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‘Weakling Chicks’ Are Replacing ‘Real Men,’ Russian Church Official Says

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Vladimir Smirnov / TASS

Russia’s “real men” are being replaced by “scrawny chickens,” a Russian Orthodox official said on Monday as heated debates surround the concept of toxic masculinity and the #MeToo movement in the West.

Many Russian women raise their children independently due to the country's high divorce rate — in 2016, Russians were 1.6 times more likely to get divorced than they were to marry. Some conservatives have linked the prevalence of single mothers to a supposed lack of traditional masculinity among Russian men.

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“If you take the average modern 30-something, the only *muzhiki* we have left are in the special forces,” Archpriest Dmitry Smirnov, who heads a patriarchal commission for children’s and mother’s rights, was quoted as saying by Interfax.

The Russian slang word "*muzhik*" — once used by President Vladimir Putin to describe Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio — can denote men of a lower class, as well as a traditionally masculine "man's man."

Smirnov also expressed concern over many Russian men's refusal to raise their own children and urged for the situation to be corrected, starting at schools, Interfax reported.

On Thursday, Smirnov compared recruits at the military academy of the missile forces where he had served for a decade to "scrawny chickens."

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