

CRISIS OF MASCULINITY, EROTIC CAPITAL AND MALE GROOMING IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS

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ABSTRACT:

Beauty is an objective reality, not a myth. For some time, the biological sciences, sociobiology and sociology have demonstrated the role of beauty as a factor influencing a number of life circumstances. Recently the theory of erotic capital has grown in sociological thought, which spreads and deepens the concept of human capital to include another important dimension. Erotic capital as a complex quality includes not only physical attractiveness and sexual attractiveness but also social competence, temperament, sexuality and a capacity for self-presentation. This capacity for self-presentation is dependent on the ability to groom, to care for one's own appearance and body. The goal of this study is to demonstrate that this dimension of erotic capital has become a relevant life strategy for a male population as components of a formula for life success, and that they are willing to invest ever more funds in grooming. We are seeking to support the hypothesis that a relationship exists between efforts to increase one's own attractiveness and desire for success. What can be identified as "male grooming" is a growing economic sector, supported by an ever more robust marketing industry. We have reached the conclusion that the media-constructed narrative of male grooming can be effectively communicated as the potential to achieve a hegemonic masculinity, i.e. dominance and success in the socioeconomic dimension of life, which corresponds to the empirical findings of sociologists. It is thereby possible to respond to perceptions of male grooming as an expression of a crisis of masculinity, or rather of a submissive and marginalised masculinity unappealing and rejected by the heterosexual male population.

KEY WORDS:

beauty, crisis of masculinity, erotic capital, marketing communications, masculinity, men, physical attractiveness, success

Introduction

Discussions on masculinity are an area within the traditional research coordinates of gender studies and sociological perspectives that has been enriched for some time by specific approaches of media and



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communication studies, not uncommonly incorporating philosophical/ethical concepts of the transformation of masculinity in the conditions of late modern consumer culture and accelerated technical advancements in the area of media communication, digitalisation of life, or the ever more invasive implementation of artificial intelligence.¹ Certain social psychology studies² and socio-philosophical studies³ in these contexts even see fundamental causes of the transformation of manhood and have developed arguments pointing to a crisis of masculinity. Alongside certain scenarios of the degradation of masculinity in the postmodern era there are also less dramatic studies referring instead to more general terms explaining transformations of manhood and its historical dynamics, searching for new life formulae and their application, in the changing environment of social relationships and redefined content of gender roles.⁴ In recent years this has been paralleled by growing empirical evidence from data that captures various economic parameters and trends in the area of markets and marketing opportunities for the sale of cosmetic products in the male population segment and provides information about their consumer behaviours and decision-making.⁵ At the same time, ever more intensive attention in sales and marketing practice has been given to the purchase of products for grooming and care for one's appearance, which are becoming part of a rapidly growing industry.⁶ The prognosis of economic indicators on a global scale for the male 'grooming' industry, particularly in Asian countries,⁷ clearly indicates contemporary and future trends of men's growing interest in grooming products and other related services including refinement of appearance, reducing the effects of aging and enhancing physical attractiveness. This fact has attracted attention of manufacturers and merchants whose economic success depends on effective support of systems of integrated marketing communications, the purpose of which is the (re)construction, in the media and beyond, of a narrative of manhood within a changing plurality of identities. One of these possible narratives is based on understanding grooming and self-presentation and the creation of capital, the accumulation of capabilities applicable to fulfilling formulas for life success. In the interest of individual men, but also in companies within the cosmetics industry and the expanding sphere of associated services, grooming should act as a legitimate, socially accepted practice, not as an expression of weakened manhood and eroded masculinity, in which feminine elements of behaviour typically intervene.

On a related note, the concept of "erotic capital" continues more and more to gain footing in the social sciences.⁸ The theory of erotic capital has been developed in various systems of thought when addressing problems and explanations of various phenomena and processes, and provides a means to explain numerous phenomena and different life situations. The concept of "erotic capital"⁹ has become a sufficiently universal tool for describing and clarifying a number of phenomena within the biological sciences, evolutionary psychology, anthropology, psychology, and last but not least, bioeconomics and sociobiology.

The theory of erotic capital was originally developed in sociology as a specific type of capital that, in addition to social, cultural, economic, symbolic and human capital, contributes in ever more meaningful ways to life success in the cultures of societies both modern and otherwise. Recently the British sociologist Hakim¹⁰ has been working on the systematic development of a theory of erotic capital, with her research building both on the concept of "human capital" promoted primarily in the economic sciences of the 1960s by Becker¹¹

and on the widely known and respected sociological theory of Bourdieu,¹² who takes an original approach to explaining social inequality and its reproduction in modern societies using a concept of economic, social and cultural capital. Bourdieu defines "capital" as a certain capacity or potential capable of generating specific advantage(s) in relation to other people. Similar thinking was evinced by Hakim, who ascribes to erotic capital the properties of a certain capacity that can be actively used and applied in various life situations in the areas of interpersonal relations, partner life, study or professional career. A number of sociological studies empirically indicate the measurable effects of erotic capital in achieving life success.¹³ Thus, there is abundant empirical evidence available indicating that physical beauty and sexual attractiveness not only actually empower holders of this form of capital with social prestige, but also lead to enhancement of their social capital in the sense of more effective creation and retention of social networks and access to useful contacts or higher income. More attractive people are also more frequently appointed to leadership and managing positions by employers.¹⁴ Hamermesh,¹⁵ for example, determined that men in North America earn more than women on the basis of attractiveness. According to his study, physically more attractive men achieve 17% higher income compared to less attractive men, whereas for the opposite sex the situation is only 12% more advantageous for women of above-average attractiveness. It is certainly worthy of note that a recent study in the Czech environment reached conclusions that, on the contrary, confirm the higher economic value of erotic capital in the female population. Whereas more attractive men in the Czech Republic earn an average of 9% more than less attractive men, in the case of women with greater capacity for erotic capital average income is higher by 21%.¹⁶ In terms of average income in the Czech Republic, this means that during the course of one year less attractive women are disadvantaged by approximately 50,000 CZK, and by approximately 1 million CZK over 20 years of their careers.

Erotic capital is thus a significant form of capital contributing to life success in economic and social terms. At the same time, it is a resource for retaining and reinforcing social inequalities in various areas of life; it represents a valuable and desirable asset that can be individually converted to material and non-material benefits. Moreover, it is identified as a psychological component at a level of authentic experience itself. Erotic capital thereby serves for the construction of one's own identity and self-concept.

Transformations in the Scholarly Discourse on Masculinity

The academic discourse on masculinity in the field of sociology is characterised by consensus on the term's non-static conceptualisation. Masculinity cannot be captured as a static, universal, unchanging image, but is rather monitored as a dynamic process of constructing various forms of masculinity determined by the specifics of the cultural worlds of norms and values, as well as by the authenticity of social mechanisms. Masculinity is actively formed in interactions between the person and culture in the form of interiorisation of the role of manhood as a psychological disposition, moderated by the dominant structure of cultural norms.¹⁷ Masculinity is therefore more of a verb than a noun.

In various historical periods and cultures, therefore, there is a plurality of various masculinities and their mutual relationships. Masculinity is thus marked by a plural and variable character, or rather by a potential for multiple different narratives. This, of course, does not mean that the relation of these masculinities would be

1 MAIELLO, G., ROUBAL, O.: *Média a kultura. Od primární orální kultury ke konstrukci kyber-prostorových identit v éře digitální komunikace*. Prague : University of Finance and Administration, 2020, p. 7-8.

2 See: ZIMBARDO, P., COULOMBOVÁ, N. D.: *Odpovědný muž. Jak technologie připravuje muže o mužství a co s tím*. Prague : Grada Publishing, 2017.

3 LEVANT, R. F.: The Masculinity Crisis. In *Journal of Men's Studies*, 1997, Vol. 5, No. 3, p. 221-231.

4 OURAHMOUNE, N.: Masculinity, Intimacy, and Consumption. In OTNES, C. C., ZAYER, L. T. (eds.): *Gender, Culture, and Consumer Behavior*. New York & London : Routledge, 2012, p. 311-331.

5 EUROMONITOR INTERNATIONAL: *Men's Grooming*. [online]. [2020-01-14]. Available at: <<https://www.euromonitor.com/mens-grooming>>.

6 REPORTLINKER: *Global Men's Grooming Products Industry 2019 - 2027*. [online]. [2020-01-14]. Available at: <<https://www.reportlinker.com/p05222536/GLOBAL-MALE-GROOMING-PRODUCT-MARKET-FORECAST.html>>.

7 DAXUE CONSULTING: *Male Grooming Market in China: The Rise of Male Beauty*. [online]. [2020-01-15]. Available at: <<https://daxueconsulting.com/male-grooming-market-in-china>>.

8 ROUBAL, O.: The Erotic Capital of Men from the Perspective of the Sociology of Marketing Communication. In KUSÁ, A., ZAUŠKOVÁ, A., BUČKOVÁ, Z. (eds.): *Marketing Identity 2019. Offline Is the New Online*. Trnava : FMK UCM, 2019, p. 706-717.

9 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague : Karolinum, 2017, p. 27.

10 HAKIM, C.: Erotic Capital. In *European Sociological Review*, 2010, Vol. 26, No. 5, p. 499-518.

11 See: BECKER, G.: *Human Capital: A Theoretical and Empirical Analysis, with Special Reference to Education*. Chicago :

University of Illinois, 1964.

12 BOURDIEU, P.: The Forms of Capital. In RICHARDSON, J. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York : Greenwood, 1986, p. 241-258.

13 MITCHEN, D. G. et al.: No Relationship between Intelligence and Facial Attractiveness in a Large, Genetically Informative Sample. In *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 2015, Vol. 36, No. 3, p. 240-247.

14 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague : Karolinum, 2017, p. 183.

15 See: HAMERMESH, D. S.: *Beauty Pays. Why Attractive People Are More Successful*. Princeton : Princeton University Press, 2011.

16 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague : Karolinum, 2017, p. 16.

17 HEARN, J.: Men, Masculinity and Masculinities. In EVANS, M., WILLIAMS, C. H. (eds.): *Gender: The Key Concept*. London, New York : Routledge, 2013, p. 149-156.

equal, similarly propagated and culturally applied, socially preferred and realised, or universally accepted. As a rule, there is one type of masculinity that is placed above all others at a given time and specific cultural circle.¹⁸ “Hegemonic masculinity”, similarly to “preferred femininity” represents the culturally dominant idealised image of manhood and womanhood, representing ‘templates’ for how men and women can be measured and seek their defining parameters.

There are numerous sociological and anthropological studies available that explain various portraits of masculinity. These portraits may be identified and analysed in greater detail in media depictions of various forms of masculinity, e.g. in lifestyle magazines. One of these recent studies, for example, focused on a content analysis of eight magazines for men sold in Canada. The authors of this study monitored different media portraits of masculinity in these magazines and predicted their different interpretations. They identified and described a total of three different forms of hegemonic masculinity depicted in these men’s magazines.¹⁹ According to the authors, the strongest position was unquestionably held by the ‘metrosexual’ type of masculinity (e.g. David Beckham), which is becoming a prominent model of manhood with a very convincing media depiction of a well-groomed man, typically with elements of juvenile attributes. The second type of masculinity is a representative of ‘laddism’, i.e. a model of manhood that appears in the 1990s in the United Kingdom as an expression of resistance to ‘metrosexuality’ and feminisation of manhood (and universally to feminism as an emancipatory women’s movement),²⁰ based on principles of bachelorhood, consumer hedonism or sexism. According to the authors, the third model of masculinity in the form of physical strength, muscles and athletic musculature was marginalised and communicated only peripherally to a much less palpable extent and only in a single magazine (*Men’s Health*) out of the eight titles examined.

Current research into models of masculinity in sociological, media and communication studies more or less confirm these findings in the sense not only of the reinforced position of the metrosexual type,²¹ but also the preference for ‘retrosexuals’ (e.g. George Clooney), i.e. a certain compensation of feminised manhood, which can be seen, for example, in current advertising production.²² The ideal type is thus becoming the ‘androgynous’ type,²³ representing a hybrid model of masculinity, integrating the typically male and female characteristics of strength and sensitivity, aggressiveness and gentleness, impulsiveness and moderation or selfishness and empathy. There is no doubt that at present we can monitor significant transformations of gender roles, characterised by a softening of mutual differences rather than mutual differentiation.²⁴

How should we therefore interpret certain contemporary transformations of masculinity that in many aspects of media exposure approximate the feminine world of values? In this study we focus our attention on certain circumstances of male grooming as components of the erotic capital traditionally concentrated in the female segment of the population. Here we consider male grooming as one of the intervening forces reinforcing femininity over masculinity in coherence with values of the cultural circle of late modern prosperous societies of the Western type in which traditional and continually functioning models of masculinity have long been embedded that are based on values preferring the expression of male features of strength, hardness and physical ability, as opposed to the feminine features of gentility, refinement and elegance, including the juvenile features of contemporary ‘metrosexuals’ as pioneers of male grooming, which is also a reason for the sustained popularity of men to perfect their physical proportions as part of fitness studies.²⁵

It is for this very reason male grooming can be and often is stereotypically interpreted as an expression of insufficient manhood and in some cases vain attempts may be seen to legitimise this practice as a male

(and not merely female) activity. This fact is becoming a not inconsiderable barrier to executing the practices of grooming for men themselves, who submit to these interpretations and sensitively perceive the often hesitant or directly negative reaction of their immediate social surroundings, suspicious of male grooming as an expression of subsiding, weakening or even degraded masculinity. This thesis is supported by certain sociological and marketing studies identifying interest in grooming in the male population on the one hand, on the other their reluctance and uncertainty to practice grooming from a certain self-consciousness and fear of negative reactions from their surroundings, where men oriented toward grooming may be perceived as homosexuals.²⁶ Specifically, this can mean that heterosexual men caring for their own face do not take advantage of the options for purchasing adequate products and the services of cosmetic salons, but rather defer this care to the privacy of their homes and utilise the beauty products of their partners or spouses there (generally in secret). One of the research studies focused on this phenomenon in Great Britain and quantified the average costs for facial care products paid by female partners directly for their male partners at 230 GBP per year.²⁷

In the same way this stereotyping presents a considerable challenge – not sufficiently reflected in domestic technical studies – for commercial strategies and psychological and marketing techniques²⁸ meant to communicate male grooming as an equivalent alternative model of modern masculinity and part of a pattern of life success while minimising the risk that male grooming will be defined as the prism of a crisis of masculinity. In this study we attempt to clarify and further explain several facts that should be subject to far more intensive and systematic study in the media, sociological and marketing discourses.

Firstly, we draw from the theoretical prerequisite of a conception of “masculinity” as a plural concept determined by a number of cultural and social effects undergoing a permanent historical change, forming unprecedented forms and contents in the conditions of the contemporary era of late modernity. We point to the growing importance and popularity of male grooming as a component of erotic capital, which can be interpreted either from the perspective of a crisis of masculinity, waning manhood and convergence of the genders in the sense of androgyny, or on the contrary as part of the transforming hegemonic masculinity, enriched by new elements of its expression as part of patterns of life success. Here are the greatest opportunities and challenges of marketing communication and the media construction of manhood, defining the interpretative framework of social discourse regarding masculinity as an attribute of consumer culture. This level of analysis is not sufficiently developed in current marketing communications and media and sociological studies.

Secondly, we approximate erotic capital as a complex quality including not only physical attractiveness and appearance but also other dimensions contributing to its overall capacity and effectiveness.

Thirdly, we point to the need to develop a theory of erotic capital far more intensively in the environment of the male population as well, in which erotic capital continues to be a more visible phenomenon and means for life success, and not a crisis of masculinity as certain theories suggest. Erotic capital is stereotypically ascribed functions rather in the female segment of the population, whereas it is necessary to point out its importance for men as well.

Fourthly, we wish to illustrate using the specific example of the Czech Republic and with the support of empirical data from current sociological research²⁹ how the importance of one dimension of erotic capital, in the form of physical grooming, is becoming ever more entrenched in the male population. We are seeking to support the hypothesis that a relationship exists between efforts to increase one’s own attractiveness and desire for success. What can be designated as “grooming” is a growing economic sector supported by an ever more robust marketing industry, as well as an important individual life strategy for men motivated by an orientation on success. It has been shown that physical beauty and attractiveness is consciously associated with achieving success and not as an expression of receding male values and a crisis of such values.

18 CONNELL, R. W.: *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2005, p. 77.

19 RICCIARDELLI, R., CLOW, K. A., WHITE, P.: Investigating Hegemonic Masculinity: Portrayals of Masculinity in Men’s Lifestyle Magazines. In *Sex Roles: A Journal of Research*, 2010, Vol. 63, No. 1-2, p. 65-66.

20 NIXON, S.: Resignifying Masculinity: From “New Man” to “New Lad”. In MORLEY, D., ROBINS, K. (eds.): *British Cultural Studies: Geography, Nationality and Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 373-385.

21 MITCHELL, V. W., LODHIA, A.: Understanding the Metrosexual and Spornosexual as a Segment for Retailers. In *International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management*, 2017, Vol. 45, No. 4, p. 349-365.

22 ZAYER, L. T., MCCRATH, M. A., CASTRO-GONZÁLEZ, P.: Men and Masculinities in a Changing World: (De)Legitimizing Gender Ideals in Advertising. In *European Journal of Marketing*, 2020, Vol. 54, No. 1, p. 238-260.

23 BADINTEROVÁ, E.: *XY. O mužské identitě*. Prague, Litomyšl: Paseka, 2005, p. 155.

24 VALOUCHOVÁ, A.: Aktivní otcové. In SEDLÁČEK, L., PLESKOVÁ, K. (eds.): *Aktivní otcovství*. Brno: NESEHNUTÍ, 2008, p. 36-41.

25 See: PRONGER, B.: *Body Fascism: Salvation in the Technology of Physical Fitness*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 2002.

26 For more details, see: LYONS, M. et al.: Detection of Sexual Orientation (“Gaydar”) by Homosexual and Heterosexual Women. In *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, 2014, Vol. 43, No. 2, p. 345-352.

27 SANGHANI, R.: *Metrosexual Men Cost Their Partners £230 a Year in Beauty Products*. [online]. [2020-01-15]. Available at: <<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/lifestyle/10152755/Metrosexual-men-cost-their-partners-230-a-year-in-beauty-products.html>>.

28 See also: HALL, M., GOUGH, B., SEYMOUR-SMITH, S.: Stake Management in Men’s Online Cosmetics Testimonials. In *Psychology and Marketing*, 2013, Vol. 30, No. 3, p. 227-235.

29 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krásu a atraktivitu k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague: Karolinum, 2017, p. 97-106.

In conclusion, we will focus our attention on certain questions related to marketing support of male grooming, or rather cosmetic products and services intended for the purposes of male grooming and construction of its specific narrative as an integral and coherent part of hegemonic masculinity. In this sense we cite selected current trends of development of markets for male grooming products in the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Theory of Capital

The theory of capital in sociological discourse is established as an important thought structure explaining various social functions, clarifying the substance of social order and stability, and last but not least addressing questions of the creation and preservation of social inequalities and their reproduction.³⁰ Bourdieu reveals the logic of the social world as a relational reality in which there are forms of capital determining the power that defines social position and forms specific lifestyles bound to these positions.³¹ Capital in his concept is not reduced solely to accumulated work, usable for the production of material wealth and economic gain, but it is any potential generating an advantage in relation to other people. Bourdieu thus expands and develops the original economising theory of human capital of the 1960s in social contexts of the world as a relational reality in which cultural and social capital are mutually applied alongside economic capital. Cultural capital is characterised apart from the formal dimension in the form of institutionalised education and the acquisition of a diploma by a level of incorporated knowledge, verbal expression, language competence or communication skills, and is further supplemented by the objectivised capacity of this capital in the form of works of artists and tangible artefacts of the cultural world. Social capital is defined as the capacity of a social network of useful contacts, connections and protection, which can be activated in various life situations and applied toward achieving one's own goals and facilitating the solution of various life problems. An important characteristic of the functioning of capital is its reproducibility and convertibility. This means that capital requires investment, a certain level of care and effort, as well as cultivation, attention and activity not only to be preserved but also to be further reinforced. Neither cultural nor social capital are entities that would be capable of autonomously and spontaneously generating their own potential, but rather their capacities are dependent on the amount of investment of their bearers, as well as their willingness and means to revitalise these capacities. Another essential characteristic of capital is its convertibility, i.e. the option to transform one type of capital into another. Social capital can be converted into economic capital (for example, the use of contacts when seeking employment); cultural capital can be used to obtain acquaintances and contacts, while economic capital can be invested in the development of cultural capital in its various forms of expression.

These features of capital are the key to further consideration of the role of erotic capital, dependent on a quantity of investments for its preservation, reinforcement or enhancement, as well as conversion to other forms of capital in the sense of material benefits as well as symbolic values in the form of prestige, recognition or positive self-concept.

Can Beauty Be Capital?

In the 1990s the idea of the form of this capital was established in economic thought, its capacity defined as physical beauty and attractiveness.³² The original theoretical consideration of beauty and its role in achieving success in various areas of life (income, work position, partner life, etc.) has gradually achieved

support in the relatively abundant empirical evidence from studies in economics,³³ evolutionary psychology,³⁴ and sociology.³⁵ The role of beauty and the achievement of life success have been analysed in recent years in an original manner by Czech authors as well. In their opinion, the evolutionary psychology, economics and sociology of beauty represent an important interdisciplinary direction of mutually integrated research that expands the traditional concept of "human capital" by one of its other dimensions.³⁶

Several years ago, the concept of "erotic capital" appeared in sociology. The British sociologist Hakim used this concept to express the fact that physical beauty and attractiveness must be considered in a more complex meaning and not merely as a static and visually observable quality, but as a perceived and experienced social energy of other people, including much more than mere proportionality of the body or symmetry of the face. Hakim also assigns erotic capital a similar meaning and function that we can observe in the case of economic, social and cultural capital. Moreover, the role of erotic capital should be elevated and its influence in various spheres of life enhanced in late modern digitalised societies, where human physicality and beauty is an everyday object of medialisation and commercialisation. Human physicality is increasingly 'eroticised'; sexuality is represented without the features of links to emotional bonds, merely as a technical component of life, promising enticing and arousing hedonistic experiences without commitment: "An era of revolution is being succeeded by a period of commercialization of eroticism; an era of sin by a period of high-performance, hypertechanical, and efficient sex."³⁷

Generally, erotic capital is discussed as beauty or physical attractiveness, i.e. in one of its dominant dimensions, materialised and visualised by human physicality and its proportions, shapes, symmetries and other qualities. Beauty and perceptions of beauty have deep philosophical roots and tradition particularly in the line of thought established by Ancient Greek philosophers. It represents an anthropological constant of cultural life, materialised and symbolically articulated in artistic works, literature, poetry or music. Beauty can be considered a certain type of asset both scarce and in demand, which facilitates or can facilitate access to material and non-material resources in the form of power, property or prestige. It can be a symbol of health, immune system resilience, strength, reproductive success, intelligence, success, satisfaction or uniqueness.

Certain authors, of course, fundamentally question the reality of beauty and its historically established objectivity, and instead relativise the phenomenon of beauty and even define "beauty" as a construct or myth. Probably the most popular author who denies the facticity of beauty is the American feminist Wolf. According to Wolf, beauty is merely a myth generated by the male segment of the population in order to keep women in a subordinate position; beauty represents an ideology the main purpose of which is to limit or revert the individual successes of the women's liberation movement. Men allegedly force onto women the idea of beauty as something objective and universally achievable. It is this fact that, according to Wolf, creates new barriers in the world of women and reinforces gender inequality. In Wolf's understanding, women allegedly did not put stock in beauty prior to 1830.³⁸ And yet, such assertions are fundamentally questioned not only by common historical experience of the lives of archaic, traditional and contemporary societies, captured for example in numerous artistic artefacts and philosophical writings of ancient antiquity, but also culturological and ethnographic studies³⁹ that refer to beauty as a universally shared motif of human creativity across different world cultures. Also, well-known are the anthropological studies of Buss,⁴⁰ who undertook the study of a total of 37 cultures across 5 continents and on 5 islands in order to subsequently formulate generally shared indicators of female attractiveness (full lips, clear skin, bright eyes, rich and long hair, fluid gait, facial symmetry and femininity, feminine voice, low ratio between waist circumference compared to hip circumference). Interesting findings have also been produced by entirely modern studies of evolutionary

30 BOURDIEU, P.: The Forms of Capital. In RICHARDSON, J. (ed.): *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood, 1986, p. 241-242.

31 BOURDIEU, P.: *Teorie jednání*. Prague: Karolinum, 1998, p. 15.

32 HAMERMESH, D. S., BIDDLE, J. E.: Beauty and the Labor Market. In *The American Economic Review*, 1994, Vol. 84, No. 5, p. 1174-1194.

33 HARPER, B.: Beauty, Stature and the Labour Market: A British Cohort Study. In *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 2000, Vol. 62, No. 1, p. 771-784.

34 HASSEBRAUCK, M.: The Visual Process Method: A New Method to Study Physical Attractiveness. In *Evolution and Human Behavior*, 1998, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 111-123.

35 See: HAKIM, C.: *Honey Money. The Power of Erotic Capital*. London: Allen Lane, 2011.

36 MATEJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague: Karolinum, 2017, p. 164.

37 See, for example: LIPOVETSKY, G.: *Paradoxní štěstí*. Prague: Prostor, 2007.

38 WOLF, N.: *The Beauty Myth. How Images of Beauty Are Used against Women*. New York: Harper Perennial, 2002, p. 15.

39 GOTTSCHALL, J. et al.: The Beauty Myth Is No Myth. In *Human Nature Behavior*, 2008, Vol. 19, No. 2, p. 174-188.

40 See: BUSS, D. M.: *Evolution of Desire*. New York: Basic Books, 1994.

biology, focused on the study of the shape and contours of human faces and assessments of their attractiveness. According to certain predictions, the attractiveness of human faces, or a certain proportionality of the contours and shapes of human faces, corresponds not only to objectively measured IQ but also IQ subjectively perceived and estimated by observers. Kleisner, Chvátalová and Flégr used a sample of 40 different attractive photographs of male and female faces to analyse the relationship between the objectively measured IQ of the respondents in the photographs and the abilities of observers to estimate this value using subjective and altogether intuitive guesses at the IQs of the respondents drawn from assessing the individual photographs of their faces. It is surely worth noting that while the observers were not altogether successful in these guesses with photographs of women, and did not succeed in approximating the objectively measured IQ with their own estimated IQ for the faces of women, the opposite was true for the faces of men. Here the actual IQ of the men in the photographs was estimated with far greater accuracy. The authors of the study reached conclusions based on the geometric morphometry of the men's faces that confirmed the function of certain facial parameters in the process of visual assessment of attractiveness and intelligence of the persons studied.⁴¹ It was shown that men, whose faces are more elongated, with greater distance between the eyes, sharper chin, and corners of the mouth oriented in a more upward direction, not only create the impression of greater intelligence but even achieve a higher value of actual intelligence.

In the spirit of these and many other scientific findings, it is difficult to accept the assertions of Wolf that how people look is not objective but merely a construction of what people consider beautiful. The reason is that beauty fills not only a cultural function but a biological one, visually referencing assumptions about reproductive success, resilient immune system and capability to propagate in competition with others.

Erotic capital clearly incorporates attributes of physical beauty as a static quality, captured, for example, by photography or drawing, but these are not by far its sole component. Similar to cultural capital, for example, which is not anchored only in a formal framework of education, diplomas, professional qualifications or academic titles attained, so erotic capital is not a one-dimensional quality reducible only to a sole disposition in the form of physical beauty: *“Physical attractiveness, whose main features are to a significant extent biologically based, may play a large role in sexual selection but for a person represent merely one, albeit significant, element of overall sexual attractiveness.”*⁴² In the concept of “erotic capital” we find it possible to perceive sexual attractiveness, sometimes simplistically described as beauty, in a complex way in terms of its multidimensional character. Hakim differentiates a total of 6 different elements of erotic capital.⁴³

First, it consists of the aforementioned physical attractiveness in its static and visual meaning, defined as a rule by figure and face, i.e. by what can be seen at first sight and relatively quickly assessed. Physical attractiveness is dependent to a certain extent on cultural/historical models of beauty, socially accepted and preferred at certain stages of the life of a society.

Second, sexual attractiveness is an inseparable component of erotic capital, defined by features typical for the ‘male’ and ‘female’ genders. In this dimension, male and female parameters of figure and overall expression of personality are therefore valued. On the contrary, a negative feature is the presence of feminine attributes in men or masculine attributes in women.

Third, it is also important to observe social competence, communications skills, charm, prowess in establishing and retaining interpersonal relationships and empathy as a part of erotic capital, which are partly a clear matter of training and the result of self-refinement in these various social skills, yet partly a congenital disposition of a psychological type of personality and genetic prerequisites.

Fourth, it consists of the overall temperament of a personality, an aspect of response in mutual communication, methods of actual experience or a sense of humour, which very closely relate to the referenced type of personality, its psychological structure and its overall emotional disposition.

The fifth element is the sexuality of the person, fantasy and playfulness, and the ability to offer a partner satisfaction, cultivate their sexual desire and fulfil their wishes in the sexual sphere of life. If we accept the

41 KLEISNER, K., CHVÁTALOVÁ, V., FLÉGR, J.: Perceived Intelligence Is Associated with Measured Intelligence in Men but Not Women. In *PLoS ONE*, 2014, Vol. 9, No. 3, p. 1-7.

42 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague: Karolinum, 2017, p. 27.

43 HAKIM, C.: Erotic Capital. In *European Sociological Review*, 2010, Vol. 26, No. 5, p. 499-518.

thesis that sex is primarily a female resource,⁴⁴ i.e. something offered by women to men and not vice versa, this element of erotic capital is a dominant feature of the female gender, which naturally moderates the increased activity and imagination of men in sexuality and further orients it according to their own possibilities, needs and interests.

Finally, the sixth element of erotic capital is a capacity for self-presentation, an ability to create an elegant, presentable or stylish impression. This capacity of erotic capital is dependent on skills and willingness of people to care for themselves or groom themselves with the goal of looking attractive. Part of this self-presentation is to use exterior style modifications to manifest a certain social position, professional classification, and create an image of oneself, which we monitor and desire to confirm in the eyes of others.

It should be noted that erotic capital is by far not the only part of feminine life strategies for achieving success in various stages of one's own biography, but also a part of male life practices, widely implemented and executed in various types of intensity, form and scope. Beautification or ‘grooming’ is becoming an increasingly important and perceptible component of the life story of men in late modern society, which unfortunately has evoked only sporadic response thus far in terms of systemic and in-depth sociological study of this phenomenon. Here we will pay closer attention to this element of self-presentation. We will point out its considerable economic and marketing potential.

Does It Pay Off to Invest in Beauty?

In the context of the theory of erotic capital, physical attractiveness, purposefully supported and enhanced through the art of self-presentation, is a tool for social and economic success. According to a study by Wong and Penner,⁴⁵ more attractive men and women are more successful in income and their performed professions – by 20% than their less attractive colleagues. Not only is the evident influence of beauty on income confirmed, but this influence has been further enhanced when introducing additional variables in the form of ‘grooming’. To summarise, according to the findings of the authors of this study, the influence of above-average grooming on the amount of income was shown to be more significant than the influence of beauty itself, which also had a positive effect on the amount of income, yet was not as significant as the effect of grooming. This finding is also supported by the fact that below average beauty is a less severe circumstance reducing professional success in material area than below average grooming (careless attire, unkempt hair, lack of cleanliness, etc.), which threatens the amount of income achieved far more than below average attractiveness of physical appearance. Self-presentation, dependent on the willingness and ability to care for oneself, to conceal flaws, and conversely to highlight and emphasise positive elements of one's own appearance, is thus a worthwhile investment.

As noted above, investments in beauty and attractiveness are stereotypically attributed more to the female population. Grooming is frequently stereotyped as a female phenomenon in advertising as well, and numerous marketing strategies are adapted to this stereotype. Despite the fact that the cosmetics industry, for example, is traditionally associated with women and communicated in marketing as a typically feminine sphere of production, male demand for cosmetic products in recent years has increased significantly and has become a very attractive and lucrative market segment in economic terms, in which the financial interests of companies are intertwined with the efforts of consumers to build and confirm their own identities⁴⁶ using products and services of physical grooming. *“Early efforts to sell beauty were tied largely to the cultivation of womanhood and different femininities, but we now see the proliferation of corporate attempts to connect men's identities to the consumption of beauty products and services.”*⁴⁷ Male grooming has a unique history and fills an important social and cultural function: *“The way men cultivate their bodies distinguishes them not only*

44 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague: Karolinum, 2017, p. 43.

45 WONG, J. S., PENNER, A. M.: Gender and the Returns to Attractiveness. In *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility*, 2016, Vol. 44, p. 113-123.

46 For more details, see: LIU, C.: Men and Their Groomed Body. In *European Journal of Marketing*, 2019, Vol. 53, No. 5, p. 1015-1034.

47 BARBER, K.: *Styling Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Inequality in the Men's Grooming Industry*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016, p. 47.

from women, but also from other men along the lines of class, race, and sexuality (...) The rise of men's grooming as a subsector of the beauty industry allows for new exploitations and inequalities to emerge alongside men's commercial pursuit of social distinction.⁴⁸

The fact that the male grooming industry is becoming a highly lucrative economic sector has been confirmed by other empirical studies as well. According to Souiden and Diagne,⁴⁹ referencing to marketing analyses of the market served by L'Oreal, in 1990 only 4% of the male population reported regular use of face creams and other cosmetic products for facial care, whereas in 2001 male customers increased to 21% and in 2015 this growth was expected to reach an estimated 50%. In the last 20 years, global growth of the male grooming market has been roughly 4.5% per year.⁵⁰ Whereas in certain male grooming product segments this growth has been evident for some time, others have seen a decrease in sales, which applies, for example, to safety razors both in Europe and the USA. In Europe a decreasing share of sales of safety razors has been monitored from as early as 2014; a similar trend has been seen in the USA as well, where the sale of safety razors in 2016 to 2017 dropped by 2.4% and this trend has been confirmed in recent years as well.⁵¹ Global markets for male grooming products remain underdeveloped, despite offering highly attractive sales potential. For example, the share of products intended for facial care for men comprise only a 2.08% worldwide of all these types of products on offer.⁵²

'Grooming' is becoming an ever more important part of life for the male population and at the same time an attractive economic opportunity for manufacturers and sellers, accompanied by robust support of the marketing and media industry. From a sociological perspective, it remains interesting to identify the motivations of physical grooming of men and their willingness to invest more material and non-material resources into their own appearance, from which they expect various effects. One of these effects may be an expectation of success in the form of a more lucrative profession, higher income or a more attractive place in the work hierarchy with a broader range of decision-making and managing authority, for example.

The question of relationships between desire for success and care for one's own appearance and overall physical attractiveness was the focus in recent years of a team of Czech sociologists led by Matějů. They attempted to determine on the basis of a representative sample if men (but also women) who prioritise professional success care more about how they look. The authors of the study proved that this relationship does in fact exist. The correlation between orientation on professional success and interest in actual physical appearance is strong and statistically significant. What is interesting is the fact that the association is stronger in the case of men, who therefore probably more frequently place greater hope than women in the effect of physical attractiveness in achieving professional success. At the same time, care for one's appearance is a more natural behaviour for women, and the reasons for this care are more than just professional success. In the case of men, it can be assumed that the motive of success very reliably incites greater interest in physical attractiveness, which in the population of women is apparently activated by a larger number of factors, not reflecting solely a motive to advance in a professional track.⁵³

It is not surprising that the correlation between success and physical attractiveness is weakest under the age of 30 for both men and women, i.e. during youth, when beauty still does not require such exterior intervention. This correlation nonetheless grows stronger in middle and upper age, when it is necessary, as a result of natural aging, to implement various exterior interventions and practices of a short-term and long-term character to help slow the effects of aging. At the same time, aging is the most natural and most reliable process of the physiological degradation of a person, as a result of which the features of beauty fade, lose

48 BARBER, K.: *Styling Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Inequality in the Men's Grooming Industry*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016, p. 46.

49 SOUIDEN, N., DIAGNE, M.: Canadian and French Men's Consumption of Cosmetics: A Comparison of Their Attitudes and Motivations. In *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 2009, Vol. 26, No. 2, p. 97.

50 BANO, S., SHARIF, M. A. M.: Metrosexual: Emerging and Lucrative Segment for Marketers. In *International Review of Management and Marketing*, 2015, Vol. 6, No. 4, p. 117.

51 FINANCIAL TIMES: *Made-up Men Reflect Changing \$50bn Male Grooming Industry*. [online]. [2020-01-16]. Available at: <<https://www.ft.com/content/825e520c-c798-11e6-8f29-9445cac8966f>>.

52 MICHAELIS, D.: *Index: Men's Skin Care Market*. [online]. [2020-01-15]. Available at: <<https://www.cossma.com/marketing/article/index-mens-skin-care-market-33836.html>>.

53 MATĚJŮ, M. et al.: *Moc krásy. Pomáhá krása a atraktivita k životnímu úspěchu?* Prague: Karolinum, 2017, p. 97.

their original form and transform into physical features and manifestations that are associated with reduced performance, wear and tear, fatigue, loss of dynamism, etc.

It is in this group of the population, which relies on beauty because they wish to be successful in their professional careers, but which at the same time are growing older and therefore required to invest more attention and care to retain their attractiveness, that considerable potential exists for the 'grooming' industry and marketing strategies that would focus more on men in light of sociological findings. In accordance with these findings, it is possible to adapt advertising content with the goal of more effectively addressing the male segment of the population with an offer of all types of products for the purposes of their own 'grooming'. If the communication of grooming products was closely and credibly interwoven with a motif of success in the content of the values of work and performance, or ambition, such types of communications if suitably designed in various advertising formats would more effectively reach the target audience of men.

Marketing Support of the Male Beauty Narrative as Part of Hegemonic Masculinity

From the perspective of sociological findings, the data based on the available empirical evidence of Matějů's research team indicates a narrative of male attractiveness, or male grooming and overall care for physical appearance in coherence with the narrative of professional success (assuming competitiveness and aggressiveness) and with the attribute of a model for life success in other dimensions of everyday activities as well. Professional success of men is generally associated with their higher socioeconomic status and dominant role in society, which references a model of hegemonic masculinity, representing success in private and public spheres. Male grooming then does not need to be interpreted in the plural concept of masculinities, as an expression of subordinate or otherwise marginalised and 'handicapped' masculinities (e.g. homosexual), but on the contrary as one of the tools for realisation of models of dominant expressions of hegemonic masculinity.

Brands such as Axe, Diesel, Dove Men + Care or Nivea for Men are successfully established in evolving grooming markets. The colognes of David Beckham are well-known throughout the world in the popular versions Homme, Respect 90, Classic Blue, Intimately and Instinct. These and other cosmetics brands use the ever-popular image of the 'metrosexual' (metropolitan heterosexual) male, who acknowledges his own feminine component and cares for his appearance.⁵⁴ The men's cosmetics brands The Art of Shaving, L'Oreal's Lab Series, Jack Black, Bulldog, Clinique, Hanz de Fuka and Murdock London have successfully established themselves in global markets using media images of the 'metrosexual'. The business success of these brands of the male grooming industry is no coincidence.⁵⁵ According to Barber, "*Selling beauty to men involves using discourses of masculinity to mark previously feminized spaces, products, and services as 'for men'*".⁵⁶ In this way it *de facto* points to the importance of the psychological and sociological dimension of the process of manufacturing, selling and purchasing of grooming products as a traditionally feminine offering, penetrating into the circle of interests of consumption for the male segment of the population. For this reason, the marketing communications of male grooming products cannot ignore these social and psychological aspects, but on the contrary must convincingly integrate them into the form and content of their own communications. Sales points are also intensively adapting to this, as the 'Men Zone' appears in certain shopping centres, typically with a blue light, accompanied by the television production of a sports broadcast, which is intended to reinforce not only the comfort of male shopping at the sales point but also to provide a certain level of discreetness which men appreciate particularly in those situations when they feel awkward and uncertain in the presence of women while purchasing cosmetics products.

54 TUNCAY, L.: Conceptualizations of Masculinity among a "New" Breed of Male Consumers. In STEVENS, L., BORGERSON, J. (eds.): *Gender and Consumer Behaviour*. Edinburgh: Association for Consumer Research, 2006, p. 312-327.

55 Remark by authors: For more information about the differences in male and female consumer styles and the importance of brands in men's shopping, see VOKOUNOVÁ, D.: Nákupné štýly mladej generácie. In *Marketing, Science and Inspirations*, 2019, Vol. 14, No. 1, p. 39-40.

56 BARBER, K.: *Styling Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Inequality in the Men's Grooming Industry*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016, p. 61.

Manufacturers of male cosmetics are also adapting not only the naming of products but also the colour and overall design in such a way that they correspond more to masculine values and approach a masculine perception of the world. Certain colognes or body lotions are accompanied by grey and metallic colours, with blue shades dominating, while the shapes of the packages recall certain military or sporting goods. The increasing integration of the market offers the option for dialogue and support between socio-demographic groups. Each group presents its values and standards primarily for the purpose of developing its identity.⁵⁷

Men can enter the world of beauty thanks to marketing techniques, even with a specific vocabulary. Male and female grooming is therefore also a question of language. Gender modifications of linguistic terms and designations are a very substantial part of redefining beauty for men as something natural and non-threatening to the essence of masculinity. By using language properly, it is possible to reinforce the narrative of male grooming as an integral part of hegemonic masculinity and indeed questions the conviction that male grooming disrupts or even eliminates masculinity in favour of androgyny, femininity or homosexuality. Research into the representation of beauty, gender roles and stereotyping of human race in professional photography is directly linked to the use of advertising photography. Goffman was among the first sociologists who analysed the orientation of expressions and positions of models in advertisements. He pointed to stereotypes and models that reflect contemporary social norms. Professional photography can be considered a reflection of social trends and lifestyle, and for this reason photographs are conceived in such a way as to capture socially desirable ideals.⁵⁸ Beauty is always depicted using socially established norms, never as an entirely abstract concept. Professional photography pursues the goal of capturing beauty that is entrenched in the contemporary trends, produced and reproduced in the process of self-stereotyping.

The terminology for women vs. men in the area of beauty products and services may be differentiated in different cases as follows: Salon vs. Grooming Lounge; Bangs vs. Front; Manicure vs. MANicure/Hand Detailing; Pedicure vs. Foot Detailing; Hair Colouring vs. Colour Camo; Body Waxing vs. Malescaping/Manscaping; Facial vs. Skin Detailing; Highlights vs. Manlights.⁵⁹

Systemic marketing support has gradually established the male grooming industry as a prospective industry with substantially growing economic potential. Presentation of an ideal, whether beauty, harmony or strength in women and men has been a key element of advertising photography since the very beginning of its use in marketing communications, i.e. from the beginning of the era of mechanical reproduction.⁶⁰ The published image has always reflected period and social, gender or religious models. Global media and social networking sites now play an important role in shaping and codifying certain conventions both for creating photography, sharing it and emulating it by individuals who attempt to underscore their own identities.

Over time, the point of view of the photographer in relation to the subject has gradually changed. Movement, active dynamic posture is an integral, expected component of a shared image, whether commercial or private. The movement and dynamic activity of subjects are now a key element when creating attractive content; an actively sporting man who takes care of himself is presented as a template. The construction of an ideal itself, and therefore male beauty, is understood in the theoretical framework of “representation” defined in the text by Hall,⁶¹ who proposes analysing representation reflexively and in a constructivist manner. That is, observing the manner in which we share information about ourselves to the world, and how we understand and interpret symbols, images, text and the spoken word that reaches us. Intentionally created advertising visuals document the processes of negotiating human identities, which are based on a set of norms and the cultural context of the given time and place, often distinctly influenced by marketing communications itself.

57 CIRKLOVÁ, J.: Tracing Trust and Distrust. Leviticus Reinterpreted in the Frame of the Contemporary Consumer Culture. In *European Journal of Science and Theology*, 2020, Vol. 16, No. 1, p. 1-10.

58 See: GOFFMAN, E.: *Gender Advertisements*. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.

59 BARBER, K.: *Styling Masculinity: Gender, Class, and Inequality in the Men's Grooming Industry*. New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2016, p. 64.

60 BENJAMIN, W.: The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction. In ARENDT, H. (ed.): *Illuminations*. New York: Schocken Books, 1969, p. 217-251.

61 See: HALL, S.: *Recent Developments in Theories of Language and Ideology: A Critical Note. Culture, Media, Language: Working Papers in Cultural Studies*. Birmingham: University of Birmingham, 1980.

In recent years, the Czech and Slovak market for male grooming has undergone an interesting evolution. In the Czech Republic it is possible on the basis of socioeconomic data from *Euromonitor International 2019*⁶² to identify growing interest in male care products, thanks to massive support of advertising and product innovation that far more closely appeals to male needs. Social media has played a significant role, specifically *Instagram* and *YouTube*, where discussions and comments related to the topics of male grooming have grown. All of this is also influenced by perceptions of the position of make-up in the portfolio of male cosmetics, which for some time has polarised the male population in terms of opinion. While Clinique, Yves Saint Laurent and Calvin Klein have introduced make-up for men to the Czech market, the brands Mac, Tom Ford and Marc Jacobs offer gender-neutral make-up. At the same time, it is confirmed that men are willing to spend higher amount of money on cosmetics; of course, their modes of shopping are typically irregular and impulsive. It is also worth noting that the Dermacol Men Agent line is newly appearing on the Czech market, offering over 20 cosmetic products intended for men. Thus, the Dermacol brand is offering a men's line of cosmetic products on the Czech market for the first time in its 50-year history. One important circumstance is the fact that retail chains such as Lidl, Tesco, Rossmann or DM are substantially increasing the extent of their offerings of male cosmetics as part of a diversification strategy, responding not only to growing desire for personalisation, but also the redefining boundaries of masculinity.

The Slovak market for male cosmetics and grooming is also undergoing interesting developments and transformations.⁶³ Here, the trend persists for inadequately shaved face in men and clipping hair. Marketing prognoses nonetheless call attention to a potential weakening of this trend in future years as the result of advertising campaigns using sports celebrities (e.g. Cristiano Ronaldo) and show business personalities who may reverse this tendency to benefit the fashion of a clean-shaven face. Whereas facial grooming is not as popular in the case of Slovak men, the shaving of other parts of the body, particularly intimate ones, is becoming more and more of a preference. This trend is reflected in growing sales of electronic razors and various trimmers. On the contrary, the sale of safety razors and generally manual shaving tools is decreasing. Similar to the Czech Republic, in Slovakia Dermacol has also successfully entered the market with male cosmetics, specifically shower gels, deodorants and products for hair and facial care. The entry of Dermacol to the male cosmetics market was accompanied by robust marketing support. Specifically, television advertising featuring popular Slovak musicians, printed advertisements in fashion magazines and Internet advertising on social media were deployed. Slovak men are focusing their attention ever more intensively on domestic cosmetics products reflecting a value system oriented on patriotism and nationalism.

Conclusion

Masculinity is not a static quality; on the contrary it is a culturally constructed and socially modified, defined plurality of various coexisting forms, in which these different masculinities obtain the status of a hegemonic or otherwise marginalised submissive masculinity. Male grooming is a historical phenomenon that in the contemporary late modern consumer culture acquires entirely specific cultural dimensions, social and economic meaning, thanks in part to robust media support of marketing communication. Male grooming is essentially motivated by an effort to reinforce and generally improve physical attractiveness as capital leading to the achievement of life success in the public and private space.

Beauty and physical attractiveness are neither an artificial construct nor an ideology propagated by men for suppressing and demeaning women, but an objective reality, perceived and experienced, whose features and expressions possess only a deep, evolution-based foundation but also a number of other social and cultural functions. Whereas the perspective of evolutionary biology refers to beauty as information about the potential for reproductive success of individuals and their physiological condition (e.g. immune system resistance),

62 EUROMONITORINTERNATIONAL: *Beauty and Personal Care in the Czech Republic*. [online]. [2020-01-17]. Available at: <<https://www.euromonitor.com/beauty-and-personal-care-in-the-czech-republic/report>>.

63 EUROMONITORINTERNATIONAL: *Beauty and Personal Care in Slovakia*. [online]. [2020-01-17]. Available at: <<https://www.euromonitor.com/beauty-and-personal-care-in-slovakia/report>>.

the sociological perspective at the same time emphasises the influence of beauty on life success regardless of any influences of other variables in the form of age, education or gender. The effect of beauty is therefore expressed independently and manifests in the achievement of various life goals, and facilitates the acquisition of various advantages in competition with others (higher income, professional status, easier and more efficient building of social networks, etc.).

Physical attractiveness is a component of erotic capital that, in addition to social, cultural and economic capital, significantly contributes to a form of social status and the creation of constellations of human social positions within a social structure. In other words, it represents a certain capacity, providing certain competitive advantages in the conditions of relational reality.

In a performance-oriented society, in which the value of success is the main metric, the interest of men and women will be ever more clearly concentrated on the creation and retention of capital whose capacities will be an effective source of competitiveness against others. Self-presentation as an element of erotic capital can be perceived as an important type of sub-capital based on care of one's body, physical expression and enhancement of physical attractiveness; it can have not only psychological effects in the form of increased self-confidence and self-concept but also effects in the form of greater chances for achievement of professional success, bringing material and non-material advantages.

Men who care about success also care about how they look. They understand well that care for their physical appearance can be one of the important attributes of achieving such success. The grooming industry and its complex support in the tools of integrated marketing communication may take better advantage of these findings and integrate them into advertising campaigns, for example. The media-constructed narrative of male grooming should clearly and emphatically communicate this narrative as potential for achieving hegemonic masculinity, i.e. dominance and success in the socioeconomic dimension of life, and should react to perceptions of male grooming as the potential expression of a crisis of masculinity or the submissive or marginalised masculinity so unattractive to and rejected by the heterosexual male population.

A more complex question remains: whether we are truly witnessing the twilight of masculinity in the context of certain philosophical/sociological views contributing to the conviction of a deepening crisis of masculinity through a fundamental questioning of the traditional male identity and the transformation of the male role into an uncertain and opaque set of expectations of what his main focus in life should be, how he should distinguish himself, what he should strive for, and in what may he achieve actualisation.⁶⁴ At the same time, this represents the conviction that the integration of feminine aspects is too strong an element, one that transforms the essence of manhood, and consequently tends more toward the convergence of the genders than their clear differentiation.

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64 KOMÁREK, S.: *Muž jako evoluční inovace? Eseje o maskulinitě, její etologii, životních strategiích a proměnách*. Prague : ACADEMIA, 2012, p. 193.

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