have increasingly been focusing on social media and used it as a platform to start social movements (Gill and Orgad, 2018). Olson (2016) wrote about hashtag activism and how it has been effective. Hashtag activism has been used on social media; it has especially been used a lot in the "international women's movement" (774). Hashtag activism can have the power "to move an issue from the margins and to the mainstream agenda" (776). Hashtag activism has been used a lot in feminist activism and women's movements like #MeToo, #BeenRapedNeverReported, and other hashtags. Research about #BeenRapedNeverReported found out that people felt more comfortable to let their feminist opinions be heard on Twitter than in real life (Mendes, et al, 2018). The #Karlmennskan is a form of hashtag activism aiming towards a movement and connecting with other movements. Þorsteinn who is the leader of this hashtag activism said in an interview that he wanted to start a movement with the goal to get rid of gender stereotypes and wanted to encourage men to share their stories (Sigurþórsdóttir, 2018)

Media power

Corner (2011) notes that "it is now a routine assumption in most societies that the media do have power" (15). He talks about both good and bad power. He argues that the media can be used by authorities "to transform political or economic power into forms of cultural power through the legitimizing visibility they give it across a range of generic types" (14). Corner argues that "nearly all ideas of 'bad' power have their grounding in perceptions about the distortion to either knowledge or values, or both, which the media introduce into general consciousness through their part in constructing the symbolic environment" (32). Discussion about television and bad power came up with men in this case study and therefore in this case it is interesting to look at how television and popular culture can impact gender performance and ideas about masculinity and femininity. "While the average viewer is most likely unaware of the social construction taking place through television programming, its effects are internalized nonetheless" (Brandt, 2014: 112). Brandt (2014) argues that "television continues to rely on binaries, which posit men and women as complete opposites. [...] These binaries do very little in the way of providing healthy models of masculinity and femininity, and they are often unrealistic and sexist in their depictions" (112). According to Corner (2011) television has power and he notes that "the anxiety about the 'power of the press' was overtaken some time ago by concern about the power of television" because "television has in many societies become the most popular media form, one with unparalleled political, social and symbolic centrality within the space of the nation" (21).

Power can also be positive, Corner (2011) uses the word "empowering" to "describe an increase in power for individuals and groups previously having marginal scope for emancipation, self-definition and social action" (17). The internet and the power of it have been debated. Corner (2011) argues that the web is a "non-systemic" or "anti-systemic" communication. The web "encourages stronger patterns of diversity than previous media, across both the content range and the origins of provision" (31). Castells (2012) talked about communication on the internet as "self-communication because the production of the message is autonomously decided by the sender, the designation of the receiver is self-directed and the retrieval of messages from the networks of communication is self-selected" (6-7). Castells (2012) argues that social media can be used for independent communication and he talks about social movements on the internet and said that "the autonomy of communication is the essence of social movements because it is what allows the movement to relate to society at large" (11). Olson (2016) did a research on #BringBackOurGirls, which is a Nigerian social media

movement, and he argued that this social media movement "shows the potential that cyber-communities have for guiding the mainstream media's attention and mobilizing public communication." It took the movement two weeks of hashtag activism until they gained attention internationally in mainstream media. He talked about how "social media communities can be a tool for shaping the public agenda and creating real-world change" (783).

Recognition and voice
Couldry (2010) wrote about the importance of voice and how we use our voices to tell a story. He quotes Judith Butler who says that voice is "giving an account of oneself" (15). Having a voice is a "basic dimension of human life" (16). He wrote about voice in two levels, "voice as a process" and "voice as a value" (10). "Valuing voice involves particular attention to the conditions under which voice as a process is effective" (11). Couldry argues that "the aspect of voice which matters most then for voice as a value is people's practice of giving an account, implicitly or explicitly, of the world within they act" (16). Voice as a "social process" is both about expressing oneself and paying attention to what others have to say. People have various stories and it is important that they get to express their voice because Couldry (2010) argues that "to block someone's capacity to bring one part of their lives to bear on another part […] is again to deny a dimension of voice itself" (17). Couldry (2010) talks about Honneth's concept of recognition, which was inspired by Hegel. Honneth's original point is "that the intersubjectivity of human life on all scales makes possible moral injuries - we can damage each other's 'personal integrity' by how we talk with and treat each other" (72). Honneth (In Couldry 2010) differentiates between three levels of recognition "first basic care and love for 'the person as such': second, respect for the person as a moral agent with responsibility: and third […] social esteem or solidarity, that is, the recognition of someone 'as a person whose capabilities are of constructive value to a concrete community'" (72). Honneth (1995) argues that social evolution can be explained by the battle for recognition and the need to have self-esteem, he said that "It is by the way of the morally motivated struggles of social groups their collective attempt to establish, institutionally and culturally, expanded forms of recognition-that the normatively directional change of societies proceeds" (93).

Recognition is important in social movements because "social movements, throughout history, are the producers of new values and goals around which the institutions of society are transformed to represent these values by creating new norms to organize social life" (Castells, 2012: 9). Couldry (2010) talks about the internet and how "the vastly increased opportunities

enabled by digitalization for exchanging images, narratives, information and ways of managing data - suggest many ways in which a new public 'is finding and identifying itself'" (140). He talks about five potential ways on how the internet has enabled voice. The first one is "new voices" more people have the ability to become a "public" voice. Secondly, he talks about "increased mutual awareness of these new voices" people have the opportunity to distribute what others are saying and put their own reflections on it as well. The third is "new scales of organization" it is easier for people to organize collective action for example. The fourth is "our understanding of what spaces are required for political organization is now changed" and the last one is a combination of all of the other ones and that is to "generate potential new intensities of listening" there are so many public voices and "governments cannot any longer say they don't hear" (140-141).

The #Karlmennskan was a hashtag activism on Twitter in Iceland with the goal of changing ideas of masculinity and to show how men have experienced toxic masculinity in Iceland. The concepts that have been discussed in the chapters before are useful when looking into this hashtag activism. Ideas from Kupers (2005) and Seidler (2005) can give a better understanding on what toxic masculinity is and benefit the analysis on how the interviewees have experienced toxic masculinity. The concepts from Corner (2011) and Couldry (2006) will help with the understanding on how media and social media can have power and be a platform for change. All these concepts that have been discussed relate to what the participants talked about in the interviews and will benefit the analysis of this thesis.

Methods and methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodological approach of this thesis and the method that was used. First, I will go through the methodological approach which is a case study and profeminist standpoint. I will explain it and talk about why that is relevant to this thesis. Next there will be a chapter with a discussion of qualitative interviewing method that was used for the data collection. Then I will go through details about my sample and how the research was conducted, ethical considerations, where I position myself as a researcher. Finally, I will talk about the process of analyzing the data.

Methodological approach

Case studies are an essential method in social science according to Flyvbjerg. Context is one important thing, and Flyvbjerg (2001) shows that with the Dreyfus model. The Dreyfus model is a model of the learning process. There are five levels in the Dreyfus model, and we go through these levels in our learning process. These five levels are "novices" who "act on the basis of context-independent elements and rules, then "advanced beginners", "competent performers" they are "characterized by the involved choice of goals and plans as a basis for their actions" the fourth is "proficient performers" who "identify problems, goals and plans intuitively from their own experientially based perspective" and the last one is "experts" and they are "characterized by a flowing, effortless performance, unhindered by analytical deliberations" (21). "The Dreyfus model contains a qualitative jump from the three first to the fourth and fifth levels. The jump implies an abandonment of rule-based thinking as the most important basis for action and its replacement by context and intuition. A logically based action is replaced by experientially based action" (Flyvbjerg, 2001, p.21). The Dreyfus model can be used for all learning processes, but it is good to use it in social sciences because social sciences depend on context more than rules. It focuses more on knowledge than proof. Flyvbjerg (2001) argues that "the case study produces precisely the type of context-dependent knowledge which makes it possible to move from the lower to the higher levels in the learning process" (71). Case studies are often close to reality and "human behavior cannot be meaningfully understood as simply the rule-governed acts found at the lowest levels of the learning process, and in much theory" (72).

This thesis can be positioned within standpoint theory with a profeminist standpoint. Pease (2013) argues that "key characteristics of a profeminist standpoint entail knowledge of feminist

critiques and a commitment to challenge patriarchy and male power" (44). The #Karlmennskan activism started following the #MeToo movement, and the profeminist standpoint depends on men being willing to listen to and talk about women's oppression with them. Pease (2013) says that "many men are reluctant to discuss women's experiences because it requires them to acknowledge their privilege and their complicity in women's oppression" (45). After the #MeToo movement men in this case study realized that they also needed to fix something among themselves and that toxic masculinity is destructive for everyone, not only for men. This activism is about challenging toxic masculinity and therefore challenge patriarchy and male power. Pease (2013) argues that "the study of men and masculinities should focus on the ways of working towards gender equality, rather than focus solely on the issues facing men. In this respect, it is important to locate the study of men and masculinities in the context of feminist theories" (39).

Qualitative interviews

When individual experiences are researched, it is most useful to use a qualitative interview method. When the goal is to get a better understanding of experiences and feelings, it is important to use open questions (Seale, 2017). Seale (2017) argues that when talking about sensitive topics qualitative methods are helpful. "Issues that might be of a sensitive nature, for example, experiences of violence, or which interviewees may be reluctant to talk about (or unconscious of) such as racism or other forms of prejudice, can be approached with sensitivity to open up dialogue and produce fuller accounts" (210) The most suitable method for this kind of research was a semi-structured interview. Semi-structured interviews focus on the interviewee's descriptions and experiences of a specific thing (Kvale, 2007). The goal of the interviews was to get a better understanding of how the interviewees experienced the #Karlmennskan activism, and that is why I chose to use the semi-structured method. This method has some preconcerted questions that focus on different themes, but there is also room for follow up questions of something unexpected that might come up during the interview (Kvale, 2007).

Sampling and conducting the research

The sample for this research includes men that participated in the #Karlmennskan activism by sharing their story. The sampling method I used for this research is purposive sampling. That is that "the researcher decides what needs to be known and sets out to find people who can and are willing to provide the information by virtue of knowledge or experience" (Etikan, et al.,

2015: 2). A big part of the men that participated did not have the message option on Twitter, which means that only people they are following can send them a message, this made it harder for me to get in contact with them. I sent as many as I could a message on Twitter and interviewed the first ones who responded. I sent twenty men messages on Twitter, and I got seven positive responses, one answered with a no and twelve of them did not respond. Five of the men I sent a message on Facebook, where I got four positive answers and one no. I aimed to take ten interviews. Overall, I took twelve as two of the recordings failed with equipment malfunction, so I added two other interviews. The 10 men that were interviewed were from age 20-53 years old with different educational and job experience backgrounds. Aron is a 27 years old lawyer, Baldur is 34 years old gender studies student and lecturer, Darri is 21 years old software engineering student, Elías 21 years old is a musician, Fannar 28 years old works in freight transport, Gylfi 20 years old works as an au-pair, Helgi is 26 years old and is studying language technology and works in childcare, Ingvi is 41 years old and works as an administrator, Jóhann is 53 years old media consultant who worked as a news anchor for 20 years, Kristinn is 20 years old and is studying geography. All of these men live in the capital are in Iceland, except Gylfi he does not live in Iceland.

Before the interviews, an interview guide[1] was created with the aims of this thesis in mind. The interview questions focused on their opinions about the #Karlmennskan in general and how they had experienced it. It is important that the interview questions are simple, clear and easy to understand. It was important that the interviewees would be able to tell their stories and talk without being disturbed with other interview questions. Listening is important, and that is why I aimed at having the questions open and room for them to speak and express themselves fully (Kvale, 1996). Qualitative interviewing can be a good method to use when the topic can potentially be sensitive. It is important that the participants know that they do not have to answer all the questions if they don't feel like it. When doing an interview "we can talk through the topic with the participant, debrief them afterwards, and answer their questions about why we are doing the research" (Miles and Gilbert, 2005: 67).

The interviews were conducted in Iceland over two weeks in March 2019. The place where the interviews take place is essential, it is crucial that the interviewee feel comfortable in the place (Kvale, 1996). My interviewees all had the option to choose a place where they would like to

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[1] See appendix 2

do the interview. Six of the interviews were conducted at a cafe, one was done at the interviewee's workplace and one at a University in Reykjavík. Two of the interviews were conducted via video call. There was a difference between the face to face and the Skype interviews, I felt like the face to face interviews had more flow than the Skype interviews. I made my interview guide in English and then translated it to Icelandic before the interviews. After I did the first translation, I tested the interview guide with a friend and saw that I needed to phrase the Icelandic version a little better. I rephrased it to make it more clear and easy to understand before I took the first interview. The length of the interviews differed, the longest one was 55 minutes and the shortest one was around 16 minutes. After the 16-minute interview, my interviewee texted me and told me that he had been nervous, but he thanked me for letting him be a part of this and that he was happy he did. Even though the interview was short it still gave me a lot of data to work with. Most of the other interviews were around 45 minutes. An example of one full-length interview can be found in the appendix[2]

Ethical considerations

There are always some ethical considerations that need to be kept in mind. Before each interview, my interviewees were informed shortly about the research. They then signed a written consent form[3] that stated that they could say as little or as much as they wanted and that they were allowed to stop the interview at any time. The consent form can be found in the appendix. Eight out of ten interviewees signed the consent form, however, the ones who were interviewed via the internet got the consent form sent in advance and then agreed on the interview verbally. Informed consent is important, the participants should always be informed beforehand about the main goal of the research (Kvale, 1996). Confidentiality is important and that "implies that private data identifying subjects will not be reported" (Kvale, 1996: 114). There were some sensitive topics that were discussed in the interviews so it is important that all identities will remain anonymous. All the names that are used for the interviewees here are not their real names.

Positioning myself as a researcher is important in this study. Kvale (2007) argues that "the researcher as a person is critical for the quality of the scientific knowledge and for the soundness of ethical decisions in an interview inquiry" (7-8). I am a woman interviewing men, Flood (2013) argues that when studying men, the interviewers gender matters. Flood goes on

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[2] See appendix 3
[3] See appendix 1

and says that "recent research has continued to suggest that there are subject areas where men are more comfortable speaking to women" (66-67). When interviewing men, he says that "female interviewers may have an advantage over male interviewers" (67). When women are researching men, they are not a part of the group they are researching (Hearn, 2013), and therefore do not share the same experiences in the gender system for example. They were sharing their personal stories and experiences of the activism about masculinity; they were talking about things that I have not experienced and therefore I had to be understanding and did what I could to make them feel comfortable sharing these stories. It is my responsibility to not misrepresent their stories and experiences.

Analyzing the data

The analysis started with transcribing each interview. One full interview was then translated from Icelandic to English, the other interviews were analyzed in Icelandic and then the relevant quotes were translated to English. During the transcription process, I paid attention to any similar things and themes that were coming up. The next step was to read all the transcripts, Bazeley (2013) recommends doing that "to remind yourself of the depth and breadth of its content" (101). I read all the interviews and took some notes before I started the coding process. The first step of the coding process was open coding. "Open codes are labels for chunks of data that capture something of the literal essence of the data" (Seale, 2017). The coding was done line by line to make sure that all parts of the transcriptions were processed in the same way. Codes can expand over a few lines or paragraphs. In the beginning, the goal is to "get down a word or phrase that describes the data well" (Seale, 2017: 371).

When the open coding was finished, I had a list of 125 initial codes. The next step was to arrange these codes into categories. Putting the codes in categories "is needed if the analysis is eventually aimed at more than just description" (Seale, 2017: 375). Seale (2017) talks about this as a second stage that "involves grouping similar open codes together to form analytic categories" (375). I grouped the open codes to nine different categories. The categories were recognition, solidarity, types of toxic masculinity, mediation, stereotypes, stigma, media power, pop culture, and other movements. The next step was to make spider diagrams, but they can be useful when organizing codes and categories. I made three different spider diagrams[4] The last step was to find the themes from the nine categories I had. "A dominant category may

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[4] See appendix 4

be used as a theme […] But often, themes are abstract concepts shaped from two or several more literal categories" (376). At last, I came up with five different themes from these categories, each theme has two to three sub-themes. The five main themes are toxic masculinity, reacting to toxic masculinity, context to toxic masculinity, media power and finally social movements, hashtag activism and awareness. When the themes had been decided I was able to structure the analysis into a comprehensible text.

Analysis

Toxic Masculinity

This part focuses on some aspects of toxic masculinity that were prominent in the interviews. Misogyny, stigma, and violence were themes that were prominent from the interviews and seemed to be consequences of toxic masculinity according to the interviewees.

Misogyny

Connell (2005) argues that when hegemonic masculinity emerged in the 1980s it was presumed to be the "pattern of practice [...] that allowed men's dominance over women to continue" (832). Toxic masculinity is built up from ideas of hegemonic masculinity that are harmful. Kupers (2005) notes those things "such as misogyny, homophobia, greed, and violent domination; and those that are culturally accepted and valued" (716). There are also some sides of hegemonic masculinity that are not toxic, like for example wanting to provide for the family or succeed at work. Those are some of the positive sides of hegemonic masculinity. But when men are selfish and want to control other people and are violent etc. that is more in relation to toxic masculinity. Kupers (2005) argues that respect is important in relation to toxic masculinity. "There is nothing toxic about the need to be shown some respect. All men have that need and go about satisfying it in various ways. What can lead to toxicity is the repeated frustration of a man's need to be respected" (717). Men feel entitled to be shown respect and that can lead to toxic behavior towards the women in their life for example (Kupers, 2005). Fannar, 28-year-old defines toxic masculinity in this way:

> Toxic masculinity is the pressure of always being the perfect man, be strong, fearless, never show weakness and just be this tough guy, that contributes to harassment towards women […] This makes men feel like they deserve something from women, I don't know if you know the concept friend zone, that is nothing else than a man who feels entitled to something from his friend. […] Sexual harassment is in this because toxic masculinity makes men feel entitled to get what they want.
>
> Fannar (28)

What Fannar is saying about toxic masculinity here can be related to what Kupers (2005) says about respect. "There is the well-known caricature of domestic violence or toxic masculinity in the community, where the man feels chronically disrespected at work and in the community, drinks alcohol to numb the pain, and proceeds to beat or otherwise abuse the woman he is closest to while screaming, "All I ask for is to be shown a little respect!" (717). Fannar also

talks about entitlement. Entitlement is something that can be hard to measure since entitled people often do not notice that they are. It has been shown that men often feel more entitled than women do (Anderson, 2014). Within patriarchal societies, male entitlement is often natural, and it relates to male power. People see sex as a right and privilege for men, men have strong needs and they must be satisfied (Bouffard, 2010). That can be linked to what Fannar says about the friend zone[5]. Baldur 34 years describes here how he experiences misogyny:

> I think the root of toxic masculinity is misogyny that is implanted in us really sneakily. I think we need to stop hating women, I think that is the task, men and society need to stop hating women so much. This is maybe drastic for some, but I really think that this is what it is. I'm not saying that I hate women, but with all kinds of behavior and attitudes, we show misogyny. What else can cause this fear of being considered feminine.

Baldur (34)

Like Baldur says here that misogyny is implanted in us sneakily, he uses the word sneakily and it can be interpreted that he feels like attitudes and behaviors in the society that despise women have been normalized. Toxic masculinity is a lot about being dominant over women (Connell, 2005). Connell (2005) says "the dominance of men and the subordination of women constitute a historical process, not a self-reproducing system. "Masculine domination" is open to challenge and requires considerable effort to maintain." (844). From what Baldur says it can be interpreted that he agrees with Connell that "masculine dominance" is not automatic and he feels like things need to change in relation to that.

Aron, 27-year-old says, "I think this masculinity problem will not unravel until men start looking at women as equals." In the last years, there has been a focus on women and women's rights. Women have been encouraged to have more confidence and go after higher jobs, getting an education and show that they are smart. They are encouraged to go against the gender system that can often hold them down (Weiser and Miltner, 2016). Weiser and Miltner (2016) noted that "As more and more women are encouraged to be self-confident and have high self-esteem [...] some men—particularly those who ascribe to the tenets of toxic masculinity highlighted in

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[5] A friend zone is a slang and means a friendship, when one person, usually male, is romantically or sexually attracted to the other, but the attraction is not mutual. (https://www.dictionary.com/browse/friend-zone).

#MasculinitySoFragile—perceive this as an attack on their rightful place in the social hierarchy" (172). Aron also talked about how he experiences gender equality in Iceland.

> I think we gender equality in Iceland is maybe good in international comparison but I think it's still going too slow, and it's definitely worse for women, but I think that these ideas about masculinity are an offshoot of feminism, not just something that men need, I think it all connects.
>
> <div align="right">Aron</div>

From what both Baldur and Aron are saying here we can see that they still feel that men in Iceland do not look at women as equals, and men and society still look at women as a subordinated group. They both talk about how misogyny might be the root of the problem. Men need to stop being afraid of the feminine and look at women as their equals. Based on what they said it seems that this hashtag activism is a good start for that, and it is good to remind men that this is not personal attacks against them. This is against the gender system that maintains gender dualism.

Stigma

Stigma is a theme that was prominent and discussions about it came up repeatedly. "Society establishes the means of categorizing persons and the complement of attributes felt to be ordinary and natural for members of each of these categories" (Goffman, 1963: 2). People often want to categorize themselves and others even subconsciously. So, when something is different and does not fit into categories it becomes stigmatized (Goffman, 1963). From what came up in the interviews you could see that everything feminine has been stigmatized among men, men are not supposed to show any signs of femininity. That is related to misogyny and men being a dominating group over women.

> Since I was in elementary school I have experienced this toxic masculinity, because I have always been kind of a flamboyant, if you could say that I love colorful clothes, I love pink and have always liked makeup and I was in theatre classes, I was always hearing from people that they thought I was gay, but I am not, and that is where it started I think. The idea about masculinity was just to not be feminine, don't do anything that women would do but I always liked that.
>
> <div align="right">Elías (21)</div>

What Elías is describing here is a kind of stigma that he experienced, because he liked things that were considered feminine. They did not fit into the masculine category; it was different than many other boys. Goffman (1963) stated that "when a stranger comes into our presence, then, first appearances are likely to enable us to anticipate his category and attributes" (2). What Elías said here shows how he connects misogyny and homophobia. Being called gay in a negative way because he liked feminine things show that both femininity and homosexuality are less desirable than being masculine. It shows that when people are different and don't fit into a certain category like Goffman talked about, they often become stigmatized. It shows that you have to fit into this preconcerted box to be a man.

The impact of stigma came up in the interviews especially in relation to mental health. Mental health among men has been stigmatized, Corrigan (2014) notes that "the prejudice and discrimination that comprise the stigma of mental illness is one important reason for the disconnect between effective treatments and care seeking." (37). Fannar talks about the impact of stigma in this way:

> I mean there has to be some reason that men commit way more suicide than women. I think that now almost everyone knows someone who has taken their own life, that could have possibly ended better if they could have asked for help and that it wasn't so shameful to do that.
>
> Fannar (28)

> It's often very hard for guys to talk about mental illness, two years ago I started getting anxiety, I felt like all my friends could talk about these things, one of my friends had told me that he was dealing with depression and another friend of mine had committed suicide. And I had decided that if I would ever be dealing with something like that, I would talk to them. It was really hard for me, but I finally did it and that was really good.
>
> Aron (27)

Here both Fannar and Aron are describing the shame that often comes with mental illness and how hard it can be for men to seek the help they need before it is too late. Aron said that it was hard for him just to talk about it with his friends even though he knew that some of his friends had been going through similar things. It does not go with these masculinity ideas that men feel that they need to meet. There is often a stigma around mental illness and prejudice against people with mental illness. People who are suffering from it are often represented in a negative way (Batterham, et al, 2013). Aron says that he had decided to talk to his friends if he would

deal with something like this, he says it was really hard for him and that can be a sign of self-stigma. "Self-stigma refers to the reactions of individuals who belong to a stigmatized group and turn the stigmatizing attitudes against themselves. [...] Self-stigma comprises of stereotyping, prejudice and discrimination." (Rüsch, et al. 2005: 531). Rüsch, et al. (2005) note that "persons who turn prejudice against themselves agree with the stereotype" (531). Self-stigma is often related to mental illness, "because of their self-prejudices, persons with mental illness may fail to pursue work or independent living opportunities. If they fail to reach this goal this is often not due to their mental illness itself but due to their self-discriminating behavior" (531).

Violence

Violence is another theme that came up related to toxic masculinity. That also relates to misogyny, which is a form of violence, but the theme of other violence also came up, like domestic violence and bullying for example. Lomas (2014) argued that "men can learn to engage more constructively with emotions, to the benefit not only of themselves, but of those around them. For example, there are links between restrictive emotionality, anger and domestic violence" (127).

> I experienced violence from my stepfather and that has affected me and also what happened after it. My stepfather probably experienced toxic masculinity after this, he reacted in a toxic way, that is mostly about his ego, I think ego is the biggest part of toxic masculinity, men have to live up to some standards and can't show any weakness, so after this I felt that it was my fault, that I should have done things differently, this is something that he said to me and I told myself, I am 17 at the time.
>
> Darri (21)

Here Darri is talking about his experience of domestic violence, he talks about how he thinks that this was connected to his stepfather's ego and how men have to live up to standards. Like Kupers (2005) talks about how lack of "insensitivity to or lack of consideration of the experiences and feelings of others" (717) is a form of toxic masculinity and also the "readiness to resort to violence" (717). Darri mentions ego, and how he feels that men have a pressure to not show any weakness. Seidler (2006) stated that "from an early age young men can learn that it is only through being 'hard' that you have a chance to survive. If you show vulnerability or any sign of weakness, you soon learn that others will ruthlessly exploit it to their own advantage" (90).

Hjallastefnan[6] is doing good things, they are emphasizing on empowering the boys in showing kindness, hugging each other, it's so cute, and the girls learn to stand up and speak and believe in themselves. I really like this idea; I think there needs to be more of this. I think that if boys would stop being so aggressive then they are more unlikely to do all these bad things that make others suffer, like domestic violence, sexual abuse, bullying or anything and that is what I think is so important.

Elías (21)

Here Elías is talking about violence and from what he is saying it can be interpreted that he thinks that men's inability to show vulnerable emotions might affect violence. What Elías talks about can be linked to what Seidler (2006) talked about that boys learn from a young age that they are not supposed recognize pain, they learn how to downplay what they experience. "Sometimes children from different backgrounds witness violent behaviors at home that they feel they cannot tell anyone at school about." (83) as a result of that they often start "bullying other children as a way of 'passing on' their own pain" (84). It seems to be important to Elías that this starts to change among younger boys.

Reacting to toxic masculinity

In this part, the focus will be on reactions to toxic masculinity. How the men have dealt with these toxic masculinity ideas. There are two themes that will be discussed that were prominent in the interviews. The first one is emotions, how men feel the pressure of being in control of their emotions. The second one is illness. In the interviews, there was only the discussion of mental illness and that seems to be more taboo than physical illness among men.

Emotions

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[6] Hjallastefnan is an Icelandic school model that promotes a system where the children work in small single sex groups for the biggest part of their school day. This serves to liberate them from traditional gender-roles and stereotypical behaviour, and to make sure that girls and boys get even attention and equal opportunities in the classroom. The children receive training in all human qualities and the focus is on empowering gender through compensation work, so they become independent and self-assertive individuals, but not least so they gain a positive, tolerant and compassionate disposition towards themselves and other. (hjallimodel.com)

Emotions and lack of emotions seem to be really connected to toxic masculinity. From the interviews, it was clear that men are dealing with this, showing emotions has not been considered masculine. "Emotions such as sadness, fear and vulnerability cannot be acknowledged within a dominant male culture that still defines emotions as 'feminine'" (Seidler, 2006: 12). Self-control is important for masculinities and that means that you have to be in control of yourself and your emotions. "It is as if men learn to fear knowing 'too much' of what is going on for themselves emotionally, partly because they fear the emotions they might discover. For them, emotions indicate a lack of self-control and thereby a threat to male identities" (Seidler, 2006:19). When boys are raised, they often learn that they should always be in control of their emotions and then when they get older it can be hard for men to share how they are really feeling when they have always learned that they should have control of how they are feeling. Asking others for help might make them feel that they are powerless and not in control. They might feel that delving into their emotions might threaten their masculine identity (Seidler, 2006).

> I feel like the dominant idea about masculinity is this insensitive guy that never cries unless maybe in his mom's funeral but does not even cry but only just sheds one tear.
>
> Fannar (27)

> When I was 25 I had my daughter and I thought it was so beautiful when she was born and I was supposed to cut the umbilical cord but I couldn't see it because I cried so much and then one of the nurses said to me, stop whining, behave like a man, this was really hard to forget, so the message was that you are allowed to cry in funerals and that's all. You can cry from sadness but never from happiness.
>
> Jóhann (53)

> It is about this pressure on men that they always need to be these tough guys, not show emotions, not cry in front of anyone and also guys that you often see downtown, these macho guys punching others.
>
> Helgi (25)

Here Fannar, Jóhann and Helgi are all describing this pressure on men to be in control of their emotions. Both Fannar and Jóhann talk about how they have felt that they are not allowed to cry when they are sad. What Jóhann said about the nurse shows that has experienced this

pressure from other people, this is not just an internal pressure that he put on himself because he felt like he was not supposed to cry because he is a man. He was in a vulnerable situation experiencing the birth of his daughter and he was told not to cry and act like a man, that shows that both men and women have these ideas about men and how they should not cry. They are supposed to be the strong one at all times. What Helgi says about the macho guys can be interpreted that they have some emotions that they are not dealing with, like Seidler (2006) says that emotions are feminine but aggressiveness and being tough is masculine so that is maybe why they deal with these emotions in this toxic way. "Within a rationalist culture men feel easier dealing with problems that have solutions, so that if they are depressed, they think there must be something they can do to get rid of these 'negative' emotions" (Seidler, 2006: 19). He noted that men often want a "quick fix and a fear of engaging in an inner exploration of emotional histories. It is not that men do not talk about their personal lives, but they often fear that they will compromise their heterosexual male identities and be found somehow lacking" (Seidler, 2006: 19). Seidler (2006) further argues that among men "there is a tendency to silence their emotions and turn them in on themselves, or else to project them as anger and violence they can take out on others" (62).

> We have to open the discussion that men also have feelings, we also have the option to show emotions even in a public place, we do not always need to be the strong silent guys that most of us are raised to be, if boys fall we are told to get up and be strong but when girls fall then they are hugged and told that it's ok to cry.
>
> Jóhann (53)

Seidler (2006) notes that boys often learn when they are growing up that they are not supposed to cry and show their emotions and what Jóhann talks about here is an example of that. "Parents are happy to see their children manifesting socially acceptable behaviors. While behaviors suitable to gender role mode are rewarded, behaviors which do not match social expectations related to gender are punished" (Gökçearslan, 2010: 5203). From what Jóhann is explaining here this seems to be something that Jóhann seems to have experienced, that kids are raised differently based on gender.

Illness
The discussion of illness related to masculinity came up in the interviews. They mostly talked about mental illness and how that is hard for men to seek help when they suffer from mental illness. It seems that the interviewees perceive mental illness as more taboo for men than

physical illness. Women have higher depression and anxiety rate than men, but men have higher suicide rate than women. There have been some concerns that depression among men is higher but it unnoticed because men are less likely to seek help (O'Brien, et al. 2007).

> Toxic masculinity actuates depression among men, because you are always trying to meet some standard that maybe you don't even want to meet but you feel like society expects it from you because that is just the norm, it is just so normal, that you should be this stereotype but maybe you don't want that at all, you are just doing it to prove something to others.[…] My family, especially my mother and my sister, they are just my biggest role models. They have always had my back and let me be myself, even though it was really hard sometimes. It is of course really hard to help someone and support someone who does not want to be himself, like I was at the time when I was the most depressed. I did not dare to talk about my emotions because I just that was another sign that I was you know... a loser... it even went that far that I was going to commit suicide. But thankfully I had great people who always stood by me.
>
> <div align="right">Fannar (28)</div>

> There is always this pressure of being masculine you feel like if you are sick and especially something with mental illness then you are less of a man. You don't want to be weak. Everyone is dealing with stuff and probably a lot of men dealing with mental illness and no one knows. I have anxiety and I have been open about it with my family and have been to a psychologist. But this is not something that I have talked a lot with my friends. But maybe we need to normalize this more among guys. This is something we should talk more about because that can only be helpful. So, this activism is a good step towards that I would say.
>
> <div align="right">Kristinn (20)</div>

The relation that has been made with femininity and emotions might be a reason for why a lot of men hide their depression (O'Brien, et al. 2007). Here both Fannar and Kristinn talk about how they did not want to let others know what they were dealing with. From what they say you can see that they both got support from their families and they helped them through this. Seidler (2006) argues that "It is difficult to reach out for the support of others, if when you feel depressed or lack direction, if you have grown up feeling that you 'should' be able to control your own life and that needing help is just a further sign of weakness" (18).

Contexts to toxic masculinity

This chapter will focus on contexts to masculinity where the focus will be on stereotypes and patriarchy. Both of these themes were prominent in the interviews. The men reflected on how they have experienced stereotypes and patriarchy as a part of toxic masculinity.

Stereotypes

The most stereotypical masculinity that forms young men is the concept hegemonic masculinity. The stereotypical man therefore does not show emotions, appears to be strong and does not show any signs of weakness. Shows no signs of anything feminine and is passionate and wants to be successful. These are the stereotypes but in reality, this is a concept and most men do not relate to all the things that are stereotypical for this masculinity. The hegemonic masculinity is nevertheless seen as the "real man" and men often have concerns that if they do not fit in this box that others will see them as less of a man (Kupers, 2005). Homosexuality has also been stereotyped and in societies where patriarchy is dominating, gay men are often seen as less of men than straight men, they are not as masculine. Connell (2005) talks about how the culture makes some beliefs that "opposites attract" (143). With sexuality that must mean that masculinity and femininity attract each other, so if a man is attracted to another man that must mean that he is feminine (Connell, 2005).

> Maybe the people who needed this the most were some old men sitting at home who have never talked about anything, the generational difference is so massive. I will probably be the most open grandpa in the world, both of my grandpas were really guarded and would have never been able to talk about these things, but I can see the difference with my dad. We are very close, but he has always been more guarded than I am because he is older.
>
> Elías (21)

Elías is describing here how he has experienced the generational difference of masculinity. He sees difference in his grandfathers and his father, that his grandfathers were more guarded and not willing to talk about their emotions. Seidler (2006) talks about how younger men experience the generational difference "They learn from their experience that they are living in a very different world, especially in their relations with young women and gay men with whom they were at school. They are suspicious of the easy universalism into which men seem so easily to escape" (33). Here Seidler is talking about how men today are growing up in a more diverse reality than before he argues further that "they might feel a need to honor the

experiences of the past while also learning to voice the very different lives they live as young men in the present" (2006: 33). It can be interpreted that Elías feels like stereotypes are different between generations.

Fannar expressed stereotypes that people have of gay men. Connell (2005) argues that "patriarchal culture has a simple interpretation of gay men: they lack masculinity" (143). He discussed this further and said that how there is a tendency to think that "opposites attract" "If someone is attracted to the masculine, then that person must be feminine - if not in the body, then somehow in the mind" (143). Fannar said this about stereotypes:

> And to say that I don't look gay, like what does it mean to look gay. I am gay then I must look gay because I just look like I look, and I am gay. This is just the stereotype that has been put up for everyone like you know that you have to look feminine to be gay and then it's also a bad thing because then you're more like the "worse" gender. This is always said to me like this so great, just like well-done you don't look gay at all, you just look normal just like me.
>
> <div align="right">Fannar (28)</div>

Here Fannar is describing how people were shocked when they found out that he was gay because to them he did not look gay. He talks about the stereotype that has been of gay people and how is not like that, but he is gay. This is like Connell talks about that the stereotype of a gay man is feminine so that is why people expect gay men to be like that. Appearances are important thing when thinking about stereotypes. "There is considerable evidence to indicate that people are highly attuned to the stimulus information provided in other's appearance" (Zebrowitz, 1996:82-83). How Fannar talks about the "worse" gender can be interpreted that he feels like women are considered as a worse gender and the gay stereotypes are more feminine, this shows both homophobia and misogyny which are both traits of toxic masculinity.

Patriarchy

Patriarchy has been defined in different ways and the concept has researched extensively in social sciences. Walby (1989) defined patriarchy as "a system of social structures, and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (214). That does not mean that every man is dominating and oppressing women, but men benefit from this social structure. In patriarchal societies men learn that they have power and can show it in diverse ways. Growing up this social structure called patriarchy can affect people. Boys learn that they are supposed to have power and they learn how to think about others like women and gay people. Masculinity

is important and there is the fear of being "not man enough" if men don't act in a way that is expected from them (Seidler, 2006). Seidler (2006) argues that "men sometimes grow up in different cultural settings feeling that they have to control others if they are not to be controlled themselves" (45). Here Baldur talks about how he has experienced power and control.

> Be in control, and being able to control something, like in every context, I think those ideas are dominating, and also financial power I think that is also related to masculinity.
>
> <div align="right">Baldur (34)</div>

> It is really interesting to look at social behavior and see how we exert our bodies to show that we are men, […] There are all kinds of things that I do every day to maintain my power as a man, that has nothing to do with the subordination of women, it is because I am supposed to have control. One example, you know I do these things because I think I'm polite, but actually I am saying that I'm in control, like if we would stand up from this table now I would you know let you go first but then I'm in control. […] Then you would play along because you have learned to play along, with these everyday things.
>
> <div align="right">Baldur (34)</div>

Here Baldur talks about how men still use their bodies to show that they are in control, from what he is describing it seems to be an unconscious thing that men do, and how everyone plays along, people might not even realize that this is what it is. Like Seidler (2006) said people learn these things growing up and what Baldur is describing here is a good example of that. These are everyday things that everyone plays along with without noticing it. "It was harder for men to recognize that their experience was gendered because they had often grown up to think of themselves in 'universal' terms. When men looked in the mirror, they saw an image of themselves as a 'human being'" (95) Seidler (2006) further argued that "this also made it difficult for men to acknowledge the power they had in relation to women because they were reluctant to think in gendered terms" (95). He then noted that "feminism challenged men to name the power they took for granted and to recognize the ways in which a capitalist patriarchy was organized in their interests" (95). What Baldur says here shows that he is aware of toxic masculinity and acknowledges the power that he has within a patriarchal society.

> I also tweeted in relation to the Klaustur scandal […] I was criticizing that men who laugh at domestic violence should not be parliament members.
>
> <div align="right">Darri, 21</div>

> I am just waiting for a day where we have a demonstration march for all of these movements together, that would be an amazing demonstration march, and also just when the next generation will be in the parliament, they are not going to be at bars talking shit about other people, it's going to be nice to see that.
>
> <div align="right">Elías, 21</div>

Here Darri and Elías are criticizing the Klaustur Scandal[7] in Iceland. Seidler (2006) claims that a "traditional patriarchal analysis […] could position women as the victims of male power" (96). From what Darri and Elías are saying here it can be interpreted that they agree with Seidler, they both seem to be critical that these men are still in the parliament. It can also be interpreted from what Elías says that he seems to have hope for future generations and that they will break away from patriarchy.

Media power

The media can be used to affect cultural ideas. Corner (2011) talks about how the media power to "contribute to the way things are in society" is "soft power" It does not have the physical, possibly coercive, dimension that, for instance, military power, police power and aspects of economic power, including the power of labor relationships, can and do have in many countries" (14). The theme of power came up in the interviews and the interviewees seemed to have examples and experienced both good and bad media power. In this part there will be an analysis of good and bad power, the most prominent media that came up from the interviews were social media and popular culture, where social media seemed to be more of a good power and popular culture bad power. Corner (2011) also talks about how the government for example can use the media to get a message out there and how that might have "cultural power." That shows how someone can have "power over" the media (14). An example of good power is when individuals criticize and challenge the government (Corner, 2011).

Kristinn said "I think that a lot of things had been starting to change before this activism, and this is also changing worldwide just like the Gillette commercial" Here Kristinn is talking about how things have already begun to change in the media, and not only on social media. He mentions a new commercial from Gillette, the commercial is about toxic masculinity and

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[7] The Klaustur Scandal happened in November 2018 where recordings from a local bar was leaked to the media. At the recording six members of parliament, including former prime minister, were demeaning and dismissing female colleagues for a few hours. They are all still members of parliament.

how men need to change for the boys who are growing up now, so they will be better. Lot of people praised this commercial however there were also a lot of people who criticized this, saying that this commercial implied that all men are sexual abusers (Topping et al., 2019). It can be interpreted that Kristinn sees this commercial in a positive way, because he said that things have been starting to change and then he mentions this commercial, it seems that he experienced this commercial as step towards a positive change.

> You can be an example for others, I have many good friends that are well known and I really appreciate when they talk about these things, whether it is in Instagram stories just hey let's talk about emotions, Aron Mola perfect example, he was depressed and started the #allirgráta campaign and made a children's book. He has so many followers and just such a good influencer.
>
> <div align="right">Elías (21)</div>

Elías describes here how people can use their social media platform to influence people and how he appreciates when his well-known friends do that. He talks about Aron Mola who is an Icelandic social media influencer. He started the hashtag #allirgráta (everyone cries) to draw attention to that everyone has emotions and how everyone is allowed to show these emotions and cry. This is a sample of good power where an individual uses his platform to try to influence and change these cultural ideas. He has 23,2 thousand followers and is popular among young people. From what Elías says he thinks that Aron Mola can have a good influence on his young followers with what he has been doing on Instagram.

> I think social media made this possible for us, this didn't start with a parade […] I think this is like with other movements like #freethenipple and #MeToo its really important, you don't need much, no money, and no need to gather people beforehand, so this gives people the platform to fight for something.
>
> <div align="right">Helgi (25)</div>

The internet and social media have been a platform where groups, especially marginalized groups can express themselves and communicate (Corner, 2011). Corner (2011) talks about the web as "often regarded initially as a non-systemic, indeed an anti-systemic, agency of communication" (22). Here Helgi is talking about how social media made this hashtag activism possible, because it was so easy to get people to participate, social media gave them a platform and this activism would not have happened and gotten the same attention as it did without

social media and the internet. It can be interpreted from what Helgi is saying here that he sees social media as a platform that has potential to make a positive change.

Corner (2011) talks about "bad power" and how that plays a role in creating ideas and values in the society (23). Movies and TV shows have been a big part of how ideas about the genders are today. People might not notice how these things are constructing ideas about masculinity and femininity. How the genders are represented can often be destructive (Leavy and Bieniek 2014). The interviewees seem to experience the negative power of media from popular culture like movies and television more than social media and mainstream media.

> I feel like these are the biggest influencers that you see daily. Like Friends, Joey is such a man, and Joey and Ross fall asleep together once and it was so embarrassing for them and everyone was laughing so much because of it. If I watch it today, I just think that there is nothing wrong with two straight friends falling asleep together and it doesn't need to be embarrassing if you don't want it to. And Joey is also the main guy because he is always sleeping with different girls. The same goes with Barney in How I Met Your Mother. And just all these movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone and all these guys. These are "masculine" movies and it should almost just be written on them no girls are allowed to see these movies, because you know these movies are made for these manly men, so these are just our role models, like when we are growing up and we want to be like them.
>
> Fannar (28)

Here Fannar is describing TV shows and movies that from his experience are showing toxic masculinity. Brandt (2014) also talk about the show How I Met Your Mother, "Barney Stinson on How I Met Your Mother, speaks to society's acceptance of a model of masculinity that objectifies women and endorses men rejecting adult male responsibility" (113). Fannar explains how boys grow up with these ideas around them and these are the role models. Baldur has also experienced similar things with animated films:

> I was criticizing toxic masculinity like I talked about then, like this kind of straight chauvinism, I was just criticizing these really sexist and harmful images were produced in this animated film.
>
> Baldur (34)

Baldur expresses here how he wrote an article about an animated film that he saw with his son. This is a movie for young children, it is therefore obvious that these harmful ideas are in movies

for kids, so these ideas start to surround kids growing up. Gökçerslan (2010) talks about gender roles in cartoons and says that "One of the most viewed programs by children on TV are cartoons. Cartoons which are tools of entertainment include many incorrect massages despite their educative aspect. Messages sent related to gender are of great concern since children at tender age cannot separate fiction from reality" (5203)

> Throughout time tv has for example shown us how real men should be, and I think we need to break this stereotype that we have always seen.
>
> Ingvi (41)

> And all those super guys like Gillz for example, they are just bad role models because they spread messages that you should be ashamed if you are not like society wants you to be. I think it's so good that people are talking about this now, there has been so much focus on harmful images for women, like advertisements and stuff like that, but that has of course also been necessary. It is just so new that people are talking about this for men also and it is so important to do that.
>
> Fannar, 28

Television often represents the genders in a binary and restricted ways, Leavy and Trier-Bieniek (2014) argue that those constructions are "harmful to everyone in society" (17). You can see from what Ingvi says here that he feels like TV has represented men in a negative way. Leavy and Trier-Bieniek (2014) note that "the media consistently define masculinity in a narrow and heterosexist ways making it difficult for many real boys and men to exhibit characteristics associated with femininity" (17). Feasy (2008) talks about "the power of the medium to define norms and conventions, to provide 'common-sense' understandings of gender and sexuality and to portray what is considered to be both 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' social relations" (155). Fannar is also critical on the men that are represented in the media. Jóhannsdóttir and Hjálmarsdóttir (2011) argued that Gillz was contributing ideas about toxic masculinity and from Fannar says it can be interpreted that he agrees with that.

Social movements, hashtag activism and awareness

This part will focus on the awareness that developed around this hashtag activism, how men experienced the recognition of this topic and why this was important for them. Following that

there will be a discussion about the #Karlmennskan activism in relation to other social media movements like the #MeToo movement which was prominent in the months before the #Karlmennskan. Next there will be a discussion of the solidarity that formed among the participants. Finally, the next steps will be discussed, what do the interviewees see as the next steps for this activism for continued awareness.

Recognition

Couldry (2010) talks about Honneth's concept of recognition, and Honneth differentiates between some levels of recognition the first one is "basic care and love for the person as such" next he talks about "respect for the person as a moral agent with responsibility" and the last one is "social esteem or solidarity" and with that he means how people can have a positive effectuality on the society (Honneth in Couldry 2010: 72).

> This was necessary for us men, but it was also necessary for women because it is never good to keep quiet, it is always better to have the truth out there, that is why this movement was needed, to tell the truth, and to correct some misunderstandings. Because there were some misconceptions about how people thought men should behave, and also you think you're so special and alone because everyone is so good at hiding it. You look at the next man and think he has everything under control but then he is just like you. So basically, it was about telling the truth.
>
> Gylfi (20)

Here Gylfi is talking about why this activism was important to him, from what he says here it seems that the most important thing for him was that men spoke up. Honneth (1995) argues that "the reproduction of social life is governed by the imperative of mutual recognition, because one can develop a practical relation-to-self only when one has learned to view oneself" (92). It can be interpreted that Gylfi feels like a mutual recognition was what happened, that men realized that this was something that they needed to talk about.

> The discussion is often that feminists don't care about men's problems but in this movement, I saw that feminists embraced this, not that it was surprising for me but it just that showed that most feminists do care about men's problems and that was nice to see.
>
> Helgi (25)

Here Helgi talks about recognition from feminists, he talked about how some guys thought that feminists don't care about men's problems. He says that it was not that surprising for him to see that they cared but from what he is saying you can see that this recognition from feminists was important to him.

> My first reaction was that I was really happy, I was just like yes finally, and because the discussions were kind of deep, some were talking about suicide and that a lot of guys die every year.
>
> <div align="right">Elías (21)</div>

From what Elías is talking about here it seems that this activism was important to him, the use of the word "finally" interprets that this was something he had thought about before and could have come earlier, this was something he had been waiting for.

Other movements

In recent years repressed groups have started to use hashtag activism to share their experiences and unite and fight for a change. The #MeToo movement which started in 2017 and got really big right away. After the #MeToo movement there was a movement that started in the US focusing on men and what they could do to change this rape culture. That movement was the #HowIWillChange movement, encouraging men to share how they could change. That movement did not get really positive feedback. A lot of men were saying that this was just not true what the women were saying, that there is no rape culture and women have made this reality for themselves. There were both sexist comment and comments about how they wanted nothing to change (PettyJohn et al. 2018). The #Karlmennskan activism seemed to be more positive and men were engaging in it by sharing their stories, without disregarding women and their experiences.

> The #MeToo movement came before this one and I followed that movement, there were some crazy stories there and then this came and there were not as many discussions, but it was very relatable.
>
> <div align="right">Elías (21)</div>

Here Elías talks about how he related to the stories that he saw on Twitter before he tweeted his story, he talks about how he followed the #MeToo movement and how this hashtag activism started following #MeToo.

I think a part of the reason that this movement happened was because of the awakening with the #MeToo movement, I think the #MeToo movement inspired men and they had experienced that they needed their own movement.

<div align="right">Jóhann (53)</div>

I think it really was the right time, following the #MeToo movement. Like when people are talking about the #MeToo movement they talk about how masculinity is to blame, like the reason that men are pervert's kind of. So, this might be kind of like a countermovement, just to show that men are also dealing with this, because men are under pressure from both men and women. And also, to show that we are trying to escape these ideas and pressure and we need time to reform and work on this.

<div align="right">Kristinn (20)</div>

What Jóhann and Kristinn are talking about here shows how men realized after the #MeToo movement that there was something that needed to change for men too. How this hashtag came at a perfect time after the #MeToo movement. It seems from what they are saying that the men realized that this movement was not a personal attack against anyone, that this was more against ideas about masculinity and the gender system and that there is this pressure that men are experiencing. What seems to be different with the #Karlmennskan and the #HowIWillChange movement is that they might have experienced it as a personal attack, a lot of men there were saying that they would not change because they were not rapists (PettyJohn et al, 2018). In this case the focus was more about how society could change these ideas and how that can happen with more awareness and when everyone tries to do something to help that change.

The women's movement made this #Karlmennskan possible, that cannot be forgotten. If the #MeToo movement had not happened and if women had not been fighting for women's rights and feminist movements for decades, then this platform would have never been possible for men.

<div align="right">Baldur, 34</div>

From what Baldur says here it seems like he experiences this as a natural progression of the #MeToo and the women's movement in general. Seidler (2006) argues that "feminism challenged men to name the power they took for granted and to recognize the ways in which a capitalist patriarchy was organized in their interests" (92). Baldur acknowledges that #Karlmennskan is a feminist activism and that it would not have happened without feminists and their movements.

Solidarity

Diani and Dellaporta (2006) wrote about solidarity and argue that "to identify with a movement also entails feelings of solidarity towards people to whom one is not usually linked by direct personal contacts, but with whom one nonetheless shares aspirations and values" (95). The interviews demonstrated that a sense of belonging and solidarity formed among the participants.

> I felt really good to hear from my friends, I was very emotional and had a good talk with my friends, and after I tweeted, I felt the support and people were able to take it in also, not just that you feel confident enough to counteract toxic masculinity but also that people are willing to take it in and show support, so yeah I just got overwhelming support from everyone, even from people that I hadn't really talked to before.
>
> Darri (21)

Here Darri talks about his experience of sharing his story and how he got support from people he did not know personally or had never talked to before. Men shared their own stories and could relate to other stories and that connected them, so they supported each other that is an example of how he experienced solidarity, like Diani and Dellaporta (2006) noted, with people who shared similar values and goals as him.

> I wanted to help other boys and men to break out from these masculinity ideas, maybe this sounds dramatic for some, but I think that a lot of people also experienced it that way. Just to show how we are not always these tough guys.
>
> Helgi (25)

> You felt how people experienced it positively, and men were hugging each other in cyberspace, so I only felt positive reactions.
>
> Jóhann (53)

> I would say the goal was reached and not reached, men got to vent, but I don't know if this needs to be a yearly thing or what, of course the dream is that this is just ongoing and that men can talk about their emotions anytime, that would be amazing, that men could use this, maybe some who don't have many friends or don't have a lot of people to talk to, just put something out there and get support from others, that would be great.
>
> Jóhann, (53)

What Jóhann is indicating here is that the solidarity that formed was mostly limited to the internet, how he says that men were hugging each other in cyberspace indicates that there was not as much support going on in the real world. The whole activism happened mostly on the internet, so it is reasonable that the solidarity and support was mainly on the internet as well. It is easy to show support by liking or commenting on what others are posting. From what they are saying here it can be interpreted that this hashtag activism was a good first step in their opinion and that it did not go outside of social media enough. That something more needs to happen or that this needs to be an ongoing discussion like Jóhann said.

Next steps
From the interviews it is noticeable that the men were thinking about the future of this activism and if it was enough to contribute to any change of ideas about masculinity in Iceland. There have been a lot of changes in gender roles since the 1950s for example. The childhood years are important, that is the time we learn about the world and how it works, we learn the gender roles from the surroundings (Twenge, 1997).

> I think the media can have a big impact. We have seen the media landscape change over the last years, much more discussion of mental illness, suicides and the discussion of homosexuality have changed a lot over the last 20-30 year. That tells us that there is a chance, we also need to change ourselves. The media can help but we have to change ourselves also.
>
> Jóhann (53)

> Social media can be a really great tool for something like this, we just have to keep this alive, I feel like this didn't last as long as it would have needed to last. But I think it's really great that he is going to schools now to talk about this. We need to get the younger people to think about it, because then it won't be a problem anymore in a few years. Also just maybe try to make it a yearly movement or something like just take a month every year where there is a lot of focus on this, in the media, in schools and everywhere. Because then it won't just become forgotten that would be such a shame.
>
> Kristinn (20)

What Jóhann and Kristinn talk about here is what can be done as next steps to move towards new ideas about masculinity. Jóhann talks about how there have been some changes in the

media over the last years, that shows us how cultural changes happen over time (Twenge, 1997). Kristinn then talks about how Þorsteinn, who started the hashtag, is now going to schools to talk to teenagers about masculinity ideas and how he thinks that it is important to talk about this with the younger people. From what both Jóhann and Kristinn are saying it can be interpreted that it is important to them that this discussion will live, and this hashtag will contribute to changes in society. Olson (2016) argues that "social media communities can be a tool for shaping the public agenda and creating real-world change, but they have limitations" (783) because "it can gather and command the national and international agenda for a short amount of time until the next big thing captures the trending list" (783). Kristinn and Jóhann seem to be aware of the risk that this happens with this activism and how it is important to keep it alive and get it outside of social media.

Conclusion

This thesis has examined participants in the #Karlmennskan activism in Iceland which focused on bringing awareness to toxic masculinity and how to work towards changing attitudes and actions regarding these issues. The three main research questions of this thesis were: What are the reasons interviewees in the study participated in the #Karlmennskan activism? How do the men in this case study reflect on toxic masculinity in Iceland? And In what ways do the interviewees understand hashtag activism as a contribution to societal change regarding toxic masculinity? This thesis has analyzed how the participants experienced toxic masculinity. They expressed how participating in this hashtag activism has enabled them to be more open with their emotions and to express themselves. It also highlighted how it was important for these men to participate in this hashtag activism and how they see social media as a potential digital platform to bring awareness and change ideas in society about men and masculinity. They look at this as a natural progression from bigger feminist movements like the #MeToo movement. These are some of the key findings that came from the research. Hereunder is a detailed reflection of the findings of each research question and how it relates to the empirical data and theories such as Seidler's (2006) and Kuper's (2005) ideas about masculinity and Corner's (2011) and Couldry's (2010) ideas of power, voice, and recognition.

What are the reasons interviewees in the study participated in #Karlmennskan activism?

Looking back at what interviewees said there seem to be a few main reasons for why these men decided to participate in this hashtag activism. The men felt like things needed to change in society, and that is why they chose to share their stories because people need to speak up for change to happen. They mentioned that there was trouble with masculinity in Iceland and men needed to start looking at women as equals like Aron said, "I think this masculinity problem will not unravel until men start looking at women as equals." The analysis shows that in various

social behavior among men they show how they have power. Misogyny has been normalized in behavior and attitudes in the society that contribute to misogyny. This relates to what Connell (2005: 844) said about male dominance and how it requires effort to maintain because it is not a "self-reproducing system." Based on what these men shared they seemed to agree with Connell and felt that the system of male dominance could be changed and starting to look at women as equals would be a good step in the right direction, changing the male dominance would lead to more gender equality.

Another reason for these men to participate in this activism was to show that men also have emotions and how they should not have to hide their emotions because they are men. Seidler (2006) talked about emotions and how sadness and vulnerability, for example, are still considered feminine emotions. The men, in this case, reflected on this and how they have felt the same things as Seidler talked about. Seidler (2006) argues that "emotions indicate a lack of self-control and […] a threat to male identities" (19). The men in this case study expressed how they feel like they have not been able to express their emotions because of the pressure that is put on men to be strong and in control of their feelings, how they are not supposed to show any signs of weakness. "It is about this pressure on men that they always need to be these tough guys, not show emotions, not cry in front of anyone" this is what Helgi said about emotions. This is similar to what Oransky and Marecek (2009) found that teenage boys do not want to show emotions because of the risk of being labeled as gay or girly. Like the men in the case study touched upon it has been hard for them to show vulnerable emotions with friends but it was nevertheless important for them to open up a discussion about this so that men don't have to be ashamed of their emotions, they seem to feel that there is need for more emotional literacy in Iceland.

What they said about the importance of opening up the discussion can be related to another theme that came up which was about mental illness among men. The participants talked about suicide among men and how it is important that men feel like they can get help if they are dealing with mental illness. Kristinn talked about how mental illness needed to be normalized more, "maybe we need to normalize this more among guys. This is something we should talk more about because that can only be helpful." Seidler (2006) also talked about this that when men grow up feeling like they need to be in control of their emotions it can be hard to ask for help. The interviewees reflected on that that there is this standard that society wants you to meet and that they have felt the pressure to meet this standard. It seemed to be important for

them to have this discussion to show that men are also dealing with mental illness and to get rid of the stigma that seems to be around mental illness and help-seeking. This can be related to what Corrigan (2014) claimed that stigma around mental health is one of the reasons that men don't seek the help they need.

Pointing out how the gender system can affect men and women and women equally was one of the reasons that these men participated in this activism. It was essential to go against the gender system because that is the thing that maintains gender dualism. They saw this as a natural progression from the #MeToo movement and looked at this as an opportunity to be a part of it and to make a better reality for both women and men by fighting against toxic masculinity. PettyJohn et al. (2018) claimed that a lot of men experienced the #MeToo movement as a personal attack against them. The men in this case study show that they did not experience it as an attack against them but more against the gender system and that is why they wanted to participate in this hashtag activism by sharing their stories on Twitter. They saw it more as an opportunity to use social media to contribute to a change in society and attain gender equality. PettyJohn et al. (2016) argued that hashtag activism can be used to move topics from border to mainstream media and that is what important to the men in this case study.

How do the men in this case study reflect on toxic masculinity in Iceland?

The men in this case study shared a lot of stories that reflected on how they had experienced toxic masculinity in Iceland. The stories were both personal experiences and more general experiences in Iceland. They reflected on stigma and stereotypes among men and how they feel that men that are not stereotypical are often stigmatized for being different. They explained how everything feminine in a man is often stigmatized, and that shows both misogyny and homophobia. One of them reflected on the stereotype that has been put on gay men and how he felt stigmatized for being gay but not being like the typical stereotype. "And to say that I don't look gay, like what does it mean to look gay I am gay then I must look gay because I just look like I look, and I am gay" this is what Fannar had to say when people thought that he didn't look gay. Connell (2005) talked about how the stereotype of gay men was that they lack masculinity, that is not the reality for Fannar in this case, and he experienced that people were shocked when they found out that he is gay because he didn't look gay according to them. Fannar expressed how people said that he looked normal and he explained how that shows

homophobia by saying that is not normal, he discussed how that shows how stereotyped homosexuals are. He also expressed how this could be related to misogyny because the stereotype of gay men is that they are feminine and therefore like the "worse" gender as Fannar put it. Goffman (1963) explained how people often categorize people and Zebrowitz (1996) argued that appearances are important when categorizing people. But when these categorizations contain misogyny and homophobia like Fannar talked about they can become toxic. From what the interviewees talked about it seemed that they experienced stigma as a barrier to encouraging gender equality.

They also reflected on how mental illness has been stigmatized among men and how toxic masculinity actuates depression among men. The interviewees talked about all the pressure that is put on men to be strong; it is hard for them to be vulnerable and open with their struggles, how it was hard for them to talk about anxiety or depression with their friends. They reflected on how the stigma is mostly related to mental illness and not a physical illness. One of them said "there is always this pressure of being masculine you feel like if you are sick and especially something with mental illness then you are less of a man." O'Brien (2007) argued that men are less likely to seek help because of mental illness than women. The men, in this case, talked about personal experiences where it had been hard for them to seek the help they needed. They, however, spoke about how things might be starting to change, one of them reflected on how he saw a lot of difference in himself, his dad and his grandfathers, that his dad and grandfathers were way more guarded and closed off than him. He noticed a generational difference and that is something that Seidler (2006) also claimed, that younger men today grow up in a more diverse world than older generations, and therefore they might be more open. Seidler (2006) also noted, that people learn gendered terms when growing up and that men are supposed to have power. They expressed how it was essential to start awareness early. Based on what the interviewees talked about, a part of the motivation for this hashtag activism was that they wanted to change these ideas for the younger generation, so this won't be a problem in the future.

The men in this case study shared stories of violence concerning toxic masculinity. Kupers (2005) talked about how violence was a form of toxic masculinity and that men often lack consideration regarding the experiences of others. Seidler (2006) also mentions violence and that men often learn from a young age that they have a chance to survive through toughness. The men, in this case, reflected on these things, one of them shared a personal story of violence

he experienced from his stepfather. Another one of them expressed that he felt that boys needed to be empowered in showing kindness and that if they would from a young age learn that they don't need to be aggressive, then that would benefit everyone, he thinks that it would reduce violence, sexual abuse, and bullying. Seidler (2006) talked about how patriarchy can affect how men think about others, and these men acknowledged the patriarchy in Iceland, they also recognized the power men have within a patriarchal society. As Walby (1989) defined it as a social structure that allowed men to have dominance over women. Feminism is something that Seidler (2006) also talked about and how it challenges men to see the power they have. The men, in this case, acknowledged that and talked about this hashtag activism as a feminist action focusing on social awareness and gender equality.

They also reflected more generally about toxic masculinity in Iceland and what is distinctive for Iceland. One of them talked about how gender equality might be good in international comparison but how it was still important to make it better because it is going slowly. They also talked about the Klaustur scandal that happened in Iceland in 2018 and criticized how members of parliament could show misogynist behavior and still be parliament members. But that can show how men can benefit from this social structure that is patriarchy. Walby (1989) argued that patriarchy is how "men dominate, oppress and exploit women" (214). One of the participants, Elías, mentioned an Icelandic kindergarten and emphasized how they are doing good things in raising kind boys, he also seemed to have hope for future generations and that this will not be as much of a problem when they become members of parliaments in Iceland.

In what ways do the interviewees understand hashtag activism as a contribution to societal change regarding toxic masculinity?

The participants in this case study expressed how they thought this hashtag activism was a good step towards change in ideas about masculinity. They explained how social media was the thing that made this all possible for them. Social media made it possible to make this visible and show the reality of Icelandic men and for them to be able to share their stories efficiently. They talked about how social media could have what Corner (2011) calls "good power" (14) and they talked about how for example social media influencers who have a lot of followers can use the platform to draw attention to things like this hashtag activism. Corner (2011) also talked about the internet as a form of good power and a "non-systematic" communication with

the potential of more diversity than previous mainstream media. The participants also talked about TV in relation to what Corner (2011) calls "bad power", he argues that bad power is how media can distort knowledge or values. Television has shown stereotypical men and the interviewees have felt pressure to be like the men that are represented in movies and TV shows. They talked about how the most significant influencers you see daily are TV shows and movies and how it can be positive to show that real men are not all like the ones you see in movies. Corner (2011) noted the power of television and argued that "in some views, it is an agency of systematic misrepresentation" (35). Based on what the interviewees said, they seem to experience television to have the power to construct stereotypes.

Recognition was something important to all of the participants. They expressed positivity that this was happening. They felt like this was not only important to men, but it is also equally important for women. Couldry (2010) talked about how the internet, among other media has made it possible for many people to make their voice public. That is what the men in this case study felt like, that they could share their story and it would get the recognition they were hoping for. They also expressed how solidarity formed among the participants. Men were supporting each other, and that was important for them both to get support and to be able to support others. They got support from both people they knew and people they had never met before. Diani and Dellaporta (2006) talked about that to identify with a movement, which in this case is hashtag activism on social media, people often feel solidarity with people who they are not usually linked with, but they share the same goals and values. "They also argue that "the presence of feelings of identity and of collective solidarity makes it easier to face the risks and uncertainties related to collective action" (2006: 94). That is something that these men experienced, that they were all in this together and supported each other. When the men talked about solidarity, they mostly expressed solidarity through the internet, like Jóhann said "men were hugging each other in cyberspace." It did not reach out of social media into the real world as much. That might be considered a weakness because it did not reach that far out of social media. The interviewees only talked positively about the solidarity, that it could be easy for men who don't have a lot of friends to be able to get support from other men, and that it is easy to show support on social media, by liking and commenting.

The men talked about #Karlmennskan in relation to bigger social media movements like #MeToo. Men realized that they needed to change something among themselves. They talked about how this was to bring awareness and how ideas in society can change, rather than

experiencing the #MeToo movement as a personal attack against men. According to the interviewees, they saw this hashtag activism as a good step towards a change, but they also talked about how it needs to be bigger to alter ideas and succeed more. One of them mentioned how media can have a significant impact but that people also need to change themselves, the media can only help, but it can't do it all. They also talked about how it is vital to keep this alive and keep talking about these things. They mentioned that maybe this needed to be a yearly thing so it won't be forgotten. Olson (2016) argues that social media activism "can produce a quick change in the public conversation" (784) he, however, argues that "for more complex issues, gathering a group of people who are willing to move from online work to in-person education sustained organizing work turns digital communities into working real-world communities" (784). The interviewees emphasized how it was a good first step but they felt like it was a weakness that it did not move to the offline world enough.

Concluding reflections

To conclude this thesis has examined participants in the #Karlmennskan activism on Twitter in Iceland. We can see how these men have experienced toxic masculinity and why this hashtag activism was important to them. It is also evident that they questioned if it was enough to contribute to change in the society about masculinity ideas. They expressed how they felt that it was not as big as they would have wanted, that it needed to get bigger and how they felt that it did not last as long either. Olson (2018) spoke about how hashtag activism has the potential to maintain a conversation for longer than just a short time. It would, therefore, be interesting to look back at this later in the future and see if they have made that possible as that seemed to be important to the participants that this discussion will go on. PettyJohn et al. (2018) noted that "recent studies have indicated that people often exist in "echo chambers" within online spaces" which they explained as the "preexisting views are amplified and reinforced by the news content they are exposed to and the messages of like-minded people who make up their virtual social group" (9). That is why a wider sample might have improved the study. Another thing that might improve the findings of how men experience toxic masculinity would be to analyze the tweets that were shared under the hashtag. That would give a broader sample of how men have experienced it, but that would however not give the deeper meaning and experiences behind each story as the interviews have given. The conclusion shows that is important to look at small-scale activism as well as bigger movements. #Karlmennskan

activism was important to these men and they feel like it has a potential to change ideas about masculinity in Iceland.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 – Consent form

#Karlmennskan: Raising awareness of toxic masculinity through hashtag activism in Iceland

Lund University

Researcher: Þórdís Ylfa Þórsdóttir

This research seeks to explore the social media activism #Karlmennskan and your experience of it. I will ask questions regarding the #Karlmennskan and your own experience. The interview will last around 40-60 minutes. The data will only be used within my master's thesis in Lund University.

I would like to record the interview and use the dialogue to present my findings. I will record the interview only with your written consent. Please feel free to say as much or as little as you want. You can decide not to answer any question, or to stop the interview any time you want.

I ensure that your identity will remain anonymous.

If you agree to join this study, please sign your name below.

_____

Full name

Appendix 2 – Interview guide

The #Karlmennskan

- Where did you first hear about #Karlmennskan?
- What was your first reaction to #Karlmennskan?
    - How did it make you feel?
- What kind of positive reaction have you noticed about it?
    - Where is it coming from?
- What kind of negative reaction have you noticed about it?
    - Where is it coming from?
- What do you think about the role of social media in this activism?
- What do you think the main goal was with this hashtag activism?
- How do you feel that the society reacted to it?
- Why do you think a movement like this is needed?

Their own experience

- What does toxic masculinity mean to you?
- How have you experienced toxic masculinity?
- How do feel about gender equality in Iceland
- What was the main reason why you decided to tweet with the hashtag?
- How did you feel about the reactions to your tweet/s?
- How did you engage in the movement outside of twitter?
- What has changed for you since you tweeted your story?

Appendix 3 – Translated sample interview

Where did you first hear about #Karlmennskan?

I think I saw it on Twitter first, I don't remember if I saw the original post, I don't really remember who it was that posted it on Twitter in the beginning, but it was someone who was talking about how guys should be able to talk about their experience of toxic masculinity.

How was your reaction to it when you saw it?

I have for a long time definitely, or for like a good amount of time been irritated by these ideas, I'm a gay man and had to hide my masculinity for a long time. So it was really good for me to see someone else talk about this, because I know the same things go for straight men as well, they also struggle with these things, many men around me like me dad, it is tough for him to express his emotions and also for my brother so for me it is just really important that all men can express their emotions and just get to be exactly like they are without getting the comments, are you gay or are you a girl (kelling) or some jokes like that. And like girly things, why do people feel like it is bad to be girly or feminine, like it is so bad to be like a woman to some degree. So, it was really good for me to see this.

What kind of reaction did you notice about the #Karlmennskan?

Around me I only noticed positive reactions. The ones who talked to me about this were just positive, the only negative reactions I noticed was on the radio on FM957 (radio station), they were talking about it in Brennslan (radio show) and were just making fun of this, they thought it was kind of tacky, and that is of course exactly what is being criticized that we cannot talk about these things without being made fun of or we cannot talk about that men can be something else than just the stereotype of a man.

How would you say this stereotype of a man is in Iceland?

I feel like the dominant idea about masculinity is this insensitive chunk that never cries unless maybe in his mom's funeral but does not even cry but only just sheds one tear. The image that is put off for us is this power giant, like Hafþór júlíus, the mountain for example. And he is just not a good role model. And all those super guys like Gills for example, they are just bad role models because they spread messages that you should be ashamed if you are not like society wants you to be. I think it's so good that people are talking about this now, there has been so much focus on harmful images for women, like advertisements and stuff like that, but that has of course also been necessary. It is just so new that people are talking about this for men also and it is so important to do that, I mean there has to be some reason that men commit way more suicide than women. I think that now almost everyone knows

someone who has taken their own life, that could have possibly ended better if they could have asked for help and that it wasn't so shameful to do that.

What role do you feel social media had in this activism?

They were of course the driving force in this movement, I don't know if this could have happened without social media, so I feel like they were the main thing that kept this movement going and made it possible.

What do you think was the main goal with the activism?

I think the main goal has to be to teach men to respect others. Even if you want to be the stereotypical man, that you can of course be if that is what you want, you do not need to criticize others just for being themselves, they should not feel the need to hide or be accused of being gay or a girl (kelling), and those are not bad things either, but it has just been tized, its bad being gay or its bad being girly. It's just how it is like if a group of friends goes to a movie and one cries then he is a girl and then others make fun of him. Others make him feel ashamed of something people should not be ashamed of, you should not have to be ashamed of having emotions or showing them.

Have you felt this stigma?

Yes, I did not come out until 2011, I was 21 at the time. I had been hiding it for a long time. I remember when everyone was using MSN, I was always putting on songs that were "masculine" because I wanted others to see what I was listening to. I did not want to listen to what I actually wanted to listen to because I did not want others to see what that was because it was Britney Spears or Pussycat dolls or something like that because I knew what kind of reactions I would get if people saw what kind of music I liked. I remember even getting those reactions like when I came out to one guy I knew, he said yeah I always knew you were gay because you have only girlfriends and only listen to girly music. This was his reaction and I was just like what does that even say about my sexuality, I know plenty of guys who are straight who listen to "girly" music or have only girlfriends. Just recently my roommate started dating a guy, she is a girl, and he almost only has gay friends or friends who are girls, but he is straight. This has nothing to do with your sexuality that is just a myth.

How do you feel about the goal of the activism, do you feel like the goal was reached?

No, I think the goal has not been reached, but I think it's important to keep going. This is just like with all the other movements that have been surfacing, it is important to keep going until it's normal that boys can just say hey, I don't feel good and just be open with their emotions. It is not a coincidence that suicide is way more common amongst boys, because they can't talk about these things, they can't

express their emotions and tell people that they feel bad, it is so weak, for them it's just a sign that you're a pussy or not being manly enough. But in my opinion, there is nothing manlier that just to own your emotions and to be self-consistent.

How do you feel society reacted to #Karlmennskan?

Around me the reactions were really good, but there are of course always some negative people, especially in the comment sections on Facebook and something like, the people that don't want anything to change ever. The ones who feel like things have always been like this and feel like this is the end of the man, but those are exactly the people that are a problem, this adheres to the older generation like a lot of things do, a generation who is not ready to adjust or change with the society. But society as a whole reacted positively to this. I got a lot of positive reaction and I have also written about this before and after the movement, about my experience of this. But we have still so far to come because there is only a small part of men and boys who are ready to talk about this and take part in this and I still feel like you have to say to a lot of men that it is okay to be human.

What does toxic masculinity mean to you?

Toxic masculinity is definitely the pressure of being this perfect man, you are supposed to be strong, fearless, never show any weakness and just be this tough guy, that just contributes to assault against women for example, friend groups cheer each other on in getting the most girls or to be immoral, this conduces that men feel like they deserve something from women, I don't know if you know the concept friend zone, but that is nothing else than a man that feels like he deserves something from his friend, I think its related to each other. I feel like toxic masculinity is kind of the glue in that, because it makes these things normal and that makes men feel like this is just normal and nothing wrong with it.

Sexual abuse and rape are also included in this, because toxic masculinity makes men and boys feel entitled to get what they want, and in a way, they are provoking each other. This is just something I have seen when growing up and just around me. Toxic masculinity actuates depression among men, because you are always trying to meet some standard that maybe you don't even want to meet but you feel like society expects it from you because that is just the norm, it is just so normal, that you should be this stereotype but maybe you don't want that at all, you are just doing it to prove something to others. I was once seeing a guy who was in the closet and he was this really tough dude, he was telling me that he was often going home with girls and then he just pretended to pass out from alcohol because he didn't want to sleep with them, and then he went and told all his friends what he had been doing with all these girls, and none of it was true. He only did this because he thought his friends would think like wow what a cool dude, but he felt at the time at least really bad about this, but he did not want to change it because he thought it would be so humiliating if he would come out.

You have maybe mentioned some examples, but how have you experienced toxic masculinity?

I spent a long time trying to meet this standard myself, and also when I was coming out, I heard a lot that I didn't look like I was gay, I took this as a compliment at first but with time I have learned that this is not a compliment because it is disparaging for others. And to say that I don't look gay, like what does it mean to look gay. I am gay then I must look gay because I just look like I look, and I am gay. This is just the stereotype that has been put up for everyone like you know that you have to look feminine to be gay and then it's also a bad thing because then you're more like the "worse" gender. This is always said to me like this so great, just like well-done you don't look gay at all, you just look normal just like me. I thought it was cool but then I just learned that it is just super tacky to have this attitude. My best friend is what you could call gay, or like looking gay, he is my biggest role model in life, even if we do not look alike. And like if my interests are something that would be considered gay is this then taken from me, just like oh you don't look gay, but your personality is gay. I have felt the need to hide like in work or something, I had to come out three times at work because every time a new person started, they didn't know because you can't see it on me, so I had to have these discussions, but you know nothing changes, I'm still the same person.

Yeah, so are you still having these discussions?
No there is a while since the last time, but if I go to a new job or something then I will have to do it again. People are still surprised that gay men can be what they consider masculine, they categorize that as not gay, because that how the stereotype is. That is definitely one of the reasons why I want to exterminate these ideas about masculinity because I think that they have held me back and also my brothers and sisters in the LGBT community, we have all had to lie a big part of our lives just so people don't suspect that we might be worse, but there is nothing worse about us.

How did you think about the concept of toxic masculinity before #Karlmennskan?
I had thought a lot about it, but I didn't really have a word for it or something like that. It was just something that bothered me because I had been struggling with it for a long time. I was bullied in high school because people said to me, that was even before I knew myself that I was gay, that I was obviously gay, based on all kinds of things, all those things were something that could not say anything about my sexuality. I mean yeah, I had some "feminine" hobbies and interests, but I also had "masculine" hobbies, but it was kind of like if you had one feminine and 10 masculine then the feminine outweighs the masculine. Like you can be a power lifting man, always drinking beer and listening to metal music and whatever, but if you love musicals then that is a lot and that is super embarrassing and you can't tell anyone that.

So, what were your hobbies at the time?

What I was most ashamed of was my taste in music and the fact that I had a lot of girlfriends, I had very few guy friends but then again, I also loved video games, and action movies and all that and I even felt that that was not something that is expected from a gay man, I was focused on the stereotype and the stereotype of a gay man was not like me. Like if I was gay, I had love musicals and nothing else. But you know it was just like this, i was made so ashamed for these interests so I just did not anyone to know about the. I was just really ashamed of who I was and how I was treated, people were telling me that I was obviously gay, and I took it so bad like it was this horrible thing, because I did not want to be gay, I think I had just this internal homophobia and I was ashamed for that.

Like the Icelandic dream is to have a wife, house, children and a dog and everything that comes with that. I anticipated that if I would come out then that would never happen for me, I would just have to go to art school and learn to dance or something ha-ha…. these are just the stereotypes who pollute the brains of people when they are growing up. And that is really important, I mean we are grown-ups now, like the people who are participating mostly in the movement and we are talking about our own experience because we want this to help the younger generation and the kids that are growing up now, like my nephews and just everyone who will grow up in this society and I really do not want them to go through this. I hope they will just get to be who they are.

What is the main reason you decided to tweet your story?
My main reason was because I hoped that my story could help someone, I sometimes write about the things that have tormented me and I feel like I have improved a lot and I just want to share that with others. Just because things can always get better and you don't have to fit into a form that society wants you to be in, because with time we can change the society to the better, where everyone can be themselves.

Exactly, so what had you been writing about before the #Karlmennskan?
Maybe not exactly these things but I had talked a lot about my bullying and talked about how boys should be allowed to show emotions, but maybe I hadn't talked about it as much as I did after the movement and all the discussions came. I think I hadn't connected to straight guys also, because from my point of view only gay men were struggling with these things. But when I saw this I was like yeah of course they are also struggling with this. Both my father and brother have never been to a phycologist, and are probably more repressed than they would need to be, even if they have been opening up a lot over the past years and they are way more open now than they were before. But I still think they could be a lot more open emotionally, I know that my dad was repressed emotionally by his father and brothers because there was just not this openness at the time. He started studying academically and he was just a pussy studying academically was just for girls and pussies, like working at an office was just not for men.

What has helped you most in changing these ideas?

My family, especially my mother and my sister, they are just my biggest role models. They have always had my back and let me be myself, even though it was really hard sometimes. It is of course really hard to help someone and support who does not want to be himself, like I was at the time when I was the most depressed. I did not dare to talk about my emotions because I just that was another sign that I was you know… a loser… it even went that far that I was going to commit suicide. But thankfully I had great people who always stood by me. For my dad it was not as easy but he has supported me for a long time now, I mean this was 10 years ago. Times were different back then. I feel like in the media and also just meme sites that were encouraging harmful ideas. And even when I look at my Facebook page from back then I just feel really bad, like when I see the things that I was sharing back then. I was dishonoring women, just like things that women belong in the kitchen and that kind of bullshit, and I feel just absurd that these were my opinions, but like I was just trying to fit into this stereotype. Just trying to convince everyone that I was as much of a man as everyone else. But to have this opinion is just so ridiculous. The two most important persons in my life belong everyone else than just the kitchen and they have shown how great role models they are. This is a dark spot in society, like to have this opinion, but this is what comes with toxic masculinity, to treat women like this and talk about them this way.

How did you feel about the reactions you got to your tweet?

I felt really good about them, I would have wanted to see the movement become bigger, I feel like it didn't get big enough, I mean it didn't get like #metoo or anything but that was also just an explosion. I would have wanted to see the same with this movement. But I feel like there are still discussions about this, not as much and this has obviously not reached everyone, like there was a news article last year where someone said that a boy had committed suicide because of feminists, that is just the most bullshit I have heard and just showed that this person did obviously not know that feminists started this movement and they want men to be able to express their emotions and to be more open and get to be themselves. The people who don't want that they are just causing men to feel bad. So naturally I would have wanted it to reach more people, this is just ignorance by a lot of people, they need to realize that men should be able to be what they want, so of course I would have wanted it bigger.

What do you think could have been done to make it bigger?

It would be best to get a big movement, would be great to get big nice role models, like men that other men look at as masculine. I think that would be strong. Like famous people, and maybe not only Icelandic people, would be so good if this would reach further, but I haven't noticed this outside of Iceland that much. That would be a really big step for this movement if it would reach out of Iceland

and get the attention of famous men who would be good role models. I have seen a lot of "news" on gossip sites about how some famous men are soft, and everyone thinks that is really cute but then again then it is being put up like that is exceptional. Like for example look at Hugh Jackman he is really this soft bear but then everyone is like yeah, but he is also this tough guy. We need more spokesmen like that. For me a boy dealing with my sexuality I always felt like the role models were just this typical stereotype, because the ones I saw in the media were Friðrik Ómar, Haffi Haff and Páll Óskar (famous gay men in Iceland). I mean they are all great guys but for me at the time they represented the feminine gay guys no matter what they talked about. I always lacked the role models that were more like me because I just did not relate to these guys and I thought ok so if I come out will I be like them? And this has of course changed since then but at the time that is what I really needed. Still today we are seeing men come out really late, just because someone said to them if you come out your career will be over. Just like Ricky Martin and the guy from NSYNC, they could not come out until their career slowed down and they didn't have any projects anymore. Like if they would have been out at the time I would have been like wow ok so a guy in a boyband, that is great. But I feel like this is changing now or I hope so at least, it's happening slowly but I think it is happening.

How did you participate outside of the internet?

I didn't really do that; I did not really realize how the movement worked outside of the internet. I didn't know if there was something happening, I am following the Instagram page and I have seen recently that he is now doing lectures about this in schools.

What has changed for you after #Karlmennskan?

Not so much for me personally, I have been open for quite some time now, I spent a lot of time being ashamed of myself and who and how I was, but it has been a few years now since I accepted myself for who I am, I stopped being ashamed of these things that I should have never felt ashamed for in the first place. So, the movement didn't really change that for me, but I got messages that I was helping others and have gotten messages like that before and that gives me so much. Just to know that there is a boy out there who was experiencing the same things that I had experienced, and that he saw me and that I could be a role model for him and that gives me a lot.

How has that impacted your identity?

Just to know that I can talk about these things and there are others that also want to talk about it, that helps me a lot. I feel like I have maybe still some traces of old ideas still in me, like don't tell people that you listen to Taylor Swift, but with time I have stopped being ashamed. So, I feel like I can be more myself these days, like if someone says something about me now then I just say back that they are the

one who are tacky for judging other people for what they like. I think I would not have done that 3 years ago. So that has changed and help me a lot to be myself.

How did you feel about the solidarity that developed?

That could have been bigger, but I felt that the ones who were tweeting were together in this. There was this solidarity and it didn't matter who you were or where you came from, what your sexuality you had or gender or anything. We shared an opinion and we were one, for the time this was going on. So this also helped me understand things that I maybe didn't understand so well before, and to see things from others point of view, like from straight guys point of view, that has helped me understand better the men in my life that are important to me.

How did you feel when you were reading the stories from others?

I mostly felt shame that society is really like this or has been like this. Just like accepting this and just feel like this is normal just because it has always been like this, like talking about how women only belong in the kitchen, this is just so old fashioned, this is just something from like 1950 or something, when women were stay at home and maybe couldn't even go to school and just recently got the right to vote and stuff like that, these ideas are traces from that era and it is sad that it has taken this long for things to change. Like this was just normal, this was the norm and boys were raised with these norms. Like boys get soldier toys and girls get princesses, these are things that people maybe do not realize that can be harmful, they just think I always got this, and this hasn't damaged me. I remember once when there was a discussion that we should change the lyrics of some Christmas song, so they are not talking about that the mom is in the kitchen and the dad is doing something else, I can't remember what he was doing. But I saw a guy posting on Facebook where he said something like I always listened to these songs and this hasn't affected me in any way, and I just remember thinking that this was so funny because I know this guy and he is one of the most sexist men I know, he really talks down women, so yes maybe it affected you in some ways. But I'm not saying that just by changing the lyrics in this song everything changes, and he would probably be the same if this one song was different. I'm just saying there are these small things that maybe we don't notice all the time.

So, what do you think mostly affects those ideas?

I think it mostly comes from both advertisements, and just media in general, movies, news, all these things, music. I think these are the things that mostly affect our ideas. It is what we grow up with. When I was growing up, I saw almost no gay couples in movies, so I have always just seen straight couples as the norm, in all those movies. But now there is maybe one gay couple here and there, and as soon as

there is maybe one gay couple in one movie people are just like really, why do we have to see gay couples everywhere now? I mean I had to see straight couples in all movies when I was younger in all movies, music and all that. And then we get maybe one good movie like love Simon last year which was really good for us and people still need to be like ugh this gay agenda that has to be squeezed into everything now. I feel like these are the biggest influencers that you see daily. Like Friends, Joey is such a man, and Joey and Ross fall asleep together once and it was so embarrassing for them and everyone was laughing so much because of it. If I watch it today, I just think that there is nothing wrong with two straight friends falling asleep together and it doesn't need to be embarrassing if you don't want it to. And Joey is also the main guy because he is always sleeping with different girls. The same goes with Barney in How I Met Your Mother, Barney in that show. And just all these movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Sylvester Stallone and all these guys. These are "masculine" movies and it should almost just be written on them no girls are allowed to see these movies, because you know these movies are made for these manly men, so these are just our role models, like when we are growing up and we want to be like them.

And this is also just what I said before about the Icelandic dream, have a wife, dog, kids and all that, this is because of the movies. What is put into our head when we are younger, girls should relate to Disney princesses and boys should relate to the tough guys. But what if the guy wants the girl to propose, why is that bad? Why can't the girl just propose just like he can? Why does he need to fix the sink, what if she can do it? Why does he need to carry all the bags, what if he has back pain and she is really strong, it is these small things? People don't say anything, but I have felt like when I go shopping with my roommate, who is a girl, she carries the bags, she is strong and she is buying it, do I have to offer to carry the bags? I have felt it from people just like really, but if this would be reversed no one would care. People don't know how much these little things can do; we need to change the little things. If we start changing them then the bigger things start to change as well. The bigger things are the results of all the smaller little things. A boy and a girl are friends in kindergarten and people are just like aww are they a couple, or when a boy is mean to a girl and then he has a crush on her, those small innocent things that adults say to kids that are maybe not so innocent after all, they are shaping the kid's opinions. I have two nieces and nephews and they are 4 and 5 years old and he says yuck I'm not going to play with girls' toys, this is not because of the parents they are not like this, it is something that he learns in school from other kids or other adults that say this. This gets into their head so sneakily and that is really sad.
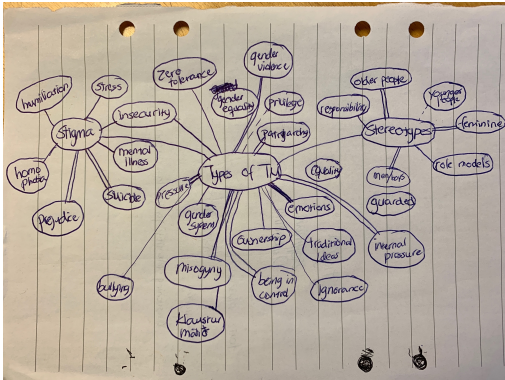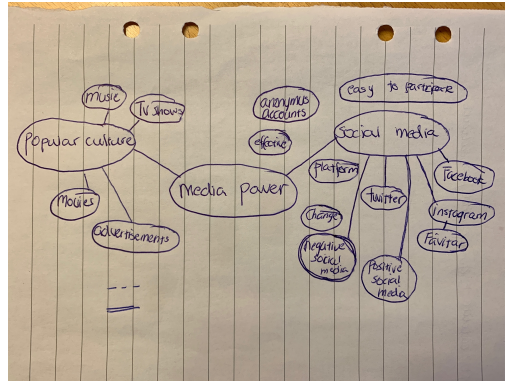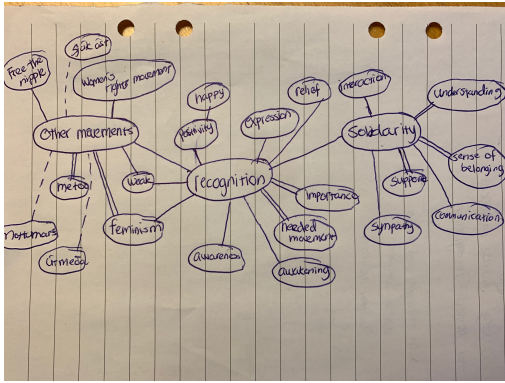
Appendix 4 – Data coding example

Theme	Categories	Codes
Social movements, hashtag activism and awareness	Recognition	Happy, positivity, needed, expression, visibility, feminism, awareness, weak, importance, attitude change, finally this discussion, relief, social change, awakening, good timing, ongoing discussion, not surprising, good first step, reality
	Solidarity	Helping others, interaction, friendship, support, understanding, sympathy, sense of belonging, relatable, togetherness, diversity, communication
	Other movements	Women's rights movement, #MeToo, #Frethenipple, 6dagsleikinn, sjúk ást, mottumars, útmeða

This is an example of the final steps of the coding where the codes and categories were put into relevant themes.

Here is an example of the codes after they had been put in to categories, before the themes had been decided.

Here are examples of spider diagrams that helped with putting the categories into themes