

Ewelina Kamasz

(Uniwersytet Kazimierza Wielkiego w Bydgoszczy)

Rita Frieske

(Uniwersytet Warszawski)

Representations of Masculinity in Advertising in Poland and China

Introduction

Contemporary culture is an individualistic one highly focused on body, appearance and attractiveness. Postmodern body is essentially different from modern body. The postmodern body gives pleasure and helps to experience it. If a person cannot fully embrace new sensations, his body is thought to be crippled. In contrast, the modern body was supposed to serve a person to fulfill his duties as a worker, or a soldier. One was supposed to nourish it and sustain all bodily functions – other actions concerning body care were thought to be excessive and useless¹.

Nowadays we can observe the growing cult of the body². This cult takes the whole universe³ and shrinks it down to the size and shape of one's body. This new religion has got its followers (ordinary people all around the world), saints (celebrities in the magazines, films, on television and internet), priests (personal trainers and surgeons), temples (gyms, runways, red carpets), and holy books (on how to lose 20 kilos in a month).

¹ Z. Bauman, *Ponowoczesne przygody ciała*, in: *Antropologia ciała. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, edited by M. Szpakowska, Warszawa 2008, pp. 95-102.

² D. Czaja, *Ciało w kilku odsłonach*, in: *Metamorfozy ciała. Świadectwa i interpretacje*, Warszawa 1999, edited by idem, p. 7.

³ W. Małecki, *Somatoestetyka a normy ciała*, „Kultura Współczesna”, 1/2009.

Advertising and marketing agencies tend to use Photoshopped images that will help to sell their products. A lot of commercials tend to exploit models and objectify both women's and men's bodies. Lots of these images reinforce harmful stereotypes about gender. To be frank, there are not many ads that do not include either an image of a young, half-naked women/men acting as a sex object or a woman busy doing housework while her husband is enjoying his leisure time.

Physical attractiveness and male body in Western culture and Poland

Physical attractiveness is beneficial in many aspects of life – it can help you to find a partner, avoid getting a speeding ticket or to get a job over a less attractive candidate. Every culture and society has its own beauty standards. According to the social expectation theory, physical attractiveness is a highly valued asset that can moderate social interactions. A person's attractiveness has been found to produce a halo effect, in which an observer's overall impression of a person influences their thoughts about person's character⁴. Physical attractiveness is the one positive aspect of a perceived person that makes us think of them in a positive way⁵, e.g. if she is beautiful, she must be also moral, intelligent and good-natured. We are more willing to mingle with attractive people because we assume they are competent, nice, kind, generous, even-tempered, strong, happy, socially active and sexually satisfied⁶. By contrast, the devil effect occurs when people allow a negative trait to influence their evaluation of other traits⁷.

Heavily exploited in media, beauty is also connected with success, fame, and money⁸. Beauty standards set by media are unattainably high and difficult to meet. An internalized image of a perfect body is one of the reasons of lower self-esteem, and eventually, worse life quality⁹. Self-esteem is crucial for our happiness and life satisfaction¹⁰, it is also inevitably influenced by social approval and one's age. People with higher self-esteem perceive themselves as more socially attractive and more likable¹¹. They also have fewer psychosomatic afflictions than individuals with the lower self-esteem¹².

⁴ W. Wosińska, *Psychologia życia społecznego*, Gdańsk 2004.

⁵ B. Wojciszke, *Człowiek wśród ludzi. Zarys psychologii społecznej*, Warszawa 2006.

⁶ E. Mandal, *Miłość, władza i manipulacja w bliskich związkach*, Warszawa 2008.

⁷ A. Głębocka, *Niezadowolone z wyglądu a rozpaczliwa kontrola wagi*, Kraków 2009.

⁸ Ibidem.

⁹ A. Brytek-Matera, *Obraz ciała – obraz siebie. Wizerunek własnego ciała w ujęciu psychospołecznym*, Warszawa 2008.

¹⁰ C.D Ryff, B. Singer, *Paradoksy kondycji ludzkiej. Dobrostan i zdrowie na drodze ku śmierci*, edited by J. Czapiński, *Psychologia pozytywna. Nauka o szczęściu, zdrowiu, sile i cnotach człowieka*, edited by J. Czapiński, Warszawa 2004, pp. 147-162.

¹¹ V. Battistich, D. Solomon, K. Delucchi, *Interaction Processes and Student Outcomes in Cooperative Learning Groups.*, "The Elementary School Journal", 94/1993, pp. 19–32.

¹² M. Łaguna, K. Lachowicz-Tabaczek, I. Dzwonkowska, *Skala samoocen SES Morrissa Rosenberga – polska adaptacja metody*, „Psychologia Społeczna”, 2/2007, pp. 164-176.

Aesthetic medicine hand in hand with pharmaceutical industry pelts us with promises of enhancing our appearance¹³. Women feel obliged to stay fit, while men want to bulk up. According to the American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery and the American Society of Plastic Surgeons buttock augmentation surgery is getting more popular. With more than 10 million cosmetic procedures performed in 2014, those that showed the largest growth in volume on a year-over-year basis included buttock augmentation (up 86%), labiaplasty (up 49%), and nonsurgical fat reduction (up 42%). Additionally, more men are turning to aesthetic cosmetic procedures, with dramatic increases seen in both surgical and nonsurgical options over the past 5 years and a 43% increase overall¹⁴. The fast-growing interest in aesthetic medicine indicates a worrying tendency to improve one's look regardless of the consequences and money¹⁵.

The obsession with body building and body modifications is not only limited to women's lifestyle magazines but is also presented in magazines addressed to men. In "Men's Health"¹⁶ we can read that perfect shoulders, flat stomach and muscular arms are essential to get woman's attention and make every man happy.

Contemporary men face the unattainable goal of being well-educated machos with no hair on their chests¹⁷. Arcimowicz has conducted research in which he has tested if mass media present three male body types equally (mesomorphic – having a muscular body build, ectomorphic – having a light body build, endomorphic – having a heavy rounded body build with a tendency to become overweight)¹⁸. After analyzing male beauty icons of the last twenty years he has stated that the most popular actors (e.g. playing James Bond) are mesomorphic. Mesomorphic body type was also the most prominent and most frequent body type in "People's" rankings of the most handsome men of 2013 and 2014.

Masculinity in Western culture

In 1976 David and Brannon published their paper on four themes crucial for the male sex-role: *no sissy stuff* (men should not display any feminine, emotional behaviors), *the big wheel* (men should be successful and rule the others), *the sturdy oak*

¹³ W. Strzelecki, M. Cybulski, M. Strzelecka, A. Dolczewska-Samela, *Zmiana wizerunku medialnego kobiety a zaburzenia odżywiania we współczesnym świecie*, „Nowiny Lekarskie”, 2(76)/2007, pp. 173-181.

¹⁴ American Society for Aesthetic Plastic Surgery <http://www.surgery.org/media/news-releases/the-american-society-for-aesthetic-plastic-surgery-reports-americans-spent-more-than-12-billion-in-2014--pro>, 28.05.2015.

¹⁵ M. Čiarbič, L. Pokrywka, *Piękno ciała*, Warszawa 2010.

¹⁶ „Men's Health” <http://www.menshealth.pl/>, 15.04.2015.

¹⁷ T. Szlendak, *Leniwe maskotki, rekiny na smyczy. W co kultura konsumpcyjna przemieniła mężczyzn i kobiety*, Warszawa 2005.

¹⁸ K. Arcimowicz, *Ciało męskie w kulturze współczesnej*, in: *Corpus delicti – rozkoszne ciało. Szkice nie tylko z socjologii ciała*, edited by E. Banaszak, P. Czajkowski, Warszawa 2010, pp. 125-127.

(men should rely on themselves), *giv'em hell* (men should be daring and aggressive)¹⁹ Thompson and Pleck conducted research on 400 young males and created a three-dimensional model of the male sex-role consisting of three elements: status, toughness and anti-femininity²⁰. Kimmel believes that we equate manhood with being strong, successful, capable, reliable and in control²¹. Courtenay emphasizes that men must suppress their physical and emotional pain, neglect their health in order to control the pain and exert power²². As a result a lot of men avoid visiting doctors because the traditional male role does not include admitting one's weakness.

Cultural representation of masculinity in China

Idealized image of masculinity is being shaped by many factors including fashion, changing male roles, historical and economic conditions²³. During the Tang dynasty Chinese men cultivated "a virile, even martial appearance. They liked thick beards, whiskers and strong moustaches and admired bodily strength"²⁴. Ideal lover of the Qing dynasty "is described as delicate, hyper-sensitive youngster with pale face and narrow shoulders, passing the greater part of his time dreaming among his books and flowers, and who falls ill at the slightest disappointment"²⁵. The above description refers to two different historical contexts that were primarily shaped by the political situation in China. It is absolutely understandable that during warring the Tang dynasty martial look was more popular. The Qing dynasty on the other side was established by Manchus, to prevent rebellions martial arts were restricted only for the ruling ethnic group, therefore Chinese men from the Han majority started despising the barbarian art of war, and thus the intellectual style came into fashion²⁶.

Kam Louie notices that Western image of masculinity is dominant in the field of men's studies. Masculinity in the West exposes itself in courage, individualism, physical rather than verbal form of expression and callous attitude towards sexual relations. Because of the cultural domination of this specific image, masculinity models created in other cultures are often shown in the opposition. And so, because masculinity in China operates with another set of values, Chinese men are perceived as girlish, too delicate, not manly enough. Louie claims that models of masculinity from cultures other than Western should be analyzed within their

¹⁹ D.S. David, & R. Brannon, *The Forty Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*, Reading 1976.

²⁰ E.H. Thompson, J.H. Pleck, *The Structure of Male Role Norms*, "American Behavioral Scientist", nr 29/1986, pp. 531-543.

²¹ M. Kimmel, *Masculinity as Homophobia: Fear, Shame and Silence in the Construction of Gender Identity*, in: *Theorizing Masculinities*, Newbury Park 1994.

²² W. Courtenay, *Theorizing Masculinity and Men's Health*, in: *Men's Health: Body, Identity and Social Context*, Chichester 2009.

²³ K. Louie, *Theorizing Chinese Masculinity. Society and Gender in China*, Cambridge 2002.

²⁴ R. H. Van Gulik, *Sexual Life in Ancient China*, Leiden 1974.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ K. Louie, op. cit.

own context. He suggests that traditional notion of manliness in China consists of two elements: cultural *wen* (文) and martial *wu* (武). Due to examination system for government officials, men from every social class of Chinese society could obtain high status and wealth. Because of this both elements, cultural and martial, could be possibly applied to almost every man in China. Of course, the situation in which one element was prevailing was the most common (for instance men from higher social circles were more likely to cultivate their cultural side), but the ideal man would possess them both. It is worth mentioning, that martial aspect of masculinity differs from that known in Western cultures. It is marked not only physical strength and love of fight – reason, self control and virtue are important parts of this trait²⁷. One could compare it to martial approach represented by goddess of rightful war Athena rather than love of fight itself represented by god Ares. As we already mentioned men could possess only one of these traits, nevertheless, great Chinese political leaders should combine two merits. Annals mention Qing emperor Kangxi as versed both in *wen* and *wu* skills, and respectful both towards literati, as well as military officers. Military and political leaders were often depicted with some attributes of cultured officials. Example from recent history of the XX century, Mao Zedong, was praised for his skills in calligraphy. Term *wen* appears early in Chinese history. It was praised above *wu* by Confucius and consequently we find numerous descriptions of *junzi* (君子): virtuous man, exemplary man, man of noble character in Confucian canon. *Junzi* can live in poverty. *Junzi* does more, speaks less. He is loyal, obedient and knowledgeable. He practices self-cultivation and measures himself according to rigorous standards. “The superior man, extensively studying all learning, and keeping himself under the restraint of the rules of propriety, may thus likewise not overstep what is right”²⁸.

Representations of men in advertising in Western culture and Poland

Advertisement is an important part of the Western culture. The contemporary society forms their citizens to be perfect consumers, buying more and more commodities. Shudson believes that advertising gives us an insight into an economic system and the whole of a society's structure²⁹. It provides us valuable information on the transformations of culture and stereotypes underlying other person's perception.

Edward Bernays believed that advertising is a tool that might be powered by personal fears and desires, a notion he had learned from his famous uncle – Sigmund Freud³⁰. Claimed father of public relations and modern advertising, Ber-

²⁷ K. Louie, L. Edwards, *Chinese Masculinity: Theorising Wen and Wu. East Asian History*, 8/2004, pp. 135-148.

²⁸ *Confucian Analects, the Great Learning, and the Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. J. Legge, The Chinese Classics I, London 1861, Trübner Revised second edition 1893, Oxford Clarendon Press, reprinted by Cosimo in 2006.

²⁹ Z. Bauman, *Ponowoczesne przygody ciała*, in: *Antropologia ciała*, op. cit., pp. 95-102.

³⁰ M. Shudson, *The Uneasy Persuasion: its Dubious Impact on American Society*, New York 1984.

nays, applied this rule in practice while making numerous campaigns. One of his ideas was to implement messages of high social status, power and sex to car industry campaigns while working with General Motors. Bond between cars and these desires has ever since been, used in industry commercials aimed on male audiences.

According to Bernays³¹, advertisements describe everyday life, social order and rituals in social life. Ad makers do not create stereotypes, they simply use already existing ones to sell their products. Gender displays are used heavily in advertising in order to establish the role of one gender in relation to the other. Advertisements create a distorted reflection of the real world, in which some things are emphasized and others are de-emphasized³². Advertisements reflect gender stereotypes and try to show them in the most attractive ways³³.

Since the 1980s men's bodies have started appearing more frequently in advertising. Men have been shown more often as sex objects³⁴ with hard abdominal muscles, massive chests and inflated shoulders³⁵. As a result, men are getting more interested in their looks³⁶, some of them are developing Adonis complex and eating disorders due to prolonged exposure to idealized male bodies in advertising³⁷. Men have to face exploitation and objectification in the same way as women have had to for years. Hopefully, advertisements can not only transmit stereotypes but they can also show new representations of masculinity that could affect people's behaviours.

A considerable amount of literature in consumer research has studied the use of representations of the female and male image in advertising. Dziedzic has deconstructed the message of television advertisement in Poland and the UK. Commercials tend to show women three times more than men in both countries. Men in Polish commercials are depicted as professionals (in stereotypically female and male areas of expertise), they do sports and rarely do household chores or take care of children³⁸. Men have all the power and prestige in advertisements, they are able to play many prestigious social roles whereas women are deprived of these chances. Men are also shown as more intelligent, self-sufficient and creative³⁹.

³¹ E. Bernays, M. Miller, *Propaganda*. New York 2005.

³² E. Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, New York 1976.

³³ Ibidem.

³⁴ J. Bator, *Wizerunek kobiety w reklamie telewizyjnej*, Warszawa 1998.

³⁵ A.J. Kimmel, E. Tissier-Desbordes, *Males, Masculinity, and Consumption: An Exploratory Investigation*, "European Advances in Consumer Research", 4/1999, pp. 243-251.

³⁶ H.G. Pope, Jr, K.A. Phillips, R. Olivardia, *The Adonis complex: The Secret Crisis of Male Body Obsession*, *New York*, New York 2000.

³⁷ D. Barthel, *When Men Put on Appearances: Advertising and the Social Construction of Masculinity*, in: *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, edited by S. Craig, London 1992.

³⁸ H.G. Pope, op. cit.

³⁹ K. Dziedzic, *Wizerunek kobiety i mężczyzny w reklamie telewizyjnej w Polsce i w Wielkiej Brytanii*, in: *Portrety kobiet i mężczyzn w środkach masowego przekazu oraz podręcznikach szkolnych*, Warszawa 1997, pp. 89-94.

The cosmetic industry turned its eye to men in the 1980s. All of a sudden men could see commercials of cosmetics designed especially for them. They were required to focus more on their looks and their bodies were instantly objectified and subjugated, just like female bodies had been objectified and subjugated earlier⁴⁰. However, Twardowska and Olczyk claim that male bodies are treated in a kinder way than the female ones in Polish commercials. The authors hold firm, saying that consumers do not focus on men's beauty, wrinkled skin or weight. In their opinion Polish men are not expected to look flawless⁴¹. Arcimowicz has analyzed different representations of men in Polish commercials. He has described 8 men's types shown on television advertisements: *professionals, chiefs, husbands, family men, lovers, babysitters, gentlemen and men doing household chores*⁴².

Professionals in the ad world give women pieces of advice about cooking, cleaning, washing up, doing laundry. They are usually middle-aged, reliable men that are not afraid of anything, plan ahead, manage their time wisely, travel around the world and are sophisticated. They are businessmen, bankers, lawyers, architects, mechanics, cooks, bartenders. These men lecture women on how they should run their households, take care of their children and themselves. In commercials men are very often chiefs and women are their subordinates. Bosses give orders and display their power. The team's poor play is being blamed on the ineptitude of female staff⁴³.

In traditional families husbands make money while their wives take care of children and create a joyful home atmosphere. Kaschak has described a traditional female role as a mother of her children and her husband's wife (like Jocasta) fulfilling emotional and physical needs of her relatives, whereas a male role is a mixture of being a husband and a privileged child with special needs (like Oedipus)⁴⁴. In Polish commercials women cook, serve food, wash clothes while men sit on the couch, read newspapers or watch television. Husbands usually do not want to listen to their wives' tales and flee to pubs. They are not interested in doing their share of chores but once they are forced to do them, they magically find the most effective cleaner available on the market and clean much more effectively than their dumb, inept wives⁴⁵. Generally, men are not supposed to do household chores, this kind of work is beneath them even in commercials⁴⁶ and if they actually engage in cleaning, it is meant to be a joke⁴⁷. Family men in advertisements have to take all the hard decisions that will influence lives of their families – they are the ones

⁴⁰ **O**d *kobiety do mężczyzny i z powrotem: rozważania o płci w kulturze*, edited by J. Brach Czaina, Białystok 1997.

⁴¹ S. Craig *Men, Masculinity and the Media*, London 1992, pp. 137-153.

⁴² A. Twardowska, E. Olczyk, *Kobiety w mediach*, in: *Kobiety w Polsce w latach 90.: raport Centrum Praw Kobiet*, edited by B. Gadomska, M. Korzeniewska, U. Nowakowska, Warszawa 2000, pp. 257-267.

⁴³ K. Arcimowicz, *Obraz mężczyzny w polskich mediach. Prawda. Fałsz. Stereotyp*, Sopot 2003.

⁴⁴ Ibidem.

⁴⁵ E. Kaschak, *Nowa psychologia kobiety. Podejście feministyczne*, Gdańsk 2001.

⁴⁶ K. Arcimowicz, op. cit.

⁴⁷ E. Goffman, *Gender Advertisements*, New York 1976.

who decide whether their family needs a new car or a life insurance. They should also think about their family's economic situation, budget and future. They are not supposed to look after their kids because it is a purely feminine task⁴⁸.

Men are often depicted as lovers in cosmetics' commercials. Some men find themselves disturbed by the idea of being a target of cosmetics' campaigns as they can feel that using too many creams, lotions, fragrances or balms could make them look effeminate or homosexual in the eyes of the society. One of the coaxing strategies is concentrating on the model's muscular body in commercials. This body is supposed to symbolize male power and dominance. Another way to make the campaigns more appealing is to introduce female models that are supposed to prove that using these cosmetics will make men more desirable for women. Ad men will also hire popular sportsmen or macho actors to sell their products⁴⁹. Labels are also very important in this business – deodorants, shower gels or fragrances names are connected with authority and strength and the colours used on containers will be also carefully chosen (usually it is gold, brown and black)⁵⁰.

Babysitters and gentlemen are the rare representations of breaking gender stereotypes. Men are allowed to enjoy looking after their children instead of taking care of business in commercials including these types of men. They can wash kids, change their diapers, dress babies or go for a walk with babies in prams. They can also look unattractive and androgynous in their light-coloured sweaters and glasses and talk about their families, friends or happiness achieved out of quiet, private life instead of work and rivalry⁵¹.

Research of a male body image performed in Taiwan shows that Chinese Taiwanese are less dissatisfied with their body image than their Western counterparts. Among several reasons for such an outcome researchers point out decline of traditional male roles in the West the reason that leads to greater exposure of a male body as a measure of masculinity. They prove that the image of naked male body is shown more often in Western media whereas men in Taiwanese commercials are rarely portrayed undressed. Western tradition is said to be attributing masculinity to a muscular and fit body image⁵².

Comparative analysis of chosen commercials

Representations of men as well as symbols of manhood differ according to various cultural contexts. In this work we concentrate on Polish and Chinese images in commercials. These two examples combine common features of Western and East-Asian cultures with more distinctive, local characteristics.

⁴⁸ J. Bator, *Wizerunek kobiety w reklamie telewizyjnej*, Warszawa 1998.

⁴⁹ K. Arcimowicz, op. cit.

⁵⁰ Ibidem.

⁵¹ D. Barthel, op.cit.

⁵² K. Arcimowicz, op. cit.

In order to find a common platform for the analyzed images, we compared commercials of international brands, which were localized to aim at men in different geographical regions. It is worth mentioning, that international commercials, even though try to adapt to local markets, still maintain core brand values, therefore cannot mingle in the culture so well as commercials of products focused solely on local markets (i.e. Chinese medicine or typical Polish snacks).

Among products typical for male consumers, like e. g: shaving products, cars, men's wear, men's cosmetics, some financial products, sport's brands, we've chosen few brands available in Poland and in China. Gillette, Axe/Lynx for cosmetic brands, Honda and Nissan for cars, Adidas as a sport's brand. In most cases products were tailored according to market needs, and so we decided to choose closest and most adequate products in both markets within the same brand. Polish commercials could be watched on YouTube, Chinese were taken from local equivalent of YouTube, YouKu, former being blocked by Chinese censorship.

Chinese commercial 1,2,3 Hey!⁵³ shows three men during their morning ablutions. 1,2,3 in the commercial title refers to the three stages of shaving. Portrayed men are handsome, each one in a different stage of life – youngest looks like a teenager, oldest is probably in his mid-thirties. It is not difficult to observe that ethnic Chinese have less hairy appearance than their Western counterparts. Only the oldest man has visible stubble, he is also the only muscular one. According to the above example, body of a physically attractive Chinese man balances between slender, boyish figure, and more masculine posture.

Analogical commercial in Poland is a part of the FirstReal campaign. Whole set of clips show mature men who have already pasted the first excitements of awkward youth, men who are self-confident and calm⁵⁴. Analyzed video shows youngster during his first clumsy training concentrating on results, and later the same already grown up man doing training for the pure pleasure of it. Man shown in the video is far from muscular or model-attractive. Portrayed man is middle aged, of a medium-slim/medium-muscular posture, with a haircut that doesn't hide the first signs of aging well enough, regular, average-handsome face and visible wrinkles. What makes him attractive is his self confidence, calmness and his focus on the training. As in many commercials of a kind, image of a woman shown as a reward is also implemented in the clip.

Comparing beauty canons from both cultural backgrounds, one might get the impression that while on the Polish side male attractiveness is careless, the Chinese commercial shows male bodies that are clearly cared for. The actor in the Polish example has visible wrinkles and imperfections, the Chinese men on the

⁵³ C. J. Yang, P. Gray, H. G. Pope, *Male Body Image in Taiwan Versus the West: Yanggang Zhiqi Meets the Adonis Complex*, "The American Journal of Psychiatry", vol. 162, 2/2005, pp. 263-269.

⁵⁴ Youtube Gillette FirstReal/training <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Laxyx7G0d-c&index=6&list=PLIVOJMVfOzkXWNeahJmtHPducM0yw2FJW>, 24.05.15.

contrary have smooth, fair complexion regardless of their age. It is worth mentioning that fair, white skin is considered more attractive both to the Chinese men and women, in opposition to Western glorification of tanned bodies.

Axe, in some countries known as Lynx, is a brand of shower cosmetics, deodorants and perfumes. It is well known for its aggressive, sexist communications aimed at male audiences. Both in Polish and Chinese commercial mechanism is simple – after man uses Axe/Lynx, women inevitably become attracted to him.

The Chinese commercial of Axe portrays a young man, who, already equipped in his Axe halo, goes to the coffee shop where young attractive lady serves him a sandwich with her number written on it⁵⁵. Both male and female shown in the clip have facial features characteristic to Chinese and Caucasian race, to the extent that their ethnicity is not actually clear, and we can only figure it out from the context rather than by looking at them.

Another Chinese commercial of Lynx shower gel, shows the body of a young man of delicate regular features and fair skin⁵⁶. Camera takes us to the laboratory where a group of female scientist test shower gel on a man and his 'little brother' (in commercial portrayed as a miniature clone of a main character). Commercial is sexually explicit as expression "little brother" (小兄弟) in Chinese refers to a penis.

In the Polish commercial, an average-attractive middle aged man (a famous Polish actor) walks through the city catching female looks. Every time he achieves his goal he uses a simple counting device, clicker, to measure the lustful peeps of his prey. In the last scene he stands in the elevator with a janitor who also plays the game of clicking. After comparing the results they discover that janitor's result (of course thanks to Axe) is much higher than actor's⁵⁷. Analogically to Gillette's commercial, the physical attractiveness of male in a Polish commercial wasn't the most important factor. Portrayed man is average by means of appearance, his body is not well shaped, his hair shows signs of aging, but yet due to self confidence he seemed attractive to all the women.

Chinese commercial of Honda CRV shows middle aged muscular man. His work out in a gym builds an analogy to a working car⁵⁸. In the Polish ad of Honda Civic male silhouette appears only for a glimpse⁵⁹. Men in both commercials are of a similar age, better off (wearing suits rather than leisure clothes), both live up to Western standards of masculinity, to the extent that no special cultural dimorphism can be observed. Commercials of Chinese Nissan

⁵⁵ YouKu Axe http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTQ1ODc5NTQ0.html, 24.05.15.

⁵⁶ YouKu Lynx 凌仕广告 http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XNDEyNTUxNDQw.html?from=s1.8-1-1.2, 24.05.15.

⁵⁷ YouTube Axe Borys Szyc Klikasz? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wqpZVN6SXik>, 24.05.15.

⁵⁸ YouKu Honda CRV http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMzYyODExMjA=.html, 24.05.15.

⁵⁹ YouTube Honda Civic <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OZoPWYh6FU4>, 24.05.15.

Sylphy⁶⁰ and Polish Nissan Qashqai⁶¹ are further examples of internationalization of certain male depictions. The only visible difference is ethnicity of men appearing in the clip. Again we can see that ad is targeted to better off, middle aged, successful men, in the Chinese version notion reinforced by presence of an attractive woman. The analyzed Adidas commercials also present unified, international image of masculinity – muscular, fit sportsman. Image based on a Western canon of beauty^{62 63}.

Examples of global brands show that they are more likely to reinforce model of masculinity that can be applied in various contexts. Differences in male beauty canons are clearer in cosmetic ads, simply because they have to be much more concentrated on the appearance of individual. We can notice that masculinity in commercials is shown by two different methods – either by exposing physical image of a man or by reinforcing message of his status. And so in car commercials the representation of a man is universal to many countries – the most important message is his power and success. Symbols of success being the car itself, suit which indicates stable, well paid job, and a beautiful woman on a passenger's seat.

As for physical image cultural differences are more visible. Figure of a physically attractive Chinese man balances between slender and mesomorphic. Recently the muscular type, originally attributed to the western male depiction, is being implemented in many Chinese commercials, the tendency that can influence Chinese self-image in the nearest future.

Conclusion

Advertising industry uses similar mechanisms to attract potential customers, mainly desires, fears and stereotypes. Differences in commercials watched all over the world arise not from their geographical origin, but from varying content of those feelings. Cultural value characteristics to male representations in patriarchal societies regardless to culture is power. In the West this power is depicted more straightforward than in China, it is literally embodied in a muscular figure of a Western man. In Chinese image of masculinity power is more of an inner virtue, it is associated with intelligence and self-cultivation, thus male body is much slimmer and more delicate.

Masculinity archetypes shown in commercials put Western culture visibly in favor. Foreign representations of masculinity were brought to China along with international brands. Nowadays traditional Chinese image of masculinity starts to mingle with the Western one. In the nearest future this hybrid will be most likely

⁶⁰ YouKu Nissan Sylphy http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMTQ5MDcyMjA=.html, 24.05.15.

⁶¹ YouTube Nissan Qashqai <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yFC9WpA9NYgc>, 24.05.15. cc

⁶² YouKu Adidas任我释放|林书豪助阵adidas climachill冰风系列全新广告 http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XOTE5NTMzNzg4.html?from=s1.8-1-1.2, 24.05.15.

⁶³ YouTube Adidas is all in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTK1ujh2Zs0>, 24.05.15.

shaping a self-image of today's teenagers. Tendency towards internationalization of a male image is visible also on the Polish ground, though, due to cultural similarities the process seems more natural.

As men's studies are relatively new field of research developed in the West, it is very important to raise awareness of dangers in perception that come with attempts to look at masculinity from different cultures, solely from the Western perspective. Therefore one must not forget to evaluate these phenomena with connection to their cultural context.

Representations of Masculinity in Advertising in Poland and China

The below article explores how the physical attributes of the ideal man vary between Western culture (Poland) and Eastern Asian Culture (China). We have analyzed how popular culture, media and commercials have changed our views on the ideal male beauty. The study also briefly shows men's reactions to the representation of male bodies in advertising, particularly when men are portrayed in a sexual, objectified, exploitative manner. In this work we have focused on Polish and Chinese representations of men and male bodies in commercials that hold common features of Western and Eastern Asian cultures as well as distinctive characteristics of these two countries.