

Being a man in dance: socialization modes and gender identities

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This essay examines the participation of men in physical activities deemed female. Biographical interviews of 14 professional male jazz and ballet dancers were conducted and analysed to determine the gender-socialization modes that allow men to develop a taste for female activities, and the socialization effects of being in a female world on the gender identity of male dancers. The data provide evidence of a reversed gender-socialization mode within specific family configurations, as found in women who play male sports. The professional socialization of male dancers in a female world is shown to produce specific effects on their gender identity. As 'feminist' men, they fight against being stigmatized as homosexual dancers by recognizing gender-related ways of dancing. In addition to this shared characteristic, two forms of gender identity were found, men who want to 'remain a man' and men who describe themselves as 'both feminine and masculine'.

In Stephen Daldry's film *Billy Elliot*, Billy dreams of becoming a dancer, to the great disappointment of his father who hopes he will be a boxer. This film expresses the idea that in a working-class environment, dancing for a man contradicts the dominant gender norms and leads to stigmatization. Yet from a historical point of view, dancing has not always been regarded as a female activity. On the contrary, ritual dances in most religions are often reserved for men. In France, dancing started to undergo a process of feminization in the late seventeenth century and became a full-fledged profession following the creation of the Royal Academy of Dance. During the nineteenth century, professional artistic dancing was prohibited for men, who were relegated to the rank of *porteur* (a man who lifts and carries the ballerina) to glorify female dancers. Then in the early twentieth century, the arrival of new artists (e.g. Isadora Duncan, Serge De Diaghilev) who had broken away from the gender norms dictated by trends in academic and institutional circles helped to promote the development of professional dancing careers for men. However, despite these progressive changes, ballet dancing is still seen today as a female activity, with the figure of the ballerina as its ideal type.¹ As dance became increasingly feminized, the dancing universe gradually diversified into an assortment of more or less varied and highly gender-discriminating practices and styles.

Based on gender theory and a sociological approach to identity, the present essay attempts to delineate the social conditions that lead to a professional dancing career, and to analyse the effects of male socialization in a female activity. Specifically, our analysis combines interactionist approaches to identity with structuralist concepts.² In this framework, the choice to enter into an atypical career (here, to become a professional

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dancer) can be explained by specific socialization modes which create particular dispositions.³ Intense socialization in the athletic world (here, the world of dance) involves a process of building and confirming one's identity, as Peter Donnelly and Kevin Young demonstrated.⁴ To shed light on this process, our study analyses dancers' childhood modes of gender socialization, and then looks at the effects of socialization within the dance world on how male dancers define their gender identity. The literature on the role of sports in the building of gender norms completes our theoretical framework.⁵

Gender identity and gender-conforming choices in sports

Recent studies on identity building have largely renewed the issues addressed today in the field of sociology in France.⁶ Despite its many meanings and sometimes essentialist connotations, the notion of identity has placed the subjective dimension at the core of sociological analysis and has opened the door to what Bernard Lahire calls a 'psychological sociology'.⁷ Claude Dubar defined identity as 'the result of various socialization processes – simultaneously stable and temporary, individual and collective, subjective and objective, biographical and structural – which jointly build individuals and define institutions'.⁸ However, using the term 'identity' is not a straightforward matter, and certain authors prefer the concept 'identification'. For Roger Brubaker, the term 'identity' has both a 'hard' meaning which is based on an essentialist definition, and a 'soft' meaning in which identity is an ever-changing mosaic.⁹ For this reason, he prefers the term 'identification', which has the added advantage of referring to a process.

Generally speaking, an analysis of the self-defining process in a society that affords us multiple and potentially contradictory socialization frameworks raises the question of the degree of permanence and fragmentation of identity. Briefly, identity can be regarded either as a relatively permanent, unitary entity resulting from the internalization of a social world, or as a temporary construction elaborated in and by a given situation.¹⁰ These two points of view may predominate to varying extents, depending on the personal history of the individual and the contexts in which he or she has evolved. Taking this approach, several recent studies have proposed an analysis of the identity-building process that encompasses the effects of both an 'incorporated past' and life events and situations. The present inquiry falls in line with these studies. For Lahire, 'the plural man' selects certain incorporated schemas in accordance with the configuration of the present situation.¹¹ Claude Dubar, following in Peter Berger and Thomas Luckmann's footsteps, proposed a sociological theory of identity based on a dualist conception of social reality that takes into account both the subjective ways individuals talk about themselves and the objective categorizations that define them.¹² Objective categorizations refer to the series of social positions held by individuals in the course of their life path. Subjective categorizations refer to the way in which individuals interpret their personal history. The conjunction of these two unavoidably linked elements is what defines the 'identity forms' or 'types of accounts' which, at a given time, reveal the position of an individual in a particular social domain.¹³ In this respect, our analysis pertains as much to the objective routes taken by male dancers, as to the ways in which they talk about their life paths and express their gender identity. What I call 'gender-identity forms' result from the combination of the objective and subjective elements that define gender identity.

Joan Scott defined gender as a constituent of social relations based on perceived differences between the sexes, and as the primary way of manifesting power relations between the two gender groups.¹⁴ In this sense, gender provides an underlying structure for the concrete and symbolic perceptions that organize social life at the collective and

individual levels.¹⁵ Numerous authors have proposed theoretical models for analysing the process of gender construction. Sandra Harding, for example, distinguished three social levels at which gender differences are constructed; the symbolic level, the institutional level and the individual level.¹⁶ Here again, we find the relationship between objective positions and subjective experiences. To define the meaning of gender identity more precisely, we can quote Messner and Sabo: 'Gender is a dynamic component of the self which develops across the life cycle, is occasionally confronted by crises, and which is subject to redefinition and modification as individuals continually interact with their social environment.'¹⁷ In this view, gender-identity forms refer to the ways in which dancers position themselves with respect to gender categories at a given time.

By including in Harding's model the features of the individual social positions that mark each level, Leslie MacCall related this model to Pierre Bourdieu's and, more generally, to sociological theories of identity.¹⁸ Refusing to let gender be regarded as a secondary characteristic, MacCall employed the term 'gender dispositions' to refer to the part of an individual's past or incorporated schemas that is structured by gender-differentiating socialization modes. Research on female soccer players, female boxers and women who participate in traditionally-male dancing genres has pointed out the importance of gender dispositions in the choice of a sport.¹⁹ Other studies have insisted on the role of the family as a primary socializing force that acts as 'a place where, from infancy, boys and girls internalize particular ways of behaving which correspond to social expectations for their sex and influence their future involvement in and attitudes to sport'.²⁰ The primary gender-socialization modes of male dancers can therefore be assumed to play a key role.

Physical and sports activities are the locus *par excellence* of the naturalization of gender identities, a fact that makes potential violations all the more difficult and unacceptable. The body is at the centre of two complementary processes, one that biologizes social phenomena and one that socializes biological phenomena, in such a way that socially constructed characteristics appear to be natural ones.²¹ As Julia Epstein and Kristina Straub explained, sex/gender systems are 'historically and culturally specific arrogations of the human body for ideological purposes' in which 'physiology, anatomy, and body codes (clothing, cosmetics, behaviours, miens, affective and sexual object choices) are taken over by institutions that use bodily difference to define and coerce gender identity'.²² The sports world is one of the most effective of these institutions for controlling and inculcating male and female ways of using one's body. In this sense, 'organized sports are not only a "gendered institution" but a "gendering" one as well'.²³ Accordingly, female athletes considered to achieve top-level performance (on a par with males) are perceived as unfeminine. Reciprocally, the sports abilities of women regarded as feminine are questioned.²⁴ The many studies conducted on women in male sports have demonstrated the existence of sport-specific socialization modes which raise many questions about gender and sex categories.²⁵ In contrast, studies on the participation of men in female sports or artistic activities are relatively scarce. Most of the studies have pointed out a strong historical relationship between the world of sports and certain dominant forms of masculinity.²⁶ In line with Connell, the gender order in sports is organized in terms of three interrelated components: the gender-based division of labour, the distribution of power, and concrete modes of interpersonal interaction.²⁷ These three levels contribute to the continual reproduction of the gender order and maintenance of masculine hegemony. Indeed, 'images of ideal masculinity are constructed and promoted most systematically through competitive sport'.²⁸ The sports world thus aids in ranking the many competing versions of masculinity that appear in a culture at a given time. As Donald Sabo and José Panepinto showed, men's socialization in male sports requires them to

distinguish themselves from both homosexuals and women.²⁹ Because of this, dominant notions of masculinity must be formed in relation to subordinate types of masculinity, and in relation to femininity.³⁰

The experience of men in the so-called female sports or artistic arenas is a highly relevant area of study for grasping the complex dynamics underlying the diversity of gender identity in our societies. Based on Robert Connell's work, Laurel Davis analysed the construction of masculinity in male cheerleaders.³¹ Often categorized as homosexual or effeminate, these men nevertheless manage to take on this activity in a masculine way. In this approach, one studies the effects of sports- and occupation-related socialization on the gender identity of men participating in a female sport or activity. The present essay attempts to relate the processes of gender socialization before and during a male dancing career, to the ways in which male dancers situate themselves with respect to the gender categories.

Given the diverse types and styles of dancing, it is useful to describe the characteristics of this activity as it is practiced today. The dancing disciplines chosen for study here (jazz and ballet) are likely to offer different ways of defining masculinity. In the field of dance – now a universe of highly diverse activities – ballet and jazz dancing do not enjoy the same status or have the same significance. The technical and symbolic features of ballet have made it the most prestigious type of dancing and the most highly codified as far as gender is concerned.³² Jazz dancing, on the other hand, evokes a more enjoyable and less rigid image, and as such, permits identification with less traditional gender models. Thus, from the standpoint of gender identity, the dancer's relationship to the body is quite different in ballet and jazz. Here, we analyse the personal life paths and gender socialization processes of male jazz and ballet dancers in an attempt to grasp the social conditions that underlie their career choice and the ways in which they construct masculinity.

Method

The rationale for choosing jazz and ballet for this study was the fact that they are the two most popular dance disciplines in France, at the same time as they compete with each other both economically and symbolically. Fourteen professional male dancers in France were selected as subjects. All of the dancers worked in the same region of France. This being our first study on this theme, we selected dancers with excellent reputations who were considered experts in their respective styles of dance.³³ This allowed us to interview dancers who were highly committed to the world of dance and were more or less 'shaped' by socialization in that milieu; they also had a very good knowledge of the discipline. Half were jazz dancers and the other half were ballet dancers. The ballet dancers were from national dance companies and conservatories. The jazz dancers were private dance instructors and/or choreographers. This occupational difference is due to the fact that it is difficult to become a professional jazz dancer, although related jobs are available for competent jazz dancers.

Tables 1 and 2 below present the main characteristics of the dancers interviewed in this study. To improve readability and comprehension, the letter J is used for jazz dancers (J1, J2, J3, J4, J5, J6 and J7) and the letter B, for ballet dancers (B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6 and B7).

The biographical interviews, which lasted an average of two hours, were recorded and fully transcribed. A qualitative in-depth type of interview was chosen for this study because it facilitates close contact between the subjects and the researcher. To help build empathy with the dancers, the interviews were preceded by an observation phase. However, we did not perform an actual field study to establish personal ties between interviewers and interviewees. Because of this, unlike in previous studies, we did not

Table 1. Jazz dancers.

Age and Marital Status	J1, age 33, living maritally	J2, age 30, living maritally	J3, age 27, living maritally	J4, age 40, unmarried	J5, age 50, married, two children	J6, age 28, married, one child	J7, age 35, unmarried
Social Class	Upper-middle class	Middle class	Middle class	Upper-middle class	Middle class	Upper-middle class	Middle class
Occupation	Dance instructor and choreographer	Dance instructor and choreographer	Dance instructor	Dance instructor	Dance instructor	Dance instructor	Dance instructor, and choreographer
Birth Order	3rd of 9 children	Eldest of 5 children (2 brothers, 2 sisters)	Eldest of 3 children (1 brother, 1 sister)	Eldest of 3 children (1 brother, 1 sister)	2nd of 6 children	Eldest of 3 children (1 brother, 1 sister)	2nd of 3 children (2 brothers)

Table 2. Ballet dancers.

Age and Marital Status	B1, age 37, married, 1 child	B2, age 45, living maritally, 3 children	B3, age 26, unmarried	B4, age 31, unmarried	B5, age 32, living maritally	B6, age 29, unmarried	B7, age 33, living maritally
Social Class	Middle class	Middle class	Lower-middle class	Middle class	Lower-middle class	Middle class	Upper-middle class
Occupation	Dancer	Dance instructor	Dancer	Dancer	Dancer	Dancer	Dancer
Birth Order	Younger of 2 children (1 sister)	Only child	Youngest of 3 children (2 brothers)	Younger of 2 children (1 brother)	Youngest of 3 children (2 brothers)	Only child	Younger of 2 children (1 brother)

question the interviewees directly about their sexuality.³⁴ This topic was addressed in a general way by means of a question about collective representations that associate male dancers with homosexuality. An open-ended interviewing guide that revolved around two topics was used: (a) socialization in the home and among peers, aimed at determining the nature of the gender dispositions acquired by the male dancers during their childhood, and (b) secondary professional socialization associated with gender-identity definition processes. Some of the questions were taken from the literature and others arose inductively from the interviews themselves. The interview corpus was processed by means of a thematic analysis designed to bring out socialization modes and life paths, and a structural analysis aimed at identifying the binary oppositions that structured the dancers' accounts and at bringing out the forms of gender identity built by male dancers.³⁵ The structural analysis was based on grounded theory and was conducted to determine the categorical order that organizes dancers' discourse and gives it social meaning.³⁶ More specifically, the goal was to identify the favoured categories for gender identification. These two types of analysis allowed us to identify the objective elements of the dancers' experience as well as the more subjective ones.

The results are presented in two parts. The first part starts by analysing the dance careers of the interviewees (age and conditions of entry, training, style of dance, and type of professional involvement). Next, childhood modes of gender socialization are analysed, along with the family configurations that favoured the boys' pursuit of this female activity. The second part presents the characteristics of the socialization of these men in a female world, and studies the position of the male dancers with respect to gender norms and to the gender-identity forms detected in their discourse.

Paths and socialization modes

The first section of the results presents some objective facts about the experiences of the dancers studied and the setting in which their gender socialization took place. Two life paths could be distinguished, based on the age of entry into dancing and the dance discipline practiced. First we will examine 'orthodox' paths, defined as early contact with dancing followed by an education in a recognized school of dance, in pursuit of a career as a ballet dancer. Then we will present the life paths of the male jazz dancers, qualified as 'heterodox'.

The ballet dancers: early entry and an 'orthodox' life path

The life path of the seven male ballet dancers can be qualified as orthodox. They started dancing between the ages of 8 and 10 and were educated at an accredited dance conservatory. This allowed them to begin their professional career at the relatively young age of 17. Their early beginning was rooted in a personal desire to dance, accompanied by encouragement from their mother, who herself either participated in some type of artistic activity on an amateur or professional basis or simply expressed a love for the arts. In short, the entry of these ballet dancers into the world of dance was the outcome of willingness both on the part of the son, who developed an early taste for this activity, and on the part of the mother, who chose the most renowned dance schools and helped manage her son's career. The mothers also played a central role as an intermediary between the sons and their fathers. At first, the fathers were often hesitant or even opposed to their son's involvement in dance, but as the boys became recognized in the world of dance (winning prizes in dance contests, admittance to a dance conservatory, etc.) the fathers' attitudes gradually evolved.

The primary socialization of the male ballet dancers resulted from the joint and converging action of the family and the conservatory, an authoritarian institution that imposes on its students a highly disciplined regime centred on building an ascetic relationship with one's body.³⁷ The fact that French conservatories are boarding schools added to the weight of this 'strict' form of socialization. The heavy impact of the conservatory was supplemented by that of the family, especially the mother, who actively supported her child's artistic career. In several cases, the families even moved to a different location to be closer to a prestigious school of dance. As we shall see later, the specific family configurations of the ballet dancers, who mainly came from all-male sibling groups, also contributed to the imparting of artistic tastes from the mother to one of her sons.

Thus, the dancers in this group, fully committed to ballet, developed an 'artistic habitus' at a very early age. Their orthodox paths, grounded in the acquisition of the values and dispositions specific to the world of ballet, brought them into the most highly recognized dancing discipline in the field.

The jazz dancers: later discovery and a 'heterodox' life path

A 'heterodox' life path was defined as one that involved taking dance lessons in a non-academic setting that led to less prestigious jobs than those obtained by the dancers in the preceding group. The majority of jazz dancers had taken this type of route. They began dancing between the ages of 15 and 18, i.e., four to eight years later than the ballet dancers. They were much more versatile and had mastered several types and styles of dance. Although some of the jazz dancers started with ballet, none of them had ever been enrolled in a dance conservatory. In all cases, they did not consider ballet to be a 'higher form' of dance. Consequently, their trajectory in the world of dance can be qualified as 'heterodox'. The life path of two jazz dancers in the study was mixed, insofar as they began early with ballet (although without attending a conservatory) and then turned to jazz dancing in adolescence. The jazz dancers worked in two occupational areas, choreography and/or dance instruction.

The individuals in this second group explained their entry into the world of dance either in terms of their circumstances (e.g., becoming friends with a female dancer) or their taste for musical comedies, which feature relatively masculine representations of male dancers. Unlike the dancers in the first group, their families did not provide any particular incentive to pursue an artistic career. On the contrary, the parents even expressed some reluctance about this career choice, especially the fathers, who according to their sons, considered jazz dancing to be a leisure activity or a means of entertainment, not a profession. As Doug Risner also noted in his study, the fathers felt that dancing was a female activity and therefore had trouble accepting their son's choice.³⁸ In such a context, some of the dancers started to dance without telling the family, sometimes hiding this fact for several years.

In summary, our analysis pointed out two modes of entry into dance and two types of life paths leading to a professional dancing career for men. One path – represented by the ballet dancers – involved early entry into the activity as part of the child's primary socialization, whether within the family or through enrolment in a conservatory of dance. This paved the way to the most prestigious dancing professions (ballet dancer with a major dance company or institution). The other path – represented by the jazz dancers – began later in life and led to more diversified, less prestigious professions (choreography, teaching, etc.).

But merely identifying these two paths does not suffice to explain the engagement and commitment of men to the dance professions. An analysis of the gender-socialization modes of the male dancers should offer further insight into their personal investment in a female world.

'Reversed' gender socialization

The results of our analysis provided evidence of a reversed gender-socialization mode that varied in strength and was independent of the type of dance chosen.³⁹ The dancers' remarks regarding their childhood behaviours contrasted with the results of studies on gender socialization in children.⁴⁰ According to Barrie Thorne, the world of boys is characterized by hierarchical and competitive relationships, large peer groups, and a focus on physical activities or even fights.⁴¹ By contrast, girls favour egalitarian relationships in small groups and place less importance on physical activities, although they do enjoy learning how to dance. As we shall see, the male dancers' behaviours were closer to those of girls than to those of boys. It was the intensity and homogeneity of the socialization process that divided the male dancers into two categories. For a majority of the dancers studied, the gender-socialization processes in the different domains of social life were converging (family, peers, sports groups and clubs) and generated relatively strong opposite-gender dispositions. For a minority, the gender-socialization modes were more heterogeneous; they too generated reversed-gender dispositions, but weaker ones.⁴²

In their youth, eight of the dancers defined themselves as a 'dreamer' or a 'calm, serious' child. Four of them often employed the expression 'the world of dreams' in talking about their childhood:

J3: I was very attracted to the world of dreams . . . very quiet. I did well in school.

This was a relatively frequent type of self-definition and differs from the more traditional ones found in boys.⁴³

Shyness also appeared as a strong characteristic of the dancers' childhood identity. This trait is part of the 'sissy' stereotype.⁴⁴ In contrast to the female football players and female boxers we interviewed in an earlier study, the male dancers as a whole had difficulty talking about their childhood. Their remarks were punctuated with frequent hesitations, silences and lowering of the voice. While identifying with the tomboy stereotype appears to be validating for girls, identifying with the sissy stereotype proves to be more difficult for boys, both more difficult to experience and more difficult to talk about.⁴⁵ In fact, their experience means coming down in the hierarchy of the sexes:

J2: Dance is a means of expressing myself, making myself heard. It's a little like a mask I can put on my face, and that way, I can do what I want without fearing the reactions I'd normally fear because I'm not a real boy.

Here, dance provided a relatively protected space that facilitated the expression of non-gender-conforming behaviour.

The dancers were also found to enjoy privileged relationships with their female peers. They said they played more with girls and preferred their company to that of boys:

B4: I have a better spontaneous rapport with girls. I more readily open up to a group of girls than to a group of boys.

This type of within-group mixing of males and females is unconventional according to Maccoby, who found early sex-based segregation.⁴⁶ Segregation of girls and boys seems to vary across contexts.⁴⁷ Separation by gender tends to be reinforced in school situations, whereas neighbourhood relationships appear to facilitate the forming of mixed groups. Our male dancers valued relationships with girls in both of these contexts. However, at school, some of them recalled feeling left out even though they participated competently in girls' dance groups. Their history resembles that of Brian, the young boy with non-conforming gender behaviour studied by Thorne.⁴⁸ Labelled as a sissy, Brian was rejected

by boys but did not succeed in establishing strong relationships with girls in spite of his abilities in their games.

For the ballet dancers, who entered dance at an early age, the male-dancer identity accentuated their relational difficulties with boys. Some tried to hide their dancing from their friends:

B3: People have trouble with that anyway . . . it's uncommon. My childhood and adolescence were not like everybody else's. I always hid from my friends that I was a dancer. In relating to other people, it has never been easy to be a dancer.

So, while the world of dance could provide a sheltered area that allowed these non-conformist boys to express stigmatized gender behaviour, it also led to painful daily-life experiences.

Finally, the dancers' typical lack of participation in sports reflected a peculiar if not 'abnormal' relationship to sports. Unlike most boys, the majority of the dancers were not sports-oriented.⁴⁹ The others who had played a 'male' sport (soccer, basketball, etc.) had unpleasant memories and rapidly changed over to a female activity (gymnastics) before choosing dance. Most of the dancers acknowledged their lack of interest in fighting or competitive activities. Because of this, they were not socialized in a sport that builds a virile masculinity and reinforces distance from girls.⁵⁰ As a whole, the insignificant or totally absent sports socialization in these boys was in some sense compensated for by an early and relatively consistent artistically-oriented socialization, regardless of their social class. Listening to music or playing a musical instrument, the fine arts, and a taste for certain types of shows like musical comedies – these pastimes left a mark on these boys' childhoods and were an integral part of a family lifestyle that fostered such activities, often prized and encouraged by the mothers.

All in all, a 'non-conformist' gender socialization characterized the childhood of the majority of the male dancers, from their upbringing in the home to their social learning among peers or in the artistic and sports arenas. The reversed gender dispositions of these male dancers exhibited a high degree of homogeneity and intensity much like that found in female soccer players.⁵¹

A minority of the dancers interviewed did not quite fit into the opposite-gender socialization model described above. They differed from the others in how they defined their 'childhood identity'. They never mentioned personality traits or behaviours traditionally qualified as female and remained rather evasive in their self-descriptions. These dancers said they played as much with boys as with girls when they were children. However, like the dancers in the majority group, their relationship to their body and to sports did not fit with the dominant gender models: they participated in a relatively female sport (gymnastics) or were not sports-oriented at all. In addition to this, their artistic socialization was not as great as in the first group of dancers. In fact, no typical gender-socialization model could be ascertained from their discourse. Their gender dispositions were relatively heterogeneous or even fragmented, unlike most of the other dancers studied, who exhibited a certain degree of homogeneity and could be qualified as feminine.

In all cases, though, the more or less reversed gender-socialization modes noted here were rooted in different family configurations specific to each dance discipline.

Specific family configurations

The family configurations of the ballet dancers and the jazz dancers turned out to be very different. In many cases out, the ballet dancer was the second or third child in a family of

all boys. This ‘missing girl’ model, rarely noted in the research so far, can be seen as a male version of the ‘missing boy’ model, often applied to a girl from an all-girl family who assumes a boy’s role in the home and goes into a male occupation or sport.⁵² For our ballet dancers, two findings support the ‘missing girl’ model: (a) the older brothers of these dancers fulfilled their male roles, often by participating in conventionally male sports like rugby, soccer or basketball, and (b) they all mentioned having a relatively difficult relationship with their father, accompanied by special ties with their mother, who was an avid defender of their taste for dance:

B1: With my father and my brother, it used to be very hard. My father played rugby and was in charge of the club; my brother played too. They didn’t understand my choice. My father would always ask me, ‘But why do you want to dance?’ The relationship with him was always tense. Luckily, my mother encouraged me. I was very close to her.

As Emily Kane shows, the fathers react more negatively than the mothers to their son’s gender nonconformity.⁵³ Otherwise, the characteristic family configuration of most of the ballet dancers was the parallel in every respect to that of a majority of the female soccer players and boxers questioned in an earlier study, where the women were oriented by their father toward sports and stood apart from their sisters who complied with the norms of their gender.⁵⁴ The family configuration of the other ballet dancers also gets closer to this model. Indeed, one was from a family that followed the ‘unsuccessful girl’ model – next youngest to a daughter who had failed in her attempts to dance, the son was the one to fulfil his mother’s dream in his sister’s place, and two were an only child. Thus, the family configurations of the ballet dancers favoured a typically ‘cross-gender identification’.⁵⁵ These configurations promoted the transmission of artistic tastes from the mothers to one of the sons.

For the jazz dancers, the family configurations had two features of their own. First of all, the majority of these men were the eldest child and came from a relatively large family (three or more children) with boy and girl siblings. The others were also from large families, but they were not the eldest child. Secondly, the familial socialization process always involved early demands to carry out household tasks, especially for the firstborns. In some cases, the initiation of these young boys to homemaking stemmed from a child-raising choice made by the parents, although it was also sometimes the result of family circumstances (frequent absence of the parents, for example). Some of the dancers’ remarks revealed that the gender roles in these families did not conform to the dominant norms:

J2: I was brought up in a matriarchal world where the wife ran the show. In my home, it was my mother who wore the pants as they say.

J3: My father was unemployed for 10 years. He was the one who took care of us, and it was my mother who brought home the money.

The family configurations of the jazz dancers are reminiscent of those found for high-academic achievers in a study by Michèle Ferrand, Françoise Imbert and Catherine Marry.⁵⁶ This study showed that in middle- and upper-class families, child-raising practices based on equality of the sexes prompt children to engage in activities and disciplines deemed inappropriate for their sex (dancing for boys, science for girls).

For both types of male dancers, our analysis of the gender-socialization modes indicated that their entry into this female milieu was the outcome of a reversed gender-socialization mode that varied in strength and resulted from specific family configurations. Let us now attempt to determine the effects of professional socialization in a woman’s world on the gender-identity construction process.

Gender identity of male dancers

This section is devoted to accounting for the impact on gender identity of the choice to become a professional male dancer. The facets that characterize the dancers' professional socialization are reported first. Then the features of gender identity shared by the dancers will be presented, followed by an analysis of the elements that differentiate them (different forms of identity) and reveal the dancers' individualized life paths.

Professional socialization of male dancers

Women are omnipresent in the world of dance. All of the male dancers in the study emphasized being in the minority, during dancing lessons as well as in the professional arena. Dance instructors estimate that girls outnumber boys in their classes by a ratio of about ten to one. Even when boys are present, teacher-student interactions are essentially geared to girls. During our observations before meeting with the dancers, we noted that the boy (or boys) in the class was often 'lumped together' with the girls, as indicated by frequent statements on the part of the teachers such as, 'Come on girls, hold now!', 'Higher up, girls, higher up'. As several studies have shown, teachers often utilize the gender difference as a technique for managing the class.⁵⁷ Referring to children by their gender is one of the most-frequently used devices in class management.⁵⁸ Also, the boys consistently tried to make themselves inconspicuous by standing behind the girls.

Given that work and friendship circles at least partially overlap, all of the dancers interviewed spent much more time with women than with men. The majority of them said they fully enjoyed being 'immersed' in a female world:

B3: I prefer the company of women; I'm much better with girls. Of course I have a few male friends but my true friendships are with girls. I owe a great deal to women.

For the most part, the childhood preference for girls was carried over into adulthood. The opposite-gender dispositions acquired by most of the dancers during childhood and adolescence undeniably promoted their access to the professional world of dance, but their strong relationships with women prevented them from breaking away from the female world, even though this process usually represents a decisive step in the construction of male identity. David Gilmore showed that socialization among men, as described by Maurice Godelier in the Baruyas, remains an important stage in the making of men in our societies.⁵⁹ The male gender identity of men who do not participate in this kind of exclusively-male socialization is often doubted. Engaged in a female social and occupational universe, our male dancers were confronted with the effeminate, homosexual male-dancer stereotype.⁶⁰ All of our interviewees, regardless of their sexual orientation, strongly deplored the repeated confusing of male dancer and homosexual:

J5: It's hard to be a man in dance. It conveys preconceived ideas, the idea that all male dancers are homosexuals, which is totally absurd.

B4: I can't stand people who think that all male dancers are homos, or parents who refuse to sign up their son because they're afraid he'll turn gay.

The dancers' consensus on this point reflects the strength of the stigmatization process at work here. Several of the dancers spoke of painful memories on this matter. Often likened to '*queers*', they have been made fun of and had aggressive remarks directed at them. As J5 expressed above, being a man in dance is not easy, a fact that is reinforced by the asexual nature of the bodily techniques taught:

J1: For me, there's no difference. Dance is asexual for me, so as far as technique is concerned, men and women do the same thing. What is interesting, on the other hand, are variations in the same choreography presented by a man or a woman. Masculinity or femininity, it's something we carry inside us.

B5: In ballet, men and women learn the same thing from the technical standpoint. After that, the roles often differ, as in *portés*, which are mainly for men.

While the techniques are the same, then, the way they are put to use appears to be gender-linked and clearly contributes to the identity building of male dancers. Like the cheerleaders studied by Davis, some of the dancers were proud of their strong muscles and claimed they danced in a more energetic way than women.⁶¹ The dancers sometimes had trouble explaining the differences they perceived or sensed between the dancing of women and that of men. Their frequent, but not very explicit, statements about this topic are indicative of difficulty symbolically characterizing a skill in terms of its technical features:⁶²

B7: A female ballet dancer will make the same jumps as a male dancer except that a male dancer... he'll start up in the same way but in the air... the difficulties are equal but in the middle of the jump there will be an extra thing, and this extra thing... that's where the difference between male and female dancing lies.

B7's remarks illustrate the need for male dancers to set themselves apart from the femininity ascribed to dancing, despite the difficulty they have pinpointing the differences from a technical standpoint.

Thus, being a male dancer sometimes involves painful experiences, particularly outside the world of dance. However, it has some advantages in terms of professional socialization. Right from their entry into dance, boys appear to be watched more carefully and encouraged more by their various instructors. The fact of being outnumbered grants them a special status:

B4: *I was really pampered by my teacher – she didn't get boys every day. She paid a lot of attention to me and really encouraged me. It was very gratifying for me.*

Like B4, the other dancers often mentioned special relationships with their dance teachers. Their privileged status in the world of dance encouraged them to persevere in the field and certainly played a central role in their commitment to it. As in women's soccer, the world of dance for male dancers can be regarded as a 'diminished' world, in that it prizes in men the kinds of skills and abilities that are usually stigmatized in other social realms.⁶³

The relative scarcity of men in dance also promotes their entry into the profession. The recruitment process and the required qualifications often put men at an advantage. Whereas for women, specialized training with a solid technical background is indispensable, men may only need artistic qualities or physical abilities to obtain a contract.⁶⁴ As a result, the population of job-seeking female dancers is much larger than that of male dancers. In 1997, for example, 26% of unemployed dancers in France were men and 74% were women.⁶⁵

Men therefore have an irrefutably advantageous position over women in the dance universe. Although socialization in the world of dance partially reinforces reversed-gender dispositions, our male dancers nevertheless emphasized their differences from female dancers and their masculine ways of dancing. In this perspective, the world of the dance can be analysed as a gender regime which produces local masculinities.⁶⁶ However, not all of them built their gender identity in the same manner, even though they all described themselves as being in favour of equality of the sexes. Let us begin by presenting the characteristics of gender identity shared by every male dancer interviewed. Then we will

analyse the elements that differentiated them in their definitions of themselves and the gender categories.

'Feminist' men

All of the dancers in this study had 'progressive' views regarding both the division of roles between men and women in private and public life, and the acknowledgement of homosexuality. They were clearly for equality of the sexes in all areas of social life; they often adopted militant attitudes, and generally saw the greater participation of women in public life as a positive factor of social change. They agreed by an overwhelming majority with the so-called 'parity' law in France, frequently rejected by a portion of feminists and by most women who participate in male sports.⁶⁷ This egalitarian position, the conventional one for men in the privileged classes, was held by all the dancers, regardless of their social status. Their talk was very favourable to women, and some did not hesitate to call themselves a 'feminist', a label often refused by athletes who play a male sport.⁶⁸

J6: I'm a pretty feminist person in my way of seeing the world. I think the female side of things is not emphasized enough. Equality, that's my main battle . . . I say to myself that if the world has always been run by men and we're still there today . . . you wonder what's the way out, unemployment, insecurity . . . why not try with women?

The dancers' egalitarian attitude also showed up in the private sphere. They defended the idea of spouses sharing household tasks, and contrary to what has been shown in other surveys on this subject, their remarks on this topic were not just theoretical but also applied to their actual task-sharing practices at home.⁶⁹ All seven dancers who were married or living maritally with a woman did housework. Their attitudes were rooted in an early initiation to household tasks for some, and to awareness or even empathy about the female condition for others. Their special relationship with women, notably their mother, allowed them to understand and share women's experience. Their discourse was a testimony to their clear-sightedness regarding the processes underlying domination, a classic 'privilege' of dominated categories.⁷⁰ Often categorized as a homosexual or an effeminate man and subjected to the effects of the instilled gender order which ranks the different models of masculinity, they vigorously condemned the effects of male chauvinism.⁷¹

B2: I've always struggled not to be a macho. My mother and my grandmother suffered too much from male chauvinism, and I don't want to make my lady friend undergo the same thing.

B1: Sharing household chores, I think it's very important in a couple. It's a question of striking a balance. We have to go beyond the idea of tasks for men and tasks for women. It's like for children, the day we stop giving a gun to a little boy and a doll to a little girl . . . If we start by getting rid of guns, by eliminating the warrior frame of mind, it will help cure the world.

As these remarks by B1 and B2 show, the dancers' opinions in favour of equality of the sexes were accompanied by a highly critical view of the dominant manliness models of manhood. In their eyes, the figure of the rugby player is a typical ideal of masculinity:

J2: I dislike the manliness model, which is too tough. I feel completely at odds when I go back to my hometown – everybody plays rugby. They all talk about rugby and in a couple of minutes, I've got nothing to say to them. Actually, they're in a rather closed world.

The tolerant attitudes of the dancers about homosexuality confirmed their overall innovative stance in matters of gender and sex norms. Even if they had to fight against the stereotype of the homosexual male dancer, the men studied here all adopted a very understanding position on homosexuality. And their sexual preferences did not change their attitudes: homosexual or heterosexual, all the dancers had homosexual friends and

enjoyed their company. They said they were in favour of recognizing same-sex couples if the concerned partners so desired. Some of the dancers openly stated that they were homosexuals, even though the interview question on this topic was very general. One of the other dancers, who was living with a woman at the time of the study, suggested that homosexual experiences constituted an important stage of sexuality.

The free and open way in which the male dancers addressed the topic of homosexuality contrasted sharply with the embarrassment experienced by the majority of the female soccer players interviewed in an earlier study.⁷² Acknowledgement of the homosexual artist in our societies, and conversely, the lesser conspicuousness of lesbians, perhaps account for this difference.⁷³ Our male dancers did not settle for redefining the gender norms – they also related in a different way to sexuality, or at least some of them did. In this respect, the experience of male dancers is like that of many females who play a male sport and confirms the links between gender and sexuality, particularly in the world of sports.⁷⁴

In summary, one can suggest that the atypical gender socialization of male dancers during childhood, followed by their socialization in the world of dance, produces specific effects on their gender identity. Men in dance seem to agree on the need to promote the equality of the sexes, in both public and private life. They question the established ranking of the different forms of masculinity and sexuality. Beyond these general characteristics, however, a structural analysis of our corpus revealed two distinct forms of gender identity that covered the majority of the dancers studied.

Two forms of gender identity

Two major ways of describing one's gender identity and defining the gender categories were detected in this population of male dancers. These two identity forms also involved different relationships to sexuality. The 'traditional' form of gender identity included dancers who affirmed the established relationship between sports participation, a relatively virile form of masculinity, and heterosexuality.⁷⁵ Conforming to the dominant culture of Western societies, they established a link between sex, gender and sexuality. Thus, even if they criticized men involved in male sports, they insisted on distinguishing themselves from the effeminate male stereotype and refused to be categorized as homosexuals. Indeed, the seemingly natural link of hegemonic masculinity with heterosexuality did not facilitate their identity building.⁷⁶ Involved in an activity construed as feminine, they insisted in their remarks on their desire to 'remain men' and on their liking for feminine women:

J2: I've always tried to present myself as a guy who dances, so there would be absolutely no ambiguity, so things would be very clear. Me, I'm a guy, I'll always be a guy, I don't have to have a feminine way about me to be widely liked in dance. I think I have enough femininity in me to not have to exaggerate that side of things.

B5: I like very feminine women. Girls who swear are appalling to me. I like very thin girls with big breasts, and I also like them to have some backbone.

J2's and B5's remarks are indicative of their attachment to certain dominant gender and sexual norms (rejection of effeminate men, preference for feminine women). However, they also identified with less-conformist gender models: J2 acknowledged his femininity, and B5 said he appreciated women with a backbone. Thus, the form of gender identity acquired by the dancers who wanted to 'remain men' was not always clear-cut and sometimes even contained contradictions. J5, for example, criticized machos at the same time as he said he liked very masculine men. In this respect, the dancers' views attest to the dynamic and complex nature of gender identity.⁷⁷ Local masculinity contests and borrows some traits from hegemonic masculinity at once.⁷⁸

The second form of gender identity detected here appears to be more 'subversive' or 'resistant'. This form included dancers who refused or had trouble defining the gender categories (B3, B4, J1, J3 and J4) and who did not assert their heterosexuality. J1 and J3 said they did not know how to define masculinity and femininity, and B3 and B4 refused to say what they thought were the gender roles:

B4: As for me, I don't assign roles to anyone, especially not on this matter. I hate clichés and labels. Personally, I feel both feminine and masculine.

J1: For me, to tell you the truth, masculinity, I don't know what it is... And if there's anything that has to do with femininity, it would be more like a personal idea, a way of walking, of expressing oneself... but without being related to the female or male sex.

The dancers in this group differed in two respects from those in the first group. To begin with, they denied the existence of two separate gender categories, refusing to take a one-sided position. Secondly, they questioned the socially-constructed link between sex and gender. J1's remarks clearly illustrate this position. In this form of gender identity, the dancers presented themselves as 'both masculine and feminine'. They questioned the dominant gender norms in a much more radical way than did the dancers in the first group. To some extent, their positions are illustrative of a deconstructivism of the dominant gender categories by certain social groups.⁷⁹ Finally, these dancers never mentioned an attraction to highly feminine women. Thus, in contrast to the 'traditional' dancers, the 'subversives' distinguished sex and gender, and questioned heterosexuality.

By interrelating the objective and subjective elements of the life paths of these male dancers, we were able to gain insight into the processes responsible for the construction of different forms of gender identity. The dance discipline chosen and the mode of gender socialization cannot alone account for the observed differences. The male ballet and jazz dancers could be classified into two main gender-identity forms, and dancers who had undergone a relatively strong and homogeneous reversed gender-socialization process were present in both groups. On the other hand, the dancers' sexual practices and their marital status were homologous. Accordingly, those who wanted to 'remain men' were married or living maritally with a woman, and often had children. Conversely, among the men who were 'both feminine and masculine', only one lived maritally with a woman, three lived alone, and none were married or had children. Furthermore, two of the dancers in this group said they were homosexual (one living alone, the other with a domestic partner), and another dancer mentioned having had homosexual encounters in the past.

Thus, as in numerous studies already mentioned, the data revealed the existence of a relationship between the gender identity and the sexual identity of the male dancers.⁸⁰ For the dancers in the first group, their wish to 'remain a man' and their taste for 'feminine' women operated jointly. By contrast, for the dancers in the second group, gender mixing was accompanied by a wider variety of sexual and matrimonial choices. In this sense, for the homosexual dancers studied here, their gay sensibility (as described by Pronger) reflected a particular way of being in the world, even though it exhibited some degree of flexibility that allowed them to have certain values in common with their heterosexual counterparts.⁸¹

Another facet also differentiated the dancers with the two forms of gender identity. In many cases, the men in the first group ('remain a man') were of foreign extraction (West Indies, Africa, Spain), from cultures where dancing by both men and women is appreciated and widely practiced. For example, B5 learned flamenco dancing in the home, and J2 remembered festivities in his West Indies village 'where everyone danced'. As for B2, who was born in France, his initiation into dance also exhibited a particularity: he was the only

dancer whose father was involved in getting his son into dance, by taking him to see musical comedies. None of the dancers in the second group had experienced this type of early initiation into forms of dancing not exclusively reserved for females. Initiation into dance in a setting that authorizes dancing by men and proposes models of relatively manly male dancers thus seems to favour greater proximity to the dominant gender norms in adulthood, or in any case seems to alleviate the need to question the established gender categories in a radical way. The incorporated past appears to be a key element in the construction of gender identity.⁸² It also seems that cultures that provide for male dancing in non-stigmatized ways mitigate the need for men to account for their dance careers.

In summary, two elements separated the male dancers with the two forms of identity. Those dancers wishing to 'remain men' all lived with a woman and had discovered dance in a context that provided them with conformist gender models promoting the participation of men. The dancers who were 'both masculine and feminine' rarely lived with a woman, asserted their homosexuality in some instances, and were initiated into dance in an exclusively female setting. Thus, the ways in which the dancers defined their gender identity were connected not only to the specific characteristics that determined their socialization in the world of dance, but also to the particular aspects that characterized their private lives.

Concluding remarks

Based on biographical interviews with 14 professional male dancers in France, this study shows that opposite-gender dispositions develop during the primary socialization period. This reversed socialization, shared by most of the dancers studied, was manifested by a greater affinity for female peers and little contact with the world of sports, to some extent compensated for by an early initiation into artistic activities. The socialization process took place within specific family configurations found to depend upon the dance discipline chosen. In particular, we noted two types of life paths and family configurations that allowed these men to become dancers. In the first, we found early socialization in the world of dance, characterized by the joint action of the family and the dance conservatory leading to the profession of ballet dancer; in most cases, the ballet dancer was a younger brother in an all-boy family, a fact which supports the 'missing girl' hypothesis. In the second, the dancer's occupation as a choreographer or instructor of jazz dancing, a less prestigious style of dance, was found to be related to the discovery of dance later in childhood, in a family context that was less favourable to this activity. The jazz dancers were also more frequently the eldest child in a large boy-girl family and had started doing household tasks at an early age. Although the family configurations of the ballet and jazz dancers differed, the home environment always created a setting conducive to innovative gender models. For male dancers, like female boxers and girls aiming for 'men's' occupations, the decision not to conform to gender norms appears to be made gradually in the course of a specific gender-socialization process.⁸³

The present study also looked at how the socialization of men in a female world affects the process of gender-identity building. The professional socialization of the dancers was unique essentially by virtue of the special relationships they had with women and the absence of a 'men's house'.⁸⁴ In such a context, the gender identity of these male dancers is a testimony to the complexity of the identity-building processes generated by this type of career. As 'feminist' men stigmatized by the effeminate, homosexual male-dancer stereotype – which they vigorously denounced – they recognized the use of gender-based body techniques specific to their discipline.⁸⁵ Differentiating oneself from female dancers

appears to be a useful strategy for putting oneself in a favourable position in this highly competitive job market. In this respect, the experience of these male dancers partially overlaps with that of female boxers, shown to utilize 'genderizing' for self-presentation.⁸⁶

Beyond these shared characteristics, the male dancers constructed different forms of gender identity. Two main forms were sufficient to describe the majority of the dancers studied: the first included dancers who wanted to 'remain a man' although without being a 'macho' because of it. The second included dancers desirous of being 'both feminine and masculine', who refused to define the gender categories and dissociated gender and sex, while also rejecting the stereotype of the effeminate and homosexual male dancer.

The dancers with the two identity forms differed mainly by their sexual identity and marital status on the one hand, and by the context in which they were initiated into dancing on the other. The dancers in the first group, all heterosexual, had discovered dancing under cultural conditions that facilitated this practice by men. Those in the second group, some with a homosexual orientation, began to dance in a setting less favourable to dancing by males. As in a study on female mountain-climbing guides, the conditions under which male dancers discover this activity supplies the key to analysing their gender identity.⁸⁷

In conclusion, the data obtained here provide evidence of the multiplicity and flexibility of the process of gender-identity construction. Different models of masculinity appear to be combined and/or opposed in male dancers, who attempt to break away from both effeminate and hypermasculine stereotypes, at the same time as they adopt certain behaviours characteristic of these 'ideal typical' figures.⁸⁸

Notes

- ¹ Valentin, 'L'acte blanc'; Sanderson, 'Age and Gender Issues'.
- ² Goffman, *Les rites d'interaction*; Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*; Lahire, *L'homme pluriel*.
- ³ Mennesson and Galissaire, 'Les femmes guides'.
- ⁴ Donnelly and Young, 'The Construction and Confirmation of Identity'.
- ⁵ Connell, 'An Iron Man'; Birrel and Cole, *Women, Sport and Culture*; Theberge, 'Gender, Sport'; Messner, 'Studying up on Sex'.
- ⁶ Lahire, *Portraits sociologiques*; Dubar, *La crise des identités*.
- ⁷ Dubar, *La socialisation*; Lahire, *Portraits sociologiques*.
- ⁸ Dubar, *La socialisation*, 111.
- ⁹ Brubaker, 'Au-delà de l'identité'.
- ¹⁰ Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*; Goffman, *Les rites d'interaction*.
- ¹¹ Lahire, *L'homme pluriel*.
- ¹² Dubar, *La socialisation*; Berger and Luckmann, *La construction sociale*.
- ¹³ Demazière and Dubar, *Analyser les entretiens biographiques*.
- ¹⁴ Scott, 'Genre'.
- ¹⁵ Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*.
- ¹⁶ Harding, *The Science Question*. Gender symbolism (long-lasting expressions of gender differentiation) is founded on binary oppositions. The occupational gender structure refers to the dual division of work and the two-part organization of society. Individual gender identity refers to various experiences of 'femininity' and 'masculinity' that rarely conform to symbolic representations of gender.
- ¹⁷ Messner and Sabo, *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*; Yiannakis and Melnick, *Contemporary Issues in Sociology of Sport*, 271.
- ¹⁸ MacCall, 'Does Gender Fit?'; Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*.
- ¹⁹ On soccer players, see Scraton *et al.*, 'It's Still a Man's Game?'; Mennesson, *Etre une femme*; on boxing see Mennesson, "'Hard" Women and "Soft" Women'; on dance see Clément and Dubertrand, 'La féminisation des sauts béarnais'; Bourdieu, *Le sens pratique*.
- ²⁰ Hargreaves, *Sporting Females*, 147.
- ²¹ Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*.
- ²² Epstein and Straub, *Body Guards*, 3; Birrel and Cole, *Women, Sport and Culture*, 9.

- ²³ Yiannakis and Melnick, *Contemporary Issues in Sociology of Sport*, 271.
- ²⁴ Laberge, 'Pour une convergence'.
- ²⁵ Theberge, 'Gender, Sport'; Young, 'Women, Sport and Physicality'; Cox and Thompson, 'Multiple Bodies'; Caudwell, 'Women's Footballing Bodies'.
- ²⁶ Dunning, 'Sport as a Male Preserve'; Messner and Sabo, *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*; Messner, 'Sports and Male Domination'.
- ²⁷ Connell, *Gender and Power*.
- ²⁸ Ibid., 85; Messner, *Power at Play*.
- ²⁹ Sabo and Panepinto, 'Football Ritual'.
- ³⁰ Connell, *Gender and Power*; Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity'.
- ³¹ Davis, 'Male Cheerleaders'.
- ³² Novak, 'Ballet, Gender and Cultural Power'.
- ³³ Becker, *Outsiders*.
- ³⁴ Mennesson and Clément, 'Homosociability and Homosexuality'.
- ³⁵ Demazière and Dubar, *Analyser les entretiens biographiques*.
- ³⁶ Sacks, *Lecture on Conversations*.
- ³⁷ Sorignet, *Le métier de danseur contemporain*.
- ³⁸ Risner, 'Sexual Orientation'.
- ³⁹ Saladin d'Anglure, 'Du projet "PAR.ADI"'.
⁴⁰ Best, *We've All Got Scars*; Thorne, *Gender Play*.
- ⁴¹ Thorne, *Gender play*.
- ⁴² The use of the term 'reversed-gender' dispositions does not mean that the sexual dispositions of girls and boys are necessarily opposed, but that the sexual dispositions of the male dancers corresponded more to those of the majority of girls than to those of the majority of boys. While collective representations tend to identify two opposing gender categories, individual experiences allow for a less stereotyped position; Lahire, *Portraits sociologiques*.
- ⁴³ Belloti, *Du côté des petites filles*.
- ⁴⁴ Thorne, *Gender Play*.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid.
- ⁴⁶ Maccoby, 'Le sexe, catégorie sociale'.
- ⁴⁷ Thorne, *Gender Play*.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid.
- ⁴⁹ MacRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*; Thorne, *Gender Play*; Hasbrook, 'Gendering Practices'.
- ⁵⁰ Vaz, *The Professionalization of Young Hockey Players*; Fine, *With the Boys*; Landers and Fine, 'Learning Life's Lessons'.
- ⁵¹ Mennesson and Galissaire, 'Les femmes guides'.
- ⁵² Daune-Richard and Marry, 'Autres histoires de transfuges?'; Mennesson and Clément, 'Homosociability and Homosexuality'.
- ⁵³ Kane, 'No Way my Boys are Going to Be Like That'.
- ⁵⁴ Mennesson and Galissaire, 'Les femmes guides'.
- ⁵⁵ Thorne, *Gender Play*.
- ⁵⁶ Ferrand, Imbert and Marry, *L'excellence scolaire*.
- ⁵⁷ Zaidman, *La mixité à l'école primaire*.
- ⁵⁸ Thorne, *Gender Play*.
- ⁵⁹ Gilmore, *Manhood in the Making*; Godelier, *La production des grands hommes*.
- ⁶⁰ Risner, 'Sexual Orientation'.
- ⁶¹ Davis, 'Male Cheerleaders'.
- ⁶² Defrance, 'Comment interpréter l'évolution des pratiques sportives?'
- ⁶³ Mennesson and Clément, 'Homosociability and Homosexuality'; Goffman, *Stigmaté*.
- ⁶⁴ Sorignet, *Le métier de danseur contemporain*.
- ⁶⁵ ANPE, *Les demandeurs d'emploi*.
- ⁶⁶ Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity'.
- ⁶⁷ A law ratified by the French parliament in 2000 stipulating that the candidate lists presented by the different political parties or politicians in local elections must contain 50% women. Mennesson, "'Hard" Women and "Soft" Women'.
- ⁶⁸ Young and White, 'Sport, Physical Danger'; Mennesson, "'Hard" Women and "Soft" Women'.
- ⁶⁹ Kaufmann, *La trame conjugale*.

- ⁷⁰ Bourdieu, *La domination masculine*.
- ⁷¹ Connell, 'An Iron Man'.
- ⁷² Mennesson and Clément, 'Homosociability and Homosexuality'.
- ⁷³ Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity*.
- ⁷⁴ Theberge, 'Gender, Sport'; Scraton, *et al.*, 'It's Still a Man's Game?'; Cox and Thompson, 'Multiple Bodies'; Connell, 'An Iron Man'; Messner, 'Studying up on Sex'.
- ⁷⁵ Messner, 'Studying up on Sex'.
- ⁷⁶ Connell, *Gender and Power*.
- ⁷⁷ Connell, *Gender and Power*; Messner and Sabo, *Sport, Men and the Gender Order*.
- ⁷⁸ Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity'.
- ⁷⁹ Messner, 'Studying up on Sex'.
- ⁸⁰ Connell, *Gender and Power*; Messner, 'Studying up on Sex'.
- ⁸¹ Pronger, *The Arena of Masculinity*.
- ⁸² Laberge, 'Pour une convergence'; Lahire, *Portraits sociologiques*; Mennesson and Galissaire, 'Les femmes guides'.
- ⁸³ Mennesson, *Etre une femme*; Daune-Richard and Marry, 'Autres histoires de transfuges?'
- ⁸⁴ Godelier, *La production des grands hommes*.
- ⁸⁵ Davis, 'Male Cheerleaders'.
- ⁸⁶ Mennesson, "'Hard" Women and "Soft" Women'.
- ⁸⁷ Mennesson and Galissaire, 'Les femmes guides'.
- ⁸⁸ Connell, *The Men and the Boys*.

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