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The Power of “The New Order” – Masculinity at Stake

Exploring how men reconstruct their masculinity as a response to
femvertising

by

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Abstract

- Title:** The Power of “The New Order” – Masculinity at Stake. Exploring the reconstruction of masculinity as a response to femvertising
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- Keywords:** Femvertising, The New Order, Reconstructing Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity, Inclusive Masculinity
- Thesis Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to investigate how men reconstruct their masculinity when experiencing and discussing femvertising, which attempt to challenge current gender roles and support women with feminist messages.
- Methodology:** The study was conducted with a qualitative approach, providing a multi-sided perspective in terms of in-depth interviews with 16 Swedish men, combined with three femvertising videos to enable an eliciting effect. A thematic approach was used for the analysis.
- Theoretical perspective:** The main theories that this study is based upon is Gender Theory, with special attention to Masculinity Theories regarding hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity theory. Furthermore, it also uses theory about masculinity and feminism.
- Empirical data:** The empirical data was gathered through in-depth interviews. This allowed us to observe how the participating men reconstructed their masculinity right there and then.
- Conclusions:** The study concluded that the participating men reconstructed their masculinity in order to maintain, protect or redefine it when challenged by a “new order” that femvertising creates. Concludingly, the men reconstructed their masculinity in terms of over-responsible masculinities, masculine victims, resistant masculinities and tolerant feminists.
- Practical implications:** The study suggests that practitioners should advocate these messages for both men and women, and further show the true urgency of these issues, in order to fulfil the purpose of femvertising and not force the reconstruction of masculinity.

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1. Introduction & Problematization¹

Imagine that you are watching your favourite television programme when the channel cuts to commercials. As usual, you start to think about something else, but then, one commercial suddenly catches your attention. You are not sure who the sender of the commercial is, but it is not the product that is in focus. You soon come to realise that the commercial takes a pro-female, feminist stance and refers to the empowerment of women and how men need to change their behaviour in order for the world to be equal and inclusive. When the commercial ends, you are left feeling rather shaken by the message. On the one hand, you feel empowered to be a positive force in helping equality prevail, but on the other hand you feel like the message might have been a bit harsh on how it portrayed men. When you discuss it with your friends, you realise that you are not the only one feeling twofold. As it turns out, the public debate regarding the commercial shows how it has been praised for breaking traditional gender roles, encouraging people to question set behaviours, but simultaneously has sparked a backlash as a consequence of the simplified message that today's inequalities are results of men's behaviour.

What you just imagined is an example of *femvertising*; what a *purpose-driven marketing* attempt can communicate. The mission of purpose-driven marketing is to make consumers understand the importance of an issue and make them want to be a part of the societal change that it promotes (Minár, 2016). An example of an increasingly more popular approach is femvertising, with its purpose to advocate feminism and pro-female messages, and also to challenge traditional gender roles especially for the benefit of women. By using these messages, some claim that gender roles and society at large possibly can change, since research have shown that the portrayals in advertisements can influence the established beliefs of people (Barr, Bugden, McKenzie & Webster, 2018).

The intention of practicing purpose-driven marketing, femvertising included, is not driven by profit, but rather by the wish to create a positive change in the society and show what the world could look like in the future (Minár, 2016). Moreover, to make the consumers acknowledge the commercial and the issues it communicates, it is important that there is a value in it and that the consumers feel that it benefits them as well. This is created when the brand takes a stand and it

¹ Parts of Chapter 1. Introduction and Problematization has been used in one of our previous examinations in BUSR31.

is relevant both for the consumers and the community they live in (Minár, 2016). A decision made from an ethical perspective is more valuable for many consumers than the price tag itself, which is one of the reasons why brands are taking a more active position in these societal questions than before (Cardona Cervantes, 2016). According to Edelman Earned Brand's study (2019), approximately 67 percent of the consumers around the world buy a product or service based on whether a brand takes a stand or not. In connection to this, 72 percent are more likely to recommend a brand if it supports a good cause (McMurtry, 2015). If companies are exposed for not being committed to what they communicate, the consequence could be that the consumers feel betrayed. Further, it could result in the consumers stop buying the products (Edelman, 2019; Minár, 2016) or switch to a competitor (McMurtry, 2015). Hence, this new interest, in brands actively supporting a societal issue, among the public argues for its relevance in today's society.

A message that has become increasingly more important in connection to purpose-driven marketing is *feminism*; a concept defined by its aspiration for equality of the sexes (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Feminism is a topic that over the decades has engaged the public in injustices and women's rights and even if much has changed since the start of feminism movements, with its first wave in the 19th century (History.com Editors, 2019), the world is far from equal. For example, there is still a wage gap between women and men (Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2020), women do not have the same access to education and only 23,7 percent of the representation in national parliaments are female in average (United Nations, 2020). Many have embraced the quest for equality, but feminism has also encountered resistance throughout the years (Marshall, 1991). For instance, Chafetz and Dworkin (1987) mean that anti-feminism movements could rise as a backlash for those who feel threatened by social and economic changes. In this sense, they have come to influence the state and politics, the woman's right to her own body and preserved masculinity in some countries (Dupuis-Déri, 2016; Wojnicka, 2016); in other worlds, leaving things unchanged. Up until 2017 the non-changeable and toxic masculinity had not been the main focus of feminism. However, in the fall of 2017, many witnessed feminism being commercialised by the public and the global media in connection to the #MeToo movement, affecting views worldwide with its purpose to end sexual harassment and sexual assaults (McCarthy, 2018). This highlights the fact that feminism is not only about equal rights between genders in terms of work and wages, but also about behaviours that come to harm both women and men. Especially, it comes to challenge "toxic" gender roles which

might have been traditionally accepted, further extending the view on feminism and pro-female messages.

In connection to feminism and its agenda, *femvertising* has become increasingly more important for society as a whole, with the aim to support feminism and women with its pro-female messages in marketing (SheKnows, 2014). Additionally, it does not seldom challenge gender stereotypes (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017). The sudden increase in femvertising can partly be explained by women's increasing purchasing power around the world and the fact that women drive 70-80 percent of all consumer purchases through their influence (Brennan, 2018; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017). As it shows, femvertising attempts to pursue the fight for women's rights and feminism is also being increasingly more used by traditionally male-oriented brands, such as Audi, Nike and Gillette (Cause Marketing, 2017; DossierNet, 2019; Gillette, 2019), further arguing for its relevance.

Due to the fact that a purpose of femvertising is to challenge the stereotypical gender roles that are traditionally used in advertising and society, it is fair to assume that this could possibly also challenge how consumers experience the attempt. What happens when a brand challenges certain gender roles in order to take a pro-female stand? It has previously been discovered that this strategy might not always be successful in the eyes of men. For example, Avery (2012) conducted a study about gender-bending, when a masculine gendered brand attempts to attract women as a new target group. As it shows, gender is still an important element for consumers' decision-making process, and particularly, men tend to be resistant against strategies that challenge masculine identity (Avery, 2012). One thought is that men do not only feel that the brand is threatened, but also their own masculine identity and their role in the gender hierarchy, which must be defended (Avery, 2012). Hence, the resistance could be a possible outcome when brands attempt to challenge traditional stereotypes in advertising for the benefit of women, such as in femvertising. Was Avery (2012) right when he stated that men are resistant to a brand changing course of action? Or could it be that Swedish men have a more open mindset when it comes to these shifts? In regard to Hofstede's (2001) study, Sweden has the lowest masculinity index among the 53 nations included in a study and is thus categorised as the most feminine country, meaning that there are overlapping gender roles where both women and men are accepted as gentle, tender and kind. This indicates that Sweden should be more equal and progressive than countries defined as more masculine, and that the view of gender roles should be more non-traditional and gender stereotypes will be rooted only in biological differences

(An & Kim, 2007; Hofstede, 2001). To specify, feminine societies have smaller gender role differences and the citizens have more equal opportunities when it comes to, for instance, job and education (Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede Insights, 2020).

However, as of today, there seems to be a current paradox that problematizes the Swedish context which makes the topic of femvertising and masculinity of interest to investigate. This paradox highlights the fact that Swedish men might be seen as more gender equal and pro feminism than they truly are, contradicting Hofstede's (2001) study. To specify, on the one hand, Sweden is one of the most gender equal and progressive countries in the world (World Economic Forum, 2019), with focus on social rights for citizens (Sweden, 2019). But, on the other hand, only 45 percent of Swedish men declare that they would define themselves as feminists (Statista, 2019) and additionally, Global Citizen (Sanchez & Rodriguez, 2019) ranked Sweden as number two of countries who discard the #MeToo movement. The statistics show progress among the citizens' values and equality, but, at the same time, there are indicators that not everyone shares these values and that there are still gaps to overcome for men to fully accept feminism and its attempts. As there legislation wise are no obstacles for feminism and gender equality to prevail in Sweden (Sweden, 2019), this paradox only concerns the Swedish citizens' personal opinions, which further allows us to assume that there is a current issue in the Swedish society that needs to be given attention. Especially, there clearly seems to be some kind of resistance towards feminism and feminism attempts among Swedish men that is yet to be discovered. Due to the fact that femvertising communicates feminist messages for the benefit of women, this current paradox makes the topic of femvertising of relevance to investigate.

We would argue for the fact that the above mentioned paradox is an effect of a shift, or a "new order", in the gender hierarchy that feminism creates. More specifically, as feminism promotes that women and men should be treated equally, it also supports women's liberation from being the subordinate gender in a patriarchal society, in which men usually set the rules (Beauvoir, 1949). By doing so, we propose that feminism creates a "new order" in the gender hierarchy, for the support of women, where the dominant masculinity is being questioned. This is something that we assume that femvertising also creates, with its feminist messages and attempts to challenge certain gender roles and norms. Especially, as femvertising is an attempt to support women, it is fair to consider that men, even Swedish due to the previously mentioned paradox, might experience their masculinity to be at risk, as men and women, masculinity and femininity, are usually seen as oppositional to one another (Beauvoir, 1949; Connell, 1990).

Thereby, through supporting women's liberation from subordination, it could also be seen as an attempt to disparage men's superiority as these are dependent on each other. By changing femininity, it is said that one also changes masculinity (Connell, 1990). In this sense, men might need to come to terms with their masculinity and reconstruct it if they perceive it at risk, resulting in men creating anti-feminism movements and defending their masculinity (Avery, 2012; Chafetz & Dworkin, 1987). With Avery's (2012) study and anti-feminism movements in mind, we would therefore argue for the fact that masculinity could come to play an important role also in the context of femvertising. Especially as the paradox shows that Swedish men might not agree with all progressive attempts to challenge traditional gender roles, and thus their masculinity, in society.

1.1 Purpose & Research Question

As we have seen, there is a paradox in the Swedish society, claiming that Swedish men are highly progressive in terms of gender equality but at the same time indicating that there might be some resistance towards feminism and feminist attempts. Because of this, we argue for the fact that femvertising is an important field to investigate further, as it is a feminist attempt within marketing which thus could affect feminism's progress. Especially, we mean that femvertising is an attempt to create and support a "new order" as it tries to blur the lines between existing gender hierarchical structures and support women to become free from their subordinate role. Therefore, we wish to gain an understanding about femvertising from a male perspective because, as previously stated, men could experience their masculinity and superiority to be threatened when these shifts are advocated. As mentioned, men might reconstruct their masculinity in order to come to terms with this. Specifically, with this said, the main purpose of this study is to investigate how Swedish men reconstruct their masculinity as a response when they experience the femvertising phenomenon, which attempt to challenge current gender roles and support women with feminist messages. In order to fulfil our purpose, the following research question was constructed for the study:

How do Swedish men reconstruct their masculinity when they experience the phenomenon of femvertising?

1.2 Literature Review

The field we intend to contribute to with this study is the academic field of femvertising. Therefore, our literature review presents previous conducted research within the femvertising phenomenon, but also the field of gender in advertising as these are related to each other. We will begin with explaining the historical and traditional differences between the portrayals of men and women in marketing, and how it has emerged over the years. Following this, we will introduce the femvertising concept, how it has been discussed in previous research and its findings. Finally, we will sum up the former paragraphs and synthesise them in order to make it possible for us to argue for the importance and contributions of our study in the following section (section 1.3).

1.2.1 Gender Roles in Advertising

The topic of gender in advertising has been frequently studied in the past and has shown a development throughout the years (Grau & Zotos, 2016). According to Goffman (1976), men and women are usually portrayed differently in relation to each other in advertisements. The author studies different imagery of advertisement in order to understand the relationship between gender in the advertisement and its connection to gender stereotypes. Six areas are discussed about the female role in advertisement, and how they are usually contrasted against the male roles and stereotypes (Goffman, 1976). For example, men are often portrayed as superior to the woman when it comes to power, status, authority and physical control. Further, women are usually seen as a passive participant, while men are pictured as the active participant in imagery (Goffman, 1976). Even if the social role of women may have changed after Goffman's (1976) study, gender roles and stereotypes in advertising have still been shown to be an issue in later years (Barr et al., 2018; Knoll, Eisend & Steinhagen, 2011). For example, Knoll, Eisend and Steinhagen (2011) claim that women are up to seven times more often portrayed in a stereotypical manner than men. In a fairly newer study written by Barr et al. (2018), it is shown that there is still an ongoing use of stereotypical portrayals of gender in advertising. The authors found that the sexualisation and objectification of women is still an issue in the environment of advertisement, which could possibly have a negative effect on the efforts to promote gender equality and what is expected by men and women in today's society (Barr et al., 2018). This is further argued in O'Driscoll's (2019) study, as female respondents perceive that the sexual objectification of women in advertising is still problematic. However,

from a male perspective this is shown to be less problematic and they rather claim that men might be left out of the conversation (O’Driscoll, 2019). This may possibly exemplify the fact that women and the female gender roles are usually called for attention and seen as a challenge to overcome, while discussions about men and the male gender roles are being somewhat overlooked in both marketing and academia.

1.2.2 Challenging Gender Roles and Stereotypes in Advertising

In recent years, traditional marketing as we know it has changed greatly when it comes to the portrayal of gender roles. Some authors within the field are Grau and Zotos (2016), who, by reviewing a vast amount of previous literature, investigated the movement and development of gender roles in advertisement from previous research within the area. They mean that a main phenomenon of increasing use in the marketing arena, that challenges gender stereotypes and traditional objectification of women, is *femvertising* (Grau & Zotos, 2016). As mentioned in the introduction, femvertising is advertising that takes an advantage of feminist characteristics and pro-female messages. Also Åkestam, Rosengren and Dahlen (2017) builds upon Grau and Zoto’s (2016) study in order to investigate this area. As a result of their study, it shows that femvertising attempts to challenge traditional stereotypes are successful. Especially, women perceive these ads as less stereotypical than traditional ads (Åkestam, Rosengren & Dahlen, 2017).

Even if the academic field mainly has focused on female stereotypes and the objectification of women, some research has also focused on the male gender role in advertising (Chu, Lee & Kim, 2016; Grau & Zotos, 2016). Grau and Zotos (2016) claim that there has been a shift in advertising towards also challenging male stereotypes, for example by portraying men in a softer way and in family situations than has been done in the past. Chu, Lee and Kim (2016) are in line with this statement, after their examination of non-stereotypical gender role representation (NSGR) in marketing. The authors found that consumers usually view non-stereotypical gender role representation as a positive experience. Another important finding of their study is that it shows that the use of this in marketing could possibly lead to minor changes of traditional gender stereotypes in the real-life society (Chu, Lee & Kim, 2016).

1.2.3 Affecting the Consumers

In addition to the role of femvertising and non-stereotypical advertising in academic literature, as an attempt towards challenging traditional stereotypes, researchers have also focused on its role in affecting consumers (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017; Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). First of all, it shows that femvertising has the power to affect women's mental health (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017), as, with the attempt to portray women in a non-traditional way, women tend to feel empowered by femvertising. Moreover, Sternadori and Abitbol (2019) mean that femvertising has the possibility to affect consumers' attitude towards advertising. By conducting a quantitative study, the authors argue that one's worldview is what determines one's attitude (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). This study is however fairly different as it investigates both men and women, and also points out the factors that might influence consumers' attitudes towards advertisement. As a result, the author found five factors that might affect one's attitudes directly or indirectly: gender, supporting equality, feminist self-identification, political orientation and ad trust (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). In this sense, it is possible to expect that other academic research could possibly have different results when involving men.

Previous research has also found that the use of femvertising has the possibility to affect consumers' intention to purchase the product (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017). As for Drake's (2017) study on millennials, the use of pro-female messages has an opportunity to influence women's perception of a brand and their purchase intention thanks to the emotional connection they create with the brand. Contrastingly, Kapoor and Munjal (2017) argues that advertising might not be enough to really influence women's behaviour and attitudes. Especially, femvertising could be seen as a way to manipulate women into creating a relationship with the brand and buy their products (Kapoor & Munjal, 2017).

There are nevertheless many different views in literature about to what extent femvertising, and thus brands taking a stand, can possibly affect consumers attitude towards the brand (Grau & Zotos, 2016; Johnson, Mao, Lefebvre & Ganesh, 2019; Shivakanth Shetty, Belavadi Venkataramaiah & Anand, 2019; Sobande, 2019). Shivakanth Shetty, Belavadi Venkataramaiah and Anand (2019) propose that consumers search for and prefer brands who take advantage of these messages, such as femvertising, even if this is not always aligned with the brand itself. However, other research proposes the contrary. For instance, authenticity is

claimed to be key for consumer behaviour and the success of engaging in female empowerment activities (Grau & Zotos, 2016). With regard to both femvertising and the challenging of certain gender roles; if there is not any true cause for brands engaging in such activities, and if it is rather about “saying” than “doing”, scholars claim this could lead to both brand resistance and boycott (Johnson et al., 2019; Sobande, 2019).

1.2.4 Summary of Literature Review

To sum up what is stated in established literature, femvertising has been increasingly used by brands and is successful in empowering women through its pro-female messages and its challenging of traditional gender roles. Most authors agree that this marketing approach has a positive effect on consumers’, or more specifically women’s, wellbeing as they feel empowered by their messages and has a positive effect on their perceptions of the ad, as well as the brand pursuing this attempt. It seems like both women and men have positive views regarding non-stereotypical gender role representation in advertising in general. However, the vast majority of femvertising studies have been conducted with female participants and research has come to show that it is possible that one might get different results when involving men. Furthermore, there are split insights about whether or not femvertising could lead to a change in society at large. The question could still be asked how people, especially men, truly perceive the femvertising attempts to challenge the current norms and gender hierarchy, and what comes into play when they discuss this phenomenon.

1.3 Importance of The Study and Aiming Contributions

As mentioned, previous research has focused on femvertising from a female perspective, leaving the male perspective rather overlooked within the academic field. We would argue that feminist messages, such as femvertising, is about supporting gender equality, which concerns both women and men when it comes to attention as well as their effort. Therefore, it is important to consider men’s point of view and how they experience the pro-female “new order” that femvertising supports, since researchers highlight that femvertising plays a vital role in the shaping and limiting of genders and their opportunities in society (Barr et al., 2018). It is notable that men might not always be accepting when women get increased attention (Avery, 2012; O’Driscoll, 2019), and there is a current paradox in the Swedish society which proposes the same. It is thereby fair to assume that this also could be the case when femvertising attempts

might challenge the masculine role in society. As men might then come to reconstruct their masculinity, there is a possibility that femvertising could do the opposite of what it is supposed to, if men would consider themselves degraded and thus resist and oppose its messages. This argues for why the reconstruction of masculinity is important to highlight in this field. Related to this, femvertising is closely connected to feminist messages, which has an effect on society at large, why the reconstruction of masculinity could possibly prevent equality work from truly prevail since both women and men are needed for it to progress. There is therefore an urgency to investigate how Swedish men are coping with the new conditions that femvertising creates and if, and in which ways, it could make them reconstruct their masculinity.

The field of femvertising has previously been researched mainly from a marketing and branding perspective with focus on consumer attitudes. However, one can see that research on gender and masculinity is not yet present within this field. This is thus where we aim to position our study in the academic debate, contributing to the stream of literature. We find it essential to contribute to the femvertising field with insights regarding gender theory, since femvertising has a purpose to take a pro-female stance by challenging traditional gender roles and masculinity. Especially, it is important to understand the relation between women and men in order to understand the phenomenon of reconstruction of masculinity. Moreover, we intend to contribute theoretically by involving masculinity theories, especially hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity theory, in the femvertising discussion, something which has not been done before. The strength of this contribution will be intensified by involving the reconstruction of masculinity, which could come to play a key role in how men respond to femvertising. This will allow us to provide novel and interesting insights within the femvertising field.

Last but not least, we aim to offer practical contributions for marketing practitioners who wish to use femvertising as a marketing approach. By providing a better understanding about the femvertising phenomenon and how Swedish men perceive and relate to it, our belief is that this will aid them to effectively communicate these messages with their audience in mind.

2. Method²

This chapter will discuss the research methodology of our study. We will start with explaining the character of the study and the research approach. We will further share how we approached our sampling and data collection, and also how we moved forward with our interviews and the analysis of the empirical findings. Lastly, we will discuss some concluding remarks on the trustworthiness of our study.

2.1 Research Strategy

In line with the aim of this study, which is to gain an understanding about how men reconstruct their masculinity when discussing the phenomenon of femvertising, we considered a study of qualitative character to be appropriate. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), qualitative research is partly about understanding people's perspectives and worldviews. Also, Austin and Sutton (2015) argue for the fact that qualitative research is highly appropriate when one wants to discover how people experience a topic or phenomenon, or how they behave and act in relation to it. Especially, it is appropriate in order to understand *why* this is; for example, why people experience things in a certain way or act a certain way (Sutton & Austin, 2015). This argues for the suitability of this approach in order for us to contribute with empirical findings, as our ambition is to understand what comes to surface and how men experience femvertising, and hence what insights this could give us regarding the reproduction of masculinity. In this sense, a qualitative approach was considered appropriate as it aims to capture such events and experiences. Moreover, research of qualitative character is characterised by its ability to provide data with thick descriptions about participants' experiences rather than generalisable data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe, Jackson & Jaspersen., 2018), which we found highly appropriate as we wanted to gather a variety of empirical material which constitutes both contradictions and commonalities about men's stories and feelings when experiencing femvertising. It is also important to note how this strategy has allowed us to use our own voice throughout the study, something that is particular for qualitative research (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Especially, we have used our own interpretations of our empirical findings in the analysis, which has allowed us to generate meaningful findings and thus for our study to be one-of-a-kind.

² Parts of Chapter 2. Method has been used in one of our previous examinations in BUSR31.

When gathering our empirical data, we used a combination of data collection strategies in order to understand the phenomena from a *multi-sided perspective*; as we used *qualitative interviews* combined with *three femvertising videos* in order to enable an eliciting effect. To answer our research question, we needed to understand the men's underlying thoughts and emotions when discussing these videos. As feminism and gender equality is a fairly sensitive topic, but often discussed in different social settings, interviews were considered appropriate in order to create a conversation with the interviewees. For example, real-life examples came to surface during the interviews, thus arguing for why conducting qualitative interviews were suitable as these aim to understand people's point of view and why they hold these views (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). It should also be noted that interviews can be seen as an experience in itself, as it usually is more complex than only social interaction between an interviewer and the participants (Alvesson, 2003). Considering the interviews as an experience was especially applicable in our study, as the men who participated reconstructed their masculinity right there and then when discussing the femvertising videos. This was partly due to the fact that we used videos during the interviews to set the scene and enable an eliciting effect, which we will describe below.

The three femvertising videos, created by Audi, Gillette and Nike, were used during the interviews in order to explore the interviewees perspectives when femvertising was presented in different ways. They were displayed during the interviews together with suitable questions that enabled us to capture the interviewees' reflections about them. In other words, these videos were used as an *eliciting technique*, which could be explained as the use of, in our case, visuals in the interviews as an attempt to encourage the participants to share their ideas more openly (Barton, 2015). This was highly valuable for our study as the participating men then discussed femvertising and its feminist messages, rather sensitive topics to discuss, in a setting that was relevant for them. Thanks to this, they were able to discuss their thoughts by referring to the videos in a natural manner instead of fully exposing themselves to us. Thus, the use of the videos allowed us to create an atmosphere during the interviews in which the men felt more in control of the conversation and comfortable discussing such a controversial topic. Most important however, this enabled us to gather valuable data as the participating men could reflect more about the topic and talk about situations in the videos but also in real life. The background and motivation for our choices of videos are provided in section 2.3.4.

2.2 Research Approach

The aim of our study is to understand how the reproduction of masculinity takes place when Swedish men discuss videos containing feminist messages. To understand this phenomenon we have used an *abductive approach*, in which both theoretical and empirical material is used in order to come to a conclusion in the study (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). Our empirical data gathered during our interviews has been the foundation for our study. When we first conducted our interviews, we did not have theory in mind, but further in our study we realised the value of theory in order to find what was relevant in our empirical material regarding the reproduction of masculinity. Thus, the theory allowed us to make sense of our data, arguing for our abductive approach (Dubois & Gadde, 2002). We have had a high flexibility when doing our study, constantly alternating between the theoretical framework and our empirical material in order to understand our material with valuable and well formulated interpretations. In particular, as we will mention in chapter 3 regarding our theoretical framework, the theories we use for our study serve different purposes in order for us to reach a conclusion. Especially, the theory regarding masculinity (section 3.2) provided us with perspective during our analysis. When going through our material, masculinity theory allowed us to generate new knowledge, working as an analytical tool to understand how and why masculinity could be reconstructed in the field of femvertising. Furthermore, the alternation between theory and empirical material became evident as we have been able to find both commonalities and contradictions when comparing with theories regarding hegemonic and inclusive masculinity theories and theory regarding masculinity and feminism.

2.3 Gathering Empirical Material

2.3.1 Pilot Study

Before we started to work on our master thesis, we conducted a pilot study in order to investigate the topic we had intended to research. Importantly, this pilot study made it possible for us to shift our focus from originally being about femvertising and brand management to instead being about femvertising and masculinity. This was especially due to the fact that we noticed how the two men in the pilot study (see Appendix 1) spoke about feminism and the patriarchy when they discussed the femvertising videos, and how we came to sense an ambivalence in how they thought about the videos. Thanks to the pilot study, we could test,

evaluate and adapt our interviews for this study in order to grasp what we strived for. For instance, we decided to put more focus on speaking about scenarios and different gender roles in the different femvertising videos during our interviews, as we perceived that this was not our main focus in the pilot study. Also, we decided to add a third femvertising video to our sample of videos, namely the Nike femvertising campaign, as it included a perspective that we thought was missing in the pilot study.

Moreover, it should also be noted that we had the intention to conduct focus groups for this study (the master thesis). We noticed that the men in our pilot study were not fully comfortable with speaking with two women about the topic, leaving things unspoken. For example, focus groups could be a solution to capture social dynamics and how a group of people react to an experience or phenomenon (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). This could have been beneficial for our study as theorists usually discuss the diversity and power relations between different masculinities (Connell, 1995; Swain, 2006), something that possibly could have surfaced in focus groups. Unfortunately, the current pandemic (Covid-19) forced us to reconsider this wish as we did not want to gather people in groups for the sake of health. Therefore, we instead conducted single qualitative interviews with the men, as seen in section 2.3.3.

2.3.2 Sampling

In order to collect the empirical material, we used a *non-probability* sampling design. This means that everyone does not have the same chance to be chosen for the study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). We set up criteria that we found important before collecting the sample. Hence, the sampling was of the *purposive* kind with the aim to fulfil the purpose of our study (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). Our sample consisted of 16 male interviewees (Appendix 1) who met three criteria. Firstly, since previous research has focused on women and their attitudes towards femvertising, we found it important to explore how men perceive the phenomena. Especially due to the fact that the majority of Swedish men do not define themselves as feminists (Statista, 2019). Secondly, we aimed for the interviewees to be of different ages to capture the heterogeneity of men. This, since various age groups have different behaviours and views of ethical consumption practices (Forbes Agency Council, 2018; Francis & Hoefel, 2018). We found various ages to be beneficial for our study as the interviewees could have contrasting opinions, due to the fact that feminism has developed throughout the years. This especially came to surface when doing our pilot study since, even if there was a minor age difference

between the two interviewees, we could see differences in their knowledge and thoughts about feminism. It should however be noted that the current situation, caused by the pandemic Covid-19, affected this criterion as we did not have the opportunity to interview people of all ages we wanted; hence the final age range was approximately 20-50 years for the interviewees. Thirdly, as this topic is rather sensitive and complex, it was proposed that the participants should have some, even if minor, knowledge and/or interest about societal issues, such as the topic of gender equality, and were free-spoken people.

In order to gather our sample, we took a closer look at our social networks to see if we could find men suitable for our study regarding the above mentioned criteria. We especially focused on our acquaintances and asked others, who knew the proposed participants, for their opinion about the participant's fit for the purpose of our study. This was beneficial as the interviewees were comfortable enough to keep an open mind and state what they felt and thought, and it also allowed us to gather highly appropriate participants considering the circumstances (Covid-19). However, it should be mentioned that we did not want to interview men in our propinquity, as we believed both parties could be biased when answering questions and analysing the results. For example, we believed that this could have led to a less professional environment, as there could have been a lack of understanding the seriousness of the study and the questions asked. It should also be noted that we experienced this as a small issue during a few of the interviews, even if we did not have a close relationship with the participant.

2.3.3 Qualitative Interviews

After collecting our sample, we conducted qualitative interviews. These were of semi-structured character with open questions in order to keep the interviewees within the frames of the studied phenomenon, but with the possibility to think broad (Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). In order to achieve this, we created a topic guide to capture questions surrounding experiences of femvertising alongside with the videos (Appendix 2). To ensure that the interviewees felt comfortable with sharing their thoughts, we designed a consent form for them to read and sign before the start of the interview (Appendix 3). Notably, the consent form stated that the interviewees were anonymous, with the use of pseudonyms when quoting them in this study.

We decided to have the interviews either at the interviewee's or interviewers' home due to the fact that we wanted to make them relaxed as gender equality could be a sensitive topic to discuss

(Easterby-Smith et al., 2018). At home, a calm and quiet spot, they did not have to worry about being overheard. We also thought this could make them feel in control as they were being interviewed by two women about a phenomenon that empowers women in opposition to men. However, as some of the interviewees did not want to meet up, due to the circumstances (Covid-19), five of the interviews were held online, as video interviews. We acknowledged that this resulted in some data getting lost in translation since it was experienced as more strained to have a discussion through a screen, which could have affected our results. It should also be noted that the consent forms were accepted verbally when the interviews were held online. Moreover, both of us were present during the interviews, both online and in person. One of us was responsible for the interview and asked the interviewee questions during the conversation between the two, while the other of us observed and took notes about certain sayings and/or behaviours. Our purpose of this was the possibility for the observer to read between the lines. Furthermore, this was beneficial as the observer could support and ask follow-up questions if she noticed that something was being left out by the interviewee or interviewer. Thanks to this, we were able to gather more and better data than we would have done otherwise, especially as this could be considered a sensitive topic to discuss and therefore needs some extra effort.

Lastly, all of the interviews were audio recorded. This allowed us to stay fully focused on the interviewees and to create a conversation with them rather than being focused on taking notes during the interviews. We found this of particular importance in order for us to get thorough answers from the participating men, as we could have a flexible approach during the interviews and were able to ask follow-up questions if we sensed that something was being left out or found interesting. Thanks to this, we did not miss out on any unique material. The recordings were also transcribed to make it easier for us to analyse the result, but most importantly it allowed us to capture nuances in our empirical material as we went through it continuously and could more easily apply notes, code the material and see varieties in the quotes.

2.3.4 Selection of Videos

In this section, we will describe the background of the femvertising approaches made by Audi, Gillette and Nike, and further motivate our choices. The purpose of using these videos during the interviews was to enable an eliciting effect where the participants could discuss femvertising in its true context. The links to the femvertising videos can be found in Appendix 4.

Gillette - "The best a man can be"

As a male-oriented brand, Gillette's tagline "Gillette – The best a man can get" has been around for over 30 years (Gillette, 2020). However, in the beginning of 2019, they decided to change their tagline along with the campaign "We believe: the best men can be" (Gillette, 2019, 2020); an attempt directed towards men containing pro-female messages, falling into the category of being a femvertising campaign. More specifically, by supporting the #MeToo movement, the video had the purpose of redefining toxic masculinity that could be harmful for both men and women. The brand took a stand in order to change male behaviour, and urged men to become better people by preventing sexual harassment and not using the phrase "boys will be boys" as a disclaimer for misbehaviour (Gillette, 2019). However, producing this video resulted in it receiving positive comments as well as backlash, as many men were offended by the video and threatened to boycott the brand (McCluskey, 2019).

Audi - "Daughter"

Audi are one of the most well-known car brands in the world. Their tagline is "progress through technology", which is shown through their design and sporty look (Audi, 2020). Over the years, they have also proven themselves to be progressive in their marketing attempts. In 2017, Audi joined the bandwagon of feminism with their femvertising campaign "Daughter" (Cause Marketing, 2017), which was broadcasted during Superbowl in the US. In the light of this video, they raised the topic of feminism in regard to what fathers should tell their daughters to think about their self-worth, highlighting the fact of gender inequality and how women are usually seen as less valuable and have a more difficult time than men in different aspects. Further, they stated that Audi is committed to equal pay for equal work, meaning that, in line with their tagline, progress is for everyone. This video was seen as bold since equal pay was and still is a big issue in the US, but it was also criticised for implying that men did not value women equally (Buss, 2017).

Nike - "Dream Crazier"

As one of the largest and most well-known sports brands, Nike are known for their groundbreaking product innovations and their inspirational athletes (Nike, 2020). Especially, they are recognized by their tagline "Just do it", and in early 2019, that was just what they promoted when the brand released their femvertising campaign "Dream Crazier" (DossierNet,

2019). With the female tennis player Serena Williams as narrator, the movie especially embraces women who have proven their exceptional athletic skills, who have broken barriers and inspired other young athletes (DossierNet, 2019; Nike, 2020). Hence, it is considered a femvertising campaign in our sense as it attempts to encourage young, female athletes to never stop chasing your dream (Nike, 2020). However, the video also highlights the fact that women are usually approached differently than men in sport, as it mentions how women are usually called “dramatic”, “hysterical” and “crazy” in contexts that do not come to surface when it considers men. Therefore, it also attempts to challenge the current stereotypical notions about disparage women in sports, which we also speak of as a motivation for femvertising campaigns.

Motivation

When searching for which different campaigns to use for our study, it was important for us that they had different focuses on femvertising. During our pilot study, we used Audi and Gillette as the only two videos, but we felt that we lacked the focus of female empowerment. As we aimed for using male-oriented brands or neutral-oriented brands in order to answer our research question about masculinity the best way possible, it was a challenge for us to find a third video suitable for our study. As it shows, femvertising involving female empowerment messages are usually done by female-oriented brands, such as within the beauty and health industry. Therefore, when we discovered the video made by Nike, we found it highly appropriate for our study to complement the other two. This left us with three videos that capture different femvertising focuses; Audi with the focus on gender’s equal worth, Gillette with the focus on challenging traditional masculine stereotypes harmful for especially women but also men, and Nike with the focus on empowering women and challenging the stereotypical notions about women in sports.

We also found these campaigns suitable as they sparked discussion in society due to their controversiality, both on good and bad terms, and could thus hopefully open up good discussions in our study. Furthermore, we found it to be a strength that all of these three brands are global and well-known. Our belief was that if the participating men had knowledge about the brands from before, and even had some connection to them, they would be more open to discuss these videos and make them more involved in the conversation.

2.4 Analysis

When analysing our material, we used the approach of *thematic analysis* to identify patterns. With help of Rennstam and Wästerfors' (2018) three steps for crafting qualitative data, we structured our analysis and found relevant themes for our study. When *sorting* our material, we got intimate with it. We listened to the interviews, transcribed and read them to find patterns in the material. We coded the quotes into different categories and made these more focused when understanding what they were about in a broader sense and how they were connected. When *reducing* our material, we looked for the most interesting themes in terms of uniqueness rather than confirmation of previous research findings. In this phase, the theoretical framework was especially helpful, as it allowed to shed new light on quotes from a gender and masculinity perspective and why they were considered interesting. We found it important to use categories for which ways the participants reconstructed their masculinity in order to clearly answer our research question with our findings. This also aided us to make interpretations and to theorise material during the *arguing* process. It should be noted that this was a challenging task as the reconstruction of masculinity is a fairly complex event, and we had to review the interviews as experiences rather than as merely a conversation. Thus, the analysing process was time consuming but yet highly valuable in the sense that we had to review our findings ongoingly in order to make sense of what was actually going on in the interview setting. This approach allowed us to find the following themes and subthemes (chapter 4) that support our research question:

- Introducing The New Order.
- The Over-Responsible masculinities.
- The Masculine Victim.
- The Resistant Masculinities, followed by two subthemes exemplifying this:
 - Feminism belongs to women.
 - The Nonchalant Men.
- The Tolerant Feminist.

2.5 Quality Criteria

In order for our study to be persuasive and for the reader to find it worthwhile, it was important to prove its trustworthiness. To ensure trustworthy qualitative studies, Lincoln and Guba (1985) formulate four criteria: *Credibility*, *Transferability*, *Dependability* and *Confirmability*.

2.5.1 Credibility

The criteria of *credibility* is, according to Lincoln and Guba (1985), referred to whether the gathered material holds true and transparent. To fulfil this criterion, we contacted the participating men of our study with their quotes used in our findings in order for them to verify that they hold true. Moreover, we used a combination of interviews and videos in order to create an eliciting effect, investigating how the men perceived the phenomenon of femvertising in its true context. This, and the triangulation that was enabled thanks to that we were both involved in the analysis of our data, allowed us to uncover deeper meaning, commonalities and variations in the interviews that might otherwise have been lost. We also aimed to be reflexive in our approach in order to achieve credible findings. For example, we were aware of the fact that us being women might have influenced the way the interviewees approached our questions. We were also aware of the fact that this might have influenced the way we viewed their answers and how we asked questions. This is why both of us were present during the interviews and why we discussed the empirical material afterwards in order to get different perspectives.

2.5.2 Transferability

The *transferability* criteria is considered in regard to if the findings of a study can be used or applied in another context and research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) means that the transferability of a study can be enabled with a thick description and the use of a purposive sampling strategy. In this sense, our study can be considered transferable as we used a purposive sampling of the interviewees. Besides this, we also purposely chose the videos for our study to gather a variety of descriptive material as they enabled an eliciting effect. It could be discussed whether the use of these videos limits the transferability of the study as they were rather focused on femvertising in regard to male-oriented brands. However, the purposes and messages of the videos were dissimilar, why the combination of them allowed for us to see varieties and nuances. We found all of these three brands particularly interesting as they were

well-known and global, and their commercials gained a lot of recognition internationally. Furthermore, we described the background of these videos and motivated our choices in section 2.3.4 as we saw it as highly relevant for our and future studies. Therefore, this enables the transferability of knowledge and findings to further research with the use of similar techniques.

2.5.3 Dependability

The criterion of *dependability* is about how the findings of the study can be repeated if it would occur in another time but under the same circumstances, for example with the same participants and context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Especially, we assured that our methodology is highly descriptive and easy to follow by providing the reader with a notion of how we used our research strategy, how we used videos for an eliciting effect, how we gathered our sampling and how we conducted our interviews. Most importantly, since we used a topic guide during our interviews (Appendix 2), this made it easier for us to stick within the topic of femvertising and could hence argue for the dependability of our study. However, it should be highlighted that we did not always follow this topic guide to every word and sentence, since we aimed for variations in our results. Therefore, if we thought something was interesting during one of the interviews, we came to put more emphasis on that and, at some points, asked questions not available in the topic guide. Furthermore, the criterion of dependability has been fulfilled with the use of stepwise replication (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As our empirical material was a cornerstone of our study, we put a lot of emphasis on gathering this and analysing it. Accordingly, both of us were present during the interviews in order to be involved with the same empirical data. After transcribing the interviews, we separately took notes in order to get two different perspectives about what was going on in the material, later combining our thoughts in order to capture varieties. This strategy was also further adapted during the analysis of our findings.

2.5.4 Confirmability

The criterion of *confirmability*, relies on how dependable the research is considered to be and how much we as researchers have intervened in the results of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to support the confirmability of this study, the interviewees signed a consent form, allowing us to use their material for research. Since we collected the data and the interviews were recorded and transcribed, we had access to the raw material throughout the writing process. The interviewees looked at the quotations that we found interesting for confirmation

of accuracy. It should be noted that, as this is a qualitative study, we used our own voice in terms of interpretations of our empirical data. Thus, it is always, in one sense, going to be subjective. However, all interviews were both audio-recorded, transcribed and coded continuously by both of us. This resulted in a thick amount of data and quotes which we used directly from participants to a great extent in order to exemplify our different themes. In this sense, our findings were based upon the data from the interviews and not our own interpretations. It should also be noted that as human beings and due to our limited experience as interviewers, it is possible that we could have influenced the participating men during the interviews. However, when we reviewed our transcriptions and noticed that we have affected the interviewee to a large extent, we decided not to use these findings as we did not find it to be trustworthy enough to contribute to our study.

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter will present the theoretical framework for our study. In order to understand the topic of masculinity it will introduce a combination of perspectives, including Gender Theory, Masculinity Theory and theory surrounding Masculinity and Feminism. The theoretical framework has provided us with guidance and perspectives, allowing us to understand and explain the empirical data collected from our interviews. The aim of the first section is to provide an overview about Gender Theory and how gender is constructed. This will lay a foundation for the understanding of masculinity, which is discussed in the second section, involving Hegemonic Masculinity and Inclusive Masculinity Theory. The last part of the section will also shed light on Masculinity and Feminism and why this is considered important for our study.

3.1 Gender Theory

Since we aim to understand how men reconstruct masculinity when discussing femvertising, knowledge about women and men in regard to gender theory is relevant for our study. Especially, we need to have an understanding about how gender has previously been spoken of and how there has been a distinction between men and women, masculinity and femininity. This will provide us with some essential background before diving into the next section regarding Masculinity Theory.

Gender has long been seen as a social construction, where women and men have been seen as each other's opposites (Beauvoir, 1949; Fausto-Sterling, 1995). Beauvoir (1949) argues for this view, as she means that it is the social surroundings that creates your gender. With a clear distinction between the sex and gender, the author was able to see the social constructions behind them. Furthermore, she points out that men and women are seen as each other's opposites (Beauvoir, 1949), in which men are superior to women. Beauvoir (1949) means that the man has the role of *the self*, in which he is the subject, seen as complete, essential and sublime. The woman, however, is seen as *the other*, in which she is an object, seen as incomplete, inessential and disfigured. Hence, the man is the natural while the woman is the unnatural, who completes the man and is incomplete without him (Beauvoir, 1949). According to Beauvoir (1949), men are oppressing women by identifying them as *the other*. This is also

shared with other researchers, such as Fausto-Sterling (1995), who claims that it has traditionally been better and more accepted to be an imperfect woman than being an imperfect man, as women are already seen as subordinate. The woman is seen as the secondary sex, fitting in the world of man, as described below:

“But while conformity is quite natural for a man – custom being based on his needs as an autonomous and active individual – the woman who is herself also subject and activity has to fit into a world that has doomed her to passivity.” (Beauvoir, 1949, p.816)

However, some researchers claim that this view of gender, the oppositional and traditional, is able to blur if it is being challenged. For example, Judith Butler's concept of *gender performativity* (1990) argues that gender is not an essential category in itself. By repeatedly reinforcing performances of male and female behaviours, according to society's norms, the society is creating a naturalised binary where you can be a woman or a man. Butler (1990) rather sees gender as something that is fluid and not static. Further, she implies that individuals are doing gender, either reinforcing or deviating from the social norms in society and from gender stereotypes. By following the norms in society, women learn to have feminine behaviours and men learn to have masculine behaviours, all constructed by society, which ultimately are reinforcing the status quo. If we instead challenge current norms, for example by women being authoritarian and by men being vulnerable, we are not reinforcing the notion that there are only two categories of gender but instead make it unessential which gender one has (Butler, 1990).

How genders are traditionally thought about and how they are considered to be challenged was found relevant in order to understand the male participants' view on masculinity. We believe that the knowledge about gender as a social construction is an important foundation in order to explore the reconstruction of masculinity. Moreover, the relationship between man and women, masculinity and femininity, that these are considered as opposites, has been a cornerstone for how we have come to understand our empirical findings.

3.2 Masculinity

In this section, we will introduce different thoughts and concepts regarding Masculinity Theory. Connell (1995) means that masculinity is only a small part of a bigger structure. Therefore, we need to broaden our understanding. Especially, it could be said that there are different masculinities in interplay and with changing dynamics. In order to understand how men reconstruct their masculinity, we will involve the Connell's (1995) theory about Hegemonic Masculinity, Anderson's (2009) Inclusive Masculinity Theory, and theory about Masculinity and Feminism. Even if the theory about Hegemonic Masculinity and the Inclusive Masculinity Theory might seem contradictory, we find it important to have an understanding about both of these theories in order to understand how the hegemonic masculinity could exist even in a progressive and inclusive modern context, where the traditional view of masculinity is being challenged. First and foremost, masculinity is defined by Connell as below:

“Masculinity is socially constructed and has a material existence at several levels: in culture and institutions, in personality, and in the social definition and use of the body. It is constructed within a gender order that defines masculinity in opposition to femininity, and in so doing, sustains a power relation between men and women as groups. Strictly speaking, there is no one thing that is masculinity” (Connell, 1990, p.454)

In this sense, masculinity is understood as a social construction which arises from within the knowledge about gender, since it is put in relation to women. However, Connell (1995) further claims that there is a diversity of men and masculinities, and relational forces between for example dominance, alliance and subordination that we need to understand. This will be further elaborated on in this section.

3.2.1 Hegemonic Masculinity

Connell's (1995) theory about hegemonic masculinity is relevant for our study in order to understand how different masculine identities are maintained by men in a dynamic and changing environment, in which they are forced to enter feminine practices, such as feminism. The word hegemony refers to the cultural dynamic which makes it possible for a particular group of people to maintain a dominant position in the social hierarchy (Connell, 1995). Hegemonic masculinity is explained by Connell and Messerschmidt as “the most honored way of being a man” (2005, p.832). In this sense, the authors mean that hegemonic refers to gender dynamics and power by being “the configuration of gender practice which embodies the

currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordination of women” (Connell, 2005, p.77). From Connell’s (2005) point of view, men are compelled to be associated with this form of masculinity as it serves them with dominance in the hierarchy. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), there exists an heterogeneity of different masculinities, where the norms for the dominant, hegemonic masculinity sets the standards for the social hierarchical system in which masculinities are measured and placed.

However, hegemonic masculinity is not a decided character. Hegemonic masculinity might look different depending on social contexts and cultures, and what is seen as dominant does not look the same everywhere. For example, according to Hearn, Nordberg, Andersson, Balkmar, Gottzén, Klinth, Pringle and Sanberg (2012), the Swedish hegemonic masculinity has been highly changeable over the years and might differ from the masculinity in other cultures. For example, the Swedish hegemonic masculinity might be more connected to less violence and more gender equality oriented than others (Hearn et al., 2012). However, a man usually receives a higher place in the patriarchy and is usually seen as more of a man if one practices a more gender-polarised masculinity (Hearn et al., 2012). From this point of view, it is the masculinity that maintains the hegemonic position in gender theory and social structures (Connell, 1995). Especially, there are many different normative behaviours and traits that a man needs to live up to, which the majority of men are not able to do. However, the majority of men still benefit from the superiority over subordinate women, and also subordinate men for that matter. This masculinity could be regarded as a fact of *complicity*, as it gains benefits but does not risk suffering from tensions that might arise for the dominant masculinity (Connell, 1995). The *complicit masculinities* maintain the power of hegemonic masculinity as they see it as desirable. Especially men of this range often tend to make compromises with women in different social contexts rather than showing explicit dominance (Connell, 1995).

The use of the hegemonic masculinity concept is usually said to be a construction made in relation to women, but also in terms of men (Connell, 2005). Although hegemonic masculinity is about social and cultural dominance in relation to society as a whole, there are still other alternative masculinities which are seen as subordinate in the patriarchy. The power relations between superiority and subordination is when, what Connell (1995) calls, *subordinate masculinities* are spoken about in connection to femininity and homosexuality, categorising a man in the lowest place of the hierarchy of masculinity (Butler, 1990; Connell, 1995).

Especially, men are seen as subordinate if they are characterised by any feminine traits. This is increasingly becoming reality when society is changing and men are entering feminised fields, performing what Holt and Thompson (2004) calls gender tourism, which results in a destabilisation of hegemonic masculinity as we know it. Hence, it is common among men that they attempt to distance themselves from what is normally considered as feminine in order to maintain the power of the hegemonic masculinity and reinforce the difference from non-hegemonic masculinities (Holt & Thompson, 2004). For example, Holt and Thompson (2004) argue that men experience that their masculinity is under threat due to socio-economic marginalization, and that they tend to use for example products as tools to reinforce their masculine role and distance themselves from femininity. This also argues for what Kegan Gardiner claims, as she means that “men must work constantly to keep this masculine control and dominance in place” (2005, p.40).

However, other researchers tend to criticise the theory of hegemonic masculinity as too simplified in the real-life context where multiple masculinities can arise (Anderson & Magrath, 2019; Demetriou, 2001; Swain, 2006). In contrast, Swain means that “the existence of multiple patterns of masculinity is not incompatible with, and need not invariably diminish, the authority of the hegemonic form” (2006, p.319). In his study, he refers to, what he would like to call, *personalised masculinities* in order to describe the freedom of masculinities that exists in modern society. He means that all boys and men do not strive for a dominant hegemonic masculinity, and that they are free to choose themselves who they want to be (Swain, 2006).

It is our belief that the theory of Hegemonic Masculinity could open up important doors for our study in order to understand how masculinity is being reconstructed within the area of femvertising. We find it relevant in order to capture nuances, ambivalence and resistance in our empirical material. Thanks to the theory’s flexibility and openness, it allows us to use it in the Swedish context, contributing to our study being increasingly more trustworthy.

3.2.2 Inclusive Masculinity Theory

It should be mentioned that there are many different types of masculinities, some of which are more inclusive and have a more respectful relationship towards the other gender and subordinate men (Connell, 2005). As some researchers has come to criticise Connell’s (1995) theory about hegemonic masculinity, meaning it is too simplified or that it is not adaptable for

the modern society (Anderson & Magrath, 2019; Demetriou, 2001; Swain, 2006), we have come to include Anderson's (2009) Inclusive Masculinity Theory in this section. We find this theory relevant for our study as it gives an understanding about how masculinity has changed in a modern society into having a more inclusive masculine approach that is accepted, which we consider to be especially relevant for the Swedish context.

The inclusive masculinity theory is a development of the hegemonic masculinity theory, and it aims to understand the social dynamics of men today (Anderson & Magrath, 2019; Anderson & McCormack, 2018). This, since researchers have discovered contexts where multiple masculinities exist with less hierarchy than the hegemonic masculinity by Connell (1995) describes (Adams, 2011; McCormack, 2012; McCormack & Anderson, 2014). The inclusive masculinity theory rather suggests that Connell's (1995) hierarchical masculinities fails to describe gender relations in today's society where "multiple masculinities [can] exist coharmoniously" (Anderson, 2011, p.254). Young men in hetero-masculine contexts are today rather trying to avoid the homophobic discourses, than support them (Adams & Kavanagh, 2018), which is contradictory to the hegemonic masculinity where homosexuality plays a central role in threatening one's masculinity (Connell, 1995). The theory further suggests that homophobia and homophobia (the fear of being thought of as homosexual) are not that significant in their lives (Anderson & Magrath, 2019); they are instead challenging the conservative masculinity.

Moreover, in line with this theory, there seems to be differing behaviours among men that is not common regarding hegemonic masculinity. Especially, it shows that men tend to reject homophobia, have included gay friends in their circle of friends, can be emotionally intimate with friends, are physically tactile with other men, recognise bisexuality as a legitimate sexual orientation, embrace activities once coded feminine, and swear off violence and bullying (Adams & Kavanagh, 2018; Anderson & Magrath, 2019; Morales, 2018; Rumens, 2018). Hence, it is also acceptable for men to hold a wider range of behaviours without being mocked, such as certain hobbies, choices of clothes, expressions of friendship and emotional intimacy (Anderson & Magrath, 2019). Even if not all individuals show these behaviours, they, according to Anderson and Magrath (2019), benefit from the context. This since culture will change concerning what is acceptable behaviour when the majority of men are no longer afraid of act and show traits more coded as feminine (Anderson & Magrath, 2019).

Moreover, dominance and privilege may still occur for some men in a culture of inclusivity, but the reason is rather because of popularity than power over other groups (Anderson & Magrath, 2019). For example, McCormack's (2012) research shows that a social hierarchy among young men exists, but instead of being ranked by masculine capital and classical masculine traits, they are ranked by popularity. How the young men become popular depends on various factors, but mainly on charisma, the ability to provide emotional support and authenticity (McCormack, 2012). By encouraging these sorts of traits rather than bullying, fighting and name calling, the young men rejected the traditional traits and notions of masculinity, and hence redefined masculinity and homosexuality (Anderson & Magrath, 2019; McCormack, 2012). In a culture of inclusivity, multiple masculinities will thus be generated and recognised, without inequality between them, since there is not a stigma surrounding homosexuality (Anderson & Magrath, 2019). However, it should be noted that cultures where you can apply the inclusive masculinity theory not only have a linear opinion about different questions. In the research conducted by Adams and Kavanagh (2018), they also encountered participants who passively supported a cause, but not publicly. This, they argue, was a sign of a *limited strength* many participants had since they, in reality, had inclusive values, but lacked the courage to publicly challenge traditional discourses and practices when faced with an opinion they do not themselves agree to (Adams & Kavanagh, 2018).

The inclusive masculinity theory is relevant for our study as it is able to provide us with more depth in our analysis, as it is connected to masculinity in a modern and more progressive society. As it is applicable for the Swedish context and reminds us about the hegemonic masculinity of Swedish men, it allows a more nuanced and trustworthy picture in combination with the theory of hegemonic masculinity.

3.2.3 Masculinity and Feminism

“Misogyny created feminist theory, and feminist theory has helped create masculinity” (Kegan Gardiner, 2005, p.36). In this way, men could be seen as one of the cornerstones of feminism, in which they were involved in its emergence but also affected by its progress. Connell (2005) has previously made a case about the power of feminism and how it affects men and their masculinity. First and foremost, Connell (2005) claims that gender equality needs to come from both men and women, but especially men as they are the *gatekeepers* of societal change due to their superiority and authority. Kegan Gardiner (2005) agrees with this view but suggests other

reasons for men's involvement. She argues for the fact that masculinity is not only a benefit and a superior enjoyment for men but could also be a limitation in life (Kegan Gardiner, 2005). Hence, they should also be an incentive for the change towards equality in society, especially as men need to make drastic changes in their everyday life in order to contribute to these shifts. In this sense, Kegan Gardiner (2005) means that men become disadvantaged in terms of the effort they need to put into the work for equality, something Connell (2005) also touches upon as he means that men are, as a consequence for feminism, becoming the disadvantaged gender. However, men are still superior to women (Connell, 2005), why their involvement in gender equality policies might have the consequence of diminishing the work that has been done for women so far.

Some claim that feminism has destabilised the normalcy of masculinity and what it used to be. Masculinity is increasingly becoming feminised, as feminism has challenged masculinity of being problematic in for example ethical and sexual issues (Solomon-Godeau, 1995). Feminism is not seldom discussed along with the *oppression* of men, and even the concept of *misandry* (Yúdice, 1995). As mentioned above, some researchers found that men should gain more attention when it comes to gender equality questions (Connell, 2005; Kegan Gardiner, 2005). This is further shown in O'Driscoll's (2019) study, as men tend to desire more attention when it comes to how they are portrayed in advertising, as a lot of focus is usually directed towards women and how they are sexually objectified. In particular, they express the tendency for misandry in advertising (O'Driscoll, 2019), as they perceive men to be portrayed in a bad manner.

Hand in hand with oppression goes also *responsibility*. By talking about responsibility, it is usually done in order to recognise the male position in the patriarchy and how they maintain and reinforce this position (Yúdice, 1995). For example, as Yúdice's study shows, men, even progressive ones, "claim to feel the strain of 'over-responsibility' as a result of the various roles they have been coerced into assuming" (1995, p.268). Some might claim that feminist movements puts pressure on men to take responsibility in the debate and assume various roles, similar to what Connell (2005) mentions; meaning that men work as a gatekeeper for gender equality, as a cornerstone for its progress. In Yúdice's (1995) study, responsibility is what expresses oppression, but responsibility is also men's way to deal with the oppression they face from the feminist movements and society at large. For instance, Yúdice highlights the fact that men intend to maintain hegemony when being oppressed, stating that "occupying the role of

the victim by adopting the rhetoric of oppression is one such way to rearticulate the social and political discourse” (1995, p.271).

Furthermore, Connell (2005) discusses how the awakening of feminism creates resistance among men, and how their masculine identity is the cause of this resistance, at least in segregated settings. Some men might for example accept the fact that society is changing into becoming more gender equal, but that they still perform male dominance in terms of not submitting to gender equality work (Connell, 2005). What Connell (2005) means, is that this resistance is due to the fact that men consider their masculine identity to be threatened by the shifts and changes that come with a more gender equal society, in which women might become more worthy of attention and gain more authority. Especially, this depends on the societal norms that exist about what masculinity is supposed to be. It should however be noted that men have been involved in and supported feminist movements and anti-violence work over the years. It is shown that even in these circumstances, men could benefit from their patriarchal privilege; when men support these movements they get more attention and praise than women (Flood, 2005). Contrastingly, it is also shown that the challenge of these dominant masculinities and gender roles could lead to a fall in the patriarchy, as men are then usually blamed for being feminine and “the other” (Flood, 2005, p.464).

This section has allowed us to give some insights about previous relationships between men and feminism. These insights help us come to terms with how the male participants of our study consider these femvertising videos in regard to their masculinity. Therefore, we find this section relevant for our study in order to analyse our empirical material in the context of femvertising.

3.3 Summary of Theoretical Framework

In the above section, we have described the theoretical framework for our study. It should be highlighted that these different theories have different purposes in regard to our analysis and our final conclusions. The gender theory, discussed through the view of Beauvoir (1949) and Butler (1990), provides us with glasses in order to consider gender, and thus masculinity, from a certain perspective. Especially, it emphasises the fact that gender is socially constructed and something that one is doing, giving us a sense of how masculinity and femininity has traditionally been seen as each other’s opposites, in which men are superior and women oppressed. The masculinity theory will help us to make sense of our empirical material and

what comes to surface among men when they discuss the phenomenon of femvertising. Therefore, this theory is used as an analytical tool, which allows us to capture commonalities, nuances and varieties in our material in comparison to thoughts of previous theorists. The hegemonic masculinity theory (Connell, 1995) argues for the fact that there is a “most honored way to be a man” (2005, p. 832), which many men desire but few men are able to reach. Connell (1995) means that masculinity is measured in terms of a hierarchy, involving hegemony, complicit and subordinate masculinities, where subordination is usually characterised by feminine traits and behaviours. Due to the desire of possessing a hegemonic masculinity, men must constantly work on their masculinity and tend to resist characteristics of subordinate masculinities (Holt & Thompson, 2004; Kegan Gardiner, 2005). As a contrasting view, we involve the theory regarding personalised masculinities (Swain, 2006) and the inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson, 2009), arguing for the fact that men are increasingly more free to choose and construct their masculinity. The inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson, 2009) further states that masculinity, and especially subordination, has less to do with feminine characteristics than Connell (1995) claims. Lastly, the view of masculinity in relation to feminism provides a perspective of how men are perceived as a gatekeeper for change but at the same time are affected in a negative manner in terms of disadvantages, oppression, misandry and responsibility (Connell, 2005; Kegan Gardiner, 2005; O’Driscoll, 2019; Yúdice, 1995). Moreover, it shows how masculinity plays a role in feminism as men tend to resist submitting to changes when their masculine identity is threatened, and being involved in gender equality work is a risk for their dominant place in the patriarchy (Connell, 2005; Flood, 2005).

4. Analysis

In this chapter, we will present the findings from our interviews with the men participating in our study. Along with this, we will analyse the empirical material by involving our own interpretations and by seeing the material through the eyes of gender and masculinity theory. We will start by discussing “the new order” that femvertising creates since it has a crucial role in our study. The power of this “new order” forces the men to reconstruct their masculinity, which we first will analyse in the sense of how they reconstruct their masculinity as the over-responsible man and the masculine victim. Next up, we will highlight the fact that men reconstruct resistant masculinities when discussing these videos and explain the ways in which they enable this. Lastly, we will also bring forward the fact that men reconstruct their masculinity of a tolerant feminist and how they do it through their passive approach.

4.1 Introducing “The New Order”

For starters, we would like to introduce a theme that will be mentioned ongoingly in our analysis. That is a theme, or phenomenon, we have come to call “the new order”, which we found of importance for our study and how it made the participating men reconstruct their masculinity as a result. Although it was not a way in which the men reconstructed their masculinity when discussing the femvertising videos, it was the reason why they did it in the first place. Due to the fact that femvertising is a driving force in its attempts to challenge traditional gender roles and normative behaviours, it creates “the new order”, which could be seen as the change of the gender hierarchy structures that challenges the traditional and current power relations between them. During the interviews, we discovered that the men talked about how femvertising was a phenomenon that changed the rules and norms in society, supporting a “new order” which they as men needed to navigate through. Furthermore, our interpretation is that this “new order”, that femvertising creates and supports, is connected to the feminist efforts and improvements applied in society, forcing change to achieve equality and challenge certain gender roles. This seems to make men unsure about what masculinity means and how to act when the patriarchal structures are questioned and deconstructed in the femvertising discussions. Especially, it was shown during the interviews how men experienced their masculinity to be at risk, threatened, destroyed or challenged by femvertising and “the new order” it created. Consequently, this forced them to reconstruct their masculinity right there and

then in order to adapt to and cope with “the new order”. As a result, we found four different ways, or themes, in which the men reconstructed their masculinity. These will be further explained and analysed in the following sections.

4.2 The Over-Responsible Man

A first theme we found in connection to “the new order” is that men are forced to redefine their masculinity thereafter. When discussing the femvertising videos, we discovered that many of the men talked about the difficulties regarding how a man should act and behave, explaining the power and force of femvertising and “the new order”. The men especially emphasised the fact that they have to think more about what they say and how they come across than ever before, resulting in them being uncertain about how to behave in a society where feminism is being increasingly more on the agenda. Hence, they talked about an over-responsibility that is put on men, with a lot of pressure in terms of what it means to be a man and masculine behaviour. To clarify, this is due to the fact that femvertising challenges the nature of masculinity, which made them reconstruct the over-responsible man. A resemblance we found among the participating men was that they talked about how the femvertising videos intend to influence how they, as men, should behave. What came to surface when discussing this was that the continuously changing nature of what it truly means to be a man made them reflect more upon what it actually means to themselves. As Pelle mentions below, the dynamics of masculinity became visible during his interview as he grew up around a certain kind of masculinity, which he later has had to re-evaluate:

I think that many [...] So, when I grew up there was quite a macho-culture and I don't believe that anyone feels good because of it. Because you're not supposed to show emotions, you should be a man, you should be tough and you know. And I've only witnessed examples of this when this hasn't been good. So, I don't believe that it benefits anyone, neither girls nor boys. So I think it's really good [that masculinity is challenged].

Pelle, 30

This quote acknowledges Pelle's journey from experiencing a destructive masculinity, where being tough and not showing emotions was encouraged, to now being able to redefine what being a man means for him. Furthermore, he recognises that he believes it is good that you, as a man, are allowed to define yourself as who you want to be and that you do not necessarily have to live up to certain norms about how a man “should” be. Pelle rather sees it as a relief to not have to be defined by any readymade standards. Our interpretation is that he appreciates

that the patriarchal structures are being deconstructed thanks to “the new order” that he recognises with the help of these videos, allowing more men to feel comfortable with themselves. This reminds us about what Anderson (2009) talks about in his inclusive masculinities theory, as he means multiple masculinities can exist coherently with no power differences between men and women, but also between men and men (Adams, 2011; Anderson, 2009; McCormack & Anderson, 2014). The femvertising videos are thus a reminder for Pelle that set standards are changing continuously. As a result, more men have the freedom to create and redefine their own masculinity apart from what society expects them to be, touching upon Swain’s (2006) thoughts about personalised masculinities, which Pelle means could benefit all men and women. Complementing Pelle thoughts, other participating men emphasised how they were not against the fact that these femvertising videos showed how men need to change their behaviours. However, they expressed that it is difficult for them to accomplish. This is elaborated on in Oskar’s quote below, as he discussed the issue of masculinity during the interview:

Most problematic I’d say is that I experience that many men, maybe even including me, nowadays have a hard time knowing how to behave according to it, behave according to your own identity. That it very well could be that you are expected to be equal and restrain the classic masculinity and so. Which you perhaps also want to do, I believe so, I’ve always wanted that. To take care of the kids as much and so. And affirm [bejaka] them sort of, and restrain the classic, but still it can also be weird expectations from society that you should behave in a certain way and so. And in a way, even if it was a destructive form of masculinity that ruled 50-60 years ago, I think that in a way it was easier to navigate through. You knew what to refer to somehow. And it surely led to people getting caught in the middle, not to mention men and that they were really miserable because of it. I honestly usually think about it when I’ve been on parental leave with my kids, poor men who haven’t experienced this before somehow. Because you’re supposed to fulfil a certain role and so. So that’s what I’d say is the most problematic today. It’s rather unclear what we should have masculinity for in today’s society, so to speak.

Oskar, 40

When discussing the femvertising videos, Oskar talks about the fear of an identity-crisis as an aftermath of the feminist reformation of society and of the previously defined standards of masculinity. Our interpretation is that he means that femvertising, and thus “the new order”, makes it difficult for the men to “navigate” since men are not in control. What he means is that the freedom of redefining masculinity, which Pelle discussed earlier, creates an uncertainty among men that has not been there before, making him question why masculinity is even needed. In order for men to maintain their masculinity and deal with their uncertainty, they have to reconstruct parts of their masculine identity. This is something that Oskar perceives as a

tough challenge for men to actually accomplish when there is nothing to guide them. Kalle also talked about this when discussing his thoughts about the fact that the femvertising videos attempt to take a stand in how men behave and act. He, however, further elaborates on the fact that this puts a lot of pressure on men:

But I can also understand why one'd feel pressured in that, then maybe also it's to put pressure on what the role of a man should be? Now you suddenly have to change a lot about your behaviour. And that's really difficult for people to do. Even more so for a middle-class dad who's in a certain way. Now you have to consider this and this and this and this. To correct your behaviour. That's also, it also stirs some resistance, because it's rather hard to [...] maybe also a little harsh to say to many people. And therefore, the response can also be quite understandable.

Kalle, 24

In the above quote, it seems like the discussion of femvertising and how it creates a “new order” shakes the foundation of Kalle's worldview. We interpret that he thinks that the meaning of “being a man” is now transforming, but that men themselves are not included in its remodelling. As a result of “the new order”, Kalle, similar to Oskar, explains that men are being forced to re-evaluate their behaviours and personality in order to be accepted by society, which creates an uncertainty. When talking about this uncertainty among the men, the two voices described above (Oskar and Kalle) have something else in common. That is, that they tend to reconstruct their masculinity in terms of an over-responsible masculinity when discussing femvertising and its attempts; a similarity to what Yúdice (1995) has to say about the fact that men perceive themselves as oppressed by feminism in the sense of having a major responsibility for both themselves and others. This becomes especially visible since both Oskar and Kalle claim that men need to take on many various roles in order to be accepted as a man, and that there is a lot of pressure on them to accomplish this task. Also, to always act according to the new societal standards that femvertising advocates can, as seen above, be perceived as impossible and difficult for men to actually accomplish. Thus, we interpret, with the help of what Yúdice (1995) describes, that they tend to talk about their over-responsibility in order to protect their masculinity. This over-responsibility is not only expressed in terms of changing behaviour, but also in regard to the inequality discussion as a whole. For example, some of the men highlighted the unfairness considering that femvertising does not point out the fact that women also have an important role to play in these issues. This was something they found to be essential since equality does not only concern the involvement of men. Jonas further elaborated on this when discussing the Gillette femvertising video:

Yes but partly then, because it was a guy, or it felt like they put more focus on raising [uppfostran] guys, or like, to then get it more equal. That it was focused on the guy. But it's some kind of two-way communication, so to say. It should be, it's about raising a girl too. Yes it's like some kind of collaboration. It shouldn't be only that men [...] I don't know exactly how to phrase it, but it shouldn't be only that men say how it should become equal. It's a kind of collaboration between them [men and women]. And then one could think that if it then is about raising kids, which is my interpretation, then I think it should be both a girl and a guy.

Jonas, 30

In his quote, Jonas expresses that he dislikes that the message in the femvertising video is directed only towards men and not towards women. He clearly states that it is not only men who have to change and be involved for equality to prevail, women also need to be included as, according to him, it is a collaboration. What he means is that femvertising puts increasingly more responsibility on men in the quest to achieve equality. We interpret that he resists the notion that men should be considered the gatekeepers of this issue, giving a more modern and contrasting view compared to Connell (2005), as he means it puts an unnecessary pressure on them. In this way, he could effectively protect his masculine identity, which he perceived to be under pressure, referring to the over-responsibility he as a man has, which is not fair. In this sense, he, similar to the above voices (Oskar and Kalle), also reconstructs *the over-responsible man* in order to deal with the pressure that his masculinity is under.

To sum up, this theme shows how men re-evaluate their own identity and personal traits relative to the societal values and beliefs that are shown in the femvertising videos. The formation of "the new order" that comes with these femvertising attempts is seen as a potential challenge to their masculinity as it makes them uncertain and pressured into figuring out what masculinity truly is. As shown, the men further mention that there are challenges and resistance connected to this. "Why is it that change needs to be about the men and not women?", some asked during the interviews. The participating men experience an unfairness they have not previously met and how they have a difficult time to understand what masculinity means in this "new order" that femvertising creates. Thus, they talk about the great amount of pressure they experience from society and how they have to figure out their masculinity according to "the new order", something women are not required to do according to them. Therefore, as a response to this, the participating men reconstruct over-responsible masculinities; which we interpret as an attempt to live up to the new norms and feel important in society where the preconception of what a man should be are changing to be more flexible and men are not seen as the dominant gender anymore.

4.3 The Masculine Victim

A second theme we found in connection to how men reconstruct their masculinity when talking about the femvertising videos, is how the participating men tend to victimise themselves during the discussion. As it turned out, the vast majority of them confirmed what previous studies have claimed (Connell, 2005; Kegan Gardiner, 2005; Yúdice, 1995), sensing that men become the disadvantaged gender as a consequence of these femvertising videos. For example, many of the participants perceived femvertising and its messages to be about and for women, and they experienced that this perspective received more focus than the work for actual equality. Further, they talked about the fact that men also should be a part of the discussion that femvertising promotes, which they perceived they usually were not. If they were, they experienced that they were blamed and portrayed in a bad way, which they did not think should be assigned to them. In this section, we will therefore analyse and explain how the participating men of this study reconstruct their masculinity into *the masculine victim*.

First and foremost, when the men discussed femvertising, they had a tendency to turn the discussion to be about themselves and men similar to them. They usually referred to a masculinity that is not fully accepted in society and claimed that they as men also have a rough time, similar to the women described in the videos. Especially, they tended to dive into the male gender role and how it was being left out of the femvertising conversation, as exemplified below:

“Dramatic!” You know what, I do that more than I’m supposed to. Cry. And I’ve also been called dramatic more often than I should have. Or something similar, so I feel that that’s a bit misleading somehow. Because I believe that the social price is almost higher to pay if you’re a man who cries. Actually. At least for someone who’s similar to me and is active in the same context as me. I’ve also gotten a lot of criticism privately about raising my voice too much, that I like, have shown too much emotion – both negative and positive, been angry and so on. So I rather identify myself with the clips in the beginning. Sort of making me a little annoyed. I get why it’s [clip of a woman crying] in the video and everything, but I just think that they could’ve nuanced it a bit more.

Oskar, 40

In this quote, Oskar says that he does not perceive emotions to be a typical women’s thing, and that he himself thus feels offended by this statement. When discussing the video [Nike], Oskar expresses a sense of sadness and irritation, as he himself identifies with being “called dramatic more often than he should”. We further interpret this as Oskar's view on masculinity is more

inclusive (Anderson, 2009) than many other men, allowing him and other men to show emotions. What he additionally means is, as we mentioned above, that men are being left out of the conversation in these videos. This shows how there is a shift in the discussion, originally being directed to women, now being directed towards himself, questioning “what about the men?”. By stating that “the social prize” to pay is even bigger for a man than a woman, we interpret that the male order in the gender hierarchy is negatively affected by showing emotions. Therefore, it is more important to talk about their masculinity being under threat, rather than focusing on women. Our interpretation is that Oskar perceives his masculinity to be degraded when he is called dramatic, which should be granted attention. Furthermore, Alfons also discussed how the male exclusion from femvertising could be troubling, as he thought the same inequality issues apply to men within, what he claimed to be, “less tough sports, such as figure skating, dancing or table tennis”:

I feel like they could've had more depth in it, because now they took these classic, really mega money sports [superpengasporter] in some way. Athletics, tennis, football, boxing. So it's also masculine sports, in some way it's because they want to make their point, but I think that they'd have gotten a greater depth if they had both women and men [båda könen] in the video actually. But maybe, at the same time they can do two videos in some way. They can do one with little boys who are also having a difficult time. Or, men who are having a difficult time as well. So I don't know, I'm a little unsure actually.

Alfons, 34

Similar to Oskar's previous quote, Alfons also tends to look at gender equality from a two-sided perspective, where men are usually forgotten. When he speaks about “less tough sports”, we interpret that he means sports less masculine than the “mega money sports”, and that boys and men involved in these sports experience difficulties that need to get attention. Especially, they perceive that their masculinity might be at risk when not following the standards for masculine behaviours and traits, e.g. not cry and exercise feminine sports such as figure skating. In this sense, both Alfons and Oskar wish for “subordinate masculinities” (Connell, 2005) to be given attention, confirming what Hearn et al. (2012) mentions; that the social dominance of masculinity seems to be at risk when men do not perform gender-polarised practices. In regard to this, both of these voices come to the point of victimising masculinity, turning the discussion towards themselves. This is similar to how the men in O'Driscoll's (2019) study spoke about gender roles in advertising, and how they sense the negative trend of misandry in the videos when women get attention but not men. We interpret these two voices as a way for the men to express their concern about their place in the gender hierarchy when they are not given attention

in femvertising. More specifically, by giving women more attention and speaking more in their advantage, the participating men are contrastingly neglected and forgotten, which we would connect to how women and men are seen as oppositional to one another (Beauvoir, 1949). This further makes the men oppressed by the femvertising videos and “the new order” and as a result, masculinity is being destabilised (Solomon-Godeau, 1995) and at risk. As a consequence, they reconstruct their masculinity into the masculine victim as a way to deal with the exclusion that femvertising creates.

Furthermore, some of the men discussed the portrayal of men in the femvertising videos as if they were not being left out of the conversation. Rather, they experienced that men were portrayed in a negative manner when they were included. Many of them expressed that the femvertising videos could be criticised for being condescending towards men, as exemplified in Gustav’s quote:

You always have these extreme counterparts that, you know [...] no matter what you say, if it has some kind of tension [laddning], one of the extremes will be insulted. But yes, one could think that there’s someone who thinks that [...] That someone exaggerates it and thinks that there’s some implicit tone in the video that men are holding women back. What could one think then? Yes, it could be that people think that it’s degrading towards men.

Gustav, 34

In this quote, Gustav talks about men being portrayed as if they are “holding women back” and that men therefore could express a dislike towards the video. What he does is that he speaks about how men are visualised as “the gatekeeper” for gender equality, such as Connell (2005) traditionally has spoken about, but that this is something that is “degrading” men; reconstructing the masculine victim as their masculinity is to blame in “the new order” that femvertising helps to create. Similar to what Gustav had to say about the videos, Samuel believed that femvertising can create hatred towards men. What is certainly interesting is that this also came to surface even when he discussed the Nike video, in which men are neither mentioned nor present:

No but I think that there are many who consider it as [...] That it somehow creates hate, it’s a damn powerful word, but a feeling among people that this is how it is and that you have to find a scapegoat for it.

Samuel, 26

Here, Samuel mentions how femvertising tends to use men as scapegoats for the ill fortune of women. When asking him more about what he meant, he answered that the videos have a tendency to “demonise” men, making them look worse than they actually are as it “distorts reality”. What he means is that it is not only about changing men’s harmful behaviours, but also about making men look bad, here once again reconstructing his masculinity as being a victim. Both of these above quotes by Gustav and Samuel have the tendency to refer to what Connell (2005) would call “men as gatekeepers”, as they perceive that these videos claim that men are responsible for women’s misfortune. Our interpretation is that “the new order” further makes the participating men oppressed in the sense that they experience that the femvertising videos especially highlight female empowerment and ill-portrayals of men. Per also talked about this in a similar way, but he rather meant that all men get categorised as one common group in these femvertising attempts, something he did not appreciate. Especially, he came to speak about this in regard to the Gillette video, where he stated the following:

I could imagine, as I said, if you only watch the first part of the video, that they kind of throw all men under the same bus. I think that makes some [men] feel like they’re also being thrown under the bus, even if they shouldn’t be there.

Per, 25

In his quote, Per explains that he experiences that men are not portrayed as individuals in femvertising, but rather as one entity, which he believes is wrongful. What he means is that men who have acted accordingly to how society wants them to behave therefore get categorised with non-favourable traits that are not accountable for them. Our interpretation of this is that he perceives masculinity, which he also assigns to himself, to be under threat and hence reconstructs *the masculine victim* due to the fact that men are being defined as something they are not. Måns further elaborated on this thought when discussing how he, and other men, experienced femvertising to be a bit “lame” in its way of using certain stereotypical behaviours as an attempt to support “the new order”. Contrastingly though, he meant that some men might not consider their behaviours to be harmful:

Because they sort of did show this stereotypical role for men. That men like to barbecue, men fight and chase each other, and I think it’s provoking some, that they don’t think that there’s anything harmful about that role that those men have. They think “why are you joking about my life? What, this is how it is, why do you have to reject it?” I think that some are a little rebellious when they’re [the commercial] making fun of a role some have.

Måns, 22

Instead of speaking about the destructive behaviours shown in the videos, and that the purpose is to challenge these, Måns speaks about the videos as a way to “make fun of a role some have”. In this sense, he claims that some men might be offended instead of remorseful, which we interpret as that they consider themselves to be under siege, as it criticises the entire existence of men. This shows how he refers to a resistance among these men, as a way to consider masculinity to be under threat when there is a need for change, exemplifying the limitations that masculinity could have (Kegan Gardiner, 2005). Our interpretation of this is that Måns perceives the patriarchal structures to be secure whereas the new order threatens the masculine sovereign position. In this sense, he, and the other men he mentions, reconstruct the masculine victim as masculinity is being oppressed and therefore needs to be protected from destruction. Alongside of this, the four above voices (Gustav, Samuel, Per and Måns) also raise another commonality within this theme. That is, that they tend to direct the conversation towards men as being “the disadvantaged gender” instead of discussing how femvertising could benefit equality with pro-female messages, which confirms what previous studies have stated (Connell, 2005; Kegan Gardiner, 2005). Foremost, their statements are similar to what Yúdice’s (1995) and O’Driscoll (2019) discuss, due to the fact that they all use arguments of oppression in order to reconstruct their *masculinity as a victim* for the feminist messages that these videos send.

To sum up, there are several ways in which men reconstruct their masculinity to *the masculine victim* when discussing the femvertising videos, as a response to the new order that these help create. Particularly, they made the discussion about themselves rather than about the actual topic of femvertising and gender equality, which traditionally arose as a consequence of women’s role as victims of the patriarchy. Instead, the men tended to talk about how their masculinity was potentially under attack as a result of the new order that femvertising supports. They further acknowledged that there is a negative trend of misandry and oppression in the videos. Hence, we interpret that they fear for their masculinity to be under threat when these femvertising videos come into play, and, seen from a bigger picture, that there might even be a fear of matriarchy where men could become the disadvantaged gender. In this sense, the men reconstruct *the masculine victim*, effectively protecting their masculinity from being harmed by mistreatment and maintaining their dominance by forcing the discussion to be about themselves as oppressed and subordinate.

4.4 The Resistant Masculinities

A third theme we found when going through our empirical material was the tendency for the men to distance themselves from things and performances that traditionally have belonged to women. In order to introduce this theme, it showed that femvertising was considered to be a feminine thing to be involved with. We would like to exemplify this with Peter's quote below, when asking him who he believed the femvertising videos were intended for:

No, but women. Because, if anything, it could be that one might sell less to guys if you "demasculinise" [av-manifera] or what one should call it. Make it less masculine. So, if anything, women, but I don't know. Well, at the same time, it's like, progressivity. Generally, no matter if you're a guy or girl, people who are progressive use to like that one makes these statements.

Peter, 25

In Peter's quote, he explains how these femvertising videos tend to "demasculinise" things. This formulation is particularly interesting, as it means you take something away rather than change something. Therefore, our interpretation is that Peter talks about femvertising as a phenomenon that takes away and destroys the masculine value, making this attempt less worthy and appealing to men. What he says is that the destruction of masculinity instead makes it more appealing to women, by reinforcing femininity. This exemplifies how he considers masculinity and femininity to be opposites to each other (Beauvoir, 1949), which allows us to make the interpretation that it also results in the fact that the destruction of one, masculinity, the creation of the other, femininity. By introducing femvertising as connected to being something that destroys the masculine value and creating the feminine value, this theme will discuss how the men we interviewed are resistant towards the change, reconstructing, what we would like to call, *resistant masculinities*. A result of this reconstruction is that the men maintain the power relations in the patriarchy between the dominant hegemonic masculinity and other, non-hegemonic, masculinities, separating themselves from "the feminine", as Connell (2005) talks about. In order to understand this reconstruction, we found two subthemes illustrating this. First, the men tended to direct femvertising and its feminist messages to be a discussion that demands merely female involvement. Second, the men tended to be nonchalant when discussing the femvertising videos. Both of these subthemes will be analysed in the two following sections, followed by a summary to wrap up the entire theme.

4.4.1 *Feminism Belongs to Women*

The first subtheme we discovered for how the participating men reconstructed *resistant masculinities* was that they thought that the issues these femvertising videos highlighted was a question for women, claiming that the discussion does not have to be supported by men to prevail or to continue. As touched upon in the previous paragraph, it was notable among all of the participants that the feminist messages in these videos were associated with women rather than men. Furthermore, this was also the case when they spoke about whether or not the videos actually takes a feminist stand. When interviewing Robin, this further was something he touched upon. Specifically, when he was asked the question how feminism was displayed in the femvertising videos, he responded that it was included in the video where only women were visible. When we asked why he thought this way, he answered the following:

Especially since there are only women showing. That is a thing in itself because it is more unusual than usual in such a commercial, one should say. And then, Audi try but their purpose is not as strong since many men and boys are present. And then, that message is below the surface for Gillette, but it is [...] Well, yes, it is clear, not as clear, no, not as clear I would say.

Robin, 30

In his quote, Robin states that feminist messages are clearer in femvertising when they come from women, and that they might not be seen as feminist messages when men are involved. His following quote builds on this argument, as he did not consider the videos with men involved as representing feminism, but rather representing a different kind of masculinity:

One could call it a type of feminism, of course it depends on what you associate feminism with, but that's what first comes to my mind, since there are only men visible it's a [...] What would you call it [...] An alternative masculinity or something like that maybe. That's what they're trying to show. Alternative in comparison to what's the old, traditional or something like that.

Robin, 30

We interpret this quote as when men are visible in femvertising it is not experienced as feminism, which is still considered more of a “women's-thing” in Robin's mind. The “old” and “traditional” he mentions, we interpret, is a nod to the previous ruling structure of the patriarch which he compares to “the new order” that society has moved towards. Nevertheless, Robin emphasises that these femvertising videos rather speak about a new format of manhood and not

as much about feminism. When speaking of this “alternative masculinity” he partly distances himself, but also his masculinity, from feminism, allowing him to effectively maintain his dominance by reconstructing a *resistant masculinity*. This is thus similar to what Connell (2005) talks about when it comes to resistance for men, as Robin tends to be acceptable towards the message about feminism that femvertising intend to promote but still takes distance from it, which we interpret as he senses the masculine identity to be threatened by the “demasculinisation” that Peter spoke about. The difference between the male and female role in the videos was further shown in the interviews as the majority of the participating men did not think about femvertising to be a discussion for men to be involved in. Foremost, this was shown when the participants spoke about femvertising as an attempt to promote feminism. In the interview with Anton, he brings this to the table:

Like, I didn't see one single woman in the first commercial [Gillette]. Which shows that it has more focus on how men should behave. And that's important as well, of course, but if one talks about feminism, that's not where to start.

Anton, 25

Anton is, just like the majority of the other men, certain that the feminist discussion spoken about in the femvertising videos is better if men do not engage in it. We interpret that he means it is more important to involve only women in the discussion than to make all men and women participate in the issue. By saying “that's not where to start”, Anton claims that there are more important issues to discuss than men's behaviour, even if these might be harmful. Our interpretation is that he believes femvertising and feminism are “women's things”, where women need to take the matter in their own hands without the men participating. If women are to be seen as equal to men, they alone must be the leader of this change. In connection to his above statement, this is something that Anton clearly exemplified when discussing the femvertising video made by Nike, which did not contain men:

It's a bit funny when one has seen the other two videos with a lot more focus on men. Here, it was only women, so I understand this one more [...] I think this one's better really, and I think that if I'd have been a woman and seen inequalities, I'd have been more inspired by this video than what I'd have been by the other two.

Anton, 25

Similar to his other statement, Anton once again claims that femvertising, and thus feminism, is for women as he understands the video more when it only focuses on women, meaning this

is not the place for men. We interpret that he thinks that “the new order” femvertising creates, is about women and how they can get past the inequalities they experience, but it is not applicable for men. Moreover, by saying so, we interpret that the above quotes showcase that Robin and Anton clearly distinguish men from women. This is hence similar to what Beauvoir (1949) talks about, as men being the normal gender, while females are seen as the “other” gender. As the oppressed gender, women therefore need to lead their own fight in order to break free from men and be seen as an equal (Beauvoir, 1949), which the following quote from Anton further highlights when he was asked about the message in one of the femvertising videos:

It feels like there’s more focus on women because there were only female athletes, which was kind of cool, so it felt more like it was trying to empower women. To really tell women that you can be [...] It’s not like the guys should step down because you should step up, you can step up over them.

Anton, 25

In his quote, Anton claims that it is “cool” when women take the matter in their own hands, because they are able to reach gender equality without men intervening, once again showing that men do not see the point of their involvement in femvertising or feminism. Most importantly, this quote, together with the other quotes by Robin and Anton cited above, raise a common topic which clearly belongs to this theme; that the men are more concerned about maintaining their own masculinity than being connected to the feminist discussion femvertising intends to advocate. The participating men show this in the way they talk about the videos and how feminism should be only about women, but also how they perceive it to be a discussion for women to handle themselves. It is clear that the men tend to take distance from femvertising and its messages as it is not the place for men and it is a discussion for women to pursue, clearly reconstructing resistant masculinities in this sense. This is similar to what Holt and Thompson (2004) has found, since feminism is spoken of as being a more “feminine” discussion, and hence men tend to take distance from it. Which could be further explained through the eyes of earlier masculinity theorists (Connell, 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), who claim that in a society where hegemonic masculinity rules, feminine performances are equal to being subordinate to the dominant, “most honoured”, masculinity. Thus, our interpretation is that the men of this study sense that their masculinity is threatened by femvertising and being too involved in these issues, as it is seen as a “demasculinisation”. Therefore, they respond by reconstructing resistant masculinities, effectively distancing themselves from a feminine discussion, which allows them to maintain their dominance and superiority.

However, it is important to note that some of the men, even if few, thought of femvertising and feminism to not only be a matter for women. As many others thought of it to be mainly about supporting the female position, Kalle thought of it to be about supporting everyone, even men:

Yes, but it's like that, it's something one recognises. If one looks at kids for example, kids fight often and yell at each other and maybe that's a learned behaviour, that it's how to behave. And that goes also for those who get bullied and beaten up are often men as well, if it's men who fight. A victim of that's a man, and it's rather about illustrating, not necessarily in this case it's not about showing, or partly it is, but not only about showing men's bullying position towards women, but also towards other men who aren't comfortable in their role. Which is an aspect often forgotten by those who intend to criticise feminism. It's not necessarily only about that women should take power from the men to perform power, but it's also about equalising it so that power can be distributed. [...]

Kalle, 24

In this quote, Kalle exemplifies how there are men who are also involved in the issues that femvertising highlights, who are seen as subordinate to dominant masculinities in the gender hierarchy. Going back to “the new order”, this exemplifies how Kalle thinks femvertising is able to highlight the power relations also between men, showing that there is a place for them even within, what other interviewees has claimed to be, a “feminine discussion for women”. By saying that feminism is about “equalising it so that power can be distributed”, he means that also superior men play an important role in the discussion, and that is to allow space for both women and non-hegemonic masculine men. Hence, he sees feminism and femvertising as an attempt to blur the lines between, what Beauvoir (1949) means with, the distinction between genders. Further, we interpret that he opens up for the possibility to include more types of masculinities, similar to what Anderson (2011) describes as inclusive masculinity theory. This, since Kalle expresses that “all men are not comfortable in their role” and indicates that a broader view on masculinity could aid men to feel more at ease with their masculinity. This is hence contrasting the view of other participants, as he is not reproducing a resistant masculinity towards femvertising. Meaning that he believes he can still maintain his masculinity as he does not perceive it as being under threat by the femvertising messages.

To sum up, this section concludes how the participating men in our study takes distance from femvertising messages, especially pointing out how it is associated with women and it is not up to men to intervene in feminist discussions. Foremost, they as men are more concerned about their own masculinity rather than being associated with the issue. In this sense, by taking

distance from any feminist involvement, the men reconstruct a *resistant masculinity*, which allows them to protect their dominant masculinity from a feminised arena.

However, there are other ways for the men of this study to reproduce masculinity in a resistant way. As for Gustav, this is communicated by expressing how unaffected he is by the messages regarding feminism and his feelings connected to them:

Feeling, I press stop, move on. No but, it has [...] It is for me irrelevant information. If I would be interested in buying something, then I want to know what they have to offer, not what the company's values are. Yes. It is irrelevant information for me as a potential consumer, at least for me.

Gustav, 34

Here, Gustav makes it very clear that he does not care for femvertising and he is distancing himself from it, effectively protecting his masculinity and securing his position among the superior gender. This is also closely connected to another subtheme we found regarding the reconstruction of resistant masculinity, namely how the men we interviewed sometimes responded to the videos in a nonchalant way.

4.4.2 *The Nonchalant Men*

In connection to the main theme for how men tend to reconstruct *resistant masculinities*, we found another subtheme of interest for our study. This is characterised by how the participating men tended to be nonchalant when discussing femvertising, as briefly mentioned in the above paragraph. This nonchalance was shown in different ways, all which contributed to them reconstructing *resistant masculinities*. First and foremost, many of the men explained that they did not care about these types of messages, which is shown in Gustav's quote below:

I mostly think "mhm, what the fuck is this?". It was a bit like that, what one could see. It's certainly so that such commercials are popular amongst many [people]. I'm vaccinated against such irrelevant information though.

Gustav, 34

In his quote, Gustav clearly states that he does not understand the purpose of why these types of femvertising videos and messages are produced. As he says he is "vaccinated" against such "irrelevant information", he does not see any perks or how femvertising is able to contribute to

or change anything in today's society. This view is also shared with Samuel, who expressed how unconcerned he was when he tried to talk about his emotions:

Well [...] Disappointment [snort] No, I don't know. No, nothing, I am entirely neutral. It's a bit like "shrugging my shoulders", unconcerned in that case.

Samuel, 26

Here, Samuel is very clear with expressing how he does not care about the videos or their message. Especially, by snorting at the same time as he tries to express his emotions, he uses a rather nonchalant approach in order to distance himself from the topic of femvertising and what it attempts to talk about, showing his disinterest. This disinterest and nonchalance also tended to exist among the participants when they meant that the videos showed real-life events that mattered in the past. For example, Gustav talks about this below:

So what, that's like, that actually happened. Actual events. One can [...] Reality has no values. If it has happened, it has happened. Just like with Vasaloppet [Swedish ski race], where women were hindered from [...] or women weren't allowed to join. Then what happened? Yes, some women signed up under a male name and participated anyway. I mean, those are things that have happened. So there's nothing strange about that.

Gustav, 34

What Gustav says is that these events do not capture his attention, since he means "that is just what happened". In his point of view, there is nothing special about what has happened in the past, and hence nothing special about what will happen as "reality has no values". Our interpretation is that he does not really care about these messages, treating them with nonchalance, by saying "so what?". These three above quotes by Gustav and Samuel have the commonality of showing how men do not emphasise the point or value of femvertising as anything special. Hence, they all distance themselves from the discussion of feminism that these videos intend to highlight, which we consider a similarity to what Connell (2005) states about how men could be acceptable towards these shifts but they do not submit to them if their masculine identity is experienced as threatened. Thus, we interpret that the men above effectively intend to protect their masculinity by not getting too involved in these discussions, rather showing their nonchalance and reconstructing *resistant masculinities*.

Even if the men tended to express their nonchalance towards these femvertising by showing their disinterest, they were also nonchalant when they talked about these femvertising videos

as unrealistic and too extreme. Many of them meant that the issues shown in the videos are no longer relevant in today's society, hence distancing themselves from inequality. Especially, Oskar thought that the videos should have come sooner, as exemplified in his quote below:

It's still like, if I'd have seen this commercial in 1995, I'd have been happy, I mean really like "Oh! Yes! Finally", like that. But now it's a rather overused [uttjatat] topic and it's also a bit "in your face" for me, because I think like seriously, I'm one of the world's most equal men, like if one compare with all [men] on earth, so it's like, it's not directed towards me or my family or those I know. And it makes it a bit like, "come one".

Oskar, 40

In this quote, Oskar explains how he thinks the topic of gender equality is outdated and how it should have come earlier in time, mainly because he thinks about this as a topic he already knows a lot about and therefore he does not need more information. Thus, he does not put a lot of thought into the video and rather becomes imperious when talking about it, distancing himself from the inequalities femvertising focuses on, which others might think of as still present in society. Contrastingly however, the same resistant behaviour comes into play when the men find the videos too far from reality, as if the issues are made up or does not exist. This is exemplified in Fabian's quote below:

No, but I think that it could've been like he'd throw off his shirt and start to run and then I'd have said like "ah, okay, what commercial is this?". But now it's like [...] I don't know, I only have my own perspective, and what my friends have, but I've never run after someone in town, or seen my friends running after someone. So, for me that's just extreme, but there are certainly places where people run after and ask and things like that, and then maybe it's everyday life. But if it would've been made extreme even for them, by throwing off his shirt and running and then five people should hold him back or something like that, then I'd have thought like "that's silly", because I can barely relate to the first scenario [catcalling], so the other one would have been totally made up.

Fabian, 26

With this quote, we interpret that Fabian is nonchalant towards the femvertising videos, in this case involving sexual harassment and male toxic behaviour, as he cannot relate to the issues they communicate. When he claims he cannot relate to them, we interpret that he has doubts that this even exists by stating that another scenario "would have been totally made up". In this sense, he has a rather imperious view, in which only things that he himself has experienced means something and is the true reality. Our interpretation is that when only being able to see his world as reality, Fabian is able to reconstruct a *resistant masculinity*. This allows him to not fully submit to the femvertising message and to distance himself from the realities of others

which could possibly harm his masculinity. This particular point of view is also shared with other men, such as Samuel, who did not understand the relevance of the feminist messages in the Audi femvertising video:

Well like, I've already forgotten a bit of what I saw. I don't know if I should watch it again. But what they talked about [...] I find it super ridiculous, to be honest. Because I find it totally unrealistic and there is like, well, I don't see any reason for why anyone would think like that whatsoever.

Samuel, 26

What Samuel means is that he does not find these femvertising attempts realistic due to the fact that he does not believe that people would ever think differently about men and women, and their worth in today's society. Hence, he finds these videos "ridiculous" and "unrealistic". Our interpretation is that if he does not see these things actually happen, they do not exist in society as they are not his reality. Similar to Fabian's case, this shapes his imperious and nonchalant approach. As he claims that he cannot "see any reason for why anyone would think like that" about people's worth, it clarifies that he has not lived through these issues himself. Hence, he neglects these femvertising messages due to the fact that they make no sense to him. Thus, we see a commonality between the three above voices (Oskar, Fabian and Samuel), as they tend to focus more on what they see themselves rather than being open to the possibility that harmful masculine traits or inequalities might actually exist. In this sense, they reconstruct their masculinity as *resistant masculinities* when they take distance from harmful masculinities and extreme, unequal, events. The fact that the voices above cannot relate to these messages allows us to connect to what Hearn et al. (2012) discovered; that the Swedish hegemonic masculinity is usually about being more gender equal than others. By claiming that these feminist messages, provided by femvertising, are things they cannot relate to, they are able to excuse themselves, being "good men" who are not a part of the harmful gender relationships shown in the videos. As these relationships could be a threat to their masculinity and what it means to be a superior man in Sweden, the men reconstruct *resistant masculinities* as an attempt to effectively respond to what they are not; non-hegemonic masculinities.

To sum up, the men participating in this study tend to have a rather nonchalant approach when they talk about femvertising. Especially, they do this by expressing their disinterest and carelessness for the topic, but they also distance themselves from traditionally occurring issues in society by claiming they cannot relate to them whatsoever. These ways of being *the*

nonchalant men prove their effectiveness as the participants are able to distance themselves from the topics that femvertising intend to highlight, expressing that they are not involved. Hence, the men successfully reconstruct *resistant masculinities* when participating in order to protect their masculinity.

4.4.3 Summary of The Resistant Masculinities

To summarise, the two subthemes above have provided us with insights about how the men participating in this study tend to reconstruct *resistant masculinities* when they discuss femvertising and its feminist messages. Why this is considered a reconstruction is due to the fact that we interpret that the men perceive their masculinity to be threatened and at risk.

On the one hand, masculinity is threatened in connection to femvertising as it has a “demasculinising” effect, destroying the masculine value. Therefore, this is nothing the men wish to be associated with due to the fact that their masculinity is then threatened, thus they show that they are not involved in feminised practises that could harm their superiority. On the other hand, the participating men have a nonchalant approach towards femvertising and its messages, by expressing that they are careless or how they cannot relate to these occurring issues in society. Our interpretation is that if they would care and if they would be able to relate to men’s harmful behaviours and extreme issues in society, their masculinity is at risk since hegemony in the Swedish context is not related to violence or inequality (Hearn et al., 2012). Thus, by not relating to these events and being resistant, they effectively maintain their dominant masculinity.

What the men in this section have in common is that they all showcase how they are more concerned about their own masculinity rather than engaging in the discussion and “the new order” that the femvertising videos advocate. By reconstructing, what we would like to call, *resistant masculinities*, referring to how they are resistant towards femvertising and its contents, they are all able to distance themselves from the discussion of it and its feminist messages, actively showing that they are not involved. Thus, they are able to effectively protect their masculinity from “demasculinisation” and also Swedish non-hegemonic masculinities, maintaining their own masculine superiority.

4.5 The Tolerant Feminist

A fourth theme we found among the participating men when they talked about the femvertising videos was that they were tolerant towards feminism, rather than truly accepting it. As we have previously mentioned, “the new order” challenges the established masculinity by questioning the relevance of the patriarchy, which is closely connected to the hegemonic masculinity and the gender hierarchy. When challenged, the men can either choose to resist and refuse the new societal norms, or they can submit to them. However, it was shown in the interviews that the men tended to like the femvertising videos and the intention to challenge current stereotypes, even if they were not always a fan of how this was done. Moreover, many of them claimed that they were a driving force for feminism and equality, but that they did not actively contribute to its progress. Hence, the men in our study could be seen as passive in their approach when they discuss femvertising and feminism, and thus reconstruct their masculinity in terms of being a *tolerant feminist*. This was something that was reflected in Anton’s interview, when he spoke about how he contributes to the issue of feminism without actually participating for the cause of it:

So I’d say yes, because I try, or I want to believe that I try [...] That I’m a positive force in that aspect that I might be one of those who try to take it forward. Or not actively taking it forward, but if people would have [laughs], insanely complacent [självgod] now I should say, if more men would have been like me, I believe that we’d have had a bit less issues than what we’d have had today. I don’t say I’m absolutely optimal, but I think that I’m a bit better than many [other men]. So I still believe that if more had been like me, we’d probably have had a small improvement in comparison with now.

Anton, 25

In this quote, Anton emphasises that he is both for equality and highly aware of societal issues. By saying “if more men would have been like me”, he himself claims that he is a good man compared to others. However, he does not actively do anything to contribute to any changes. Hence, he has a rather passive approach as he lets the progress of feminism have its course without him intervening. Simply put, he just lets it be. This passive participation that Anton engages in could thus be discussed in relation to what Adam and Kavanagh (2018) describes as “limited strength”, that even if he truly believes in the femvertising efforts and equality, the cultural masculine norms does not truly accept this commitment. By getting along with the progress of feminism in a passive way, Anton is able to respond to “the new order” that femvertising creates by tolerating it and gradually remaining to it. Since he states that he is not

actively a part of the change, but not actively against it either, he is, in a way, “getting the best of both worlds”. This, since he talks warmly about feminism and gets credit for doing so but is not actively participating in the issue which could protect his superior masculinity. We find this similar to what Flood (2005) speaks about, as the praise for men’s actions for equal rights usually exceeds what they actually do, as a result for their patriarchal superiority. Thus, our interpretation is that “the new order” challenges masculinity and men by choosing to not be accepted by society or not be truly accepted as a man, hence being a threat to Anton’s masculinity. Thereof, Anton decides to choose a middle way, reconstructing his masculinity as *the tolerant feminist* as a response to “the new order”. By doing so, he is able stay relevant and be accepted by society and at the same time, by not submitting to the femvertising messages, secure his place among those who still are committed to hegemonic masculinity and the gender hierarchy. Contrastingly, however, Oskar claimed that feminism is a discussion in need of active actions. Especially, he spoke about this in regard to the femvertising video made by Gillette, in which some men actively attempt to oppose male misbehaviour for the benefit of both men and women:

The intentions are good, and it has many parts that are really good that I also have thought about a lot. This guy who stops someone and says “not ok”, that, just like that is what I think one should do. “That was stupid, stop doing that” and I’m fully sure that, now I’m a scientist, or well, researcher, social scientist and so on, so I do believe a lot in the rational conversation’s way of overcoming things. So if we just talked about these things well and truly, me and my kids and me and my wife and all different situations, we’d come to a point where we’d agree and where it would work very well and so. And a part of that is to say “not ok” to someone who does something stupid, it’s the right thing to do, I think. I’m not sure that this type of commercial helps for that. Because I suspect that this packaged message, some pictures and so on, simplifies things in a way that [...] like that it becomes “fragmented” [snuttifierat] somehow, and shallow and so on.

Oskar, 40

In contrast to Anton and other men participating in this study, Oskar does not agree that a passive approach is enough when it comes to the issues that femvertising advocates; it is something that needs to be spoken about and that demands active actions, where “the rational conversation” is the solution. However, he thinks that femvertising of this sort, which he explains as “shallow” and “fragmented”, is not helpful and that it might “polarise it even more” (claimed by himself after stating the above). What he means is that it makes a clear distinction between how people are used to think and behave, and what is advocated by “the new order”, but that it is not that black and white. In this sense, he somehow agrees with the view of “limited

strength” (Adams & Kavanagh, 2018), as he means that there is a complexity involved in the context of femvertising and the messages it advocates, which could be difficult to navigate through. However, our interpretation is that Oskar himself submits to and accepts “the new order” that femvertising supports, why he does not need to reconstruct his masculinity as *the tolerant feminist* since he means this is “the right thing to do”. It should be noted that other men also agreed with Oskar, that the issues that these femvertising videos show could be tough to tackle. Contrastingly though, they thought these videos were far too extreme, not fully agreeing with how things should be done. However, they were not either fully opposing their purpose. This was something that Peter discussed during his interview in relation to the Gillette femvertising video:

Well, I'd rather have seen that one acts as a role model and shows how one should act, than showing how one shouldn't act. Then I believe that it's more difficult to squeeze in a [...] Like this, if one wants to show that one's against sexual harassments, how does one show how to behave, like should one make a one-hour movie where someone doesn't grab a girl's ass? But yes [...] I'd rather have had that one doesn't [...] Because I think that it gets more controversial when they do it like this, but I don't know if they could've brought forth the message in another way. So yes, then it feels like I can't really criticise their way either. But overall, it's not hatred, it's not bustle, but like to be against things feels like it overall creates more, gaps maybe is the wrong word, but it becomes more us-against-them, pro-against, than that you like hold hands and walk slowly around the corner. So yes, in one way I'm against it but I don't think that they could've done it in another way.

Peter, 25

As shown in the above quote, Peter tolerates the message that femvertising communicates, but he does not truly accept it. What he means is that he thinks that the statement that they make in these videos might have a polarising effect between men and women, since he claims they have a rather extreme approach when they talk about feminism and the issues of male misbehaviour. Contrastingly, by saying that he does not “know if they could've brought forth the message in another way”, he is rather tolerant towards the message as he thinks it needs to be said. Our interpretation is that Peter fears these extreme messages, that are created by femvertising as an attempt to support “the new order”, due to the fact that it forces him to pick sides, putting his masculinity at risk. In this way, it is more difficult for him to relate to his masculinity, but also to “the new order”. As an attempt to adapt and maintain his masculinity, he chooses to not truly discard the message but not truly accept it either, thus reconstructing his masculinity as *the tolerant feminist*. Similar to Peter, also Fabian spoke about the messages in the videos as too

extreme. However, he discussed the way in which femvertising portrayed men's and women's different worth as an issue, and how he did not fully agree with how this was done:

Like the dad in the background? Very strong. Because that was one thing that I reacted on and that I don't know if it would've been different, how it would have been but if I remember correctly, he said "what should I tell my daughter? That her grandma is less worth than her grandpa? Or that her mom is less worth than her dad?". I think that can provoke many people. Because it's like [...] Yes, it's really the absolute edge of things. It's not possible to say anything more extreme. When bringing this question to the table. [...] Yes, but it was that they could've had some other point of view so that they could've "eased" it in a bit. Just like, because now they compared grandma and grandpa, mom and dad. Like if the other example could have been grandma and grandpa or like this "women don't get to do this or that", like that. Because now it was [...] Well, I don't know, it was two examples that were very similar. It made a major impression.

Fabian, 26

What Fabian expresses is that he considers the message to be powerful and "strong", in a sense agreeing with what is being said. However, he is rather sceptical towards how this is done as he experiences what they say as "the absolute edge of things". In Fabian's opinion, the video could have been easier and more delicate when talking about these issues, hence advocating a more passive approach rather than an active and extreme one, due to the fact that he claims it could raise a lot of negative emotions. Similarly, this also came to surface when the men discussed alternative approaches for the femvertising videos and how they could be helpful for women. For example, an alternative approach to be helpful in this matter, could be to donate money to women's rights organisations instead of taking an active stance, as Anton's quote exemplifies below:

Maybe than that they're trying, because if this was released in connection to #MeToo, then maybe they'll get some criticism that they're trying to ride the wave of #MeToo. Then maybe it's even better if they donate a quarter million to women's rights organisations. That would've helped women more than if they did these commercials. [...]

Anton, 25

In his quote, Anton does not truly accept how the feminism work is being done, but he still agrees that it deserves attention. He clearly talks about how he thinks that a passive approach might be better in these situations, as it, in his opinion, would help women more. We hence interpret that he believes that giving money to women rights organisations will be more helpful than trying to actively affect how people behave and think. By taking a step back and letting a

women's rights organisation do the actual work, but at the same time support the message of equality, Anton could participate by being a passive observer. This is a similarity between the three voices above (Anton, Peter and Fabian) as they neither truly accept nor truly discard the messages. However, by claiming how these videos could approach feminism in an “eased” way, where men and women could “hold hands and walk slowly around the corner”, or simply where money could be given to women’s rights organisations instead, we interpret that they attempt to compromise with the feminist messages that they have just seen. In a sense, this is similar to what Connell (1995) speaks about when it comes to complicit masculinities, which rather compromises with women instead of performing actual dominance. Our interpretation is that these compromises are responses towards how femvertising and “the new order” shakes the foundation of their masculinity. Therefore, they need to respond in order to suppress the insecurities this creates about their masculinity, and the compromises allow them to be in control over how “the new order” evolves. Thus, they reconstruct their masculinity in terms of *the tolerant feminist* as a way to negotiate and maintain their masculine dominance, as they attempt to mute the power of femvertising and its pro-female messages.

Concludingly, we have found ways in which the men participating in this study reconstruct their masculinity in terms of being *a tolerant feminist* when discussing the three femvertising videos. Even if the voices above have their differences, they all have something in common. That is, that they tend to be more concerned about maintaining and protecting their dominant masculinity in the gender hierarchy, than fully submitting to “the new order” that femvertising supports. However, they are not either fully discarding “the new order” during the discussion, why our interpretation is that there is an uncertainty among them in regard to how they should relate to it without risking their masculinity. By reconstructing *the tolerant feminist*, they show how they can be in control over the situation and thus benefit from the best of both worlds by not picking sides; being accepted by society and at the same time maintain their dominance and masculinity.

5. Conclusion & Discussion

In this chapter, we will summarise and present our conclusions of our study as an answer to our research question; How do Swedish men reconstruct their masculinity when they experience the phenomenon of femvertising? The findings will then be discussed in a broader sense. In addition, we will present our theoretical contributions to the field of femvertising and provide the reader with our managerial implications. Last but not least, we will discuss the limitations of our study and give suggestions for future research.

5.1 The Findings of the Study

As previously mentioned, the aim of our study has been to explore how men reconstruct their masculinity when they experience the phenomenon of femvertising. Just like our analysis and findings show, various thoughts came to surface when the male participants discussed the videos, why we would like to recap the specific findings in this section. Importantly, we found that the men of this study reconstructed their masculinity in different ways in order to cope with “the new order” that femvertising supports. As we explain in our analysis, “the new order” challenges the current structures in the gender hierarchy, for the benefit of women to break free from their subordination. As it shows, the femvertising attempts and the creation of “the new order” shook the foundation of these Swedish men’s world views; what it means to be a man and what feminism actually is about. Therefore, “the new order” is a finding in itself even if it was not a way for the men to reconstruct their masculinity, but rather what forced them to engage in reconstructions in order to maintain, protect or remain to their masculinity. As a consequence, they experienced a lot of pressure and oppression, reconstructing the *over-responsible masculinity* in order to cope with various roles they were forced to take. Along with this came also the tendency to portray themselves as *masculine victims*, as they claimed that men were being blamed for the ill fortune of women in the videos. Furthermore, a great number of them reconstructed *resistant masculinities* in order to protect their superiority; distancing themselves from femvertising as it was perceived as a “women’s thing” and having a nonchalant approach towards the femvertising videos. Additionally, some of them reconstructed *the tolerant feminist* as a way to have a passive approach towards feminism; not fully accepting the femvertising messages but not either discarding it. To fully answer our research question, the men of this study maintained their masculinity by reconstructing it in the

above mentioned ways. We interpreted this as if the men are attempting to maintain or protect their masculinity in the context of femvertising, where their traditional male role is being disrupted and challenged. Thus, they found ways to thrive for a hegemonic masculinity, as they attempted to maintain a dominant position.

5.2 General Discussion

The aim of our study has been to explore how men reconstruct their masculinity when they experience femvertising. As we show in our conclusions, we have found that femvertising creates a “new order”, which challenges, threatens and puts masculinity at risk, forcing the men in our study to respond. Hence, they reconstructed their masculinity in the four above mentioned ways. Even though we explained in the introduction that there is a current paradox that exists in today’s Swedish society, we were surprised that the participating men reconstructed their masculinity in these ways only when experiencing and discussing the femvertising videos. This shows how sensitive these messages are to discuss among men and how they still are willing to maintain the difference between men and women, thus their masculinity and women’s femininity. However, it could also be further discussed whether our insights highlight different sorts of ambivalence among the men, and whether these could consequently affect femvertising. In connection to this, it could be further discussed if our insights highlight different sorts of ambivalence. These will be touched upon in the following sections, in which we will discuss our findings in a broader sense and what we find especially interesting about them.

5.2.1 Eroding the Meaning of Femvertising

First and foremost, we found that the participating men reconstructed and adapted their masculinity in different ways, even though the meaning of masculinity is changeable (Connell, 1990). In a way, our findings confirm what Hearn et al. (2012) have to say, since the men were fairly tolerant towards the femvertising attempts and how these took a stand for women and equality. Some also agreed with the notion that there are aspects of masculinity that need to change. However, our findings also challenge this view as there was a clear ambivalence among the men, in regard to how and what they actually supported. What we mean by this is that they were resistant and passive in their approach, and there seemed to be a tension regarding the extent to which femvertising was truly accepted. This notion challenges previous research

within the femvertising field that states that there in general are positive attitudes towards the phenomenon (Chu, Lee & Kim, 2016). It can be said that it is rather ambivalent that the participating men reconstructed their masculinity in relation to the videos if they would have experienced them positively. If they truly believed in the femvertising efforts and not perceived their masculinity to be threatened or challenged, this should not be needed. In this sense, we show how the resistance towards gender equality work can also come into play even in progressive contexts, contrasting Connell's (2005) claims, where men's masculine identity is the cause.

We interpret this ambivalence as an attempt by the men to maintain their masculine dominance in new ways when discussing femvertising, showing that the desire for hegemonic masculinity still exists among them (Connell, 1995; Hearn et al., 2012). With this, our findings are in contrast with findings of others (Anderson, 2009; Connell, 1995), due to the fact that it seems like inclusive masculinity and hegemonic masculinity can coexist among the men in this context. Yet, they did not coexist in harmony but rather created a tension when the men discussed the femvertising videos. A possible interpretation could be that "the new order" supports a shift in masculinity towards becoming more inclusive, as the men showed that they were allowed to remain to masculine identities which might not be traditionally accepted, such as having emotional traits. But at the same time, the men expressed an uncertainty about what masculinity actually means. A possible explanation for this could be that they are not yet fully ready for the shifts that femvertising advocates with "the new order", since they reconstructed their masculinity instead of fully submitting to it. Our belief is that this could also be regarded in the context of the current paradox in the Swedish society. We consider it possible that the complexity and ambivalence of masculinity shown in our findings might be present in today's society and how men might choose to respond to similar shifts to those we have found. This, since Sweden, through political reforms, has erased possible obstacles in order for equality to prevail and allows the citizens to be who they want without facing harassment (Sweden, 2019), while the men are still not fully ready to submit to all changes that come with this progressive society. With that said, it is appropriate to resonate that our findings of the different reconstructions come to surface also in other contexts than femvertising, where men and their masculinity are being challenged.

As a consequence of the above discussed ambivalence, femvertising did not seem to fulfil its purpose among the participating men, leaving them rather untouched. A thought is that there is a possibility for this resulting in the femvertising messages becoming rather “empty” or even pointless, as the men do not seem to submit to them. In this regard, there is a plausible risk that feminism itself could become an empty word. Similar to femvertising, the men of our study claimed that they agreed with feminism, allowing them to be accepted, but they did not fully submit to its purpose and meaning. In this sense, although the pace of societal change towards gender equality is high and there has been clear progress throughout the years (History, 2019), there is a risk of feminist messages becoming empty, because the men can continue to maintain an ongoing wheel of resistance and tolerance without actual improvement for equality. With that said, it could be questioned to which extent femvertising, and feminism as a whole, will lead to further progress as a consequence of the ambivalence and masculinity reconstructions. Therefore, it is essential that views surrounding the Swedish men’s progressivity and feminism become further elaborated on in order to understand what causes this ambivalence to occur.

To sum up, there seems to be an ambivalence among the participating men in our study as they agreed with the meaning of the femvertising videos but at the same time reconstructed their masculinity, especially in terms of showing resistance or being tolerant towards the messages. Hence, the men showed implications of having inclusive masculinities but still desiring hegemony, thus creating a tension when they experienced femvertising. It is possible that this could also be the explanation for the paradox in the Swedish society, as the men did not seem to be ready for these progressive shifts that “the new order” advocates. In this sense, femvertising, and thus feminism in a bigger sense, could risk becoming an empty word that does not have meaning for the men, as the men might agree but not support it to prevail.

5.2.2 Neutralising the Femvertising Efforts

Another interesting insight our study highlights is regarding whether or not femvertising is a matter for women or both genders. In contrast to what Connell (2005) and Kegan Gardiner (2005) claims, that men are seen as an important cornerstone for the progress of gender equality, the men participating in our study did not perceive this to be a matter for them to be involved in when they discussed femvertising. Instead, they expressed that femvertising is merely for women and that they want women to take the matter in their own hands since women have that opportunity today. Thus, they did not perceive themselves as the gatekeepers for the issues that

femvertising advocates. As we mention in our analysis, the participating men accepted the fact that women stand up for themselves, but meant that men should not be involved, as an attempt to maintain their masculinity. However, what is certainly interesting about this, is that on the one hand, the men confirmed that they desire hegemony and dominance, as they did not want to be involved in a feminised practice. But on the other hand, they contradicted themselves by claiming “what about the men?”, expressing how they wish to be involved in this “feminine” conversation. This is thus inconsistent with what Thompson and Holt (2004) describes, as they claim that men usually distance themselves from “women's issues” in order to keep their hegemonic masculinity.

Seen from a larger perspective, the above mentioned insights shows how the men were ambivalent about femvertising and how they truly experienced the phenomenon. It should however be noted that this ambivalence differs from the one mentioned in section 5.2.1, since it could be interpreted as an attempt for men to neutralise the progress of femvertising, by not contributing with their involvement and additionally questioning its cause. Is it possible that the participating men fear “the new order” that femvertising creates, finding it “too strong” in regard to its “demasculinising” effects as it destructs the value of masculinity? In a sense, this reminds us about what we mention in our problematization, that men might become resistant when their masculine identity is threatened by gender-bending practices (Avery, 2012). Thus confirming that this might also be the case in other contexts such as femvertising since, considering our results, there is a hint of some kind of hidden resistance involved in the ambivalence we described. In a sense, our study thereby challenges what Connell (2005) and Beauvoir (1949) claims, that men still are superior to the oppressed women despite the fact that their masculinity is challenged. Contrastingly, it could be anticipated that the participating men tend to fear that this has, or will, come to change. We argue for the fact that they perceive the patriarchy to be increasingly torn apart as the men consider themselves to be in a disadvantaged position when discussing femvertising. A position in which they do not have control or are able to navigate, thereby reconstructing their masculinity in the concluding ways. As they are not the ones in charge, they can only accustom themselves to the new settings that femvertising creates, further leaving them with a feeling of being left out of the conversation and leading them to fear for a future matriarchy. Thus, Connell's (2005) theory about men as the disadvantaged gender does not apply to our findings, as the men in our study do not consider their masculinity to be safe in any superior position.

Moreover, if this event of ambivalence and the neutralising cause is experienced and practiced in the field of femvertising, who is to say these reconstructions and consequences will not take place in another arena where gender roles are challenged, and women receive more attention than men? Especially when women and men, femininity and masculinity, are regarded as each other's opposites? An idea is that there is a possibility of this taking place in for example the organisational field, in which women receive more attention for how they are approached and how their development progresses. We believe that there is a possibility that the findings of our study are transferable to this field due to the fact that all the men within the organisation might not wish to be involved in women's organisational progress, but yet question why men do not receive attention in similar quests. One thought is that the risk of putting men in this disadvantaged position is that it could create more tension between men and women than necessary, as shown in our findings. When discussing femvertising, our men came to reconstruct their masculinity for the claim to more control, for example by being passive and compromising with the femvertising attempts. It is thus fair to assume that this shift in power might result in a neutralising effect also in other arenas as we mentioned, where men are used to their patriarchal control and dominance.

To sum up, our findings highlight that the participating men are ambivalent when they experience the femvertising videos, in terms of the videos being merely for women but they still want to be an incentive for change. Consequently, we would argue for the fact that this might be an attempt to neutralise the progress of femvertising but also in other contexts that challenges masculinity and leaves men in a disadvantaged position, not allowing it to prevail.

5.3 Theoretical Contributions

The findings of our study contribute to the research field of femvertising in different ways. First and foremost, we position our research in a literature stream that is rather untouched. That is the stream surrounding gender, masculinity specifically, which allows us to contribute with novel knowledge within the femvertising field that has not yet been touched upon. As mentioned in our conclusions, we have been able to contribute with the insight that femvertising creates "the new order", which could be considered important as it thus could be seen as a bigger phenomenon than merely a marketing attempt. We have shown how femvertising is perceived as a force that challenges the current structures in the gender hierarchy, but especially

masculinity as the participating men experience the need to respond to these challenges. This allows us to extend the view of previous research within the field.

Related to the above, we were able to come to the conclusion, and our main contribution, that the men reconstructed their masculinity as a response to the femvertising videos. Moreover, they did this in different ways (mentioned in section 5.1) in order to remain and protect their masculinity. More precisely, it allows us to contribute academically to the femvertising field as we shed light on how the phenomenon could be a bit tricky and problematic in connection to feminism and masculinity. Our findings namely show how there is a clear tension between masculinity and these feminist, pro-female messages. This, as it is not always fully accepted by the men in our study and they instead feel the need to reconstruct their masculinity to maintain their superior position. Because of this, our study provides a new perspective to femvertising than previous research conducted with female participants who feel empowered by these messages (Drake, 2017; Kapoor & Munjal, 2017) and those who find these messages as a positive experience even for men (Chu, Lee & Kim, 2016). Thus, we also confirm and extend the fact that there seems to be a difference between how men and women experience these messages (Sternadori & Abitbol, 2019). In this regard, we have managed to shed novel light on femvertising as a fairly complex phenomenon that might risk doing the opposite of what it wishes to from the male perspective, as a consequence of the reconstruction of masculinity that takes place to extend the gap between women and men. In this sense, this can be considered a contribution in the femvertising field's stream of literature.

5.4 Managerial Implications

In addition to our theoretical contributions, we have also aimed to provide practitioners with an understanding about the topic of femvertising. We believe that our findings are relevant for marketing practitioners. An understanding about how femvertising and “the new order” challenges current gender hierarchical structures and how people, especially men in this case, come to accept or resist these shifts can aid practitioners when tailoring femvertising messages with their audience in mind.

Especially, our findings contribute with important knowledge for those who intend to practice femvertising in Sweden. As mentioned in the method chapter, we chose three videos made by traditionally male-oriented brands or neutral-oriented brands, directed towards men or both

genders, which we found to be appropriate in the sense of investigating men and their responses towards feminist messages. Mainly, our findings show that men could take distance from these messages, or even resist them, at least if they consider them to put men in a disadvantaged position. In order to avoid this reaction, we would suggest managers of male-oriented brands to focus on empowering messages for both genders due to the fact that this was shown desirable in our empirical findings. If the purpose is to support gender equality, brands should highlight the fact that there are also men who have a difficult time in societal questions. By employing such an approach, it could be assumed that the men would be more accepting towards femvertising, and they would not experience the same uncertainty and pressure as when they are being portrayed as gatekeepers for change.

Moreover, as our findings show, the men participating in this study tend to be tolerant towards the femvertising messages as they do not fully accept but not either fully discard the messages. However, they tend to compromise with feminism into taking a more passive approach and not talking about something that might not exist in the reality of men. In this sense, it does not seem like femvertising, if it advocates gender equality in its most “extreme” context, is as effective as one might think. We would rather suggest that practitioners show how they support the issue that they highlight in their femvertising attempts and use real, live examples to make the issue more urgent and problematic. It is probable that this could gain more approval among the men as they then could observe present issues and perceive them as reality, rather than considering scenarios to be unrealistic in a campaign. If this is successful, it is plausible that the reconstruction of the tolerant feminist might not be as present when the men experience femvertising, which could allow these messages to prevail.

5.5 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

5.5.1 Limitations of the Study

In this section, we will provide the reader with some critique and limitations for our study. Followingly, we will also provide some suggestions for future research. When it comes to limitations, we have a few things we wish to highlight. First of all, due to the fact that this study is of qualitative character it is not to be considered as providing generalisable results. Even if

we have aimed to reach a heterogeneous sample among men in terms of their age, the majority of the interviewees were in a younger age group and mainly students due to the circumstances (Covid-19). Therefore, another sample with for example mainly middle aged or older men could result in contrasting findings as they have different experiences and worldviews in terms of gender equality. Second, the study is conducted in Sweden, only involving Swedish men, which is seen as a highly progressive country in terms of gender equality. This was also something expressed by some of the participants themselves during the interviews, as they claimed that men from other more conservative countries probably would not understand the femvertising messages. Therefore, if this study was conducted somewhere else, this would lead to a different result. Third, we would like to emphasise the fact that our results could have been limited due to the fact that we were two young women who interviewed men. Especially, we noticed that some of the interviewees were not entirely comfortable with sharing their thoughts with us as they seemed nervous or changed their course of action when discussing something. Some even claimed afterwards that they thought feminism was a fairly awkward topic to discuss alone with two women, which hence is a limitation and a weakness of our study.

A last limitation we would like to highlight is the fact that, due to the current pandemic (Covid-19), our way of working has been limited and challenged. Our aim from the beginning was to conduct a study based on focus groups in order to grasp group dynamics and make the men we interviewed more comfortable with talking about the topic. This was however not possible as we did not want to risk people's health in larger groups, why we instead decided to have regular, single interviews. Some of these were performed online as everyone who wished to contribute to our study were not able to meet us in person, and we were not able to find suitable participants over the age of 50. This has thus limited our study and could have affected our result.

5.5.2 Suggestions for Future Research

When it comes to future research, we have some suggestions that we find appropriate to investigate. First of all, no studies have been conducted about this topic involving men and focus groups. This was something we considered already during our pilot study, as we thought the men could feel more comfortable speaking to men about the topic of feminism. Most importantly, we believe this could result in new, valuable insights thanks to the group dynamics, especially since masculinity is explained as a "collective social enterprise" (Swain, 2006). This could thus possibly capture the diversity and power relations between different masculinities.

Moreover, in line with feeling comfortable, we would also propose that at least one man should be involved as an interviewer due to the fact that some expressed their uncertainty discussing the topic around women. We also think it would be interesting to conduct a similar study in another social setting than Sweden, preferably in a country which is not seen as progressive and gender equal in general. Would masculinity then come to play an even more important role in what comes to surface when men discuss femvertising? And would hegemonic masculinity and inclusive masculinity still coexist? Lastly, in order to make future studies more challenging and capture nuances and variations, it could be interesting to research this topic by involving femininity and conducting a comparative study. This could shed light upon the existing dynamics between genders when they discuss the topic of femvertising and gender equality.

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Appendix 1 – The Interviewees

Name	Age	Occupation	Interview time
Anton	25	Student	58 minutes
Alfons	37	Doctor	1 hour
David	47	Teacher	1 hour 6 minutes
Fabian	26	IT Consultant	1 hour 4 minutes
Gustav	34	Referee	1 hour 23 minutes
Jack	31	Student	53 minutes
Jonas	30	Engineer	1 h 13 minutes
Kalle	24	Student	1 hour 11 minutes
Måns	22	Student	1 hour 10 minutes
Nils	28	Chef	53 minutes
Oskar	40	Researcher	1 hour 32 minutes
Pelle	30	Engineer	40 minutes
Per	25	Student	1 hour 6 minutes
Peter	25	Student	1 hour 11 minutes
Robin	30	Chef	58 minutes
Samuel	26	Real Estate Business	58 minutes
Pilot Study			
Max (Pilot)	29	Engineer	57 minutes
Patrik (Pilot)	22	Student	48 minutes

Appendix 2 – Topic Guide for Interviews

Swedish Version

Öppning och öppningsfrågor

Gå igenom samtyckesformulär.

Förklara hur intervjun kommer att vara upplagd.

Vad skulle du säga att maskulinitet innebär?

Vad skulle du säga att femininitet innebär?

Huvudfrågor/Videos

Gillette

Känner du till Gillette sedan tidigare?

- Vad är din åsikt om Gillette?
- Vad associerar du med Gillette?

Video “Gillette – The best a man can be”

- Vad är dina reflektioner rörande videon?
- Vilka känslor och tankar får du?
- Vad tror du att deras budskap är med videon?
- Vilka tror du att videon är riktad mot? Varför tror du just dessa?
- Tror du att videon kan ha fått någon kritik riktad mot sig? Varför/Varför inte?
- Hur tycker du att denna videon överensstämmer med vad Gillette står för enligt dig?

Audi

Känner du till Audi sedan tidigare?

- Vad är din åsikt om Audi?
- Vad associerar du med Audi?

Video “Audi – Daughter”

- Vad är dina reflektioner rörande videon?
- Vilka känslor och tankar får du?
- Vad tror du att deras budskap är med videon?
- Vilka tror du att videon är riktad mot? Varför tror du just dessa?
- Tror du att videon kan ha fått någon kritik riktad mot sig? Varför/Varför inte?
- Hur tycker du att denna videon överensstämmer med vad Audi står för enligt dig?

Nike

Känner du till Nike sedan tidigare?

- Vad är din åsikt om Nike?
- Vad associerar du med Nike?

Video "Nike – Crazier"

- Vad är dina reflektioner rörande videon?
- Vilka känslor och tankar får du?
- Vad tror du att deras budskap är med videon?
- Vilka tror du att videon är riktad mot? Varför tror du just dessa?
- Tror du att videon kan ha fått någon kritik riktad mot sig? Varför/Varför inte?
- Hur tycker du att denna videon överensstämmer med vad Nike står för enligt dig?

Generellt om videorna:

Vilka skillnader upplever du mellan videorna?

- Budskap?
- Feminism?
- Könsroller?

Vilken av videorna uppfattade du som mest tilltalande? Förklara!

- Vad skulle du säga påverkar din åsikt?
- Vad tycker du är viktigt när ett varumärke använder sig av syftesdriven marknadsföring?

Om den intervjuade

Könsroller

Hur tror du att dessa videos kan påverka samhället i stort?

Hur tror du att de kan påverka könsroller?

Feminism

Vad skulle du säga att feminism innebär?

Skulle du beskriva dig själv som feminist?

Vilken skillnad tror du att det är mellan feminism förr och nu?

Hur tycker du att feminism speglas i de tre reklamerna du precis sett?

Avslutning

Efter att ha sett dessa videos och varit med i intervjun, hur skulle du säga att de påverkat dig?

English Version

Opening questions

Go through consent form.

Explain the interview process.

How would you explain masculinity?

How would you explain femininity?

Main questions/Videos

Gillette

Do you know about Gillette from before?

- What is your opinion about Gillette?
- What do you associate with Gillette?

Video “Gillette – The best a man can be”

- What are your reflections about the video?
- What feelings and thoughts comes to mind?
- What do you think their message is?
- Who do you believe this video is directed to?
- Do you believe this video has faced criticism somehow? Why/Why not?
- How do you think this video corresponds with your thoughts about Gillette?

Audi

Do you know about Audi from before?

- What is your opinion about Audi?
- What do you associate with Audi?

Video “Audi – Daughter”

- What are your reflections about the video?
- What feelings and thoughts comes to mind?
- What do you think their message is?
- Who do you believe this video is directed to?
- Do you believe this video has faced criticism somehow? Why/Why not?
- How do you think this video corresponds with your thoughts about Audi?

Nike

Do you know about Nike from before?

- What is your opinion about Nike?
- What do you associate with Nike?

Video “Nike – Crazier”

- What are your reflections about the video?
- What feelings and thoughts comes to mind?
- What do you think their message is?
- Who do you believe this video is directed to?
- Do you believe this video has faced criticism somehow? Why/Why not?
- How do you think this video corresponds with your thoughts about Nike?

General questions about the video

What differences do you experience between the videos?

- Message?
- Feminism?
- Gender?

Which of the videos did you perceive the most appealing? Explain!

- What would you say affects your opinion?
 - What is important when a brand takes a feminist stand?

About the interviewee

Gender roles

How do you believe these videos could come to affect the society?

Do you believe they can affect current gender roles?

Feminism

What would you say that feminism means?

Would you describe yourself as a feminist? Why/Why not?

Which difference do you believe there is between feminism before and now?

How do you think that feminism is viewed in these two advertising attempts?

Ending

After seeing these videos and participating in this interview, how would you say it has affected you somehow?

Appendix 3 – Consent Form

Swedish Version

Jag blev informerad om studien och dess syfte innan intervjun.	
Jag ställer frivilligt upp på att delta i studien.	
Jag är medveten om att jag kan dra tillbaka mitt deltagande utan anledning, när som helst.	
Förfarandet gällande konfidentialitet har förklarats (exempelvis användandet av pseudonymer och anonymitet av material).	
Användandet av material i studien, vid publicering, delning och arkivering har förklarats.	
Jag samtycker till att min intervju spelas in (ljud).	
Jag samtycker till att ge ärliga svar och åsikter.	

Signatur:

Datum:

English Version

I was informed about the research and its purpose prior to the interview.	
I voluntarily agree to participate in the research.	
I know that I can withdraw my participation at any time without giving reasons.	
The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (for example, the use of pseudonyms and anonymisation of data).	
The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained.	
I agree to have my interview audio recorded.	
I agree to only give honest answers and opinions.	

Signature:

Date:

Appendix 4 – Links to Femvertising Videos

Gillette:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=koPmuEyP3a0>

Audi:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jk6VIswOCmU>

Nike:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IiCDRNW5A84>