

# **Grappling with Hegemonic Masculinity: Masculinity and Heteronormativity in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu**

## **Abstract**

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and mixed martial arts constitute two strongly overlapping, culturally influential communities composed mostly of men who enact a particular strain of masculinity through participation in grappling-based martial arts (GBMA). Similar to all masculinity projects, grappling-based martial arts participants are constrained by hegemonic forces shaping masculinities, particularly heteronormativity, machismo, female exclusion, and a marked interest and propensity toward violence. This paper critically examines the strain of masculinity unique to GBMA drawing on psychoanalytic approaches and reveals it to be best understood as an overt manifestation of phallic masculinity that is extended toward the hypermasculine by a homoerotic-yet-homophobic tension predicated upon performative homosociality and symbolic homosexuality. Specifically, GBMA masculinity can be understood as strict phallic masculinity expanded to include symbolic expressions of violence as a hegemonic masculinity-approved vent for repressed male-on-male homosexual desires and behavior in the absence of socially sanctioned opportunities for healthy male-on-male touch. An understanding of this dynamic within GBMA reveals its parallels with marginalized homosexual masculinities, and offers the potential to shift it toward greater openness, honesty, and inclusion.

## **Keywords**

Masculinity; Grappling-based martial arts; Brazilian Jiu Jitsu; Homosociality; Homoeroticism

Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ) and mixed martial arts (MMA) are two overlapping, culturally influential communities composed mostly of men who enact a defined strain of masculinity through grappling-based martial arts (henceforth, GBMA). GBMA, essentially composed of BJJ/MMA along with competitive wrestling, represent a unique form of male-on-male performative behavior that focuses on grappling until one man “submits” to the other. Because of its profoundly gendered nature, the cultural impact of GBMA masculinity on marginalized masculine identities and women mirrors a problematic and toxic trendline for masculinity as it manifests in society.

In their 2015 book, *Unleashing Manhood in the Cage: Masculinity and Mixed Martial Arts*, Christian Vaccaro and Melissa Swauger explain, “Mixed martial arts provides an excellent backdrop for a multilevel approach to studying social and cultural aspects of gender. Mixed martial arts contains its own unique subculture, equipped with a variety of gendered values, norms, and attitudes which have developed over time. Importantly, the subculture is new, well defined, and well documented” (Vaccaro and Swauger 2015, 2). They go on to observe the sport's wide cultural significance in relationship to issues of gender: “examining manhood acts through the extreme contact sport of MMA can tell us about American manhood in general” (3–4).

This masculine subculture erupted from a fairly recent surge (beginning c. 1994) in the popularity and influence of GBMA on contemporary culture. National and international competitions, tens of millions of participants worldwide, and the famous Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) acted in concert to promote these sports and their competitors to unprecedented status. Indeed, the UFC alone represents a multi-billion-dollar brand in an even larger industry with tremendous commercial and popular appeal. These sports and the masculinities they promote are therefore increasingly influential to men, masculinity, and masculinity discourses in contemporary culture. The character of masculinity within GBMA, then, has significant cultural importance. To address it, this paper makes use of a psychoanalytic lens informed by Brian Pronger’s (1990, 1999) interrelated concepts of homosociality and homoeroticism in sport.

Before turning to Pronger, a straightforward analysis of GBMA subcultures is necessary. In critically examining the cultural environment in which GBMA plays out, Channon and Matthews (2015a, 938) observe, “MMA (and the UFC in particular) represents an interesting site for exploring contemporary renditions of masculinity, given the symbolic proximity of the sport and its athletes to the types of manliness described in earlier research into men’s participation in combat-oriented sports.” Citing Connell (1995) on hegemonic masculinity, they characterize this by writing, “This masculine archetype typically involves strength, toughness, competitiveness, risk taking, muscularity, and, above all else, the ability to dominate others—characteristics typically considered central to constructions of hegemonic forms of masculinity.” This, they note, “can involve such men’s direct physical domination of women and other men through acts of violence.” Specifically, there is a prominent enough strain of masculinity within GBMA that it can serve as a theoretical template for a specific, heretofore undescribed *GBMA masculinity* as a unique type of masculine performative identity.

Pronger’s (1990, 1999) notions of homosociality and about homoeroticism in competitive sport provide a rich understanding of GBMA masculinity by making clearer sense of this characterization in the specific context of GBMA. Following Pronger, I hope to show GBMA masculinity can be defined performatively and emotively by a struggle arising from repressed and/or latent homoerotic impulses as they are constrained by being situated in an overarching and particularly rigid construction of hegemonic masculinity common among male combat athletes. If correct, the purpose of this investigation is therefore ultimately to expose and disrupt the forces that constrain GBMA masculinity and prevent it from finding a healthier, nonviolent, inclusive masculine expression. It is my hope that this analysis is not merely explanatory but that it extends into the realm of praxis by potentially creating opportunities for a more inclusive and diverse GBMA cultural environment (cf. English 2017). In particular, I therefore aim to identify and unravel the myriad and unique factors within GBMA masculinity that evoke in participants so much interest in (simulated) violence and exclusion of that which they do not deem sufficiently masculine (cf. Hirose and Pih 2010).

## **Martial Arts and GBMA as Hegemonically Masculine Microcultures**

Throughout its history, martial arts participants have formed a unique subculture that is distinctly masculine, even hyper-masculine, and often performatively toxic. The so-called warrior class represents a cultural archetype of masculinity and many discourses in masculinity are defined either in reference or deference to it (Channon 2012b). Indeed, martial artists have formed a constellation of style-specific microcultures, each having in common that it exists in thrall to constructed masculine cultural tropes like warriorism, (male) strength, Stoicism/suffering, and valorizing battle (Bolelli 2016; Spencer 2012, 2014). Because they have traditionally excluded women, these microcultures have developed a concentrated and unique masculinity whose practices and discourses define many martial arts programs of today.

Within that broader martial canon, grappling in the West has its roots in the Greek tradition. The original Olympics featured an event known as *pankration* (lit.: “all of power”), which is a far more violent and deadly form of today's MMA, often fought in the nude and to the death (Georgiou 2008). Glorifying these classical Greek roots unveils the origins of GBMA masculinity's performative fascination with physicality, Stoic forbearance, and valorized rustic classical masculinity. The GBMA connections to the Greek masculine ideal run deeper still, however, as Greek athletic masculinity specifically sought a way for homosexuality to hide within heteronormative society while fetishizing it (Dover 2016, 54–55; cf. Pronger 1999, 374). Therefore, some basic features of GBMA masculinities are, like with many analogous pseudo-military subcultures, largely exaggerations of masculine tropes like dominance, strength, power, machismo (cf. Arciniega et al. 2008), control, heteronormativity, and violence as a response to problems (Choi 2017; Messner 2002, 27–62; Vaccaro and Swauger 2015). In this sense, GBMA masculinities conform to hegemonic masculinities and are hostile to marginalized masculinities, even as they evoke them. As Hirose and Pih (2010, 198) indicate,

The elements of MMA that have an external connection tend to involve hypermasculine and hyperheterosexual discourse. Although cultural variations are easily observed among various regional markets, there is a fairly coherent public image that MMA is dangerous, violent, and thus only for “real” men.

As seen through Pronger (1990, 1999), the juxtaposition of heteronormative cultural performances, male homosociality and its relationships with male homosexuality (cf. Flood 2007), and certain symbolic homosexual behavioral performances, including plain themes of male-on-male dominance and submission, constitutes the unique milieu in which GBMA masculinity erects itself. Understanding this feature of GBMA masculinity remains a challenge, yet the demands of heteronormativity in contemporary society may potentially explain its broad appeal. This unique repressed expression of marginalized masculinities therefore sets GBMA apart from other martial arts and constructs a set of distinctive masculine microcultures that bend toward the toxic (Channon and Matthews 2015a).

GBMA masculinity is in many ways typical of masculinities that arise in male-only spaces, though with its own unique features (Pronger 1999). In these environments a distinct segregational influence skews masculinity through exclusion of alternative perspectives with two primary results: a steadily masculinizing trend comes to define gender roles within the space and those that arise gain local hegemony. The nature of GBMA microcultures therefore tends to be self-reinforcing, as it attracts men in the intersection of martial arts communities and those who fall within the “toxic jock” masculine discourse (Miller 2009). In other words, GBMA masculinity becomes a gender-performative necessity for how many males “do gender” in the space while it directly or implicitly seeks to exclude women and even other masculinities (Choi 2017; Pronger 1990; cf. West and Zimmerman 1987).

For Pronger (1990) and others, one result of this circumstance is that GBMA masculine culture comes to be internally understood and externally rationalized through discourses such as “boys being boys.” Except, however, in this “masculine ethos,” the “boys” are usually men acting in ways generally not tolerated even among adolescent and pre-adolescent males (Loh and Loong 2016). These behaviors

include enacting real and symbolic violence, utilizing crude language, making sexualized jokes (which are often derogatory about women, gays, and penis size), overemphasizing muscular development/habitus as a component of masculinity, displaying hyper-competitiveness, valorizing “blood, sweat, and tears,” and developing a unique and exclusive homosocial fraternity with one another earmarked by performatively repressed homoeroticism (Flood 2007; Loh and Loong 2016; Pronger 1999; Thrasher 2015). These enacted gendered roles are, in short, overtly masculinist and strongly heteronormative, but they are also readily excused and rationalized.

This characterization of the masculine performance within contemporary GBMA microcultures has been well documented. It is epitomized in a passage on the first page of Vaccaro and Swauger (2015, 1–2), whereupon they depict a vignette in which several men discuss “a clothing brand that linked together MMA, sexual conquest, and being noticed by others... adorned with masculine symbolism—sexual prowess and aggressiveness.”

The men told [Vaccaro] their goal was to market their new T-shirt label line “Banging.” The T-shirts were rather simple. They were white with contemporary tribal tattoo “barbed wire” spikes printed in an asymmetric pattern across the front and back. The word “banging” was printed along the shoulders of the backs of the shirts. Ricky, the tallest and most muscular of the three, explained to him the significance of the T-shirt label. “You see, you can read it three ways. Banging is what you do in the cage, you know, you bang each other up in a fight. But it is also what you want to be doing to girls, banging. It’s also what you want to be wearing. Just banging clothes that pop and make you stand out, you know” Later during bouts when a fighter was knocked to the ground by a particularly hard punch the three men stood with the rest of the crowd cheering. As the referee called the fight, Ricky chanted, followed by the others, “bitches get stitches, pussies get fucked... bitches get stitches, pussies get fucked.” (Vaccaro and Swauger 2015, 1).

It should be noted that not all martial arts produce and participate in such a toxic cultural milieu. For example, in many “stand-up arts” like Tae Kwon Do and Karate, classes are often geared more toward families and mix men with women and adults with children. Accordingly, and in line with theoretical considerations about the trajectories of masculinity within all-male environments, the microcultures in such programs show a markedly less overt masculine character. This moderate, even benevolent martial-arts masculinity arises even though the instructor is still typically treated with patriarchal deference (Maclean 2015). It is therefore hypothesized that the moderating influence in these microcultural environments arises specifically because of the salutary influences of women and children in the space, which can de-hegemonize potential islands of toxic masculinity (cf. Channon 2014; Maclean 2015). Indeed, it is along these lines that Channon (2012a, 2013, 2014) indicates directly that GBMA can benefit from incorporating women and children into otherwise male-dominated classes, but in practice they rarely do. Though some women participate in GBMA, their prevalence is far less frequent than in Tae Kwon Do and non-traditional American Karate dojos (Mierzewski, Velija, and Malcolm 2014). It is unsurprising, then, that toxic masculine themes dominate within GBMA microcultures.

This raises the question of why women commonly participate in martial arts outside of GBMA but not within it. The fundamental difference between the GBMA and “stand-up” martial arts defines them: they involve grappling. Grappling largely consists of a type of wrestling, usually on floor mats, until one person “submits” another (Mierzewski, Velija, and Malcolm 2014). Highlighting the difference, the goal of a sparring match in most Tae Kwon Do or karate programs is to score points with light strikes to padded areas on one's sparring partner. In GBMA, by contrast, the goal is to *submit* one's opponent by forcing them to “tap out” (symbolizing a “submission”), often by choking them near the point of unconsciousness or by “locking” a joint near its breaking point. Furthermore, all such activities within the GBMA context happen while tightly intertwined with one's partner. This intimacy

of touch and overt stress upon dominance and submission in GBMA may be threatening to women when participating in a predominantly male class environment, especially as many of the grappling positions (e.g., the “guard,” which involves lying upon one's back with the opponent between one's legs, and the “mount,” which involves sitting atop the opponent's waist or chest) simulate rape positions (Mierzwinski, Velija, and Malcolm 2014; Weaving 2014). (This may be one of the reasons GBMA happens to be mostly avoided by non-tribade lesbian women [cf. Allen 2015].)

As a crucial point that goes beyond the scope of this study, then, while this paper focuses upon GBMA *masculinity*, and as such remains tangential to feminism, theoretical considerations of GBMA masculinity could benefit further by opening themselves up to feminist perspectives on sport. There is, for example, a small but vibrant vein of literature describing the unique circumstances that arise in female-dominant GBMA microcultures (e.g., English 2017; Kavoura et al. 2015; Mierzwinski, Velija, and Malcolm 2014; Ming, Simpson, and Rosenberg 2016; Sailors and Weaving 2017; Weaving 2014). Poignantly, this narrow vein of female-centered GBMA literature clearly aligns with what theory expects: the problematic aspects of masculinity latent in GBMA microcultures have far less to do with GBMA (BJJ in particular) than they do with the *men* within GBMA microcultures (Channon and Matthews 2015a). Female-dominant and female-only BJJ schools, by contrast, tend to exhibit greater degrees of cooperative learning and foster inclusive, supportive, mutually encouraging environments that enable practitioners to flourish according to their unique talents and interests (Channon and Matthews 2015a; English 2017; Kavoura et al. 2015); whereas GBMA masculinities tend to be focused upon themes of competition, dominance, and submission (Choi 2017; Vaccaro and Swauger 2015). The lessons of the mixed-gender “stand up” martial arts cultures therefore seem confirmed by feminist perspectives on/within BJJ, and thus modifying existing GBMA cultures to be more inclusive could exert a salutary moderating effect upon GBMA masculinity. Sadly, this vein of female-GBMA literature seems to have been underappreciated both by feminists and by GBMA practitioners, yet it offers a



potential avenue for informing and improving GBMA microcultures and the peculiar masculinity that pervades them (see Channon and Matthews 2015b; English 2017).

### **Homoeroticism on the Mat**

Psychoanalytic theory extends these insights about GBMA masculinity by offering an analysis of the relevant psychological phenomena: masculinities in the performative sense are the result of male struggles with phallic conception and the role of the phallus, treated both as a real force in the developing male's life and as a social concept atop which his masculinity necessarily sits (Connell 2005, 19–20). The phallic conception is central to masculinity from a psychoanalytic perspective, encapsulating as it does, male power and female lack inextricably bound up in binary and oppositional notions of sexuality. Annie Potts (2000, 85) recognized this fact about masculinity within impotent men, who resist defining heterosexual masculinity any other way: “[the impotent man's] perceived failure to erect his penis and perform (with it) according to dominant phallographic notions of healthy male heterosexuality infiltrates his flesh, actions, and thoughts.” Pronger (1999, 380) explains this phenomenon more deeply,

The phallus is simulated in the penis by the act of taking up space [which GBMA practitioners seek to control]: It goes without saying that a limp, shriveled penis is not effective in simulating the domineering masculine organization of desire. Given that no penis can live up to its phallic boast, no matter how swollen it gets, phallogentrism finds other ways to territorialize the body: innocuously, possibly, in body building, and more despotically in the territorial violence of warfare and competitive sport.

This (potent) phallogentric conception of heterosexual masculinity, in turn, gives rise to what is known as “phallic masculinity.” To summarize from Karlsson (2014, 250),

Phallic masculinity is usually characterized by a number of traits and formulated in such a way as being in opposition to femininity. Examples of phallic masculine traits are

activity, being in control of both the world and of one's emotional life, being in sovereign power, authoritarianism, strength, resoluteness, fantasies of being a hero or achieving something extra-ordinary, transcendent virility, assertiveness in general as well as in sexuality.

As every one of these traits is conspicuously featured within GBMA masculinity, phallic masculinity can therefore serve as a theoretical foundation for understanding GBMA masculinity.

Particularly, while GBMA masculinity's homosociality and essential opposition to femininity are easily understood under phallic masculinity, it leaves noteworthy explanatory shortcomings. To begin filling in the theoretical gap, consider how Karlsson (2014, 249) is careful to distinguish between phallic masculinity and *hypermasculinity*, observing phallic masculinity cannot account for hypermasculinity's "violent and often very sexist, homo- and xenophobic masculinity which is not to be seen as worth aspiring to in our society." The space between phallic masculinity and hypermasculinity thus provides part of the necessary insight into understanding GBMA masculinity. GBMA masculinity straddles this divide in that it is neither *overtly* sexist nor xenophobic but does tend to espouse violence (enacted in symbolic and real ways) and is often (performatively) homophobic. Complicating matters, rather than being strictly homophobic, GBMA tends to exhibit a paradoxical masculine expression that openly flirts with homoerotic-yet-homophobic masculinity displays (see Dutkiewicz and Spencer 2017).

Pronger's (1990, 1999) covariant lenses of homosocial bonding (brotherhoods or "bromances") within male-dominant groups and homoeroticism in sport shed considerable light upon these phenomena.

Almost all competitive sports are segregated along the lines of gender. This means that the practice of competitive sport itself can have homoerotic dimensions.... I have previously written positively about the covert homoeroticism of men's sport, suggesting that it affords opportunities for homoerotic vision and contact that are desirable not only

for gay-identified boys and men but also for those whose homoerotic imaginations have not become explicit, integrated aspects of their lives. In *The Arena of Masculinity* (Pronger, 1990), I argued that men's sport allows men and boys to exclude women and girls from their all-male environments, permits them to play with each other's bodies, to surround themselves with naked men in the showers and locker rooms, to enjoy that all-male contact, without suffering the vilification that usually comes from the open acknowledgement and pursuit of masculine erotic contact, the stigma of “being homosexual.” I also argued that the well-known homophobia of competitive sport... prevents the implicit homoeroticism of competitive sport, the pleasures of male bodies playing with each other, from proceeding to explicit sexual expression. That is to say, it maintains the panoptic line that must not be crossed if the orthodox masculine—which is to say the patriarchal heterosexual—credentials of competitive sport are to be maintained. (Pronger 1999, 374)

What Pronger observes about competitive sports in general is taken to a unique extreme in GBMA. Consider the juxtaposition of extreme heteronormativity and outright homophobia throughout GBMA masculinity (Dutkiewicz and Spencer 2017; cf. Pronger 1990, 1999) with the tacitly and explicitly homoerotic *behaviors* performed throughout the practice of GBMA (Channon and Matthews 2015a). In GBMA, men wrestle with one another in sexualized positions. For example, one man:

- on the floor with another sitting “mounted” on top of him (the “mount”),
- on the floor with his legs wrapped around a man's waist (the “guard”),
- laying beneath a dominant man holding him down from the side (the “cross-side” or “cross-sides top”),
- positioned on top of another man with their faces near the other's genitals exactly like a “sixty-nine position” used for simultaneous performance of oral sex (the “North-South” position),
- controls opponent’s back and places his heels between the opponent’s thighs (“back control” with “hooks in”),
- grinding his hips into some part of another man (“hipping in” or “hipping out”)

Another legitimate GBMA technique, the “oil check,” involves one man placing his fingers in another man's anus as a means to gain dominance or control (Stavrou 2017).

Meanwhile, much of this behavior is performed in an overarching cultural environment rife with homosocial bonds and covert homoeroticism that appear constitutive of GBMA microcultural performances. As Flood (2007) observes, “Some homosocial practices among seemingly heterosexual men indeed seem ripe with homoeroticism.” Consistent with this, many participants in BJJ specifically and in GBMA more widely, for example, often valorize machismo and flaunt their physiques; compare relative successes and minute details in body composition, weight and physique; and joke about groin cup (genital) sizes (Vaccaro and Swauger 2015). Moreover, GBMA masculinity has come to expect what might be called a “bro-chic” approach to fashion (cf. Draper and McDonnell 2017), with skin-tight spandex “rash guards,” “fight shorts,” and the *gi*, an adaptation of an open-chest Japanese kimono, held closed only with a thin, colored belt around the waist. This behavior constitutes a training-hall parallel of “metrosexual” fashion trends and what Cole (2015) terms “the gay male visual identity.” As Shugart (2008) observes, metrosexuality, thus GBMA bro-chic in parallel, may represent a crisis in classic masculinity. Confirming the GBMA tendency toward homoerotic-yet-homophobic masculine performances, even while GBMA practitioners flaunt bro-chic styles they often crudely deride metrosexual styles and the people who wear them as representative of male homosexuality.

Flood (2007) and Pronger (1999) are relevant to understanding this phenomenon as a form of male homosociality, which covers much of how men within GBMA microcultures engage with male-on-male bonding with their training partners. In the gym, this manifests performatively, for example, in the usual ways combined with men hugging and occasionally slapping each other's buttocks (as is also fairly common among players of American football) in addition to the many aspects of grappling and gym fashion listed above. Additionally, and of pointed significance, a performance so common that it is a GBMA “bro” trope even within broader culture, is a dogged heteronormative insistence that they are

not gay, e.g., perfunctorily adding a rejoinder of “no homo” to the end of many displays of sincerity, vulnerability, or empathy from one male to another (cf. Pronger 1999, 347). Meanwhile, the GBMA environment is so rife with homoerotic-yet-homophobic male performance that probably the best-known GBMA trope, which is used to diffuse latent homosexual tension in these environments, is “it's only gay if you make eye contact!” (Dutkiewicz and Spencer 2017, 136–156; cf. Pronger 1990, 266–269). Further confirming these observations, a common part of performative GBMA masculinity includes implicit and explicit insinuations that participation in a “manly” activity like GBMA proves one's straightness, which is a gay-exclusionary display that would not be necessary except to camouflage homoeroticism within performative heteronormativity (Channon and Matthews 2015a; cf. Connell 1992; cf. Foucault, Morar, and Smith 2011).

Indeed, the specific parallels between GBMA masculinity and gay masculinities run still deeper, as revealed by GBMA discourses related to position and strategy. Consider the direct linguistic parallelism between discourses common to GBMA masculinity and gay masculinity, particularly being “top” or “bottom” “players.” A GBMA participant who is skilled at utilizing the “mount” and “cross-sides” positions is often referred to as a “top player,” and one who is talented with the “guard” is known as a “bottom player.” Further, GBMA participants exert considerable effort into developing both their “top game” and “bottom game.” These discourses in GBMA run directly parallel to the uses of “top” and “bottom” within the LGBT community in reference to relative sexual dominance and submissiveness. (As an aside, the dynamic interplay of dominance and submission as expressions of GBMA and other martial-arts masculinities are thoroughly considered within Hirose and Pih [2010].)

In the specific case of jiu jitsu, the trend is more pronounced within the United States by its appropriation of Brazilian culture. Brazilian culture is viewed within BJJ microcultures, on average, as being less sexually repressed and more relaxed, machismo, sensual, and overtly sexual (Cairus 2012; Silva 2012; Zaluar 2011). These stereotypes are based in etymology as well as in performative physicality. For example, the “jiu” in “jiu jitsu” means relaxed, yielding, or pliant, and practitioners are

often urged to “relax” and to let their opponents “gas” (tire themselves out), which is an invention of the Brazilian line of jiu jitsu (not as common in the original Japanese variants). Further, BJJ *profesors* occasionally tell stories about how alleged Brazilian sexual prowess reaches a pinnacle in Brazilian BJJ practitioners, especially among BJJ black belt practitioners. “It’s all in the hips,” a mantra repeated with an affected Brazilian Portuguese accent and clear innuendo, is an extremely common utterance in gyms before, during, and after practice sessions.

Thus we arrive at the departure point between phallic masculinity and some of GBMA’s more hypermasculine performances. The totality of this evidence demonstrates the underlying homosexual influences marginalized by and at work within GBMA masculinity, and demands of hegemonic masculinity considered psychoanalytically requires both projection as a defense mechanism to protect the (phallic) male ego and performances of symbolic redemption to masculinistic expectations. Therefore, as a counterbalance, a remedy defining GBMA masculinity is to utilize symbolic violence as a show of “true” masculinity. As Pronger (1999, 383) summarizes it, “competitive sports as a system of desire has no room for willing bottoms,” or as he articulates it a few pages later, “the triumphant pleasure of competitive sport is the violent phallocentric pleasure of adding to oneself by subtracting from another. ... The pleasure of penetration in competitive sport... depends on withholding the same pleasure from one’s opponents and violently taking it against their will for oneself” (386).

To summarize, critically examining the strain of masculinity unique to GBMA reveals it to be constructed mostly out of phallic masculinity that is extended toward the hypermasculine by a homoerotic-yet-homophobic tension predicated upon performative homosociality and symbolic homosexuality. These collide with the heteronormative and other demands of hegemonic masculinity. Specifically, GBMA masculinity can be understood as strict phallic masculinity expanded to include symbolic expressions of violence as a hegemonic masculinity-approved vent for repressed male-on-male homosexual desires and behavior (Dutkiewicz and Spencer 2017). This raises the question of

what leads men who exhibit and/or are drawn to and/or are susceptible to being socialized into GBMA masculinity to adopt these specific masculine performances.

### **A Lack of Healthy Male Touch**

In GBMA, male participants are cast into roles in which real and symbolic homoerotic themes arise across a broader spectrum than heteronormative hegemonic masculinity allows (Dutkiewicz and Spencer 2017; Pronger 1999; Weaving 2014). Part of the explanation for this circumstance may simply be a tendency for masculinity to suppress homosexual impulses, though those desires still seek fulfillment. Considerably more of the explanation may be available through a co-constituent problem: a lack of acceptable avenues for straight and performatively straight men to engage in healthy touch with other men. As many men lack sufficient healthy touch, it is theoretically reasonable that deprived men will seek male touch in unhealthy and toxic ways, such as through enacting symbolic and actual violence (Green 2011). To elaborate, hegemonic masculinity offers (performatively) straight men little access to healthy touch from other males, and what male touch it does allow comes mostly through simulated violence, which is viewed as acceptable for masculine performances (Major and Heslin 1982). This urge is likely to be multiplied in performatively straight men who are frustrated by the suppression of their desires for *homosexual* male engagement. Nowhere is the evidence of this more obvious than in expressions of GBMA masculinities, wherein the resolution to this problem is immediately accessible via grappling (Weaving 2014).

Within GBMA, as within all contact sports in which predominantly violent avenues to male touch are common (e.g., football, rugby, ice hockey), there is a sufficient but unsatisfactory resolution to the male-touch dilemma (Dworkin and Messner 2002a, 2002b; Pronger 1990, 25–32, 1999). Contact sports provide, though symbolically enacted violence, an acceptable hegemonically masculine and heteronormative way men can touch one another and thus satisfy their innate need for male-on-male touch (Pronger 1990, 1999). Of course, within GBMA this opportunity is particularly poignant and far

more pronounced than in traditional contact sports. This is because wrestling and grappling involve full-body contact combined with extensive and exaggerated hip movement, often for long periods of time, thus making them similar in relevant ways to embracing, cuddling, and sex. (Of note, these parallels are epitomized discursively in that a common metric for determining advantage in wrestling is known by the term “ride time,” which is how long one is able to continuously maintain a dominant position over one's opponent.) In this sense, as straight and performatively straight men struggle to find socially acceptable ways to engage their need for male touch, this theme in GBMA masculinity may be viewed for some as a resolution and for others as a kind of release from the frustration of male heteronormativity.

By turning access to touch into performances of simulated violence, GBMA practice provides a hegemonically masculine and heteronormatively “safe” (to their masculinity) proxy for lacking male-on-male intimacy and male-on-male affection (Faccio, Casini, and Cipolletta 2014; Pronger 1999; Weaving 2014). Thus, GBMA offers a heteronormative avenue to partially satisfying a desire for male touch among straight and performatively straight men. This interpretation of GBMA behaviors is partially confirmed further by the overt displays of male-on-male affection after victory or defeat common within GBMA. These include physical contact such as hugging, butt slapping or grabbing (similar to how American football players slap each other's buttocks), testicle flicking, lifting one another up, masculine posturing, and mock fighting and horseplay (Flood 2007, 354; Pronger 1999).

### **Submission and Dominance**

Not only is hegemonic masculinity limited in terms of touch, it also provides inadequate nonviolent means to resolve latent power struggles between men (Bird 1996). Thus, the relationship between GBMA masculinity and expressions of repressed male homosexual masculinity runs deeper in its overt focus upon dominance and submission (cf. Faccio, Casini, and Cipolletta 2014). This reveals deep and obvious parallels between GBMA and gay BDSM/kink sexual play that demand consideration. For



example, unlike boxing where the central objective is the knockout (that is, striking one's opponent hard enough to render them either unconscious or unable to continue fighting), the central objective in much of GBMA, especially in BJJ, is to *submit* one's opponent. Further, submissions in most GBMA can be achieved by engaging in activities isomorphic to many characteristics of BDSM play: choking or asphyxiating, bondage and control (pinning an opponent to the mat, symbolically identical to bondage with ropes and other devices), forceful manipulation (“sweeps” and throws), and on rare occasions humiliation (repeatedly submitting an individual who is deemed “cocky”). A practitioner avoids the injuries that would follow from the completion of these techniques by “tapping out” or saying “tap,” which is isomorphic to the use of safe words in BDSM play. Most importantly, the focus in GBMA such as BJJ is almost entirely upon *submission* by a dominant practitioner. To wit, most competitions feature point scoring that is rendered meaningless by a submission (i.e., one can be losing by a wide point spread and still win by submitting one's opponent). Finally, highly skilled practitioners are often referred to as “submission artists.”

That there persists a deeper need for GBMA masculinity to satisfy repressed needs for male touch in ways related to dominance and submission therefore seems uncontroversial, and that it expresses itself performatively in discharging physical control, domination, pain, and bondage of one man over another seems obvious. In these regards, GBMA is performatively identical to behaviors characterizing gay BDSM/kink play, and GBMA masculinity seems to be the only available causative factor. This obvious flirtation with homoerotic dominance and submission in GBMA may best be understood as expressions of “authentic fantasy” within BDSM, analogized to GBMA (Turley, King, and Butt 2011). One can easily imagine, for example, that engaging in behaviors consistent with domination of (or, for men who lose most of their matches, forced submission by) other men constitutes a kind of lived “virtual reality” experience that simulates homoerotic kink and even gay sex. Consistent with this, Lindemann (2011, 151) offers the insight that participation in BDSM can serve a therapeutic function as a form of “sex therapy” that has “resonance with other socially stigmatized

erotic practices.” Lindermann’s research into BDSM, though obviously limited to that domain, thus hints at another way to conceptualize to the GBMA parallel behaviors: GBMA can serve as a type of therapy for men who feel oppressed by the constraints of heteronormativity.

As a final point that extends the aforementioned considerations on lack of healthy male touch and its manifestation within GBMA microcultures, though it falls well outside of the realm of responsible BDSM, there is the issue of enacted rape (cf. Dripps 1992; Pronger 1999). While many of the positions and themes in GBMA bear clear parallels to symbolic performances of rape (fetishized in tribade lesbian BJJ rape pornography—see, for example, the “Wrestling” tag on the popular fetish pornography website [www.kink.com](http://www.kink.com)), at times the rape is literal. As previously noted, consider the use of the “oil check” maneuver, also known as “butt dragging,” in which one’s finger is inserted (through clothing) into one’s opponent’s anus in order to shock him or force him to comply with techniques.

The “oil check” technique clearly represents the toxic intersection imposed by hegemonic masculinity upon GBMA masculinity, marginalized homosexual masculinities, and rape culture. It has resulted not just in accusations but convictions of sexual assault (Associated Press 2007). The case of high school wrestler Jerome Hunt stands out as a paradigmatic example. Hunt was charged with and convicted of multiple counts of sexual assault and attempted rape for repeated and unrestrained use of the “oil check” technique on his teammates. Characteristic of the most toxic strains of (GBMA) masculinity where it intersects with rape culture, this sort of behavior, even when it leads to sexual assault convictions, is consistently condoned by bystanders (Carlson 2008; Messner 2016; Stavrou 2017). In Hunt’s case, the overlaps between GBMA masculinity and rape culture were blatant and institutionalized in that they included defenses given by his coach and by his attorney. Of note, even after conviction, *Hunt was eventually allowed back on the mat* (Associated Press 2007).

## **GBMA Masculinity**

Whereas GBMA masculinity exceeds the usual boundaries of phallic masculinity, as previously explained, it also seems to fall beneath the requirements for hypermasculinity (cf. Karlsson 2014). It is, however, nonetheless often toxic. GBMA masculinity is therefore situated in a unique stratum among the hierarchy of masculinities—and also presents distinct features. In addition to the assumptions of phallic masculinity, GBMA masculinity is uniquely enthralled with dominance and (simulated) violence and exhibits uncanny parallels to (repressed, unrecognized, and/or self-denied) male homoeroticism, including BDSM/kink. It is also more interested in expressions of machismo than many masculinities and arguably even more than phallic masculinity.

Thus, a theory-based view of GBMA masculinity portrays it as a way in which many straight and performatively straight men grapple with hegemonic masculine demands. These demands, especially on the limitations of healthy male touch, often lead (performatively) straight men to fall into masculine identities that preferentially select them for interest in GBMA, which the extant GBMA microcultures will then reinforce. This results from GBMA enabling (performatively) straight men trapped in hegemonically masculine roles to safely express homoeroticism despite the oppressively narrow boundaries of a dominant cultural discourse that identifies violence and machismo with straight masculinity. (This crisis of masculinity, incidentally, is evocative of Judith Butler's analysis of sexual politics, torture, and secular time [Butler 2008].)

This problem may prove quite challenging to remediate. Indeed, the dominance of these masculinist trends within GBMA microcultures may be quite resistant to change. As we see from Connell (2015, 232), Lacanian psychoanalytic theory reveals a connection between the phallus (thus phallic masculinities) and a marked resistance to addressing gender differences and inequality,

The pattern of difference/dominance is so deeply embedded in culture, institutions and body-reflexive practices that it functions as a limit to the rights-based politics of reform. Beyond a certain point, the critique of dominance is rejected as an attack on difference—a project that risks gender vertigo and violence. In Lacanian terms it means attacking

the Phallus, the point of intersection between patriarchal dominance of culture and the bodily experience of more ordinary masculinity; in more orthodox Freudian terms it means reviving the terror of castration.

Hence, it is arguable that critically analyzing and reorganizing GBMA masculinity could lead to an overall improvement in the understanding of masculinities from a theoretical perspective but also in the lives of men who situate themselves in GBMA masculine microcultures. In particular, by recognizing the unique features of GBMA masculinity, many practitioners may be more readily able to discern the various interacting layers of their own GBMA masculinity (including phallic masculinity, homosocial community forming, repressed homoeroticism layered beneath projected violence-laced, machismo, an unsatisfied need for healthy male touch/sex, and utilizing performances and discourses exclusionary of gay men and women). This improved understanding could afford them an opportunity to approach themselves, their microcultures, and their training partners more openly and honestly, which in turn may lead in turn to a more diverse and inclusive masculine experience on the training mat and in the social environment that forms within GBMA communities.

Currently, BJJ microcultures are nearly entirely male, and GBMA/BJJ masculinity is hegemonic within many training studios (Choi 2017). Part of this, as has been addressed, results because GBMA attracts and evokes a certain semi-toxic strain of masculinity, yet there is also the self-reinforcing problem by which this uniquely masculinized culture produces a female-excluding hegemony in the relevant spaces. In essence, GBMA gyms tend to adopt a “boy's club” microculture that features female-exclusionary themes of simulated violence and machismo (Channon and Matthews 2015a), and these exacerbate and concentrate the toxic and exclusionary elements of GBMA masculinity.

Here, then, a proximal layer can be added to the present considerations about GBMA masculinity. Theoretically, GBMA masculinities are likely to be female-exclusionary not only out of a masculine fear of powerful females (Weaving 2013) or phallic female rejection (Karlsson 2014) but

also in part because the men in GBMA microcultures may simply prefer to grapple with other men. Put another way, GBMA microcultures may be more female exclusionary than mere gendered power dynamics would predict, at least in part because they form repressed homoerotic/homosocial brotherhoods for (performatively) straight men (Pronger 1999). This isn't merely theoretical. It is plainly observed in the reticence with which men in GBMA training facilities engage in grappling with women and having to overcome a visible discomfort to do so, especially with the same degree of committed and aggressive competitiveness (desire for domination) they exhibit with other men.

It follows that men situated (and constrained) within GBMA masculinity will benefit from critically re-examining it through a theoretical lens. By doing so, they will open themselves to a new perspective that can be better informed by feminist, LGBT, and queer theory discourses. It is my hope that this will lead to more inclusive GBMA masculinities and discourses and more inclusive and diverse GBMA cultures.

### **A More Inclusive GBMA Masculinity**

Grappling-based martial arts bear significant social relevance because of the recent and widespread popularity (especially on masculine cultures and masculinities in general) of BJJ and MMA. Of importance, then, the environments in which these martial arts are practiced are strongly male-dominant and are thereby characterized by a unique strain of performative masculinity, termed GBMA masculinity. The particular features of this masculinity best comport within a theoretical hierarchy on a stratum slightly more toxic than phallic masculinity, as described under psychoanalytic considerations of masculinity, but less problematic overall than hypermasculinity. Still, it may benefit from theoretical reconsideration.

Overall, GBMA masculinity is characterized primarily by the following traits: it is phallic masculinity equipped with a draw toward simulated violence and performative machismo that seem to arise in performatively straight male participants from the tensions generated by hegemonic masculine

constraints, particularly heteronormativity and an overemphasis of “warrior-class” masculinist values such as physical strength, muscularity, power, and dominance. As a result, many masculine GBMA performances focus upon homoeroticism, development of self-denying male homosocial communities (Pronger 1999), simulated same-sex physical intimacy masked by applications of real and symbolic violence, exclusion of the feminine, and pronounced parallels to BDSM culture, especially in terms of dominance and submission arising from physical control. GBMA masculinities and microcultures could therefore be more inclusive, both inside and outside of these communities that engage in them, by critically analyzing GBMA masculinity. This would entail rejecting gay- and female-exclusionary hegemonic masculine themes, behaviors, and discourses that currently dominate GBMA microcultures and the communities surrounding them.

In addition to producing a more inclusive GBMA environment and community, hopefully, a critical consideration of GBMA masculinity could also help disrupt some toxic trendlines within masculinities in general. Specifically, critical considerations of GBMA could result in more attention being paid to problematic patterns common within masculinity. In particular, it could shine a needed light upon the male fetishization of simulated violence as a means of obtaining male-on-male intimacy within a popular context that rewards male physical domination. This is especially helpful in those cases when physical violence is misused to obtain male touch due to repressed male homoeroticism in performatively straight men. As a result of critically examining GBMA masculinity in this light, there is greater hope of breaking the reliance upon themes of violence and machismo common in the performance of masculine gender.

## References

- Allen AS (2015) Phantasmal sexualities and erotic embodiment. In: *Violence and Desire in Brazilian Lesbian Relationships*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 71–103.
- Arciniega GM, Anderson TC, Tovar-Blank ZG, and Tracey TJG (2008) Toward a fuller conception of machismo: Development of a traditional machismo and caballerismo Scale. *Journal of Counseling Psychology* 55(1): 19–33.
- Associated Press (2007) Convicted wrestling champ back on the mat. *Rapid City Journal*. December 15. Retrieved from [http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/top-stories/convicted-wrestling-champ-back-on-the-mat/article\\_124b1e60-8b22-5f6c-9301-1cb21b3f9078.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/top-stories/convicted-wrestling-champ-back-on-the-mat/article_124b1e60-8b22-5f6c-9301-1cb21b3f9078.html)
- Bird SR (1996) Welcome to the men's club: Homosociality and the maintenance of hegemonic masculinity. *Gender & Society* 10(2): 120–132.
- Boelli D (2016) How gladiatorial movies and martial arts cinema influenced the development of the Ultimate Fighting Championship. *JOMEK Journal*, (5). DOI: 10.18573/j.2014.10265.
- Butler J (2008) Sexual politics, torture, and secular time. *The British Journal of Sociology* 59(1): 1–23.
- Cairus JT (2012) The Gracie clan and the making of Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu: National identity, culture and performance, 1905–2003. Ph.D. Thesis, York University, Toronto, Canada.
- Carlson M (2008) I'd rather go along and be considered a man: Masculinity and bystander intervention. *The Journal of Men's Studies* 16(1): 3–17.
- Channon A (2012a) Way of the discourse: Mixed-sex martial arts and the subversion of gender. Ph.D. dissertation, Loughborough University, Leicestershire, UK. Retrieved from <https://dspace.lboro.ac.uk/dspace-jspui/handle/2134/9756>
- Channon A (2012b) Western men and Eastern arts: The significance of Eastern martial arts disciplines in British men's narratives of masculinity. *Asia Pacific Journal of Sport and Social Science* 1(2–3): 111–127. DOI: 10.1080/21640599.2012.751170.

- Channon A (2013) Enter the discourse: Exploring the discursive roots of inclusivity in mixed-sex martial arts. *Sport in Society* 16(10): 1293–1308. DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2013.790896.
- Channon A (2014) Towards the 'undoing' of gender in mixed-sex martial arts and combat sports. *Societies* 4(4): 587–605. DOI:10.3390/soc4040587.
- Channon A and Matthews CR (2015a) “It is what it is”: Masculinity, homosexuality, and inclusive discourse in mixed martial arts. *Journal of Homosexuality* 62(7): 936–956. DOI: 10.1080/00918369.2015.1008280.
- Channon A & Matthews CR (2015b) *Global Perspectives of Women in Combat Sports: Women Warriors Around the World*. New York: Springer.
- Choi CC (2017) Position before submission: Grappling with gender and hypermasculinity in mixed martial arts. Speech presented at TAC Talks 2017 in UW Tacoma – William W. Philip Hall, Milgard Assembly Room, Tacoma, WA, September 5.
- Cole S (2015) Looking queer? Gay men’s negotiations between masculinity and femininity in style and dress in the twenty-first century. *Clothing Cultures* 2(2): 193–208. DOI: 10.1386/cc.2.2.193\_1.
- Connell RW (1992) A very straight gay: Masculinity, homosexual experience, and the dynamics of gender. *American Sociological Review* 57(6): 735–751. DOI: 10.2307/2096120.
- Connell RW (1995) *Masculinities*. First edition. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Connell RW (2005) *Masculinities*. Second edition. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Dover KJ (2016) *Greek Homosexuality*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing.
- Draper J and McDonnell AM (2017) Fashioning multiplatform masculinities: Gay personal style bloggers’ strategies of gendered self-representation across social media. *Men and Masculinities*. DOI: 10.1177/1097184X17696190.
- Dripps DA (1992) Beyond rape: An essay on the difference between presence of force and the absence of consent. *Columbia Law Review* 92: 1780–1809.



- Dutkiewicz J and Spencer DC (2017) "It's only gay if you make eye contact." In: Sparkes, AC (ed.) *Seeking the Senses in Physical Culture: Sensuous Scholarship in Action*. London: Routledge, pp. 136–156.
- Dworkin SL and Messner MA (2002a) Introduction: Gender relations and sport. *Sociological Perspectives* 45(4): 347–352. DOI: 10.1525/sop.2002.45.4.347.
- Dworkin SL and Messner MA (2002b) Just do... what? Sports, bodies, gender. In: Flintoff A and Scranton S (eds.) *Gender and Sport: A Reader*. New York: Routledge, pp. 17–29.
- English C (2017) Toward sport reform: hegemonic masculinity and reconceptualizing competition. *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 44(2): 183–198. DOI: 10.1080/00948705.2017.1300538.
- Faccio E, Casini C and Cipolletta S (2014) Forbidden games: The construction of sexuality and sexual pleasure by BDSM "players." *Culture, Health & Sexuality* 16(7): 752–764. DOI: 10.1080/13691058.2014.909531.
- Flood M (2007) Men, sex, and homosociality: How bonds between men shape their sexual relations with women. *Men and Masculinities* 10(3): 339–359.
- Foucault M, Morar N and Smith DW (2011) The Gay Science. *Critical Inquiry* 37(3): 385–403. DOI: 10.1086/659351.
- Georgiou AV (2008) *Pankration*: A historical look at the origin of mixed-martial arts competition. *Black Belt Magazine*, April.
- Green K (2011) It hurts so it is real: Sensing the seduction of mixed martial arts. *Social & Cultural Geography* 12(4): 377–396. DOI: 10.1080/14649365.2011.574796.
- Hirose A and Pih KK (2010) Men who strike and men who submit: Hegemonic and marginalized masculinities in mixed martial arts. *Men and Masculinities* 13(2): 190–209. DOI: 10.1177/1097184X09344417.
- Karlsson G (2014) Masculinity as project: Some psychoanalytic reflections. *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies* 9(4): 249–268. DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2014.908631.

- Kavoura A, Chroni SA, Kokkonen M and Ryba TV (2015) Women fighters as agents of change: A Brazilian Jiu Jitsu case study from Finland. In: Channon A and Matthews CR (eds.) *Global Perspectives on Women in Combat Sports: Women Warriors Around the World*. New York: Springer, 2015, pp. 135–152.
- Lindemann D (2011) BDSM as therapy? *Sexualities* 14(2): 151–172. DOI: 10.1177/1363460711399038.
- Loh HLL and Loong LLH (2016) The lived realities at the gym. In: *The Body and Senses in Martial Culture*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 35–66.
- Maclean C (2016) Friendships worth fighting for: Bonds between women and men karate practitioners as sites for deconstructing gender inequality. *Sport in Society* 19(8–9): 1374–1384. DOI: 10.1080/17430437.2015.1096249.
- Major B and Heslin R (1982) Perceptions of cross-sex and same-sex nonreciprocal touch: It is better to give than to receive. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 6(3): 148–162. DOI: 10.1007/BF00987064.
- Messner MA (2002) *Taking the Field: Women, Men, and Sports*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Messner MA (2016) Bad men, good men, bystanders: Who is the rapist? *Gender & Society* 30(1): 57–66. DOI: 10.1177/0891243215608781.
- Mierzwinski M, Velija P and Malcolm D (2014) Women’s experiences in the mixed martial arts: A quest for excitement? *Sociology of Sport Journal* 31(1): 66–84. DOI: 10.1123/ssj.2013-0125.
- Miller KE (2009) Sport-related identities and the “toxic jock.” *Journal of Sport Behavior* 32(1): 69–91.
- Ming S, Simpson D and Rosenberg D (2016) An exploration of experiences of female participants in power and performance sports. *Women in Sport and Physical Activity Journal* 24(1): 35–42. DOI: 10.1123/wspaj.2014-0059.

- Potts A (2000) “The essence of the hard on”: Hegemonic masculinity and the cultural construction of “erectile dysfunction.” *Men and Masculinities* 3(1): 85–103. DOI: 10.1177/1097184X00003001004.
- Pronger B ([1990] 1992) *The Arena of Masculinity: Sports, Homosexuality, and the Meaning of Sex*. New York: MacMillan.
- Pronger B ([1999] 2010) Outta my endzone: Sport and the territorial anus. In: Davis P and Weaving C (eds.) *Philosophical Perspectives on Gender in Sport and Physical Activity*. London: Routledge, ch. 11.
- Sailors PR and Weaving C (2017) Foucault and the glamazon: The autonomy of Ronda Rousey. *Sport, Ethics and Philosophy* 11(4): 428–439. DOI: 10.1080/17511321.2017.1311368.
- Shugart H (2008) Managing masculinities: The metrosexual moment. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 5(3): 280–300. DOI: 10.1080/14791420802206833.
- Silva SR (2013) Performances de masculinidade, práticas de subversão: O consumo de telefones celulares entre jovens de camadas populares.” *Comunicação Mídia e Consumo* 9(26): 61–82.
- Spencer DC (2012) Narratives of despair and loss: Pain, injury and masculinity in the sport of mixed martial arts. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health* 4(1): 117–137. DOI: 10.1080/2159676X.2011.653499.
- Spencer DC (2014) Sensing violence: An ethnography of mixed martial arts. *Ethnography* 15(2): 232–254. DOI: 10.1177/1466138112471108.
- Stavrou M (2017) BUM NOTE: What is the oil check wrestling move in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and is it legal to perform in a fight? *The Sun*, November 27. Retrieved from <https://www.thesun.co.uk/sport/5010798/oil-check-wrestling-move-brazilian-jiu-jitsu-legal/>
- Thrasher CD (2015) *Fight Sports and American Masculinity: Salvation in Violence from 1607 to the Present*. Jefferson, NC: McFarland.

- Turley EL, King N and Butt T (2011) "It started when I barked once when I was licking his boots!": A descriptive phenomenological study of the everyday experience of BDSM. *Psychology & Sexuality* 2(2): 123–136. DOI: 10.1080/19419899.2010.528018.
- Vaccaro CA and Swauger ML (2015) *Unleashing Manhood in the Cage: Masculinity and Mixed Martial Arts*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
- Weaving C (2014) Cage fighting like a girl: Exploring gender constructions in the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC). *Journal of the Philosophy of Sport* 41(1): 129–142. DOI: 10.1080/00948705.2013.858393.
- West C and Zimmerman DH (1987) Doing gender. *Gender & Society* 1(2): 125–151. DOI: 10.1177/0891243287001002002.
- Zaluar A (2011) Turf war in Rio de Janeiro: Youth, drug traffic, guns and hyper-masculinity. In: Ceccato V (ed.) *The Urban Fabric of Crime and Fear*. New York: Springer, pp. 217–237.