



**MONASH** University

# **Navigating Mobile Masculinities: Young Men in Melbourne and Berlin**

Karla Elliott

BA (Hons) *Monash University*

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
at Monash University in 2017  
Centre for Women's Studies and Gender Research, Sociology  
School of Social Sciences

## **COPYRIGHT NOTICE**

© The author (2017).

I certify that I have made all reasonable efforts to secure copyright permissions for third-party content included in this thesis and have not knowingly added copyright content to my work without the owner's permission.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Copyright Notice .....</b>	<b>i</b>
<b>Table of Contents .....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>vi</b>
<b>List of Acronyms and Initialisms.....</b>	<b>viii</b>
<b>Declaration.....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>Publications During Enrolment.....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>Chapter One Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
Evolution of the research .....	3
Key findings.....	5
Definitional considerations .....	6
<i>Men, masculinities, margin and centre.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Researching in two languages .....</i>	<i>8</i>
Setting the scene: Melbourne and Berlin .....	9
<i>Work and gender in neoliberal climates.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Cultural and social characteristics.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Considering the global climate.....</i>	<i>13</i>
Thesis outline .....	14
<b>Chapter Two Theorising Contemporary Men and Masculinities .....</b>	<b>18</b>
Introduction.....	18
Critical studies on men and masculinities: key theories and themes .....	18
<i>The gender order and hegemonic masculinity.....</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Engaging men .....</i>	<i>25</i>
<i>Masculinities in context: Australia and Germany .....</i>	<i>27</i>
Feminist care theory: challenging closedness.....	31
<i>Equality.....</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Care .....</i>	<i>33</i>
<i>The feminist ethic of care.....</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Dependence and interdependence .....</i>	<i>36</i>

Contemporary masculinities and change .....	38
<i>Men's bodies and emotional lives</i> .....	39
<i>Theories of change: inclusive, caring and hybrid masculinities</i> .....	42
<i>The theoretical contributions of caring masculinity and inclusive masculinity</i> .....	44
Conclusion .....	45
<b>Chapter Three   Researching Masculinities: Theoretical and Methodological</b>	
<b>Approaches .....</b>	<b>47</b>
Introduction.....	47
Margin and centre: theoretical approach.....	48
<i>Movement and the mutual constitution of the whole</i> .....	50
<i>Radically reimagining marginality as openness</i> .....	52
<i>The closed centre as site of domination</i> .....	54
<i>Clasped hands: the intersection of margin and centre</i> .....	55
<i>Refining terminology: openness, closedness and movements</i> .....	56
Narrative and meaning making .....	59
<i>Values and the problem of language</i> .....	61
Data collection and analysis.....	63
<i>Participant demographics</i> .....	66
Feminist methodologies .....	68
<i>Feminist ethics</i> .....	68
<i>Subjectivity, reflexivity and power</i> .....	70
Conclusion .....	71
<b>Chapter Four   Closed Narratives of Masculinities .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Introduction.....	73
Moves, manoeuvres and the continuation of closed masculinities .....	74
<i>Distancing from closed masculinity</i> .....	76
<i>Hard work for hard bodies</i> .....	78
<i>Care in work and friendships: balancing contradictory requirements</i> .....	81
<i>Hegemonic masculinity reformulated</i> .....	84
Sameness and difference: German men on gender equality .....	85

<i>Men, women and gender equality in Germany</i> .....	86
<i>Women as different but not equal</i> .....	87
Masculinity, femininity and gay men in Berlin .....	91
<i>Gay men as feminine, straight men as masculine</i> .....	92
<i>Homosexuality and the continuing influence of closed masculinity</i> .....	97
Fathers .....	97
<i>Fathers as emotionally closed</i> .....	98
<i>Fathers as role models</i> .....	101
<i>Positive relationships with fathers</i> .....	103
Conclusion .....	105
<b>Chapter Five Movements of Masculinities .....</b>	<b>107</b>
Introduction .....	107
Career, mobility and generative disruption .....	108
<i>Generative mobility and the progression of personal and professional lives</i> .....	109
<i>Inbetween: future mobility</i> .....	113
<i>Focusing on the present in Australia</i> .....	115
Privileges and pressures of masculinity .....	117
<i>Danger and male violence in public spaces</i> .....	118
<i>Alcohol consumption and expected masculine behaviours</i> .....	121
<i>Proscriptions against men's emotions</i> .....	124
<i>Independence and (lack of) help seeking</i> .....	127
<i>Contradictions and costs: the fault lines of closed masculinities</i> .....	130
"Essential" masculinity: lost but recoverable .....	131
<i>Narratives of loss of men's place and identity</i> .....	132
<i>The search for "true" masculinity</i> .....	135
Conclusion .....	138
<b>Chapter Six Emerging Openness of Masculinities .....</b>	<b>140</b>
Introduction .....	140
Openness, reflectivity and Berlin .....	141
<i>Diverse cultures and sexualities in Berlin</i> .....	141

<i>Open men in an open city</i> .....	144
Mobility, work and masculinity amongst Australian men in Berlin.....	146
<i>The move to Berlin</i> .....	147
<i>Rethinking the relationship between paid work and life</i> .....	151
<i>Work as necessary but secondary</i> .....	154
<i>Open expressions of masculinity</i> .....	156
<i>Closed masculinities amongst short-term Australian men in Berlin</i> .....	162
German men in Berlin: windows of potential.....	166
<i>Possibilities for masculine expression in Germany</i> .....	167
<i>Perceptions of masculinity in Germany</i> .....	169
Caring masculinity in the margin.....	171
<i>‘If you want to conceptualise “this person Manni”, I think caring must be something you must talk about’</i> .....	171
<i>‘I have crazy respect for people who take on all the caring alone, because I actually believe that’s too much for one person’</i> .....	175
<i>Openness from the margin</i> .....	176
Conclusion .....	179
<b>Chapter Seven Conclusion .....</b>	<b>180</b>
Summary .....	180
Contributions and conclusions.....	183
<i>Key findings and future research directions</i> .....	183
<i>Theoretical insights and concluding thoughts</i> .....	184
<b>References.....</b>	<b>187</b>

## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores contemporary mobile masculinities amongst young men in Melbourne, Australia and Berlin, Germany. Based on a schema of open margin and closed centre, I investigate movements of men towards and away from openness of masculinities. This research contributes to exploring and understanding navigations and narratives of masculinities in neoliberal late modernity. I consider qualitative, narrative interviews conducted in Melbourne and Berlin with 28 men between the ages of 20 and 31, the majority of whom were men of the centre: middle-class, heterosexual, white men from post-industrial societies.

Drawing on feminist theory and critical studies on men and masculinities, I position the margin, rather than the centre, as the site of open possibilities for masculinities. Mobility, movement and openness were key themes to emerge from this research. The mobility of masculinities discovered was bound up with configurations of work and intimate life in neoliberal late modernity. I discovered movement towards openness amongst participants from Australia and Germany alongside the continuing influence of more closed expressions of masculinity. Furthermore, contradictions and tensions of masculinity that could not be located as either open or closed emerged from participants' narratives. These nuances reveal challenges, but also possibilities, for fostering greater openness.

I explore mobilities of masculinities across three analysis chapters. The first considers narratives and expressions of more closed masculinities amongst participants, despite changes compared to their fathers' generation. The next analysis chapter explores the contradictions and tensions of mobile masculinities, focussing on narratives of career, the privileges and pressures of masculinity and the search for an essential, authentic version of manhood. The final analysis chapter investigates participants' thoughts on the concept of openness and the movement of some of these men towards greater openness of masculinities. Notably, this openness was developing amongst Australian men living in Berlin in conjunction with their mobility to the city and their rejection of career as integral to their lives. In addition, I consider evidence of openness in the form of caring masculinity in the narratives of one German participant who was working-class and queer: a man of the margin.

The findings of this thesis demonstrate that ongoing inequalities and the influence of more closed masculinities require continuing, sustained attention and problematisation. At the same time, this research indicates that movement of men of the centre in post-industrial societies towards increased openness of masculinities is possible and occurring in some instances. This movement towards openness, and a rejection of the domination of closed masculinities such as hegemonic masculinity, is critical for fostering more caring masculinities and for contributing towards greater gender equality.



## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND INITIALISMS

<b>AFL</b>	Australian Football League
<b>ANZAC</b>	Australian and New Zealand Army Corps
<b>CSMM</b>	Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>IMT</b>	Inclusive Masculinity Theory
<b>LGBTQIA+</b>	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Trans Queer Intersex Asexual Plus
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>USA</b>	United States of America

## DECLARATION

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.



Karla Elliott

03 March 2017

## PUBLICATIONS DURING ENROLMENT

Elliott, Karla 2016, 'Caring masculinities: theorizing an emerging concept', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 240-9.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Despite having written several thousand of them for this thesis, I can never seem to find the words to truly express how grateful I am to my Principle Supervisor Professor JaneMaree Maher for her guidance, support and inspiration over all the years I have known her. JaneMaree taught me generosity, integrity and thoughtfulness in thinking, writing and everyday life. She has indelibly helped both this thesis and me to become what we are today. My heartfelt gratitude also goes to my Associate Supervisor Associate Professor Jo Lindsay. Thank you to Jo for helping me develop the key critical ideas throughout this work and for encouraging me to write the best thesis I possibly could. Jo's friendliness and reassurance throughout the three years writing this dissertation provided unending motivation and comfort.

I am grateful to Dr Steven Roberts for many insightful conversations and comments on my work, which helped me to think about my thesis and the research process in new and exciting ways. Thank you to Dr Katarzyna Wojnicka for being not only an initial and continuing inspiration and mentor but also a friend. I have Dr Steven Angelides to thank for giving me the confidence many years ago to believe that I could and should do a PhD. The knowledge, hard work and unending friendliness of Sue Stevenson have been behind every step of turning that aspiration into a reality. The *Centre for Transdisciplinary Gender Studies* at Humboldt University in Berlin kindly hosted me as a Guest Researcher during my fieldwork for this thesis. My thanks go to Dr Gabriele Jähnert, Professor Christine Wimbauer, Dr Andreas Heilmann and Ellen Ronnsiek for their support throughout my stay.

I have been lucky enough to work on this thesis amongst wonderful, collegial, intellectually enriching people who have become some of my closest friends. They have been integral to my thesis, my wellbeing and my life for three years, so thank you to Bernice Loh, Lucy Kneebone, Catherine Waite, Sally Lo, Maria Tanyag, Harry Tan, Rakshinda Kabir, Madeleine Ulbrick, Nicholas Hill, Akane Kanai, Ari Jerrems, Fabian Cannizzo, Paul Satur, Sara Maher and Will Gourlay. A special thank you to Rachael Burgin for her tireless help, support and care in the final few weeks of writing.

Thank you to all my family and friends who have been with me throughout my candidature and supported me with boundless emotional labour. Particular thanks to those who talked over

ideas with me and helped me with translations and proofreading: Judy Russell, Patrick Elliott, Eleanor Elliott, Matthew Walker, Simon Gottlieb, Blanca Fernandez Milan, Jenny Wich-Knoten, Kristin Tammen, Shaez Mortimer, Shari Cohen and Vanessa Groß.

Finally, my sincere thanks go to the men who volunteered their time to be interviewed for this research. They generously shared their thoughts, hopes and fears and helped to shape the study, analysis and thesis. I am indebted to the wealth of stories they contributed to this work.

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

Contemporary masculinities amongst young men in post-industrial societies are changing in connection with global and local shifts in labour market conditions and configurations of intimate life in late modernity. Young men are to an extent able to adopt more open expressions of masculinity than previously. Nevertheless, more traditional ideals of masculinities continue to demand exacting standards and lead to pressing costs for people of all genders. Despite feminist gains, structures of domination and inequality persist. In this thesis, I investigate masculinities amongst young men in Melbourne, Australia and Berlin, Germany. I argue that contemporary masculinities are best understood as mobile, where possibilities and shifts towards more open expressions of masculinity coincide with the continuation of more closed beliefs and behaviours. My objective is to make a theoretical contribution to understanding contemporary masculinities by developing the notion of masculinities as mobile. In doing so, I capture openness and closedness of masculinities as well as complexities, contradictions and movements between these two positions.

This thesis integrates feminist theory and critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM), which Beasley (2015) suggests have diverged theoretically since the 1960s. My theoretical intervention involves the establishment of a schema of margin–centre in relation to masculinities. This schema, which I develop in chapter three, is informed by bell hooks’ (2004a) consideration of margin and centre and Margrit Shildrick’s (2006) work on the self or subject and monstrous or other. In addition, I draw on reflections on the “centre” from CSMM. I suggest that the open margin and closed centre are interdependent and intersecting, where the margin is positioned as the site of open alternatives and possibilities for masculinity. Movement across the spaces of margin and centre is a critical aspect of the schema. Margin–centre offers a way to think about contemporary mobile masculinities and the narratives of young men in post-industrial societies.

In this thesis I investigate debates within CSMM on the implications for the field of focusing on “men” on the one hand or “masculinities” on the other (Beasley 2012, 2015; Hearn 2004, 2012). My research considers both men (the participants of the study) and masculinities. The diverse array of conceptualisations and theories of masculinity that have emerged from the

field of CSMM, which I investigate in chapter two, can be plotted onto the margin–centre schema in varying positions. For instance, hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987) can be located in the closed centre and caring masculinity (Elliott 2016; Hanlon 2012) in the open margin.

Men themselves can be positioned in relation to margin–centre depending on, for example, their access to power and privilege. Hopkins and Pain (2007) argue for more attention to be directed towards investigating the centre. This thesis contributes to that project by exploring “men of the centre”; the majority of participants in this research were privileged on multiple axes such as gender, sexuality, ethnicity and class. It is difficult for men of the centre to ever rid themselves entirely of privilege and move fully into the open margin. However, the intersecting of margin and centre, which I explore throughout this thesis, shows that there is and can be movement between the two spaces. As I demonstrate, the categories of “men of the centre” and “men of the margin” are not static.

In this research I consider narratives of masculinity in relation to patterns of mobility, work and intimate life from 28 young men between the ages of 20 and 31 living in Melbourne and Berlin. These participants included eight men living in or near Melbourne, ten German men living in Berlin and ten Australian men living in Berlin. 25 of these participants were privileged men of the centre. Three were men of the margin, two as a result of identifying as gay and one as a result of identifying as queer and from a working-class background. Qualitative, narrative interviews were conducted with these participants. Based on these interviews, I trace throughout this thesis the movements of the 28 participants across the spaces of margin–centre.

Four key patterns of movement were discovered in particular. First, I found that men living in Australia had the ability and privilege to manoeuvre around expressions of masculinity depending on expectations but generally remained within the closed centre. Second, amongst the German participants, windows of potential for a movement from the closed centre towards greater openness were emerging. Third, I discovered that some Australian men living in Berlin were on significant trajectories towards increased openness of masculinities. However, the continuing pull of the closed centre resulted in the fourth movement explored throughout this work: a drawing of many of the participants back towards closed expressions of masculinity. In addition, I discovered narratives of open masculinity in the form of caring masculinity from one participant located in the margin. Finally, in chapter five I investigate the nuances,

contradictions and possibilities of mobile masculinities that are not neatly captured by these four key movements or by locating closed and open expressions of masculinity.

Mobility and movement are key themes running throughout this work both theoretically and empirically. This focus emerged from a grounded approach to the research, as I discuss in chapter three. In particular, mobility of men across geographic locations and across the spaces of margin–centre was interconnected with mobilities of expressions of masculinity. I consider possibilities and emerging shifts to openness of masculinities throughout this dissertation but also explore challenges and the continuing influence of the closed centre. Many of the men of the centre in this study retained access to privileged modes of masculinity. While changes may have occurred amongst young men in post-industrial societies such as Australia and Germany, the continuing influence of closedness cannot be ignored and is a crucial consideration in the analysis and theorisation of contemporary masculinities. To disregard the continuing resonance and resilience of closed, centre masculinities is to elide ongoing problems of power, domination and inequality, ultimately hampering the goal of more caring, equal societies and more open, fluid expressions of masculinity.

### **Evolution of the research**

In order to explore mobile masculinities and emerging openness, I conducted narrative interviews with the 28 male participants in Melbourne and Berlin, all of whom were between the ages of 20 and 31. As a feminist researcher, I was concerned with investigating and problematising closed, centre masculinities. A goal of the research was to contribute towards understandings of contemporary masculinities in order to promote and foster gender equality, though I consider the term “gender equality” in greater depth in chapter two of this thesis. My interest in this project was initially sparked as a result of moving in 2012 from Melbourne to Berlin, where I lived for two and a half years. I grew up, however, in a smaller, regional city in Australia not far from Melbourne. My experiences of having lived for many years in Melbourne and encountering both Australian and German men in Berlin led me to wonder about differences in expressions of masculinity between men in Germany and in Australia. Specifically, it seemed to me that some German men I met in Berlin displayed more open versions of masculinity.



My assumption was given support by the notion of caring masculinity, which Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) suggest is emerging in social practices in urban European centres. I was eager to investigate possibilities for caring masculinity in more depth in Berlin, where I felt I was witnessing forms of men's caring emerge. Furthermore, I had hoped to investigate caring masculinity in relation to an under-researched aspect of intimate and social life: friendship. Consequently, my original three research questions were:

1. Does care play a role in young men's friendships in Germany and Australia?
2. If yes, how can this care be conceptualised in light of feminist theory and critical studies on men and masculinities?
3. What differences does context, in this case Germany and Australia, create in relation to men's care, friendships and masculinities?

These research questions were designed to reveal more about the emotional and intimate lives of young men and their friends and to illuminate iterations of caring masculinity. My interview schedule, which I present in chapter three, was consequently structured according to these questions. However, through my grounded approach to the narrative data I collected, I recognised that although participants spoke about their friendships and caring, they mainly did so because I had asked it of them. What emerged more significantly across interviews was that participants were producing narratives of the challenges, changes and contradictions of contemporary masculinities, in particular tied to mobility and work in post-industrial societies. Furthermore, my research was initially designed to be comparative. However, again through my grounded approach, the salience of the setting of Berlin in which two groups of participants were interviewed became clear. Strikingly, 18 of the 20 participants living in Berlin had, like me, grown up in smaller regional or rural cities or town in Germany or Australia. The theme of mobility and the city of Berlin connected us all.

Consequently, in this thesis I explore narratives and expressions of the mobile masculinities I discovered amongst participants. German participants, for instance, utilised mobility in order to advance their careers. Australian men in Berlin, on the other hand, found that in conjunction with mobility they could break the salience of paid work attached to closed, centre masculinities and focus instead on sustaining and experiencing more satisfying ways of life. In addition, I consider similar themes that arose from the stories told by participants living in Australia. Their narratives highlighted the setting the Australian men in Berlin had left behind, a setting some of the German participants had also experienced through periods of living or

holidaying there. The theorising and conceptualisation of narratives in this dissertation emerged as a result of my grounded approach and in relation to the challenges of the data. Ultimately, both the participants and I are firmly located in this research: in why and how it was conducted, in how it evolved and in the final considerations around mobile masculinities explored throughout this thesis.

## **Key findings**

A primary finding of this research was that the participants who were moving most significantly towards more open expressions of masculinity were the Australian men living in Berlin. This movement and emerging openness was intimately connected with mobility away from smaller towns and cities to the city of Berlin and with breaking the connection between career and life. Windows of potential for the beginnings of a similar movement amongst the German men were also observable. The particular men who chose to speak to me for this study was a significant issue, one that related to my observations of emerging openness. Participants were those who wanted to help with my research, but they were also interested enough in the original topics of the research — masculinity, care and friendship — to want to participate and discuss these issues.

Another of the most significant findings was the openness of masculinity demonstrated by Manni, one of the few participants that could be identified as from the margin. Manni was working-class and identified as queer, and as I discuss in chapter six he was the only instance where my foundational search for caring masculinity was realised. Locked out of the privileges of the closed centre, Manni adopted a radical politics of gender and sexuality, challenged dictates of closed masculinities and had a strong commitment to care. By contrast, another key finding of this thesis is that iterations of more closed, centre masculinities continued amongst many of the participants. I focus explicitly on this closedness and demonstrate that although there had been shifts towards openness of masculinities across all three groups of participants, most continued to be drawn back towards the closed centre. As stated, a story of movement emerged here. In terms of masculinities, participants were moving towards greater openness of masculinities in certain ways, but retreating from this in others.

## **Definitional considerations**

### *Men, masculinities, margin and centre*

Language surrounding gender, masculinities and intersections such as class and sexuality is fraught and complex, as I explore in chapter three. Here, I outline my definitional commitments to illuminate the ways I navigate certain tensions of language and theory throughout this thesis. One of my foremost arguments in this work is that while it is almost impossible for men of the centre to be rid of centre privilege, they can and must reject the domination of the centre and move towards the greater openness of masculinities fostered in the margin. As a result, when considering emerging openness of masculinities throughout this thesis, I draw in particular on the concept of caring masculinity (Elliott 2016; Hanlon 2012) because it calls for the rejection of the domination of the centre and a movement towards openness through the adoption of values of care. Caring masculinity is located in the open margin, but through its insistence that domination be rejected, it can speak to men of the centre and offer them alternative expressions of masculinity. The movement away from the domination of the centre called for by caring masculinity is necessary for fostering gender equality and challenging narratives of closed, centre masculinities. I explore caring masculinity in more detail in chapter two, along with the contributions of theorising on inclusive masculinity (Anderson 2009) and hybrid masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014).

I utilise the terminology of closed, centre masculinities on the one hand and open masculinities on the other. Drawing on this language allows me to navigate the problem of slippage between using the term “hegemonic masculinity” to describe an archetype, a process or the theory itself, some of the complexities of which Hearn (2004, 2012) outlines. Anderson (2009) utilises the concept “orthodox masculinity” for masculinity he describes as conservative. He, however, argues that orthodox masculinity is ‘dominant (but not dominating)’ (Anderson 2009, p. 8). By contrast, I suggest the terminology of closed, centre masculinities maintains a focus on the continuing privileges and domination of the centre and of centre masculinities such as hegemonic masculinity.

Retaining this focus is important, as participants in this study were mainly privileged men who could access powerful versions of closed, centre masculinities in Germany and Australia,

though standards of hegemonic masculinity are generally impossible for most men to live up to (Connell 1987). The terminology of closed, centre masculinities and open masculinities furthermore enables me to avoid reifying participants as hegemonic or foreclosing the possibility for these men to move from the centre towards more openness. As I discuss in chapter three, I position the margin as the site where radical openness can flourish. Nevertheless, throughout this thesis I draw on the terminology of “open masculinities” or “openness of masculinities” without necessarily attaching “margin” to this wording. Again, in chapter three I discuss how openness and the margin, by virtue of being both open and marginalised, are less definable than the closed centre.

The language of open margin and closed centre offers a new way of thinking about masculinities beyond, but building on, Connell’s (1987) original definitions of hegemonic masculinity and the gender order, which I discuss in chapter two. As I explain in chapter three, different theories and ideas of masculinity from CSMM can be positioned in varying locations on the margin–centre schema. Hegemonic and complicit masculinities, for example, can be located in the closed centre, while subordinated and marginalised masculinities can be found in the open margin. I locate further ideas of masculinity beyond these four onto the schema in chapter three. These include concepts such as inclusive, protest and caring masculinities, which I first explore theoretically in chapter two.

The concepts of margin and centre are, I suggest, broad enough to capture the complexities of participants in this study, each of whom had varying levels of privilege or disadvantage. Margin–centre helps to capture movements of men and masculinities, yet shows that masculinities are neither easily categorised nor static and unchanging. In addition, this framework empowers the margin as a site of radical openness and resistance, rather than positioning it only as a site of deprivation (hooks 2004a). My work nevertheless remains grounded in CSMM and feminist theorising. The conceptual and theoretical tools of the gender order and hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987), for example, are particularly useful for highlighting issues of power, domination and closedness between men and over women. As I argue in the following chapter, even if most men, including the participants in this research, cannot fully live up to the dictates of hegemonic masculinity, it still sets the standards and ideals for which men are expected to strive.

## *Researching in two languages*

Definitional considerations are particularly pertinent for this research as I worked with two languages throughout the project: English and German. English is my first language. However, I consider myself fluent in German, though not to the same comfort level as English, as a result of having lived in Germany for several years and having studied German since the age of 13. Therefore, I conducted the interviews with all participants myself, including the two who chose to speak in German rather than English. I also transcribed and analysed these German interviews. Where I have translated a quote from a participant into English, I have included the original text in German in parentheses.

Furthermore, footnotes throughout this dissertation at times elucidate extra information about a translation, as often words or expressions cannot be neatly converted from one language to the other without some additional explanation. The word “care”, for example, has several versions in German, including the nouns “*die Sorge*”, “*die Fürsorge*” and “*die Pflege*” (all, notably enough, carrying the feminine gender), and the verbs “*sorgen*”, “*pflanzen*” and “*sich kümmern*”, each with different connotations. “*Reproduktionsarbeit*” signals the care and domestic work in the private sphere performed largely for free by women, with a special emphasis on how this work supports and enables paid work and production in the public sphere (Heilmann 2015). In addition, the English word “care” is sometimes used in German and covers a range of German meanings and words (Scholz 2012). Consequently, as I explain in chapter three, I always discussed with German participants during their interviews what the word “care” meant to them.

I also draw on the word “closedness” throughout this thesis. After significant consideration, it seemed to me that if I would be investigating “openness”, I also needed the ability to speak about “closedness” as a noun. A word does exist in German for closedness: “*die Geschlossenheit*” (“*geschlossen*” meaning “closed”). Although “closedness” does not roll particularly well off the tongue, I decided to nevertheless make use of it as a noun throughout this thesis because the absence of an English equivalent for *die Geschlossenheit* seems to me a limitation of the language available for discussing masculinities.

## Setting the scene: Melbourne and Berlin

### *Work and gender in neoliberal climates*

As stated, I chose two sites in which to conduct this research: Melbourne in Australia and Berlin in Germany. In the following, I trace relations of work and gender in Australia and in Germany in the past and today and consider some of the cultural and social characteristics of each country. Constructions and identities of masculinity in western societies are bound up with life long, secure paid work (Heilmann 2015; Meuser 2010; Scholz 2012). Mobile masculinities in post-industrial societies such as Germany and Australia are set against the backdrop of reflexive modernity (Beck, Bonss & Lau 2003), including shifting configurations of work and gender in neoliberal economies. Braidotti (2011) states:

[a] world economy linked by a thick web of transnational flows of capital and labor functions by internal and external flows of migration and mobility. The so-called flexibility or precariousness of actual work conditions makes for social instability, transitory citizens, and impermanent settlements.

Massey (1994) draws attention to the importance of space and place for constructions of gender. Together with McDowell in 1984, she explored male dominance, economic development, women's work and the spatial division of labour in four regions in Britain in the nineteenth century and at the end of the twentieth century. McDowell and Massey (1984) show that the separation of the private and public spheres has had differing effects on women's work and male dominance in varying locations — even when these locations are culturally similar — in combination with a range of factors. They furthermore reveal the influence of the regional on the national and vice versa (McDowell & Massey 1984). Commenting on this earlier work, Massey (1994, p. 179, original emphasis) writes that it reveals the 'importance of the *spatial separation* of home and workplace in generating dismay in certain quarters at women becoming "economically active"'. In Australia and Germany these relations too are marked by gendered spatial divisions, though with differing particularities in each country. In both locations, however, women continue to be responsible for the majority of unpaid caring and domestic work and labour markets remain gender segregated.

In Australia, services and mining have become the backbone of the economy (Connell 2007) and meanings of career have changed for young people since the 1990s (Dwyer et al. 2003;

Stokes & Wyn 2007). Dwyer, Smith, Tyler and Wyn (2003) suggest that predictable career paths ensuring financial security remained the expectation until the 1990s. However, as in other post-industrial societies, the deregulation of the industrial regime in Australia has led to increasing job insecurity and decreased resources for employees in terms of working conditions and wages (Pocock 2005). This climate of labour market precarity has affected the pathway from education to work, initiating a need for both flexibility and mobility in young people (Stokes & Wyn 2007). Stokes and Wyn (2007), in what they label “the contexting of choice”, found that in 2004 personal relationships and lifestyle considerations were ranked higher by their young respondents than work or career and that careers were seen as personal journeys rather than secure jobs.

Paid employment nevertheless remains gender segregated in Australia, including in two of the country’s major industries: health care and social assistance (female-concentrated) and construction (male-concentrated) (Huppatz & Goodwin 2013). Despite women’s increased participation in paid work in Australia, they are more highly represented in poor quality, part-time work and they ‘undertake around twice as much unpaid domestic work and care as men’ (Pocock, Charlesworth & Chapman 2013, p. 606). Huppatz and Goodwin (2013) suggest that men working in feminised occupations can draw on male or masculine gender capital in order to gain managerial or more senior positions, though this capital is exercised within the confines of class status. Men in feminised occupations also have the potential to draw on feminine capital, and indeed may need to in order to competently perform their work or move out of low-skilled service work and into higher class positions (Huppatz & Goodwin 2013). Despite shifts in the industrial regime in Australia, then, men remain more highly represented in better quality, better remunerated work and may have greater potential to draw on their gender capital in order to navigate the conditions of precarious employment.

A similar picture surrounding work and precarity for young people has emerged in Germany. Patterns of de-standardisation of work have increased for men in both the eastern and western regions of Germany, though de-standardisation began in the 1980s in West Germany and in the 1990s in East Germany (Simonson, Gordo & Kelle 2015). Simonson, Gordo and Kelle (2015, p. 390) write that since the 1990s ‘repeated phases of unemployment became increasingly common, as did job changes and such non-standard employment patterns as temporary work and marginal employment’. Simonson, Gordo and Kelle also trace the effects of German reunification on the move to de-standardisation, but argue that the process of de-

standardisation has taken place in Germany in the context of similar shifts in Europe more broadly.

According to Scholz (2012), as more traditional work in Germany wanes, precarious work becomes the reality for increasing numbers of women and men. She argues '[w]ith the subjectivisation of work ... flexible availability and mobility are demanded by employers' (Scholz 2012, p. 46, my translation). Gärtner and Höyng (2005) also draw attention to increasingly precarious, non-standard work in Europe. They note that in 2005 in Berlin, 'only 40.3% [of] males fit for work aged 15 to 65 ... [were] employed in standard jobs', that is, full time, permanent work (Gärtner & Höyng 2005, pp. 15-16). Scholz (2012) traces changes in gender relations in connection with shifts in former East and West Germany and after reunification. She demonstrates that in contrast to capitalist West Germany, where women were excluded from paid work, in socialist East Germany the distinctions between the public and private spheres faded and the full-time dual-income household emerged. Women nevertheless remained responsible for the work of raising families in East Germany and were funnelled into lower paid professions, thereby facing a double or even triple burden (Scholz 2012).

Scholz reveals that the labour market was gender-segregated in both East and West Germany, though in different ways. After German reunification in 1990, the acceleration of neoliberalism meant that ideas of stark distinctions between men and women based on biological difference began to weaken (Scholz 2012). Scholz (2012, p. 47, my translation) writes that in this climate:

no longer should the man "support" the family, rather, every adult person fit for employment should be integrated into the employment market and take care of their own financial livelihood.

Yet despite the appearance of greater equality between the genders, Scholz (2012, p. 47, my translation) argues 'structural gender inequalities persist, which are barely perceived as such'.

Quoting Nickel (2008, p. 186), Scholz (2012, pp. 47-48, my translation) argues that ultimately in Germany 'one can speak of a parallel occurrence of "erosion and intensification of gender as a structural category"', as women have been integrated into the workforce, yet work in gender-segregated employment and remain responsible for work in the domestic sphere. Höyng, Puchert and Holter (2005) confirm that in European societies, labour market gender segregation remains strong, problematic and persistent, and women still perform more unpaid work than men. These neoliberal climates of work and gender in Australia and Germany, in



which the participants in this study were situated, contextualise the narratives they offered of mobilities, work and masculinities.

### *Cultural and social characteristics*

The ties between Germany and Australia are well established, and in 2014 national cooperation between the two countries accelerated with the establishment of the *Australia-Germany Advisory Group* (2015). In 2014 to 2015, German residents made up the third largest group of working holidaymaker visas in Australia (26,327) and the third largest group of European students (4,571) (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade n.d.). In Melbourne, the capital city of the Australian state of Victoria, the population of 4.5 million is culturally diverse. 58 per cent have one or both parents born overseas (Trade & Investment Victoria n.d.) and in 2011 48 per cent of residents were born overseas (City of Melbourne 2017a). The *City of Melbourne* (2017b) council suggests approximately 140 cultures are represented in Melbourne and the median age of residents in 2011 was 28 (City of Melbourne 2017a).

Despite these statistics reflecting diversity in Melbourne, British colonisation of Australia beginning in the late eighteenth century was violent and ruthless, with ongoing consequences for Aboriginal people in Australia. Connell (2007, p. ix) writes:

white Australians often think of themselves as living at the end of the earth ... But Australia also has an Indigenous population for whom this is not the end of the earth, but the centre.

Jupp (2007, p. 7) argues that Australia has long used immigration to design and influence the makeup of the country's population, and that this has been bound up with 'long and strong xenophobic, racist and insular traditions'. The White Australia policy barred immigration from Asia from the 1880s through to the 1960s (Connell 2007; Jupp 2007); the policy was dismantled between 1966 and 1973 as a result of economic, social and political pressures (Jupp 1995). More recently, in 2012 the Australian government revived the punitive policy of offshore detention, sending some asylum seekers who arrive unauthorised by boat to detention centres with poor and unsafe living conditions on Manus Island and Nauru (Pickering & Weber 2014).

Berlin emerged in this study as a significant location in terms of openness and possibilities for masculinities. The participants I spoke to in Berlin positioned it as an open city, which I tease

out in greater detail in chapter six. This openness is borne out to an extent by the diversity of the city. According to *Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie* (2016), in 2015 40 per cent of Berlin's more than 3.5 million population was below 35 years of age and people from approximately 190 countries were living in the city. 17.2 per cent of the population was from countries other than Germany, with citizens of Australia, Oceania or Antarctica making up 0.6 per cent of this (Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie 2016). Around 25 per cent of the 114,000 people who moved to Berlin from countries other than Germany in 2015 had Syrian nationality (Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie 2016).

Historically, however, West Berlin was an enclosed city circled by the Berlin wall. During this time there was no military conscription in West Berlin. The city was, furthermore, a key location for the student movement of the 60s and 70s (Merritt 1969), and it played home to thriving music and subcultural scenes. West Berlin was therefore an attractive space for students, artists, members of sub-cultures and conscientious objectors, setting the scene for contemporary Berlin. Berlin's unique history has led to a city that plays home to start-up, sub-cultural and electronic music scenes, to name just a few. Klaus Wowereit, openly gay former mayor of Berlin, famously described the city as 'poor but sexy' (*'Berlin ist arm, aber sexy'*) (Neate 2014), capturing to some extent the contemporary identity of the city.

### *Considering the global climate*

Two thirds of participants in this study were located in Berlin, but all were enmeshed in global processes and flows. The years 2014 and 2015, in which I conducted the interviews, were marked by political and economic insecurities and tensions globally that played an important role locally in both Germany and Australia. The neoliberal global climate and deregulated labour markets have produced insecurity more broadly. In addition, more acutely visible world events affected participants over these two years. For example, at the beginning of February 2014 the conflict in eastern Ukraine began, followed by the shooting down of the Malaysian Airlines plane over Ukraine on 17 July 2014. I conducted the first interview for this study only two months later. A continuing standoff between the United States of America (USA) and Russia over the involvement of both countries in the Syria conflict further contributed to ongoing global security anxieties. Particularly in Berlin, mass migration out of Syria and refugee flows to Germany and Berlin became salient, widely discussed topics after

approximately September 2015. The perceived threat of terrorism in both Australia and Germany was also noticeable, particularly after the siege on a café in Sydney from 15 to 16 December 2014 in which two people were killed and following the terrorist attacks in Paris on 13 November 2015.

Some participants in the study directly mentioned these global events. They spoke about, for example, the wars in Syria and Ukraine, refugees from Syria, the election of Tony Abbott as Prime Minister of Australia in September 2013 and the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015. Refugee flows to Berlin was a particularly salient topic for the participants living there. Most of those interviewed from September 2015 onwards, nine participants, spoke about refugees. This global climate formed part of the backdrop, along with local contexts, to the narratives participants formed and relayed about masculinity and their lives.

## **Thesis outline**

The three analytical chapters of this thesis explore the continuation of closed, centre masculinities, challenges and possibilities of mobile masculinities and, finally, movements towards openness. Before delving into these analyses, in chapter two, *Theorising contemporary men and masculinities*, I consider previous thought within CSMM on closed, centre masculinities, I investigate the contribution of feminist care theory to challenging this closedness and I explore theoretical and empirical work on contemporary changes in masculinities in post-industrial societies. This discussion presents the foundational and contemporary debates taking place in feminist and CSMM work on men and masculinities and highlights the scholarly traditions and strands of thought in which my own work is situated.

In chapter three, *Researching masculinities: theoretical and methodological approaches*, I begin by developing the framework of margin–centre, drawing on hooks’ (2004a) conceptualisation of the margin as a space of radical openness and Shildrick’s (2006) vision of the monstrous. I theorise movement and mutual constitution of the whole through margin and centre and explore how these two spaces intersect. I then refine terminology by aligning the centre as “closed” and the margin as “open” in greater detail, and I chart the movements of participants around the spaces of margin–centre. I draw upon this schema to understand mobilities and trajectories of study participants and to consider how change is occurring. In

turning to my methodological approach, I investigate issues surrounding language, narrative, meaning making and values, and I outline the research methods for this project: narrative methods. In chapter three I introduce participant demographics and engage with feminist methodologies surrounding ethics and reflexivity. In line with these feminist methodologies, I end chapter three by considering issues of subjectivity and power and resulting challenges in the research.

Chapter four, *Closed narratives of masculinities*, marks the first of my analysis chapters. Here, I consider the proximity of many of the participants to the closed centre and closed narratives of masculinity told by men from all three groups. These narratives emerged despite changes in masculinities from, for example, their fathers' generation. I outline a double movement amongst participants whereby statements of more progressive attitudes sat alongside a continued engagement with, or attraction to, more closed beliefs or behaviours. In this chapter I consider the ways in which participants in Australia positioned themselves as modern, "softer" men, distancing themselves from protest masculinity in the process but also borrowing from it through their work on their bodies. I discuss narratives amongst the German participants of differences between women and men and beliefs of the unsuitability of women for careers.

I then turn to the narratives Australian men in Berlin told about gay men, highlighting their acceptance of these men, but also their fear that they themselves would be perceived as gay. Finally, I consider stories about the older, more closed masculinity represented by fathers, which arose in interviews with all three groups of participants with surprising frequency. In chapter four I therefore explore two of the four key themes of movement. The first is how men living in Australia largely remained in the closed centre, despite an ability to manoeuvre around expressions of masculinity. The second is the movement that continued to pull participants from all three groups away from openness and back towards the closed centre.

In chapter five, *Movements of masculinities*, I draw out nuances of mobile masculinities that cannot be captured in terms of simply openness or closedness. In particular, I explore resistance amongst participants to norms of closed, centre masculinities in some ways, but strategic use of these norms in others. Some participants were searching for a form of masculinity that would feel more authentic to them, highlighting the importance of feminist interventions aimed at fostering alternative possibilities such as caring masculinity. I first look at mobility of German participants and men in Australia in the service of career advancement before illuminating

privileges and pressures participants faced in terms of masculinities. Finally, I look at narratives of “essential”, “true” masculinity drawn on by some participants, which reflect discourses circulating in, for example, the mass media (Heilmann 2015) and movements such as the mythopoeic men’s movement (Kimmel 2010; Messner 1997; Whitehead 2002). The narratives considered in chapter five highlight challenges of closed, centre masculinities but also point to disruptions, fault lines and contradictions that suggest possibilities for more openness.

Chapter six, *Emerging openness of masculinities*, is the final analysis chapter. Here, I consider themes and narratives of openness and masculinity. I begin this chapter by drawing on participants’ narratives about Berlin that situated this city as a space of openness. Participants furthermore valued openness both in themselves and in those close to them. I then analyse the more open expressions of masculinity I discovered emerging amongst Australian men in Berlin, the group that was moving most significantly towards this greater openness. These trajectories were particularly connected with mobility to Berlin and with the breaking of the importance of career to the participants’ lives. Next I revisit the narratives told by German men to reveal windows of potentiality in their talk of greater possibilities for expressions of gender amongst men in Germany and less of a desire to draw sharp distinctions between men and women.

To conclude chapter six, I present narratives of caring masculinity told by Manni, a German man situated in the margin as a result of his class and sexuality statuses and the only participant to demonstrate caring masculinity. In chapter six I therefore track the movement of Australian men in Berlin towards greater openness, the beginnings of this trajectory amongst the German participants and Manni’s resistance and caring masculinity in the margin. However, despite exploring greater openness of masculinities in chapter six, I continue to maintain a focus on the more closed narratives highlighted in chapters four and five, which sat alongside emerging openness. Thus, chapter six too considers the pull of the centre.

Finally, in chapter seven I highlight the conclusions I draw from my investigation of contemporary men and mobile masculinities in relation to the margin–centre schema. I reiterate the importance of the margin as a site of radical openness and argue that while men of the centre largely cannot leave the privilege of the closed centre behind, they can move towards the greater openness of masculinities fostered in the open margin. Some of the men of the centre who participated in my research had begun to make this movement in certain respects,

yet were simultaneously influenced by the continuing pull of the closed centre. This research therefore reveals openness, closedness, challenges and possibilities of mobile masculinities amongst young men in post-industrial societies.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THEORISING CONTEMPORARY MEN AND MASCULINITIES

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore thought from critical studies on men and masculinities (CSMM) and feminist theory on contemporary and past masculinities. I begin by delving into some of the major theoretical debates in CSMM and key concepts of masculinity such as the gender order and hegemonic, complicit, transnational, subordinated, marginalised and protest masculinities. I investigate crisis of masculinity discourses found in, for example, the mass media and the mythopoeic men's movement. I furthermore discuss the importance of engaging men in gender equality and outline configurations of hegemonic masculinity in Australia and Germany. I turn to an exploration of feminist care theory, which challenges closed, centre masculinities through its emphasis on relationality, dependence and interdependence.

Finally, I outline considerations of change in contemporary masculinities. I present empirical work on men's bodies and shifts in their emotional lives and theoretical engagements with men's change such as inclusive, caring and hybrid masculinities. Caring masculinity in particular assists in my subsequent analysis of expressions of masculinity amongst study participants. In line with feminist methodologies I conduct a 'generous reading' (Stanley & Wise 1990) of past literature here. This means I consider work on its merits rather than speaking of gaps and flaws or seeking to position my own research as superior. I provide a synthesis of previous literature upon which my study can be built.

#### **Critical studies on men and masculinities: key theories and themes**

##### *The gender order and hegemonic masculinity*

The critical study of men and masculinities has a history dating back to the 1950s (Whitehead & Barrett 2001), and this body of work has been particularly concerned with the exploration and theorisation of masculinities that I position in the closed centre, such as hegemonic

masculinity.<sup>1</sup> Connell's (1987) concepts of the gender order and hegemonic masculinity, which initially emerged during the second wave of CSMM theorising (Whitehead & Barrett 2001), have been some of the most influential in the field. Following Connell (1987, p. 139), the gender order can be defined as "the current state of play" in the macro-politics of power, sex, gender and sexuality (Elliott 2011; Messner 1990). The simplest expression of the gender order is the domination of men over women, but a key contribution of Connell's work has been its focus on the network of multiple masculinities and femininities within the gender order and the interrelations between them (Connell 1987, 2005).

Messner and Sabo (1990, p. 13) state that both masculinity and femininity 'develop in relation to each other within a system of structured social inequality', further highlighting the salience of relationality within gender systems. The identification of structured social inequality is important, as although masculinities and femininities are relational, they are not equally valued. Connell's model of the gender order therefore represents the variation and hierarchical relationships between masculinities and femininities. Thus, Connell (1987, pp. 183-188; 2005, pp. 76-81) identifies the categories of hegemonic masculinity, complicit masculinity, subordinate masculinity and marginalised masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinity sits at the pinnacle of the gender order and is defined by Connell (2005, p. 77) as:

the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women.

It is the masculinity that is most dominant and culturally exalted at any given time, though its ascendancy is not fixed. Rather, hegemonic masculinity responds to societal changes and challenges such as feminism and changes accordingly. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) argue that local pluralities and context specific formulations of hegemonic masculinity are tied together at the regional and societal levels. They therefore propose that there is one hegemonic masculinity, as 'the "family resemblance" among local variants is likely to be represented by one symbolic model at the regional level, not by multiple models' (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, pp. 850-851). Hegemonic masculinity works to legitimise and maintain patriarchal relations. It subordinates men who embody devalued forms of masculinity, such as homosexual

---

<sup>1</sup> This discussion builds on my previous work in Elliott, K 2011 'Disrespect and the absence of responsibility: masculinity, femininity and the Australian Football League', Honours thesis, Monash University.



men (subordinated masculinities), and marginalises men based on axes such as ethnicity, class and ability (marginalised masculinities).

Yet according to the concept of the gender order, men can benefit from the subordination of women through their complicity with the hegemonic ideal (complicit masculinities). In other words, men who are complicit in the hierarchical gender order benefit from the patriarchal dividend without having to embody hegemonic masculine ideals themselves (Connell 2005). On the other hand, Hearn (2004) points out that ‘the most powerful bearers of the cultural ideal of hegemonic masculinity are not necessarily the most powerful individuals’. In practice, few men are able to live up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987). Nevertheless, hegemonic masculinity, at the spearhead of the gender order, remains a normative force in gender relationalities.

Connell (2005) and Connell and Wood (2005) suggest that at a global level it is “transnational business masculinity” that is hegemonic (Elias & Beasley 2009). Transnational business masculinity, according to Connell’s (2005, p. xxiii; see also Connell & Wood 2005) depiction, has grown from globalisation and the rise of neo-liberalism in world politics where ‘the needs of transnational capital and the creation of global markets’ are prioritised. In this context, managers and entrepreneurs are ‘the bearers of an emerging hegemonic form of masculinity’ (Connell 2005, p. xxiii). By contrast, Connell (2005) discusses the concept of protest masculinity, a form of masculinity found amongst marginalised, mainly working-class men who take on themes of hegemonic masculinity such as violence and aggression but lack the power of hegemonically masculine men. Though protest masculinity is adopted by marginalised men, it can be seen as a closed expression of masculinity rather than an open one. I revisit this nuance in my development of the margin–centre schema in chapter three. Hopkins (2006; see also Hopkins & Smith 2008) adds constructions of Muslim masculinities to the analysis, highlighting racialised discourses of masculinities, the experiences of young Muslim men in Scotland and the ways in which young Muslims are positioned as the ultimate “other”. He finds that expressions of masculinity amongst young Muslim men are multiple, nuanced and often contradictory (Hopkins 2006, 2009).

An important contribution of hegemonic masculinity theory is that it accounts for the ability of the archetype of hegemonic masculinity to shift and change in the face of challenges in order to maintain hegemony and continue the legitimacy of patriarchy. As the oft quoted definition

of hegemonic masculinity suggests, hegemonic masculinity is ‘the *currently accepted answer* to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy’ (Connell 2005, p. 77, emphasis added). Hegemonic masculinity ‘provides solutions’ to challenges, ‘tending to stabilize patriarchal power or reconstitute it in new conditions’ (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, p. 853). Bridges and Pascoe (2014) draw on Demetriou’s (2001) work on dialectical pragmatism to stress this ability of hegemonic masculinity to perpetuate itself in the face of change. They state ‘[d]ialectical pragmatism refers to the ability of hegemonic masculinities to appropriate elements of subordinated and marginalized “Others” in ways that work to recuperate existing systems of power and inequality’ (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, p. 249). In light of dialectical pragmatism and the perpetuation of inequality, I stress subsequently in this chapter how important the rejection of domination called for by caring masculinity is in the movement towards greater openness, not only the adoption of values of care.

The concepts of the gender order and hegemonic masculinity, while highly influential, have been critiqued and debated since their introduction as theories of masculinity. Connell’s early conceptualisation of the gender order was criticised as being simplistic, reductionist and essentialist (see for instance Demetriou 2001; Petersen 2003; Whitehead 2002). Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) reformulated the concept in 2005 to incorporate issues that complicate the gender order such as costs, benefits, challenges, compliance and resistance. Hearn (2004, 2012), while noting the importance of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, suggests shifting the focus in CSMM towards a framework of the hegemony of men, in which the social category of men becomes the focus of analysis, critique and deconstruction rather than the concept of masculinity.

Beasley (2012) suggests there are social constructionist leanings of CSMM as a field compared to the focus on postmodernism in other areas of contemporary feminist gender and sexuality theorising. She argues that Hearn’s concept of “men” sits problematically with postmodern feminist theory, which challenges gender and identity categories (Beasley 2015). On the other hand, Beasley (2015) suggests the category of masculinity is weak modernism and is therefore better situated to maintain a dialogue with feminist theory. Furthering Beasley’s call for CSMM to take postmodern thinking into account, Elias and Beasley (2009) challenge Connell’s reading of transnational business masculinity as the only hegemonic masculinity on a global scale. They suggest hegemonic masculinity can be seen as plural hegemonic masculinities (Elias & Beasley 2009), a claim Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) rejected. Elias and Beasley

(2009, p. 289) furthermore suggest ‘we should rethink hegemonic masculinity as a political ideal, as a discourse’.

Beasley (2015) notes the commitment to feminism in CSMM, which distinguishes the field from men’s studies (see Hearn 2004). She nevertheless suggests there has been a divergence between CSMM and feminist theorising since the 1960s (Beasley 2015), while Berggren (2014, p. 231) argues CSMM suffers from a ‘feminist theory deficit’. I contribute to addressing these concerns throughout this thesis in two ways. The first is by investigating masculinities with recourse to my framework of margin–centre, which is based on hooks (2004a) and Shildrick’s (2006) feminist theorising and Connell’s (1987, 2014) and Messner’s (2002) work in CSMM on the centre. The second is through my framework of caring masculinity (Elliott 2016), explored subsequently, which brings together feminist care theory and previous work in CSMM. However, a critique of CSMM as not engaging sufficiently with feminist theory tends to focus on postmodern feminist theory and CSMM from some parts of the Anglophone world. By contrast, varying forms of feminist theory have been integral to research on men and masculinities in, for example, regions such as southern, eastern, central and Nordic Europe (see Hearn & Pringle 2006). There are significant and critical crossovers and lineages between CSMM and feminist theory, complicating ideas of the two fields as a binary pair.

Seidler (2006) argues that the concept of hegemonic masculinity limits the ability to think about young men’s subjective masculinities, experiences, practices and possibilities for change and suggests that the concept of the hierarchical gender order is too rigid to capture the nuances of men’s experiences and emotions. In his investigation of caring masculinity in Ireland, Hanlon (2012) analyses this divergence of Connell’s and Seidler’s theories of masculinity as an issue of power versus vulnerability. Hanlon (2012, p. 66) suggests:

Seidler has argued that the understanding of men’s lives only in terms of power makes it difficult to theorise men’s experiences of powerlessness and vulnerability, nonetheless it is also true that theorising men’s vulnerability can make it difficult to theorise men’s power.

Hanlon (2012, p. 66) argues that both perspectives are relevant, writing:

[w]e cannot appreciate masculinities without understanding relations of power and dominance, but we cannot understand power and dominance without also appreciating men’s emotional lives. Moreover, we cannot deconstruct male power without reconstructing the emotional lives of men.

Hanlon begins to demonstrate that masculinities and values of care, which I explore in this chapter, are not antithetical to one another. Rather, they are already intertwined, though in need of reconstruction.<sup>2</sup> Keeping critiques in mind, the theory of hegemonic masculinity can help to account for the ascendancy of certain men over other men and women and the interplay of power relations throughout the gender order. I focus in this thesis on the hegemony of many of the men (Hearn 2012) who participated in my study, as they retained and were pulled towards the privilege of the closed centre. I nevertheless continue to draw on Connell's theorising around hegemonic masculinity, which I position in chapter three as a closed masculinity in the centre, because the concept of hegemonic masculinity still holds much value and theoretical usefulness.

Scholars of CSMM have drawn upon theories such as hegemonic masculinity and the hegemony of men in order to investigate a vast array of challenges in masculinities. One such challenge is the closed, centre form of masculinity promoted in mass media and by some men's movements as a backlash against feminism. Heilmann (2015) describes discourses circulating in mass media that argue feminism has overstepped its goals, leading to women outperforming men in arenas such as educational achievement, health and even job opportunities. This discourse sees women as favoured over men in contemporary societal and gender arrangements and bemoans the 'end of men' (Heilmann 2015, p. 105, my translation).

Similar discourses can be found in movements such as the mythopoeic men's movement, key tenets of which are captured in books such as *Iron John* by Bly (1990). Whitehead (2002, pp. 28-29) describes this book as:

little more than a plea for modern men to "heal their grief" and renounce contemporary images of adult manhood in favour of a mythological "Wild Man"; an Arthurian warrior figure, connected with the earth and an inner mysticism.

Messner's (1997, p. 20) analysis, drawing on Schwalbe (1995, 1996), is that members of the mythopoeic movement:

believe that industrial society has trapped men into straitjackets of rationality, thus blunting the powerful emotional communion and collective spiritual transcendence that they believe men in tribal societies enjoyed.

---

<sup>2</sup> Hanlon's research on men and care, along with work from authors such as Lynch, Baker and Lyons (2009b) and McMahon (1999), highlights the limitations outlined previously of considering CSMM and feminist theory in binary terms, rather than recognising the rich interconnections and crossovers of the two.

Kimmel (2010, p. 126) suggests the mythopoeic men's movement stemmed from a sense of masculinity as 'spiritually empty, a masculinity of disconnection and isolation, with no emotional resonance and little sense of fulfilment'. Other men's movements such as the Christian *Promise Keepers* in the USA, Kimmel argues, were united by a fear of gender equality and a belief amongst movement members that women had invaded the spaces to which men were entitled.

However, Roberts (2014b) and others in the collection *Debating modern masculinities: change, continuity, crisis?* reject this and similar discourses of the crisis of masculinity. Roberts (2014a) suggests that the discourse of crisis and loss actually bemoans a loss of male power and privilege, even as it obscures this privilege and ignores intersections of class, ethnicity and gender. He suggests, drawing on Beynon (2002):

we would do well to consider who benefits from the existence of such crisis discourses, who benefits from such crises being averted or resolved and just how much masculinity by its very definition requires crisis as a means for re-establishing ... power and cultural legitimacy (Beynon 2002).

Another challenge of closed, centre expressions of masculinity is bound up with what men consume, particularly in relation to alcohol and food. Connell (2000) connects the consumption of alcohol with a stereotypical image of masculinity and points out men's higher instance of problematic drinking. de Visser and Smith (2007, p. 596) note that in post-industrial nations 'young adult men are more likely than other people to binge drink'. They point out that a range of factors influence men's alcohol consumption, including ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, peer-influence, personality, attitudes and gender (de Visser & Smith 2007). Furthermore, they suggest there are important but complicated links between alcohol consumption and masculine identity (de Visser & Smith 2007). In addition, Strate (1992) explores the myths of masculinity perpetuated through beer advertisements in the USA.

In the Australian context, Lindsay (2012) discusses the connection between alcohol fuelled violence and performances of masculinity in her work on young people, drinking biographies and alcohol related violence in three locations in Victoria, Australia, including in Melbourne. She found that in terms of alcohol related violence, women were positioned as 'observers of public violence and potential victims of family violence whilst men were observers and potential victims of public violence from unknown perpetrators' (Lindsay 2012, p. 240).

Tomsen (2008, p. 301), in his study of young male drinkers in New South Wales, Australia, found that drinking alcohol provided study participants ‘the opportunity to socialise with male friends’ and affirmed male friendship.

In terms of food consumption, masculinity has traditionally been linked with meat eating. Sumpter (2015) argues that hunting and eating meat have historically been reserved mainly for men and that meat eating increases perceptions of “manliness”. Nath (2011) traces the association of meat with masculinity, strength and (hetero)sexuality. He suggests that meat is ‘a highly symbolic yet tangible hegemonic masculine resource’ (Nath 2011, p. 274) and that ‘[c]hoosing to consume a plant-based diet is thus transgressing dominant cultural and gastronomic norms of Western societies and all of the meat-eating values invested in these norms’ (Nath 2011, p. 263).

### *Engaging men*

Problematising and reconstructing masculinities is a critical contemporary task, not least because of the costs of masculinity. Decades of feminist and masculinities research have demonstrated the harmful costs of hegemonic masculinity for both women and men. For men these costs include violence (against others and self), high-risk behaviour, lack of self-care, poor health and impoverished relationships with others. Hanlon (2012) links the arenas of masculinities and emotion again when he delves into the multiple costs of masculinity for both women and men, analysing these costs in relation to men’s emotional lives and needs for intimacy. He suggests that hegemonic masculinity promotes shame in men when they cannot live up to hegemonic ideals and encourages them to deny their needs for emotion and intimacy (Hanlon 2012). For women the costs of masculinity include violence and aggression directed towards women, wage disparities, unequal opportunities, harmful stereotypes and responsibility for the main burden of care work (see for e.g. United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2010). Dominating, closed forms of hegemonic masculinity may currently be culturally ascendant, but they are by no means meeting the needs of men or women in post-industrial societies to live nurtured, emotive, interconnected lives.

These high costs of masculinity, which serve to limit both women and men, suggest that men have a stake in working towards gender equality and developing new forms of masculinities.

Furthermore, recent European Union (EU) policy, debates and directives have called for men's engagement as a crucial strategy in achieving gender equality (see for example European Commission 2006, 2010). Exploring the topic of engaging men in gender equality, Connell (2003b) points out that specific groups of men control most of the resources — economic, political, cultural and military — needed to achieve gender equality. She argues that 'it is not possible to move gender systems far towards equality without broad social consensus in favour of gender equality — and that consensus must include men and boys' (Connell 2003b, p. 4).

Connell (2003b), Hearn (2001), Kimmel (2010), Messner (1997) and Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) outline several reasons for men to engage in a transformation towards gender equality. First, a reduction in the harmful costs of hegemonic masculinity can lead to a range of benefits for men, including increased physical and psychological health, longer life expectancy, increased quality of social life, better familial relationships and reduced violence between men. Kimmel (2010) and Messner (1997) furthermore argue that men's engagement in gender equality will have a "humanising" effect on men and transform their intimate lives. Kimmel (2010), addressing men, writes '[t]ransforming masculinity will enrich our lives immeasurably, deepening our capacity for intimacy with women, other men, and children, and expanding our emotional repertoire'. I explore hints of such a transformation throughout my thesis, although with the qualification of continuing ties to more closed, centre masculinities. Second, it can be argued that men have a moral responsibility as the privileged and advantaged group in society to care about gender equality. As Connell (2003b, p. 4) stresses, 'the advantaged have an ethical responsibility to use their resources to change the system'.

Kimmel (2010) and Messner (1997), however, argue that this notion of men's moral responsibility does not hold wide appeal for many men. They trace the politics of guilt that has surrounded profeminist men's movements in the USA in the past and find that this ultimately hinders the process of engaging men in gender equality. As Messner (1997, p. 54) suggests, discourses that only focus on men's privileges in society without acknowledging the costs of masculinity 'contribute to a politics of guilt in which men's major reason for challenging patriarchy might appear to be altruism toward women'. Kimmel (2010, p. 11) notes that while this stance might be noble, 'privileged men, straight and white, wracked by guilt, do not necessarily make great political allies'. Connell (2003b, p. 29) argues that '[a]n active process of debate, persuasion, and contestation is required'.

Barriers to men's engagement in gender equality and men's change persist, often stemming from the sense of power and entitlement that hegemonic masculinity appears to hold out to men. Hearn (2001, p. 10), focussing on power, states:

[r]esistance to positive involvement in gender equality comes from men for a wide variety of reasons: patriarchal practices, sexism, maintenance of power, complicity in current arrangements, definitions of gender equality as "women's business" and not the "main or most important issues", preference for men and men's company, as well as less conscious psychological ambivalences and resistances.

Hearn (2001, p. 10) contends '[a] specific challenge to men in developing gender equality is changing the ways in which men generally relate to power and gendered power'. Kimmel (2010) focusses on the sense of entitlement many men feel they have to jobs, power and success and their defensiveness at the proposition they see as emanating from feminism that they should give up these entitlements. However, as discussed in the previous chapter it is neoliberalism, rather than feminism, that strips away secure employment for both men and women.

### *Masculinities in context: Australia and Germany*

Configurations of masculinity in the post-industrial, neoliberal setting are context specific, and local specificities shape the forms of masculinities that are most valued in a particular location or culture. Although Melbourne and Berlin share similarities as post-industrial societies, each gives rise to different configurations of hegemonic masculinity. The pictures of hegemonic masculinity in Australia and Germany outlined in this section reveal cultural ideals surrounding the most highly valued forms of masculinity in these two countries. Context-specific hegemonic masculinities are not necessarily widely adopted and do not set easy ideals for men to live up to. Nevertheless, Meuser (2003, p. 136) argues that while hegemonic masculinity may not be an accurate description for the daily practices of younger men, 'its importance nevertheless lies in being an interpretive pattern for locating oneself in the gender order'. The valued versions of Australian and German hegemonic masculinities identified here provide cultural reference points for the kinds of ideologies and expectations young men in these contexts face in constructing their masculine identities and practices (Elliott 2016).

Connell (2003a) suggests that the cultural diversity of Australia makes it impossible to speak about one Australian masculinity. However, in 2003 she suggested that hegemonic masculinity in Australia revolves around images of strong, white men such as convicts, bushrangers,



lifeguards and explorers and is linked to processes of ‘settler colonialism, dependent industrialisation, and contemporary globalisation’ (Connell 2003a, p. 19). In the same year, Donaldson (2003) investigated the production of masculinity amongst “the hegemonic” of Australia: the ruling class elites of the country such as the men of the Packer, Murdoch and Fairfax families. Donaldson argued that the sons of these families are raised in authoritative, formal environments lacking intimacy and affection to ensure they became tough, disciplined, strong, hard and stiff, with class boundaries between them and others strictly policed. Philadelphoff-Puren (2004) identified male sportsmen as particularly celebrated symbols in Australian society tasked with representing the nation, and Connell and Wood (2005) found evidence in Australia of transnational business masculinity, which they suggested was gaining hegemony globally.

More recently, Waling (2014, p. 2) has argued that ideal or appropriate configurations of masculinity in Australia have shifted ‘towards more banal, globalised and commercialised forms’. Nevertheless, in her study of Australian lifestyle magazines for men, she found that notions of appropriate masculine identity in Australia remain tied to whiteness and heterosexuality, though with contestations around class arising (Waling 2014). Bartholomaeus (2013), taking up Elias and Beasley’s (2009) call to rethink hegemonic masculinity as a discourse, uncovered an emphasis on playing or being interested in sport as an aspect of being a boy amongst students from two South Australian primary schools. However, boys in her study also engaged in alternative practices such as cooking, dancing, sewing, exhibiting intelligence, caring, loving and having cross-gender friendships (Bartholomaeus 2013). Bartholomaeus shows that boys’ practices can pose a challenge to hegemonic masculinity but can also work in tandem with it, often in incoherent ways.

A key component of hegemonic masculinity in Australia is “mateship”. Pease (2001) suggests that mateship was reified through white men’s reliance on one another during the invasion of Australia and through the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) ideology in general and the Australian World War I Gallipoli campaign in particular. Mateship, according to Pease (2001, p. 196) ‘is more than just the Australian version of male bonding. Rather, such bonding has formed the basis of myths of national identity among Australian men’. A privileged mode of Australian masculinity and relating, mateship involves ‘loyalty, non-pretentiousness and stoicism ... fairness, self-sufficiency and egalitarianism’ (Butera 2008, p. 265). Women, however, can participate in mateship ‘as outside observers only’ (Butera 2008,

p. 266), pointing to the perpetuation of power in the bonds between men in Australia. Sedgwick (2008) identified the power of male homosocial bonds to structure culture and enable male entitlement and the domination of women. She argued that such homosocial bonds between men are ‘brutally structured by a secularized and psychologized homophobia’; through male homosexual panic: the fear of one’s own potential (for) homosexual desire (Sedgwick 2008, p. 185).

In Germany, hegemonic masculinity has arisen from the interweaving of, and contestations between, former East and West German masculinities (Brandes 2007). Brandes (2007), exploring expressions of hegemonic masculinities in former East and West Germany, points out that during the division of the country hegemonic masculinity in West Germany was centred around career, political power, dominance, competition, mobility and adaptability to change. However, ideals such as personal status and achievement were not pursuits available to most men in Soviet controlled East Germany. There, Brandes argues, the hegemonic masculine ideal stemmed from the cultural hegemony of the *Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands* (Socialist Unity Party of Germany). Brandes defines the resulting hegemonic masculinity in East Germany as oriented around the proletarian-petty bourgeois ideals and society of East Germany. He argues that after Germany’s reunification, the West German model of hegemonic masculinity gradually gained dominance so that:

we increasingly have to deal with *one* hegemonic masculinity in the whole of Germany that is oriented to the Western model of a modern middle-class-masculinity concept, described by Connell as “transnational business masculinity,” generalised for the industrialized metropolises (Brandes 2007, p. 193).

Scholz (2012), on the other hand, suggests that as a result of shifts and changes throughout modernity there now exist multiple hegemonic masculinities in Germany in different social spheres of influence and power. She explores three different social fields in Germany — work, politics and the military — and suggests the hegemonic masculinities in each field compete with one another for the top position. In the field of paid work, Scholz confirms that competitive, individualistic transnational business masculinity holds a hegemonic position. She shows that the elite business world in Germany is both gendered and classed, with women, the lower- and middle-classes and non-Germans excluded (Scholz 2012). Unlike in other western European countries, the German education system is structured in such a way that it does not produce an elite class (Scholz 2012). Instead, members of the upper class are elevated to top

positions in management and business through familial ties or by possessing the class capital and markers sought by employers (Hartmann 2007; Scholz 2012). Connell and Wood (2005) point out a similar pattern in Australia, whereby some multinational firms deliberately recruit elite managers.

In the political field in Germany, the connection between politics and masculinity remained stable until the election of Angela Merkel as Chancellor in 2005 (Scholz 2012). Nevertheless, Scholz argues that the political arena in Germany and political masculinity have not been fundamentally altered by the entry of a woman into this position. In terms of the military, during the nineteenth century the ideal of man as soldier and fighter became a key aspect of men's civic participation in Germany (Scholz 2012). Military masculinity came to a head during national socialism and the Second World War with 'a hypostatization of the figure of the warrior, the rise of a male culture and the aestheticisation of military violence' (Scholz 2012, p. 183, my translation).

Masculinity and male sexuality were seen to be in need of recovery under the Third Reich, and the Nazis 'perceived Aryan masculinity as *naturally* hard, heterosexual and potent; homosexuality as deviant; and Jewish masculinity as soft and effeminate' (Ettelson 2002, p. 8, original emphasis). Military masculinity remained dominant in Germany until 1945, even if scholars debate whether or not it was hegemonic (Scholz 2012). Scholz argues that the military in Germany is still socially powerful at the global level today, even though to an extent it lost its power to collectively define masculinity after the Second World War and the fall of the Soviet Union.

Connell (2005) and Scholz (2012) argue that analyses of masculinities need to take account of both local formulations of masculinities and global processes. Hegemonic masculinities in Australia and Germany are tied together at the global level and connected inextricably to global flows and movements. Particularly salient for my research into mobile masculinities in post-industrial societies in late modernity are the global configurations of neoliberalism and precarious work discussed in chapter one. Hanlon (2012, p. 88) argues that:

[u]nderstanding how men engage in social practices at the intersection of complex and dynamic multiple identities and material social locations is key to perceiving the operation of power in practice.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity as it stands may not be sufficient for understanding the lived realities of men's emotional lives. However, it can still provide important insights into the form or cultural ideal of masculinity that is most valued in a society and interconnections of hegemonic masculinities with processes at the global level.

### **Feminist care theory: challenging closedness**

#### *Equality*

Closed, centre masculinities explored within CSMM and discussed in the previous section are challenged by care. In this section I introduce feminist theories and conceptualisations of care, in particular focusing on the feminist ethic of care and notions of dependence and interdependence. Initially, however, I consider the concept of equality in order to establish more clearly the terms on which men from the closed centre might move towards more equal and open gender relations and expressions of masculinity. The meaning of “gender equality” is often assumed. Yet as a term with a long history, and one that continues to be debated, “equality” merits some thought and definition here.

Baker, Lynch, Cantillon and Walsh (2004) note the social divisions along which inequalities are structured and perpetuated, including gender, ethnicity, class, disability and sexuality. Feminist philosopher Eva Feder Kittay (1999) traces the early problematic conceptualisation of sexual equality, which was based on men as the reference group. Here it was assumed that equality would mean women becoming more like men. As Kittay (1999, p. 9) writes:

[t]hroughout women's struggles many have assumed that expanding the possibilities for women clearly necessitated demanding that which men had hoarded for themselves. But this seemingly obvious proposition overlooks the ways the standards of equality are established by the hopes, aspirations, and values of those already within the parity class of equals. They become the reference class for what is understood as human, and for what benefits and burdens are to be shared. In this way, the presumption of humanity as male — and of a certain class and complexion — underlies much of what is striven for in the name of equality.

Lorber (2010, p. 316) also investigates the concept of equality, highlighting the distinctions between gender equality (‘treating women and men as legally and socially the same’) and gender equity (‘treating women and men differently but as legally and socially equivalent’). Lorber (2010) proposes what she terms “gender rebellion feminism” for dealing with the issues

raised by equality. Gender rebellion feminism, according to Lorber, encompasses strands of feminism beginning in the 1990s that look at the socially constructed nature and maintenance of gender. As Lorber (2010, p. 12) suggests, '[t]he goal of gender rebellion feminisms is to dismantle gender categories. That would overturn the gendered social order and ultimately create a non-gendered social order'. In this feminist vision of a world without gendered categories, equality versus equity debates dissipate.

Kittay (1999), however, takes a different approach to equality. Like Lorber, Kittay outlines the conceptions of gender equality and gender equity, though she names gender equality "sexual equality" and gender equity "the difference critique". However, Kittay adds considerations of three more feminist critiques of equality: "the dominance critique", "the diversity critique" and "the dependency critique". Drawing on MacKinnon (1987), Kittay (1999, p. 11) states that the dominance critique sees '[n]ot equality and difference, but subordination and domination [as] the relevant parameters for feminist change'. The diversity critique, originally developed by women of colour, stresses intersectionality and the inequalities between people based not just on gender but also on aspects such as ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability and age (Kittay 1999). The dependency critique draws on all these critiques and is explored and advocated by Kittay throughout her essays. The dependency critique stresses the necessity of care work, or "dependency work" as Kittay names it, and the historical role of women as care-givers. Kittay stresses, however, that there is nothing innate about women to suggest this role has to be theirs.

Rather than doing away with equality, Kittay illuminates the potential for rescuing the concept of equality from its current problematic formulations. Exploring the criticisms of equality as an aspiration based on men as the reference group, she poses the challenge:

one wants to know, is this a charge against all and any conceptions of equality, against the *concept* of equality itself, or against some particular conception? The *question of equality* fragments into *questions of equalities*. Equality *for whom*? Equality *by what measure*? Equality *of what*? Equal *to what*? Equal *to whom*? (Kittay 1999, p. 5, original emphasis).

Kittay argues that not all formulations or understandings of equality are necessarily problematic, while Baker et al. (2004) posit equality as a plethora of diverse ideas rather than a single, unified concept. Equality does not have to mean the elimination of difference, which Kittay (1999, p. 17) sees as 'unavoidable and even desirable in human intercourse'. Rather, she argues that a conception of equality is needed that includes 'the values and virtues of care' (Kittay 1999, p. 18). In her conception, equality and care need to become compatible, and she

leaves open the possibility of reformulating equality into something more useful. I refer here, then, to “gender equality” with acknowledgement of the ambivalences and contestations around the term but also without disavowing it. In the following section, with this definition of equality firmly in mind, I explore feminist theorisations of care, including the feminist ethic of care and the concepts of dependence and interdependence.

### *Care*

Research, theories, policy initiatives, programs and advocacy groups concerning care and carers have emerged in post-industrial societies since the beginnings of sustained feminist engagement with the topic of care in the 1970s (Fine & Glendinning 2005; Friedman 1993; Held 2006; Kittay 1999; Lynch, Baker & Lyons 2009b; Tronto 1993; Ungerson 2006). Originally feminist concern focussed on issues such as the unpaid care labour women provide in the shape of childcare and housework, equal rights and social justice for women and men and the extant and limiting assumption that care work is the natural preserve of women alone (Fine & Glendinning 2005; Ungerson 2006). Today, as well as a continuing focus on these issues, considerations of care have been raised in arenas such as aged care, child care, self-care and, to some extent, care work performed by men.

The distinction between caring *for* and caring *about* is salient in feminist work on care. Ungerson (2006, p. 277) defines caring *for* as ‘the practical tasks of care’ and caring *about* as ‘the affective relations of care’. From a feminist perspective, care can be seen as not just practical but also relational, emotional, intimate and affective. Feminist considerations of care furthermore identify it as an essential and inescapable part of human life, as something integral to human survival (see for example Gilligan 1982; Hanlon 2012; Held 2006; Kittay 1999; Lynch, Baker & Lyons 2009b; Tronto 1993). Every person will require care at some stage of their lives, or as Kittay (1999, p. 16) formulates it ‘the work of caring for dependents ... must be done by someone’.

However, the majority of care work is still undertaken by women. Hanlon (2012, p. 37), drawing on Daly (2001) and Daly and Rake (2003), observes that ‘caring is a choice for men but an obligation for women’. Friedman (1993, p. 144) argues that ‘heavier caretaking responsibilities ... befall women as compared to men’. She also suggests there are ‘gender-

differentiated standards of care giving responsibility in close personal relationships' and in, for instance, typically female occupations (Friedman 1993, p. 172). Therefore, Friedman suggests, a man might be forgiven for not giving care or for abandoning his care-giving responsibilities, while a woman who does so will be more harshly judged. Lynch, Baker and Lyons (2009b) discuss "affective equality" as the equal distribution of love, care and solidarity work and equality of possibilities for developing relationships of love, care and solidarity. They suggest that the conditions for affective equality can be fostered, but only with recognition of affective work and equal distribution of its labour, particularly between men and women (Lynch, Baker & Lyons 2009a, p. 2). They furthermore argue that equality of respect, access, resources and power is 'important in protecting people involved in relations of love and care from domination and exploitation'.

### *The feminist ethic of care*

Current feminist work on care has been strongly influenced by the feminist ethic of care, which emerged from a strand of feminism in the USA that attempted to highlight the positive features of care (Fine & Glendinning 2005). Carol Gilligan (1982) became one of the most well-known theorists of the ethic of care through her work to bring women's voices and so-called moral development into human development theory. Gilligan identified two "conceptions of morality": the morality of rights and the morality of responsibility. The morality of rights she described as based on qualities traditionally associated with the masculine, such as autonomy and independence. The morality of responsibility, on the other hand, she saw as encompassing supposedly feminine characteristics such as care, nurturing, relationality and interdependence.

According to Gilligan, the masculine morality of rights is ascendant in western culture, while the attributes connected to the morality of responsibility are devalued. Gilligan argued that these two moral principles of rights and responsibilities, though seemingly disparate, are in fact complementary. She reasoned:

[t]hese disparate visions in their tension reflect the paradoxical truths of human experience — that we know ourselves as separate only insofar as we live in connection with others, and that we experience relationship only insofar as we differentiate other from self (Gilligan 1982, p. 63).

This idea of care as compatible with and equal to rights and justice is what Kittay (1999) later called for in her conceptualisation of equality as compatible with care.

Tronto (1993) also takes up the theme of a feminist ethic of care, but finds the idea of women's morality troubling. She argues that this concept has failed to carve out a place for women in civic society and has worked to exclude certain women such as migrant, lesbian and working-class women. As she states:

[t]he strategy of women's morality has required for all of its limited success, that some women's realities (to say nothing of their sense of morality!) be sacrificed to achieve other women's inclusion (Tronto 1993, p. 2).

Tronto (1993, p. 3) argues 'we need to stop talking about "women's morality" and start talking instead about a care ethic that includes the values traditionally associated with women'.

Tronto develops a moral and political ethic of care by suggesting that the practice of care is a political ideal. As she puts it:

the practice of care describes the qualities necessary for democratic citizens to live together well in a pluralistic society, and ... only in a just, pluralistic, democratic society can care flourish (Tronto 1993, pp. 161-162).

In formulating care as a political ideal, Tronto diverges from the idea of two separate but compatible ideals of rights and responsibilities, suggesting instead that they are one and the same though not yet recognised as such. Roseneil (2004, p. 414) further problematises certain aspects of the feminist ethic of care when she points out 'the needs of the carer for care'. Outlining a range of issues some feminists have identified with the ethic of care, she states:

I am concerned that an ethics of care does not always adequately take into account the unequal, highly constrained, and even oppressive conditions in which many practices of caring, particularly those carried out by women, occur. We need to think about issues of equality and reciprocity, about the needs of the carer for care (Roseneil 2004, p. 414).

Held (2006) contributes to developing the feminist ethic of care and discusses the important role of emotion in care. She suggests:

the ethics of care values emotion rather than rejects it ... such emotions as sympathy, empathy, sensitivity, and responsiveness are seen as the kind of moral emotions that need to be cultivated (Held 2006, p. 10).

Held (2006, pp. 30-31) casts a broad net with her conception of care, arguing that it extends well beyond close familial and friendly relations to domestic workers, teachers, welfare states, social ties, 'the bonds on which political and social institutions can be built and even to the global concerns that citizens of the world can share'. She suggests this broad definition of care because, she argues, the presence of an ethos of care can motivate in individuals 'the



willingness to support such [broad, institutional caring] efforts and to see that they are carried out effectively' (Held 2006, p. 31). In other words, Held suggests that care, at least an ethic of it, can make people care more. This broad, societal ethic of and support for care is an ideal goal to pursue. Held (2006, p. 39) states:

the ethics of care does not accept and describe the practices of care as they have evolved under actual historical conditions of patriarchal and other domination; it evaluates such practices and recommends what they morally ought to be like.

### *Dependence and interdependence*

Dependence is a key concern of the feminist ethic of care. Tronto (1993) addresses the issue of dependence, submitting that all people need care and that this necessarily places everyone at one stage or another in a position of dependence on others and, therefore, in a position of inequality. Tronto contends, however, that the perceived threat of this inequality has been exaggerated and argues that the ethic of care seeks to address dependence and inequality. 'Rather than assuming the fiction that all citizens are equal', writes Tronto (1993, p. 164), 'a care perspective would have us recognize the achievement of equality as a political goal'. The dependency Tronto identifies is also integral to Kittay's (1999) work and indeed, as Kittay argues, integral to human life.

Yet the presumed inequality caused by this dependency has led to some concern in feminist theories of care. Kittay (1999, p. 33, original emphasis) addresses this concern by distinguishing between 'the *inequality of power* in a relation of dependence and the exertion of *domination* in a relation of inequality'. She states:

[t]he inequality of power is endemic to dependency relations. But not every such inequality amounts to domination. Domination involves the exercise of power over another against her best interests and for purposes that have no moral legitimacy (Kittay 1999, p. 34).

This domination can be on the part of the care-giver but can also stem from the care-receiver if they demand more of the care-giver than they need (Kittay 1999). For Kittay, power can only be used in the care relationship by the care-giver if it is for the good of the care-receiver.

According to Kittay the condition of dependency, when devoid of domination, does not position the dependent person as unequal. As she argues, '[i]nequality of power is compatible with both justice and caring, if the relation does not become a relation of domination' (Kittay

1999, p. 34). In this circumstance an inequality of power emerges, not an inequality of people. Kittay points out that an inequality of power is not necessarily negative. Rather, she sees it as a necessary aspect of the care relationship. As she argues, '[t]he dependency worker who is in charge of the dependent must have the power and authority necessary to meet the responsibilities of the work' (Kittay 1999, p. 31).

For Kittay, this terminology of dependency is important in establishing her dependency critique of equality, outlined previously. Held (2006), on the other hand, contends with the issue of human dependence by theorising care as interdependence. As with other feminist theorists of care, Held acknowledges the human need for care and moves away from rationalist and liberal ideas of the independent, autonomous individual and towards ideas of interdependence. She suggests that human dependence can be addressed through the ethic of interdependent care. Writing about dependence she states '[t]he ethics of care attends to this central concern of human life and delineates the moral values involved' (Held 2006, p. 10). These moral values for addressing dependence that stem from the ethic of care include those also outlined by Gilligan (1982) in her delineation of the morality of responsibility. They are, then, values such as responsibility to self and others, sensitivity, empathy and interdependence. Exploring the notion of interdependence Held (2006, p. 13, original emphasis) writes:

[t]hose who conscientiously care for others are not seeking primarily to further their own *individual* interests; their interests are intertwined with the persons they care for. Neither are they acting for the sake of *all others* or *humanity in general*; they seek instead to preserve or promote an actual human relation between themselves and *particular others*.

Interdependence involves this idea stressed by Held of relationality and the intertwining of interests in the care relationship. Interdependence acknowledges that care relations do not simply involve care given to the care-receiver by the care-giver. Rather, the notion of interdependence highlights that everyone is dependent at different times and in different ways and that everyone exists within reciprocal networks. Hanlon (2012, p. 29), emphasising the reciprocal, emotional and social aspects of interdependence, argues that:

[m]ost of us will ... be called on to provide care to others in various ways, but even those who live relatively care-free lives, as social and emotional animals we necessarily subsist within webs of emotionally reciprocal relations.

Held's (2006) broad idea of care as incorporating both familial and friendly ties but also domestic workers, teachers, welfare states, social and political links and global concerns demonstrates that interdependence can exist and intertwine between individuals, paid workers,

states, politics and global issues. Furthermore, as Held argues, such a broad, societal ethic of and support for care can motivate more care.

Interdependence connects to my framework of margin–centre as these two spaces intersect and are interdependent. Margin and centre (hooks 2004a), or monstrous and subject (Shildrick 2006), are two necessary parts of the whole. These two parts are not separated as the fictions of mind over body and self versus other would suggest, but rather are interdependent and overlapping. Care and interdependence disrupt the boundedness of supposedly secure, closed, centre masculinities.

### **Contemporary masculinities and change**

I now turn to considerations of changing masculinities in post-industrial societies in late modernity, exploring how these too trouble a static reading of contemporary masculinities. Scholars have both noted and problematised emerging shifts to openness of contemporary masculinities in post-industrial societies. Anderson (2009) and others (see for example Anderson & McGuire 2010; McCormack 2012; Roberts, Anderson & Magrath 2016) have traced changes in masculinities in accordance with inclusive masculinity theory (IMT). Meanwhile, researchers such as Hanlon (2012), Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) and myself (Elliott 2016) have explored the notion of caring masculinity, with Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) suggesting some young men in urban European centres are beginning to adopt this form of masculinity.

Here, I begin by outlining contemporary shifts and tensions in two arenas of men's lives: bodies and emotions. I then explore the concepts of inclusive masculinity and caring masculinity along with Bridges and Pascoe's (2014) critique of hybrid masculinities, which highlights the problem of the perpetuation of inequalities even as masculinities change. I conclude by considering the theoretical contributions of caring, inclusive and hybrid masculinities and outline how these three concepts are utilised throughout this thesis.

Men's bodies have become the subject of increasing scholarly attention. Nevertheless, Shildrick (2006, p. 37) suggests that despite the feminist focus on the body, 'the body that is recovered in its difference remains ... highly normative', while Braidotti (2011, pp. 215-216) points out '[w]e all have bodies, but not all bodies are equal: some matter more than others, some are quite frankly disposable'. Coffey (2016, p. 93) argues that 'body work practices are a central way that gender is performed and negotiated materially', and Whitehead (2002) had earlier suggested that men were investing more in body enhancement. Drawing on Young (1990), Whitehead (2002) reveals that closed, centre masculinities dictate that the ideal male body ought to be hard, tough and masterful over space.

Coffey (2016) confirms that ideal bodies are gendered. In her research on young people's understandings of bodies in Melbourne, she found that ideals of men's bodies are connected with 'underlying assumptions around men's "natural" physical strength and prowess' (Coffey 2016, pp. 72-73). Whitehead points out that this ideal male body can largely only be achieved through hard work, and that hard work for hard bodies is bound up with men's subjectivity. He argues:

[t]he point is not only that many men fail to achieve a seamless, constant, symbiotic relationship between their bodies and dominant discourses of masculinity, but that they attempt to; moreover, that their subjectivity and sense of masculine self is primarily invested in such attempts (Whitehead 2002, p. 191).

Bordo (1999, p. 26, original emphasis) argues that to view a body is not to see simply flesh and bones; it is also to see 'values and ideals, differences and similarities that *culture* has "written," so to speak, on those bodies'. Bordo traces increasing insecurities in western societies at the end of the nineteenth century around the ills of "civilisation" in an industrial, marketplace economy. She explores how these anxieties led to 'fantasies of recovering an unspoiled, primitive masculinity' along with a revaluation of notions of supposed non-European animalistic nature (Bordo 1990, p. 249). As Bordo (1999, p. 248-249) writes:

[b]y the end of the nineteenth century, Europeans began rethinking their attitudes towards the primitive "savage," not out of any sense of morality or political correctness, but because the primitive savage was beginning to be seen as having something the European gentlemen lacked and needed.

Bordo shows how men are now expected to be intelligent gentlemen with an appreciation of beauty and culture but simultaneously to be “animalistic” in their bodies and sexuality. Drawing on Bordo, Tanner, Maher and Fraser (2013, p. 80) argue that contemporary men must juggle conflicting societal expectations of men to be ‘soft, involved and nurturing’ but also a ‘hard-bodied, strong male’. They suggest ‘[t]he tensions between soft and hard male bodies are scripted into contemporary masculine body projects and are central to the production of a newly valorised vanity for men’ (Tanner, Maher & Fraser 2013, p. 80). Certain normative male bodies have therefore become desirable masculine projects.

Changes in men’s emotionality also appear to have occurred in post-industrial societies in late modernity. Holmes (2015) points to the common assumption that heterosexual men lack expertise in emotional reflexivity and are detached from emotions, unless these emotions are sexual desire or anger. She argues that these assumptions discount the diversity of masculinities and essentialise gender. Holmes (2015, p. 177) suggests that heterosexual men ‘reflect on and are capable of learning how to provide varying forms of emotional support for their heterosexual partners’. In particular, in her study of distance relationships in the United Kingdom (UK) she found that some men in heterosexual distance relationships engaged in tactile forms of expressing emotion. Some were, furthermore, able to undergo a ‘reflexive shift’ (Holmes 2015, p. 186) towards learning more verbal forms of emotionality in order to mediate the problems raised by distance in their relationships.

Empirical studies based on inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson 2009), which will be considered in depth subsequently, document an increasing acceptance of homosocial emotionality, affection and intimacy amongst some men of the centre in post-industrial societies. Anderson (2009, p. 143), for example, found that young, heterosexual, middle- to upper-class, mainly white men between the ages of 18 and 23 on a soccer team in the UK ‘engaged in prolonged, public, kissing’ with their male friends. This kissing was not considered sexual in nature by these men but was rather part of their homosocial bonding, and often the kissing took place while the men were drinking alcohol and out at clubs. Anderson (2009, p. 144, original emphasis) notes the humour and irony bound up with this kissing, suggesting:

key to this form of intimacy ... is that the men we interviewed expressed a shared understanding that they are not erotically attracted to the men they kiss, but that they are emotionally close to them. Privately, they kiss other men as a way to facilitate their emotional intimacy. Publicly, labeling their actions as banter *helps* ensure that they distance themselves from the eroticism associated with kissing.

The boundaries of heterosexuality therefore appear to have remained tightly policed in this increased intimacy between men of the centre, reflecting Sedgwick's (2008) argument of the homosexual panic that structures homosocial bonds between men.

In contrast to this increased intimacy, authors such as hooks (2004b), Butera (2008), Hanlon (2012) and Blatterer (2015) identify continuing proscriptions against men's emotions in late modern post-industrial societies. hooks (2004b) argues:

[p]atriarchal mores teach a form of emotional stoicism to men that says they are more manly if they do not feel, but if by chance they should feel and the feelings hurt, the manly response is to stuff them down, to forget about them, to hope they go away.

Butera (2008) found that in the Australian context, open, intimate relationships with other men were prevalent amongst men in their early 20s. This pattern was in contrast to men aged between 64 and 87, who largely avoided openness and expressiveness with other men. Butera suggests changes have occurred in the interaction order between men in Australia since colonisation. She nevertheless labels the relationships discovered amongst the younger cohort in her work "neo-mateship" rather than friendship because ideals such as intimacy, support, openness and vulnerability are not yet the norm in men's relationships in Australia.

Hanlon (2012, p. 153) looks beyond ideas of men as emotionally inexpressive by situating men as 'highly skilled emotional actors' when necessary in relation to 'masculine emotional codes'. One example of this is provided by Huppertz and Goodwin (2013) in their suggestion, outlined in the previous chapter, that men working in feminised occupations can draw on male, masculine or feminine gender capital in order to gain managerial or more senior positions. Hanlon (2012, p. 153) suggests that 'dominant masculinity does not necessarily write out emotional labour from men's lives ... what dominant masculinity does write out, however, is nurturing labour, the other-centred emotional disposition of care'. According to Hanlon (2012, p. 154), emotionality is perceived by men 'as a moral weakness and a threat to their identities'.

Blatterer (2015), exploring friendship in late modernity, argues that men's friendships are impoverished in terms of intimacy because hegemonic notions of manhood and heterosexuality preclude for men the kind of emotional, communicative intimacy allowed women. Care and men's feelings, vulnerabilities and emotional, intimate lives remain largely written out of ideals of masculinity (Blatterer 2015; Butera 2008; Hanlon 2012; hooks 2004b), though research, particularly that based on inclusive masculinity theory, suggests this may be changing.

Inclusive masculinity theory (IMT) has arisen largely from research in the United States and British contexts in order to theorise changes occurring in relation to masculinities. Anderson (2009) argues that shifts in contemporary post-industrial societies have led to a period of diminishing homophobia. He defines homophobia as the combination of ‘a culture of homophobia, femphobia, and compulsory heterosexuality’ (Anderson 2009, p. 7). Anderson argues that in periods of decreased homophobia, two forms of masculinity, neither hegemonic, appear alongside one another: orthodox masculinity and inclusive masculinity. Orthodox masculinity captures a conservative masculinity, while Anderson (2009, p. 98, original emphasis) suggests a culture of inclusive masculinity might be indicated when:

men look disparagingly at homophobia, they value emotional intimacy and physical tactility, and they are *more* willing to engage in activities or display behaviours that were once stigmatized as feminine.

Theoretically, IMT suggests that if homophobia is diminished, gay men and behaviours associated with gay men should become accepted by heterosexual men.

Authors such as de Boise (2015) have suggested theoretical issues with IMT, questioned the thesis that homophobia is in decline and argued that hegemonic masculinity remains a better-theorised framework for investigating contemporary masculinities. O’Neill (2015) argues that IMT does not focus sufficiently on gendered power relations or sexual politics and reproduces tenets of postfeminism. Questions of power are largely left out of the analysis in IMT, while more encouraging changes surrounding masculinities are documented. Despite theoretical and political difficulties, IMT’s focus on the inclusion of gay men and practices associated with gay men into the centre captures important shifts in post-industrial societies, particularly an increased outward acceptance of gay men by heterosexual men.

Continental European research, on the other hand, has begun to focus on the concept of caring masculinity as a changing expression of masculinity based on nurturing and care-giving roles for men and as a form of men’s engagement in gender equality. Authors such as Gärtner, Schwerma and Beier (2007), Hanlon (2012), Langvasbråten and Teigen (2006) and Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) have discovered and discussed emerging caring masculinity in European countries, with Scambor, Wojnicka and Bergmann (2013) suggesting ‘[c]aring masculinity is already taking place in the everyday lives of men’ (p. 2) and ‘[m]en’s attitudes

have slowly shifted from clear breadwinner roles towards care-integrating models (especially fathering) in the past decades' (p. 6).

In my theorisation of caring masculinity, drawing on Hanlon's (2012) important work on the same topic, I integrated CSMM insights into multiple masculinities with feminist theory, particularly the feminist ethic of care.<sup>3</sup> I define caring masculinity as masculinity that 'reject[s] domination and its associated traits and embrace[s] values of care such as positive emotion, interdependence, and relationality' (Elliott 2016, p. 240). There are therefore two crucial elements of caring masculinity. First, it suggests that values of care, which have traditionally been associated solely with women, should be incorporated into expressions, behaviours and identities of masculinity. Second, caring masculinity calls for the rejection of domination, which in the framework of margin–centre stems from the closed centre.

Following Kittay's (1999, p. 33, original emphasis) distinction between 'the *inequality of power* in a relation of dependence and the exertion of *domination* in a relation of inequality', the rejection of domination is a crucial aspect of caring masculinity in order to ensure the presence of equality. hooks' (2004b, p. 117) vision in *The will to change: men, masculinity, and love* of a connected, peaceful culture of non-domination, which assumes men want to 'connect' rather than 'aggress', again highlights the rejection of domination necessary for caring masculinity. This ideal also suggests that masculine identities do not have to include the exercising of domination. Caring masculinity can be seen as men's engagement in gender equality, as it requires resistance to hegemonic masculinity and sanctioned male roles, the giving up of certain male privileges and the taking up of 'values and characteristics of care that are antithetical to hegemonic masculinity' (Elliott 2016, p. 254; Hanlon 2012). Furthermore, Coltrane (1996), Doucet (2006) and Hanlon (2012) found that doing care work helped men develop more caring, nurturing expressions of masculinity.

Prior to my theorisation of caring masculinity, Bridges and Pascoe (2014) considered contemporary research and theorising on men's change under the heading "hybrid masculinities". They state that hybrid masculinities 'refer to the selective incorporation of elements of identity typically associated with various marginalized and subordinated

---

<sup>3</sup> This discussion of caring masculinity has been published as: Elliott, Karla 2016, 'Caring masculinities: theorizing an emerging concept', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 240-9.



masculinities and — at times — femininities into privileged men's gender performances and identities' (Bridges and Pascoe 2014, p. 246). Bridges and Pascoe canvas work on changing masculinities such as inclusive masculinity under the title of hybrid masculinities, even though not all CSMM scholars draw on this terminology themselves. Bridges and Pascoe suggest that although hybrid masculinities indicate patterns of change amongst young, privileged men, these patterns in fact reproduce inequalities and obscure this reproduction.

Bridges and Pascoe suggest that consequences of hybrid masculinities include “discursive distancing”, “strategic borrowing” and “fortifying boundaries”. Discursive distancing disassociates privileged men from hegemonic masculinity, ‘enabling some to frame themselves as outside of existing systems of privilege and inequality’ while nevertheless perpetuating inequalities of hegemonic masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, p. 250). Strategic borrowing, on the other hand, involves privileged men borrowing cultural elements from “other” groups of men ‘in order to boost their masculine capital’, which ‘reaffirm[s] these subordinated groups as deviant, thus supporting existing systems of power and dominance’ (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, p. 253). Finally, Bridges and Pascoe (2014, p. 255) suggest that in connection to “dialectical pragmatism” (Demetriou 2001), which I outlined previously, ‘hybrid masculine practices often work in ways that fortify symbolic and social boundaries, perpetuating social hierarchies in new (and “softer”) ways’. Their critique acknowledges changes in contemporary masculinities but highlights the often hidden perpetuation of inequalities through these hybrid masculinities.

### *The theoretical contributions of caring masculinity and inclusive masculinity*

In light of Bridges and Pascoe's (2014) critique of hybrid masculinities, both components of my theorisation of caring masculinity become crucial: the incorporation of values of care into masculinities and the rejection of domination. I locate caring masculinity in the open margin, but suggest that it can speak to men of the centre through its double insistence on the rejection of domination and the incorporation of care. The incorporation of care moves men of the centre towards openness and the rejection of domination interrupts the pull back towards the closed centre. In this double insistence, caring masculinity can also avoid the perpetuation of inequality highlighted by Bridges and Pascoe's consideration of hybrid masculinities. Caring masculinity can therefore provide alternatives of masculinity for men such as the participants in my research who, as I will demonstrate, were searching for more open ways of being.

I suggest that inclusive masculinity differs from caring masculinity in that it is located in the centre, though it is not necessarily closed as it indicates openness to some men from the margin and some of their practices. As I explain in the following chapter, masculinities cannot necessarily be categorised neatly under the headings of closed centre and open margin. Inclusive masculinity has the potential to indicate a movement of men of the centre towards openness in their adoption of practices from gay men such as homosocial emotionality and their rejection of homophobia. However, inclusive masculinity also draws some men of the margin — gay men — towards the closed centre through its inclusion of them. Furthermore, issues of domination and the perpetuation and obfuscation of power remain problematic, as highlighted in my discussion of hybrid masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014) and in critiques of IMT (de Boise 2015; O'Neill 2015). I nevertheless keep in mind the useful contribution and possibilities of IMT in the chapters that follow. As I have suggested, IMT demonstrates openness to an extent and speaks to movement across the spaces of margin–centre, though in different ways to caring masculinity.

Caring masculinity calls for openness amongst men of the centre and demands the rejection of the domination of the closed centre. I therefore primarily consider caring masculinity throughout the following chapters of this thesis when discussing openness in the margin or the alternatives of masculinity towards which men of the centre in this study were moving. For example, the emerging openness of masculinity amongst the Australian men living in Berlin was bound up with the rejection of tenets of hegemonic masculinity such as the salience of career. It was connected to a movement away from traditionally masculine lives towards locations in which these men could pursue more open, alternative life projects. Caring masculinity furthermore offers tools for understanding expressions of open masculinity I discovered amongst the men of the margin I interviewed in this study, as I explore in chapter six.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have traced theoretical work from CSMM on the gender order, men and masculinities and concepts such as hegemonic, complicit, subordinated and marginalised masculinities, transnational business masculinity, protest masculinity and discourses of the

crisis of masculinity. I have explored the importance of engaging men in gender equality and presented a portrait of hegemonic ideals of masculinity in both Australia and Germany. Feminist care theory and interdependence challenge bounded, closed, centre masculinities, highlighting reciprocal, intertwining webs of care. I furthermore considered emerging empirical work on and theories of change in contemporary masculinities. Research on men's bodies and emotions, for example, has demonstrated changes in terms of men and masculinities but has highlighted continuing dictates of closed, centre masculinities. I ended this chapter with an in-depth look at inclusive, caring and hybrid masculinities.

I situate my own study within and as part of this previous feminist and CSMM work and make a theoretical and empirical contribution to this scholarship. In chapters four, five and six, I investigate the movements of participants in my research across the spaces of margin–centre, including their steps towards openness and their retreat back to the closed centre. First, however, I turn in chapter three to developing the schema of margin–centre and to addressing my methodological considerations, including my use of narrative methods and my engagement with feminist ethics.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCHING MASCULINITIES: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES

#### Introduction

Having explored the feminist and CSMM literature on men, masculinities and care in which I situate my own work, in this chapter I address my theoretical and methodological approaches, which inform the following three analysis chapters. I begin by developing the margin–centre schema. I consider how this schema emerged from my analysis and discuss the themes of movement and the mutual constitution of the whole. The concepts of margin and centre I explore based on the work of hooks (2000, 2004a), Shildrick (2006) and CSMM scholars. I furthermore posit the “intersection” of margin and centre by proposing an extension of Irigaray’s (1993) image of two hands pressed together in my own suggestion of two clasped hands with fingers interlocked. This image of hands conveys how margin and centre intersect as two constitutive parts of the whole, showing that there is and can be movement across these spaces. I then refine concepts and terminology by positioning the margin as “open” and the centre as “closed”. Finally, I trace the movements of participants in this study, explored in the following three chapters, in relation to the spaces of margin and centre.

With my theoretical approach thus established, I turn to outlining the research methods and methodological considerations for this study. The concept of masculinity is not necessarily at the forefront of young men’s lives. Furthermore, as my discussion in the previous chapter has made clear, openness and the emotional lives of men remain taboo to an extent in late modernity, despite certain changes taking place that are also explored throughout this thesis. Therefore, I chose narrative methods for this research as they enable participants to convey values, thoughts and feelings that they might not normally be able to conceptualise. I consider some of the main components of narrative methods in this chapter, including meaning making and language. I then outline my data collection and analysis methods and present demographic information on the 28 research participants. I conclude this chapter by focusing on feminist methodologies, including a discussion of feminist ethics and researcher reflexivity. Ethical narrative methods based on principles of feminist research enabled me to uncover movements

towards openness of masculinities amongst young men of the centre but also continuing connections to the closed centre.

### **Margin and centre: theoretical approach**

The concepts of margin and centre have been taken up by authors in a tradition of spatially considering gender, privilege and intersecting power relations (see for example Braidotti 2011; Connell 1987, 2007, 2014; hooks 2000, 2004a; Messner 2002; Shildrick 2006). I came to conceptualise margin–centre in relation to masculinities through drawing on this tradition and through my analysis of the narrative data in this research. The sense of movement expressed in previous theoretical and analytical uses of margin and centre was key to my development of this schema. Movement offered a way to conceptualise and capture the mobility of participants and to overcome the problem of reifying masculinities. Mobility is a feature of globalisation and neoliberal patterns of precarious work, and the movement built into margin–centre provides a way of exploring how contemporary masculinities are shifting under these conditions.

After discussing the spaces of margin–centre, I align the margin as “open” and the centre as “closed”. This further refinement of concepts again arose from the research data. Openness was an idea that emerged from my grounded approach to interviews, as it was commonly mentioned by participants, particularly those living in Berlin. As I show in this chapter, my conceptualisation of the intersection of margin and centre again arose in respect to movement, which troubles binaries such as centre:margin and closed:open. I theorise the schema of margin–centre spatially by drawing in particular on hooks’ spatial and political (2004a) theory of the margin as a space of radical openness and Shildrick’s (2006) ontological and philosophical consideration of “the monstrous/other” and “subject/self”. The theoretical approach I develop throughout this section provides a way of illuminating the tensions of masculinity I found amongst participants in this research and movements towards and away from increased openness.

Bridges and Pascoe (2014, p. 253) argue:

[b]y framing middle-class, young, straight, White men as both the embodiment and harbinger of feminist change in masculinities, social scientists participate in further marginalizing poor

men, working-class men, religious men, undereducated men, rural men, and men of color (among others) as the bearers of uneducated, backwards, toxic, patriarchal masculinities.

Against conventional “knowledge” that spaces of privilege are the locus of progression, I, like hooks, position the margin as the site in which radical forms of openness can flourish. In this thesis I theorise the centre as a space of closedness. Nevertheless, openness and the margin are less clearly definable than the closed centre and more closed masculinities. Connell (1987, p. 186) suggests that “other” masculinities are not necessarily as defined as hegemonic masculinity and that ‘indeed, achieving hegemony may consist precisely in preventing alternatives gaining cultural definition and recognition as alternatives’. At the same time, I suggest that by virtue of being open, the margin is inevitably less clearly distinguished than the closed centre, offering diverse and multiple alternatives and opportunities through its openness. Lack of definition of the margin stemming from openness and from the influence of hegemony reveals an interplay of the margin as a site of both repression and resistance, as I investigate in the following sections.

I demonstrate here that margin and centre intersect rather than existing autonomously in mutual exclusion. As on a Venn diagram, the overlapping of margin and centre I name the “intersection”. This is particularly apt terminology for my schema of margin–centre in relation to masculinities, as the word “intersection” captures both the overlap and interdependencies of both spaces. As I will discuss, I draw on Irigaray (1993) to theorise the intersection of margin and centre with reference to an image of two hands clasped together with fingers interlocking. This illuminates the fiction of margin and centre as separated, instead highlighting both spaces as co-constitutive of the whole and revealing the possibilities for movement across these spaces. The “intersection” furthermore disrupts the binary of centre:margin and, as I will show, of closed:open. I suggest it is highly difficult for men of the centre to entirely leave the privilege of the closed centre behind, but that they can move towards the greater openness of masculinities that may be modelled by men of the margin.

In the following, I first delve into the works of hooks (2004a) and Shildrick (2006), who uncover movement and the mutual constitution of the whole through margin and centre. I then elaborate on the spaces of margin and centre and discuss their intersection theoretically. Following hooks, I situate the margin as a space in which openness can proliferate. I turn to CSMM theorists Connell (2014) and Messner (2002) to investigate the centre as a closed site of domination. I then explain my conceptual device of two clasped hands with fingers

interlocked for theorising the intersection. Next, I integrate the concepts of “open” and “closed” into the schema of margin–centre in order to further refine terms and concepts for use throughout this thesis. Finally, I chart the movements of participants across and around the spaces of this schema. Exploring these movements is the focus of the following three chapters.

### *Movement and the mutual constitution of the whole*

Margin–centre, based on the work of hooks (2000, 2004a) and Shildrick (2006), is crucially a story of both movement and the mutual constitution of the whole. hooks and Shildrick write of the moving of the other/monstrous/marginalised through the tightly policed, but always unstable, boundaries of the subject/self/centre. But they also position the other/monstrous/marginalised as a constituent part of the whole, though this interconnectedness of margin and centre is denied by the centre. Both hooks and Shildrick illuminate the fiction of separated, binary states of margin and centre. The centre purports to be bounded through its insistence that “the other is that which is not me”. But the centre is troubled by the margin/the monstrous, which leaks through the boundaries and moves in and out of the centre to be within, between and out. As I will discuss, this movement and the mutual constitution of the whole reveals the intersection of margin and centre.

Marginality for hooks (2000, p. xvi; 2004a, p. 156) ‘is to be part of the whole but outside the main body’. Those in the margin move into the centre to service it, a movement and service the centre relies on, but the marginalised must return to the margin; they are not to stay in the centre. They thereby perform a double movement of looking, through which they see the wholeness of margin and centre:

we looked both from the outside in and from the inside out ... This mode of seeing reminded us of the existence of a whole universe, a main body made up of margin and centre ... This sense of wholeness ... provided us with an oppositional world-view — a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors, that sustained us, aided us in our struggle to transcend poverty and despair, strengthened our sense of self and our solidarity’ (hooks 2000, p. xvi; 2004a, p. 156).

According to hooks the margin fosters alternative ways of being and seeing.

hooks suggests there is growth for those in the margin in fragmentation and in moving. She writes:

[o]ne confronts and accepts dispersal and fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals more fully where we are, who we can become, an order that does not demand forgetting (hooks 2004a, p. 155).

In hooks' (2004a, p. 156) conception of margin and centre, those who manage to resist the domination of the centre and hold onto marginality, even while in the centre, 'invent spaces of radical openness'. hooks therefore positions those in the margin as liberators, showing that struggle in the margin is part of the resistance that situates the margin as a space of openness.

hooks (2004a, p. 159) asks the centre to look to the margin, writing '[m]arginality as site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. Enter that space. We greet you as liberators'. The margin speaks, argues hooks, and calls to the centre to join in the liberation offered by the marginalised. Not only does the margin speak, it resists, confronting and challenging the repression of the centre. The centre, in hooks' conception, does speak of the margin or of the "other", but only ever about it or for it, or sometimes to it as a place of deprivation. The centre denies the mutual constitution of the whole through margin and centre and speaks the language of the oppressor. hooks (2004a, p. 158) writes:

I am waiting for them to stop talking about the "Other" ... It is not just important what we speak about, but how and why we speak ... Often this speech about the "Other" annihilates, erases: "No need to hear your voice when I can talk about you better than you can speak about yourself. No need to hear your voice. Only tell me about your pain.

In her philosophical and ontological approach, Shildrick (2006, p. 40) challenges bounded subjectivity and normative bodies and embodiment through her conceptualisation of the monster and the 'fluid corporeality of the monstrous'. The monster is that which is other to the bounded, masculinist, Cartesian subject, but also constituent of it. As Braidotti (2011, p. 216) sees it, 'the monstrous other is both liminal and structurally central to our perception of normal human subjectivity'. Like the "leaky" bodies of women, the 'disturbing fluid corporeality of the monstrous' threatens the boundaries of the subject (Shildrick 2006, p. 40). Shildrick (2006, pp. 39-40) writes:

[t]he supposedly intrinsic leakiness of women's bodies is, then, a threat to well Being, a breach in the boundaries of selfhood that blurs the distinctions between self and other, and between one corpus and another ... Luce Irigaray asserts that the horror of fluidity is characteristic of the male: "All threaten to deform, propagate, evaporate, consume him, to flow out of him and into another who cannot [easily be] held onto" (1985a, "Volume-Fluidity", 237). Danger lies in any loss of the hard, smooth reflective surfaces that reduplicate but never vary the subject. And just as uncontainable feminine excess must be erased from the clean and proper masculinist subject, so too must the disturbingly fluid corporeality of the monstrous.



The monstrous, in Shildrick's consideration, disrupts the borders of the bounded subject through its inbetweenness. Its 'alterity is not that of the absolute other, but of the far more disturbing figure of the inbetween that is both self and other' (Shildrick 2006, p. 42). The monstrous, or the "other", is a constitutive part of the whole, but 'irreducible to the bounded subject' (Shildrick 2006, p. 42). However, the monstrous is expunged to maintain the fiction of unitary, masculine subjectivity, and because of the horror that which is not complete, tidy and contained presents to the bounded subject. Shildrick (2006, p. 41, original emphasis) explains:

[w]hat makes that other monstrous, then, is not so much its morphological difference and unfamiliarity, as the disruptive threat of its return. It is in its failure to occupy the place of the absolute other, in its incomplete abjection, that the monster marks the impossibility of the modernist self. Monsters haunt us, not because they represent an external threat — and indeed some are always benign — but because they stir recognition within, a sense of our openness and vulnerability that western discourses insists on covering over. And in that very ambiguity of sliding between self and other, monsters signify not the difference that defines the self-same, but rather the *différance* in its Derridean sense that undoes all distinction and speaks to indifferentiation.

The monstrous resists repression and creeps back in, seeping through the porous borders of the self.

hooks' spatial exploration of margin and centre and Shildrick's ontological consideration of monstrous and self illuminate the movement of the margin or monstrous to the centre and back again and underscore the fiction of a bounded centre or subject. Movement shows that margin and centre are mutually constitutive parts of the whole and that the two intersect. In terms of masculinities, this intersection reveals the possibility for mobility across the spaces of margin and centre. Before theorising this intersection further, I explore the concepts of margin and centre in more depth. I first turn to hooks' work again in order to position the margin as the site in which openness and alternatives for masculinity can proliferate. I then address work from CSMM scholars that highlights the centre as a closed site of domination.

### *Radically reimagining marginality as openness*

hooks (2004a) theorises the margin and marginality as a space, a 'profound edge' (p. 156), a 'site of resistance' (p. 158) and a 'location of radical openness and possibility' (p. 159). She considers radical spaces of openness in the margin as such:

[i]t was this marginality that I was naming as a central location for the production of a counter-hegemonic discourse that is not just found in words but in habits of being and the way one lives. As such, I was not speaking of a marginality one wishes to lose — to give up or surrender as part of moving into the center — but rather of a site one stays in, clings to even, because it nourishes one's capacity to resist. It offers to one the possibility of radical perspective from which to see and create, to imagine alternatives, new worlds (hooks 2004a, pp. 156-157).

hooks radically reconceptualises ideas of the margin as a site of deprivation only. She positions the margin as simultaneously a space of opposition and resistance, of 'radical perspective' (hooks 2004a, p. 157) and radical openness. hooks (2004a, p. 158) does not deny the deprivation of the margin, but wants 'to say that these margins have been both sites of repression and sites of resistance'. Gruenewald (2003, p. 633) interprets hooks' work as positioning those in the margin as having been 'nurtured by the margins to think and act in ways that counter social domination'. In this radical reconfiguration of the margin, openness (in my research openness of masculinities) is not an expression only available to the privileged centre. On the contrary, the margin is the site where openness of 'words ... habits of being and the way one lives' (hooks 2004a, p. 157) emerges. The margin therefore holds open, liberatory possibilities and alternatives from which the centre can learn.

The radically open margin is the home of "others": people of colour, LGBTQIA+ people, disabled people and women, to name a few. However, the margin is at times considered a closed space of conservatism and ignorance. In terms of masculinities, for example, the margin is sometimes thought of as a space of protest masculinity (Connell 2005), where marginalised men take on themes of hegemonic masculinity while lacking recourse to its power. Or as Hopkins (2006) suggests, young Muslims are regarded as the ultimate "other", and young Muslim men are discursively positioned in the west as either violent and patriarchal or as passive, effeminate "Asian" men. Yet hooks (2004a, p. 157) argues that when the margin is viewed only as a site of despair:

a deep nihilism penetrates in a destructive way the very ground of our being. It is there in that space of collective despair that one's creativity, one's imagination is at risk, there that one's mind is fully colonized, there that the freedom one longs for is lost.

The centre locks men of the margin out of its power and domination — these men are marginalised. But if the margin is understood only as a site of deprivation, the unattainable power of the centre is held out as the only means of respite. In *Feminist Theory: From margin*

to center, hooks (2000, p. 19) suggests that when those in the margin look with their unique world view:

they are more likely to see exaggerated expressions of male chauvinism among their peers as stemming from the male's sense of himself as powerless and ineffectual in relation to ruling male groups, rather than an expression of an overall privileged social status.

On the other hand, if the margin is also a site of resistance and radical possibility, not just repression, radical openness can proliferate. In marginality as radical openness, liberatory alternatives such as those fostered by the participant Manni, which I explore in chapter six, can facilitate resistance to the seduction of the power of the centre.

### *The closed centre as site of domination*

The concept of the centre is taken up and theorised as a site of (men's) power, privilege and domination by some scholars of CSMM, notably Connell (1987, 2007, 2014) and Messner (2002) in his work on sport. Connell (1987) identified a core and periphery of gendered power structures. Core institutions, according to Connell, include the military, heavy industry, the state and technology, while the family, she argued, can be seen as a peripheral institution. In a 2014 article titled *Margin becoming centre: for a world-centred rethinking of masculinities*, Connell (2014) takes hooks' (2000) description of looking from the margin to the centre and seeing the whole as a springboard for arguing that masculinity needs to be rethought from post-colonial or global South positions, or from a world-centred approach. Connell (2014, p. 217) distinguishes the margin as 'where the large *majority* of the world's people live, where most of the world's cultures have flourished, and where most economic activity occurs'. The centre in this model is the metropole. Connell (2014, p. 217) explains that despite the majority in the margin, 'the metropole — the "centre" of the global economy — dominates the international arena of knowledge and theory as it has for the past two centuries'.

Drawing on Connell's (1987) earlier concept of core and peripheral institutions, Messner (2002) positions centre sport as a core institution. He writes:

[w]e locate the center of sport, I will argue, partly by "following the money" to the most highly celebrated, rewarded, and institutionalized bodily practices that are defined largely by physical power, aggression, and violence. The center of sports is where it all starts, a place that serves as symbolic and economic reference point for alternative images and practices. The center is a position occupied by the biggest, wealthiest, and most visible sports programs and athletes. *It is a site of domination and privilege*. It is the major focal point of the gaze of millions of fans and spectators. We find sport's center at the core of athletic departments in schools and

universities, at the locus of peer status systems among young people, and at the major nodes of sports media. And sport's center is still, by and large, a space that is actively constructed by and for men (Messner 2002, p. xviii, emphasis added).

Messner firmly positions the centre as a site of privilege and domination that largely excludes those from the margin. He points out that centre sports are the most highly valued and celebrated in a given society and culture. Furthermore, men who themselves play the centre positions in centre sports, such as the football quarterback or the basketball centre, are the most highly venerated and remunerated (Messner 2002).

Of sports that are not in the centre, such as swimming or gay and lesbian community sports, Messner (2002, p. xxi) states:

there is often a tension that simultaneously pulls these sports toward and repels them away from sport's institutional center. However, the very fact that these sports are not fully integrated into the center of the gender regime of sport means that there is greater space for the development of a range of (sometimes even subversive) meanings, identities, and relationships around issues of gender and sexuality.

Like hooks (2004a), Messner accounts for the movement of those of the margin in and out of the centre and the radical alternatives that can proliferate in the margin. He furthermore suggests that despite an appearance of "invincibility", the centre is in fact unstable and can be challenged and changed.

### *Clasped hands: the intersection of margin and centre*

I suggest that movement and co-constitution of the whole reveal that margin and centre are not mutually exclusive but rather intersect. The overlap of the two — the intersection — holds the interdependencies of centre and margin, destabilising these as a binary. Shildrick suggests Irigaray's (1993) conceptualisation of two hands in mutual touch, as if in prayer, as a means of overcoming the violently enforced chasm between self and other necessary for Cartesian or Lacanian full coming into being. Shildrick (2006, p. 45) suggests:

[i]n contradistinction to the disjunction intrinsic to the specular image, touch is always chiasmatic ... the hand that touches is also touched ... the subject accordingly is in a mutually constitutive relationship with its objects, intertwined with the other through touch.

Irigaray's vision of hands in mutual touch as if in prayer develops Merleau-Ponty's conceptualisation of the hand that reaches out to touch another, which in its reaching maintains

hierarchy (Shildrick 2006). In conceptualising the intersecting of margin and centre, I suggest an image of two hands clasped together, fingers interlocked. Two hands together as if in prayer press close and tight against one another. But when the fingers are interlocked, a space opens up between the palms. This space cannot be said to belong to either the right hand or the left, but it is formed by both through the intertwining of the fingers and the two hands overlapping and embracing one another. This space between two overlapped hands is neither closed (it is a space, after all), nor open (this space is bounded by the two hands, though with some cracks to the outside); the space is inbetween (the hands). Nor are the two hands that clasp one another with fingers interlocked closed fists or open palms; they are curled over and held by one another, coming to rest in a formation that is somewhere inbetween fist and open palm, somewhere inbetween open and closed.

In relation to margin–centre, intersection facilitates and is facilitated by movement between the spaces of margin and centre. This illuminates the possibility for men of the centre to move towards more openness of masculinities fostered in the margin. Shildrick writes:

[t]o resist closure, to be open to the trace of the other within, the other that is both self and irreducibly alien in its excess, to resist the normalization of the strange, is to accept vulnerability. It is the very possibility of our becoming, for ourselves and with others.

Moving towards openness is to acknowledge the fiction of the separation of margin and centre and to begin to ‘be open to the trace of the other within’. In moving towards openness of masculinities on the terms of those in the margin, men of the centre begin to hear and learn from the marginalised. I suggest this movement and interaction with those of the margin is where a new language of masculinities may emerge for men of the centre.

#### *Refining terminology: openness, closedness and movements*

Having developed the spatial schema of margin–centre, I now turn to further refining concepts and terminology. First, I discuss the range of ways in which I utilise the terminology of “closed”, “open”, “centre” and “margin”, and I align the concepts “closed” and “open” with the schema. Then I highlight the movements of study participants across the spaces of margin–centre. In terms of masculinities, I position the margin as an open space and the centre as a closed one. However, my theorisation of margin–centre highlights that margin and centre are not binary, separated spheres, but rather interconnected and interdependent. The schema of margin–centre therefore simultaneously disrupts the closed:open binary.

Throughout this dissertation I utilise the terms “closed”, “open”, “centre” and “margin” in a variety of ways. This includes, for example, relating these terms to notions of masculinities, emotion and care and to theoretical ideas such as “openness of masculinities”. In addition, I consider closed or open narratives or discourses from participants. I furthermore utilise the terminology of closed centre and open margin to locate conceptualisations of masculinity and to trace patterns of movement of participants throughout the spaces of margin-centre.

As I highlighted in chapter two, a wealth of terminology for different kinds, types, iterations, expressions and theories of masculinities has emerged in empirical and theoretical CSMM work. Margin-centre, where the margin is seen as open, the centre as closed and their intersection as troubling a closed:open binary, offers a different way of thinking about these numerous and varying conceptualisations of masculinity. I suggest that certain ideas of masculinity can be located in the closed centre and others in the open margin. Thus, closed, centre masculinities can include, for example: hegemonic masculinity; transnational business masculinity; complicit masculinity; orthodox masculinity; hybrid masculinity; and more general terms such as “appropriate” or “traditional” masculinity. Open masculinities in the margin could include: marginalised masculinity; subordinated masculinity; and caring masculinity, though as noted previously, the open margin is less clearly definable than the closed centre.

However, protest masculinity is seen to be adopted by marginalised men, but is not open, while inclusive masculinity might be located in the centre, but does not necessarily have to be closed. I do not suggest that masculinities can be neatly categorised under the concepts of open margin or closed centre, but rather that margin-centre provides a useful device for considering contemporary shifts and mobilities of masculinities. Inclusive masculinity and caring masculinity in particular gesture towards movement across the spaces of margin-centre, though they speak to this movement in different ways. Inclusive masculinity has the potential to indicate a movement of men of the centre towards greater openness when they adopt practices from men of the margin. However, it also involves a drawing of some men of the margin towards the centre. As I discussed in chapter two, issues surrounding hybrid masculinities further complicate this picture.

The rejection of domination called for by caring masculinity is therefore vital. Caring masculinity is an open masculinity in the margin, but as I argued in chapter two it can speak to

men of the centre through its double focus on the rejection of domination and the incorporation of care. Men of the centre can move towards greater openness by adopting values of care, and the pull that draws them back to the centre is broken through the rejection of domination. Caring masculinity can offer alternatives to men of the centre who are seeking more open expressions of masculinity.

Refining the margin–centre schema to position the margin as open and the centre as closed provides a way to trace mobilities of contemporary masculinities. Participants in this study moved across, around and throughout the spaces of margin–centre, or at times occupied one particular space. I discovered four key patterns of movement amongst participants. First, men living in Australia had the ability and privilege to manoeuvre through expressions of masculinity, but largely remained in the closed centre. Second, amongst the German participants, potentials for the beginnings of movement from the centre towards greater openness could be detected. Third, it was some of the Australian men in Berlin who were taking steps of varying length and number towards more openness of masculinities. Fourth, however, the closed centre continued to draw participants back towards it. In addition to these strands of movement, three participants were situated in the margin through their sexuality or class statuses, and I discovered expressions of open, caring masculinity in one of these men. Furthermore, there were nuances, contradictions and possibilities of mobile masculinities that were not easily captured by these key movements or by the notions of open or closed. These I explore particularly in chapter five.

Many of the participants were therefore moving or beginning to move towards greater openness of masculinities. However, another force was at play for almost all these men: a continuing, influential pull back towards the centre. Most of the men of the centre in the study remained caught up in its privilege. The gravity of the closed centre exerted itself onto these participants, pulling at them to remain there even as they travelled towards greater openness. Even two of the participants in the margin felt, to some extent, the seduction of the power of the closed centre, though they resisted in varying ways. Exploring and teasing out the intricacies and complexities of participants' movement around and throughout the spaces of margin–centre is the focus of the following three chapters.

## **Narrative and meaning making**

With my theoretical approach established, I now turn to a consideration of the research methodologies of this project and a discussion of my use of narrative methods. My approach to narrative methods is informed primarily by Chase (2005, 2011), Hollway and Jefferson (2013), Roseneil and Budgeon (2004) and Squire, Davis, Esin, Andrews, Harrison, Hydén and Hydén (2014). Narrative methods involve participants telling stories about their lives that are important to them (Roseneil & Budgeon 2004). Rather than attempting to structure the interview to elicit the information the interviewer/researcher wants to know, the interviewer's job in a narrative interview is to listen to the stories the participant wants to tell. Questions in narrative interviews are therefore very open, minimal in number and designed to initiate storytelling on the part of the interviewee. In narrative interviews the roles of interviewee/interviewer become those of narrator/listener (Chase 2011; Hollway & Jefferson 2013). The stories participants/narrators tell are deemed by the interviewer/researcher/listener to be legitimate and full of meaning.

Contemporary narrative inquiry has its roots in sociological, anthropological and feminist life history research, sociolinguistic and oral narrative inquiry and biographical methods (Chase 2005; Hollway & Jefferson 2013). According to Chase (2005), a narrative, either oral or written, may be a short story, an extended story or even a life story. Squire et al. (2014, pp. 6-7) point out the distinction often drawn in narrative research between the terms “stories”, as ‘recounted sequences of events’, and “narratives”, as ‘organized, plotted, interpreted accounts of events’. Squire et al. (2014, pp. 23-24), however, use the terms interchangeably, suggesting that recounted sequences of events are also narrativised and ‘inflected by our narrative culture’, while interpreted accounts of events are complicated by issues such as their dialogic qualities and co-construction. I therefore use the terms “story” and “narrative” interchangeably throughout this thesis.

An integral aspect of narratives or stories is meaning making and shaping. ‘Narrative’, argues Chase (2011, p. 430), ‘is meaning making through the shaping or ordering of experience’. Polkinghorne (1988, cited in Hollway & Jefferson 2013, p. 29) argued that narrative is ‘the primary form by which human experience is made meaningful ... it organises human experiences into temporally meaningful episodes’. Meaning making within narrative is not,



however, a simple process of the narrator expressing exactly what they mean with a direct correlation to reality or to the events as they actually occurred. Rather, narration is a construction of events and, consequently, of meaning. As Chase (2005, p. 656) argues, '[a] central tenet of the narrative turn is that speakers *construct* events through narrative rather than simply refer to events'. Consequently, narrative research does not seek an accurate account of the "truth" of the event. Rather, the attempt is 'to understand the meanings people attach to those events' (Chase 2011, p. 424). Meaning is of primary importance in narrative inquiry, not truth or reality.

Meaning making is not, however, confined to the narrator of the story. An acknowledgement of the co-construction of meaning between the narrator/interviewee and listener/interviewer is an important facet of narrative methods. Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 29) suggest that meaning is created 'within the research pair', and Squire et al (2014, p. 25, original emphasis) state that the 'creation of the story as a *co-construction* of the narrator, the audiences and the media in which the story appears is characteristic of all narratives'. As Egeberg Holmgren (2011, p. 367) argues, 'experiences and positions of both researcher and researched determine the form and contents of the qualitative interview'. Therefore, even if the interviewer does not set out to structure the interview by asking specific questions and guiding the participant's answers, meaning making in a narrative interview will still be a collaborative project between narrator and listener.

The co-construction of meaning quickly became salient during the practicalities of conducting the interviews for this research. My initial goal to remain a silent listener in interviews turned out to be neither practical nor useful, and too closely reflected the ideal, critiqued by feminist methodologies, of the neutral, objective observer of the participant (Lynch 1999). The first interview I conducted in the role of this silent listener was stilted, uncomfortable and awkward, even though the participant and I had already met before his interview. After this initial interview I revised my approach to one of connecting with participants as an interlocutor in a conversation. I engaged with their narratives, laughed when they said something funny, tailored questions to suit their stories, personalities and narration styles, encouraged them when I found a story particularly interesting and worked through difficult or complicated aspects of their narratives with them. I did, however, largely refrain from telling my own stories, except when a rendition of something from my life could further prompt the participant or when a participant

directly asked me questions. The vast majority of the interview time was therefore left for the participant to speak.

My interactions with participants came to resemble conversations, echoing the terminology of “care conversations” used by Hanlon (2012) and Lynch, Baker and Lyons (2009b). This technique helped me to quickly develop rapport and familiarity with people I had just met and to set the participants at ease, and it produced narratives about their emotions, lives, thoughts and feelings that flowed more easily and freely. Furthermore, participants preferred to have the interviews conducted as conversations; as I was interviewing my peers, often in cafés, the interviews unsurprisingly came to resemble the coffee catch-ups I might have with my own male friends.

### *Values and the problem of language*

Roseneil and Budgeon (2004) emphasise the importance of meaning making in narrative and narrative methods, but also highlight the communication of values that narration enables. Drawing on Hollway and Jefferson’s method of free association, which I will discuss subsequently, Roseneil and Budgeon (2004, p. 144) suggest the main premise of narrative methods is ‘that people make sense of their lives and communicate this understanding through telling stories about things that are important to them’. Roseneil and Budgeon (2004, p. 144) see narrative interviews as opportunities for participants to create stories ‘within which meaning and values gradually unfold’. Hollway and Jefferson (2005, p. 24) demonstrate that the process of narration allows people to reveal “unconscious dynamics” about states they may not consciously be aware of, arguing ‘all research subjects are meaning-making and defended subjects’. The exploration of participants’ values and understandings that narrative methods facilitate constitutes one of the primary reasons I chose these methods to investigate shifts and mobilities of masculinities amongst young participants in this study. However, questions surrounding language give rise to challenges in both meaning making and the conveying of values in narrative methods.

French feminist Hélène Cixous wrote in 1975 of the phallogocentrism that pervades all the systems by which western societies live. She wrote that in the philosophical question of ontology, for instance:

[y]ou can even fail to notice that there's no place at all for women in the operation! ... Either woman is passive; or she doesn't exist. What is left is unthinkable, unthought of (Cixous 1981, pp. 91-92).

Cixous argued there is no language in western traditions for speaking about women's existence, therefore women's existence cannot be thought and vice versa. Irigaray (1985b) similarly argues that women's desire and sexuality is all but written out of existence by phallogocentrism. A critical part of hooks' (2004a, p. 153) conceptualisation of the margin as a space of radical openness is language as a place of struggle and the 'difficult explorations of "silences"'. Speaking 'about issues of "space and location"' can be painful, writes hooks (2004a, p. 153), and speaking from the margin is not without struggle as the marginalised try to find words that are not those of the coloniser (hooks 2004a). Hearn (2004) too, commenting on the critical study of men and masculinities, writes 'there is the challenge of how to speak where there have been silences, whether these are global silences, local silences or the silences of micro-politics'.

The challenge in terms of masculinities becomes how to speak of openness while struggling against the language of the closed centre and in the face of continuing proscriptions against men's intimacy and vulnerability. Irigaray and Cixous show that women cannot be spoken or thought. Yet authors such as Blatterer (2015), Butera (2008), Hanlon (2012) and hooks (2004b), as I discussed in the previous chapter, argue that in patriarchal society care is written out of masculine identities, and men's feelings, vulnerability and intimate lives are suppressed, or at best marginalised. While young men from the centre might now be able to display more emotive, inclusive behaviours (Anderson 2009), tenets of centre masculinities such as hegemonic masculinity continue to demand stoicism and closedness from young men, as participants in this research demonstrate.

Hollway and Jefferson (2013) developed the Free Association Narrative Interview method to elicit information from defended, psychosocial subjects. I drew on this technique in my interview analysis in order to uncover some of the unspeakable aspects of masculinities and men's emotions obscured by dictates of hegemonic masculinity. Comparing more traditional narrative analysis to the free association method, Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 34) write:

[w]hile a common concern of both approaches is to elicit detail, narrative analysis has a preoccupation with coherence, which we do not share. Free associations defy narrative convention and enable the analyst to pick up on incoherences (for example, contradictions, elisions, avoidances) and accord them due significance.

This acknowledgement of the legitimacy and importance of narrative incoherences was a critical aspect of my own interviewing and data analysis, allowing me to elicit and uncover feelings, thoughts and values surrounding masculinities in late modernity amongst participants. However, while the Free Association Narrative Interview technique is based on psychoanalytic frameworks, my study focussed on social patterns and norms rather than individuals. I therefore drew on the technique's emphasis on valuing free associations and incoherences, but did not draw on psychoanalysis specifically.

### **Data collection and analysis**

I based the final design of my research methods on Hanlon's (2012) study of meanings of care in men's lives in Ireland, in which he carried out narrative "care conversations" with participants. I interviewed three groups of participants: eight men living in Australia (group identifier: Australian); ten German men living in Berlin (group identifier: German); and ten Australian men living in Berlin (group identifier Aus/Ber). No exclusion criteria were applied during the recruitment phase except that participants should be between 18 and 30 years old. Initially I conducted ten interviews with men living in Australia. However, I only consider eight of these in this thesis, as the final two were carried out with men who were not from Australia and who had been living in the country for under a year. Another participant from the final eight in this group was also not Australian, but had lived in Australia for several years. His narratives have therefore been included in this thesis. Two of the participants in this group were living in a smaller city in the Australian state of Victoria and the rest in Melbourne. Finally, I conducted one expert interview with a participant in Berlin. I have not included his narratives as part of the data set for this thesis, but they were useful in analysing the stories of the 28 other participants, particularly the German ones.

Recruitment was carried out via social media, personal networks, mailing lists, posters in cafés and universities and, to a small extent, snowballing. Despite the varied and disparate means of recruitment, one great surprise of this research was that many of the participants interviewed in Berlin were connected in various ways to each other or to me. This connection of participants raises the importance of how people self-selected into this study, which asked young men to discuss issues of masculinity, care and friendship. These were men who wanted to discuss these issues, and several were also interested in helping me with my research.

Their interest in the interview topics revealed that many of them were men of the centre who were contemplating changes in masculinities and the perceived roles of men, or felt a sense of discontent with these in some way. Furthermore, many of the 28 participants were highly engaged with the research project and very eager to learn of my findings. Their interest continued long after their interviews were conducted, with some asking me at a later date to send them published papers or summaries of results. In the *Feminist ethics* section of this chapter I outline my commitment to producing a plain-language statement for participants containing research results as part of my ethical considerations for this study.

Each participant was interviewed once by me, with interviews ranging from 26 minutes to one hour and 50 minutes. Most of the interviews were conducted in cafés, where I always paid for the participant's drink. Some interviews were carried out at participants' workplaces or in university meeting rooms, two at my home and three at participants' homes (all five only in instances where I was, for various reasons, certain about my safety), one in a park and one in a bar. As I am a fluent speaker of German and a native speaker of English, I gave the German interviewees the choice of having the interview conducted in English or German. Eight out of ten of these men chose English and two chose German.

I began interviews by asking for participant biographical details. This was followed by a minimal number of open questions designed to elicit narratives from the participants. These questions were: can you tell me about yourself?; what do you think it means to "be a man" in Australia/Germany?; can you tell me about the friendships you've had in your life?; what do you do with your friends when you spend time with them?; can you tell me about a time when you cared for a friend or a friend cared for you?; can you tell me about any other times in your life that you gave or received care? As discussed in chapter one, for German participants I also included the question 'what does the word "care" mean to you?', as "care" translates into German with several nuances.

This interview schedule reflects the initial research project, designed to investigate caring masculinity in relation to friendships amongst young men. However, as noted in chapter one, I took a grounded approach to the interview data and analysis, which enabled me to listen to what it was participants really wanted to tell me. The interview questions, and in particular the first one ("can you tell me about yourself?"), elicited rich, meaningful data illuminating the

changes and tensions of contemporary masculinities. Often these narratives were connected with mobility and work, as I show in the following three chapters, and the concept of openness, explored in depth in chapter six, emerged particularly strongly from the interviews. Furthermore, the questions about care and friendship encouraged participants to reflect on their feelings and emotions and on more open aspects of masculinities.

My brief interview schedule was highly flexible and open to change throughout the interviews. As Hollway and Jefferson (2013, p. 29) suggest, '[i]n the narrative approach, the agenda is open to development and change, depending on the narrator's experiences'. During interviews, the participants played important roles in dictating the flow of the storytelling and the topics discussed. All the interviews were audio recorded and transcribed by me. They were then analysed following Hollway and Jefferson's (2013) guidelines for analysing narrative interviews, namely through the use of pro formas, pen portraits and the technique of viewing narratives as a whole. This means that the narratives told in the interviews were not broken down into fragments that could be extracted for easy coding. Rather, narratives were analysed in their entirety in order to maintain each participant's overall meaning frame (see Hollway & Jefferson 2013).

I took field notes and a self-designed post-interview questionnaire I filled out for each participant, which I discuss in more detail later in this chapter, into consideration as part of the analysis process. Once this first phase of analysis had taken place, overarching themes for each participant were recorded in a spreadsheet in order to enable comparison and identification of common themes. Software programs designed for qualitative data analysis were not used because my aim was to consider participant narratives as whole rather than fragmented. Avoiding these software programs also enabled my own close engagement with and consideration of the data. Because of the richness of stories recorded through my narrative research, I have included a significant amount of the qualitative data throughout the analysis chapters of this thesis. The quotes from participants that I have presented have been edited only for expression and clarity.

### *Participant demographics*

All participants have been given pseudonyms throughout this thesis, and as I discuss in the following section I have not included a table of participant data because I have chosen to deliberately conceal participant biographies in order to protect their identities. The youngest participant was 20 years old and the oldest 31<sup>4</sup> years old, with an average age of participants of 26.3 years. 27 participants were white and one Asian. This was not an intentional design of the study, but does raise some pertinent questions about recruitment and intersectionality in research methods. On the other hand, the dominance of whiteness in my sample allowed me to focus on expressions of masculinity within groups consisting largely of privileged men of the centre, with the exception of some participants who could be located in the margin on the basis of other intersections, as I explore throughout this thesis.

Seven of the participants in the “Australian” group were Australian nationals, and one of these seven had dual citizenship with another country. As noted, the eighth participant was not from Australia but had been living there for several years. All men in the “German” group were German nationals, though two had dual citizenship with other European countries. All the men in the group “Aus/Ber” were Australian nationals, and two also had dual citizenship with European countries. 26 participants across all three groups had grown up in rural or regional towns or small cities: all ten of the Australian men living in Berlin; seven of the German participants; and seven of the men living in Australia, with the information about this for the eighth participant unknown. Two from the German group had been raised in Berlin and one from this group had grown up in several different places, including another capital city and some smaller cities. Again, the representation of participants who did not come from capital cities was not planned, but enabled an exploration of masculinities in connection with mobility.

The participants all identified as men and 22 identified themselves as heterosexual. Three participants did not explicitly state they were heterosexual, but of these three, two were in relationships with women and one spoke only of relationships with women. These three participants all narrated heterosexual identities and practices through their interviews, though I acknowledge that there are certain exclusions performed by assuming they were heterosexual.

---

<sup>4</sup> Despite 30 being the upper age limit I had set, I did not find out one participant was 31 until he began his interview. I decided to include his data in the sample due to the richness of his narratives and because he had taken the time to talk with me and share his thoughts, feelings and experiences.

One participant identified as gay and one as queer or MSM (men who have sex with men), but with some ambivalence around both terms. One participant had had sex with both women and men but did not like to categorise his sexual identity according to labels. However, he said he generally identified as heterosexual in broader society. One final participant described himself as ‘straight, but question mark’, with no further discussion around this. Six of the participants in Australia were single, one was in a relationship and one was married. Eight of the Australians in Berlin were single, one had a long-term girlfriend and one was single but in a “complicated” relationship situation. Only five of the German participants were single, with four in relationships and one married. One of the Australians in Berlin had a very young baby, but none of the other participants had children.

At the times of their interviews, out of 28<sup>5</sup> participants nine were students (five graduate, four undergraduate), four worked in service, nine worked in professional positions, four worked various odd jobs as freelancers, two were student assistants, four were engaged in artistic jobs or projects, one was employed in hospitality, three were volunteers and five were unemployed. As a group, though, participants possessed a wealth of skills and work-related experience. Nine mentioned experience in service work, 14 in professional positions, five as student assistants, six in artistic or creative industries or pursuits, seven in hospitality, five as volunteers, six in Information Technology or computer science, five in teaching, three in labouring and six in health-related services or therapies. Some of the German participants had presumably undertaken a period of community service (*Zivildienst*), as either army or community service was compulsory for young German men until 2011 (Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben n.d.). However, community service was rarely mentioned by these ten men.

In the group of Australian men in Berlin, the longest time any of them had lived in Berlin was seven years and the shortest was one month. Most others had lived there for between six months and two years, though some had been there for shorter periods of time and one for longer. I did not ask participants specifically about class. However, from information they provided about their jobs and their parents’ professions, I suggest 26 could be categorised as middle-class. One participant was clearly from a working-class background, an important marginal position I

---

<sup>5</sup> Some participants had multiple jobs or were studying and working at the same time. Therefore, more job positions are listed here than participants.



discuss in chapter six. One participant I situate as from the upper class. Overall, the final sample therefore consisted of 25 participants who were men of the centre, but with varying levels of access to privilege, and three participants who were men of the margin.

## **Feminist methodologies**

### *Feminist ethics*

Monash University ethics approval was sought and received for this research, but the project was also informed by feminist research methodologies and ethics, particularly in relation to participant anonymity, emancipatory research and researcher reflexivity. I did not include a table with participant demographics in the previous section because I have chosen to obscure biographies throughout this thesis in order to protect participant anonymity. I have changed, mixed up and hidden aspects of the biographies of the 28 participants considered throughout this work, removing personal experiences and presenting mainly their thoughts or beliefs. Their identities will not be recognisable to anyone outside the research team, nor, to as great an extent as possible, to the participants themselves. Nevertheless, in accordance with the emphasis in narrative methods on considering participants' narratives as a whole, the participants' biographies were crucial to my analysis of the narrative data and to the overall conceptualisation of the thesis. As I pointed out previously, this study was not one of individuals specifically, but rather an exploration of how the narratives and biographies of these 28 individuals illustrated broader social trends and changes surrounding masculinities. I have endeavoured to hold these sometimes competing commitments in tension.

Participation in this study was voluntary, with participants sent an explanatory statement and copy of the consent form to read before their interviews. They were given a four-week timeframe in which to withdraw their data, though had a participant requested their data not be used after this timeframe I would have accommodated where possible. At the end of interviews, participants were given a list of counselling services in case their participation had raised any troubling issues. However, I also extended the offer of keeping in touch with participants if they wanted any more information or wanted to discuss the interview issues further. Part of my commitment to feminist research ethics involves a plain-language statement that will be

prepared for participants informing them of the study results and contextualising my analysis for these young men.

This research was intended to be emancipatory (Lynch 1999). As Stanley (1990, p. 15) states, ‘the point is to change the world, not only to study it’. My study was designed to be emancipatory for those in the margin by contributing to engaging men of the centre in gender equality, and in its final iteration also contributes towards empowering the margin as a space of openness. I intended the interviews themselves to be spaces in which participants could consider and discuss issues of masculinity and care, about which they might not normally be able to think. Hanlon (2012, p. 19) suggests it is important to find a balance in interviews between ‘good rapport and trust and a critical dialogue with respondents’ in order to avoid collusion in dominant discourses of masculinity or femininity. I attempted to counter sexist or problematic narratives during interviews, though the risk of participants shutting their narratives down at times made this balance difficult to achieve.

Several of the participants did find their interviews to be rare moments in which they were able, and even encouraged, to talk about masculinity and emotional aspects of their lives, with some even describing the interviews as similar to therapy sessions. Some participants also managed to acknowledge certain aspects of closed, centre masculinities they were holding onto through the discussions we had in their interviews, as I demonstrate with Sven (German) in chapter four. Relatedly, the reinforcement of women’s traditional roles as listeners and facilitators of men’s stories and emotional disclosure is a problem associated with the female interviewer/male interviewee relationship in narrative interviewing (Egeberg Holmgren 2011; Pini 2005). On the other hand, female interviewers are often thought to elicit more trust and disclosure from men than male interviewers (Hanlon 2012; Pini 2005; Walker 2010). hooks (2004b, p. 140) furthermore makes an impassioned plea for more feminist women to write and talk about men and masculinities, arguing that men need ‘feminist blueprints’ for change. Feminist women who interview men may, therefore, become facilitators of men’s stories, but in doing so they can also contribute towards men’s change.

### *Subjectivity, reflexivity and power*

Another critical component of feminist methodologies and research is that of researcher reflexivity. Stanley (1990, p. 12) argues that ‘written accounts of feminist research should locate the feminist researcher firmly within the activities of her research as an essential feature of what is “feminist” about it’. Feminist research and methodologies acknowledge and even value that absolute objectivity is impossible and that the researcher’s subjectivity will have an impact (Letherby 2003). Feminist researchers therefore seek to make the biases, positionings and subjectivities of both the researcher and the researched in feminist work visible. As Letherby (2003, p. 68), drawing on Scott (1998), states:

it is necessary to present a personalized discussion of the research process, admit the relevance of interests, identities and histories of writers, researchers and respondents and expose these for analysis.

My own subjectivity came into play in this research as I constantly negotiated and reflected on the intricate issues of power in the interviews throughout the research process, particularly as I outlined formerly in relation to collusion versus critical engagement with participants. I navigated issues of power and engaged in self-reflexive practices in this research with the help of self-designed post-interview assessment questionnaires for myself, a reflective and record keeping exercise inspired by Pini’s (2005) use of similar forms. I “interviewed myself” by asking myself the questions I asked participants and recording my answers. This enabled me to reflect on the relevance to my own life of the questions I asked in the interviews and to better understand the narrative interview experience for the participants.

My reflections led to a series of considerations surrounding the positioning of myself and the participants I was interviewing, particularly as these were mainly privileged young men. As I demonstrate throughout this thesis, a complicated picture emerged of possibilities for change but also of the resilience of closed, problematic discourses. I wanted to be generous but also critical in my analysis and work. The participants had given their time and energy to participate, and many were genuinely interested in the project and in learning about and discovering new ideas of masculinities, just as I was. Indeed, their contribution was integral to the final dissertation. On the other hand, challenging closed discourses of masculinity was critical for my research as a feminist, emancipatory project. It was also necessary if I was to offer young

men in post-industrial societies such as the participants in this study alternatives, alternatives they were actually seeking.

Issues of power came into play in this research because it was conducted mainly with young men of the centre. Privileged men have the space and power more generally to construct authoritative narratives about masculinities and themselves and, as discussed in this chapter, narrative interviews involve the co-construction of stories. Taking what participants said in interviews at face value would have failed to trouble structures of power in the interview setting and more broadly. Navigating these tensions between generosity and critique constituted a struggle throughout the entire research project. I have ultimately endeavoured throughout this thesis to tread the line of contributing to meaningful change while maintaining respect for participants.

## **Conclusion**

Narrative methods, informed by feminist methodologies and research ethics, enabled me to uncover values, practices and beliefs surrounding masculinities amongst the young participants in my study. My focus on issues of language, meaning, values and co-construction, and my utilisation of narrative methods including aspects of the Free Association Narrative Interview technique (Hollway & Jefferson 2013), enabled me to delve into topics with participants that they might not normally have been able to think about or discuss. Taking a grounded approach to this data meant that I could uncover the picture they were painting of changes and tensions of masculinities. My methodological considerations work in conjunction with my theoretical approach, where I aligned “open” and “closed” with the schema of margin–centre and presented the movements of participants themselves across these spaces.

Ultimately, I identified four key threads of movement along with nuances of masculinities that could not be captured within these four movements or within notions of open or closed. My commitment to feminist research ethics and methodologies informs my insistence on following movements towards increased openness and investigating the continuing influence of closed, centre masculinities. Feminist research aims to be emancipatory and create change, and part of this involves documenting and critiquing continuing inequalities and domination. In the following three analysis chapters I trace participants’ navigations of movement and of closed,

centre masculinities versus more open masculinity. I begin with the following chapter, in which I focus on closed narratives and expressions of masculinity and the pull of men back towards the closed centre.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CLOSED NARRATIVES OF MASCULINITIES

#### Introduction

Masculinities have traditionally been considered closed, bounded, unitary and tied to autonomy and individuation. These characteristics are epitomised in portrayals and theories of closed, centre masculinities discussed in chapter two such as hegemonic masculinity or transnational business masculinity. In this chapter I investigate narratives of closed, centre masculinities amongst participants and the continuing pull of the closed centre. Despite the increasing openness of masculinities I explore in chapter six, closed expressions of centre masculinity continued to hold purchase amongst many of the participants. As Hearn (2001) suggests, men's engagement in gender equality is troubled by connections to the power promised by hegemonic masculinity. The attraction and pull of the closed centre is one of the major movements I discuss throughout this chapter, particularly in relation to the German participants and the Australian men in Berlin. While the participants in Australia manoeuvred to an extent around expressions of masculinity, they largely remained in the closed centre rather than moving towards greater openness.

The closed, centre expressions of masculinity I explore throughout this chapter were linked by a common pattern: a contradictory claim from the men of the more progressive, "softer" attitudes expected of men in the current period, alongside a continuation of more closed, traditional masculine behaviours or beliefs. Different groups of participants held more closed ideas in particular in relation to working-class men, women and gay men. Several of the men interviewed in Australia, for example, made fun of, and distanced themselves from, an Australian version of protest masculinity, while maintaining hard, muscular bodies and reformulating hegemonic masculinity in the face of expectations of men to be more caring. Some of the German participants stated they believed in gender equality, yet also believed in different, unequal roles for men and women. Furthermore, several of the Australian men in Berlin asserted that they were accepting of gay people, yet expressed discomfort at the notion of being mistaken for gay themselves.

In this chapter, I first consider the complex manoeuvring amongst the men interviewed in Australia in, out, around and between iterations of privilege, difference, progressiveness and traditionality. I explore their double movement of distancing themselves from protest masculinity while still drawing on it in certain ways in order to balance the competing modern requirements of softer masculinities and hard male bodies. I investigate the discourse of difference between men and women perpetuated by the German participants, despite their affirmations of the sameness of men and women. This is followed by an analysis of narratives about gay men told by the Australian participants in Berlin, where I highlight continuing links to ideals of more closed, centre versions of masculinity.

I conclude this chapter with a focus on the numerous stories from participants about their relationships with fathers. These narratives threw closed expressions of masculinity into stark relief, as fathers were portrayed as largely lacking the somewhat more progressive attitudes participants in the study claimed to have adopted. Fathers were mostly seen as emotionally closed off and as poor masculine role models, causing disappointment and even sadness for many of the participants. This older, more closed masculinity of fathers was set against the double movements of participants asserting more progressive attitudes, while continuing to draw on more closed, centre behaviours and beliefs.

### **Moves, manoeuvres and the continuation of closed masculinities**

The first indication of patterns of more closed, centre masculinities came in the form of an ability and privilege I discovered amongst the eight men interviewed in Australia to manoeuvre in and out of varying masculine expressions and behaviours depending on the context or requirement. They could move into, within, between and out of spaces and iterations of privilege, difference, progressiveness and traditionality. This privilege of movement reflected the autonomy of these participants as masculine subjects. As Bridges and Pascoe (2014, p. 249) state, the documentation of masculinities in transformation amongst white, heterosexual young men ‘evidences the flexibility of identity afforded privileged groups’. I discovered some evidence of a “softer” kind of masculinity amongst the participants in Australia. However, this was mediated by the men continuing to draw upon dictates of a reworked form of closed, centre masculinity that allowed them to maintain autonomy and privilege. The key movement I discovered in this case was, therefore, an ability of participants in Australia to manoeuvre

around expressions of masculinity depending on expectations. However, as I will show, they largely remained in the closed centre.

In one sense, these men attempted to distance themselves from the domination and aggression of what they perceived to be “traditional” or “stereotypical” Australian masculinity. In doing so, they reflected what Bridges and Pascoe (2014) describe as “discursive distancing”, where distance is created between privileged men and hegemonic masculinity, yet the gendered inequalities of hegemonic masculinity are maintained. The participants in Australia achieved this distancing in their interviews in particular by denigrating an Australian version of protest masculinity, which is generally suggested to pertain to working-class men when they take on aspects of hegemonic masculinity but lack the power of men of the centre (Connell 2005)<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, at least four of the eight men borrowed from this more traditional or protest masculinity, particularly through their concerted work on their bodies. This could be seen as a form of strategic borrowing, which Bridges and Pascoe (2014) argue supports structures of power.

Some of the participants in Australia clearly distanced themselves from what they perceived as traditional masculinity by positioning themselves as progressive, caring men. In their interviews they achieved this positioning through outlining the caring they did in their work lives and friendships. This caring was a positive development, yet it tended to be in the form of helping or caring on an ideological level. Examples of this included participants caring about politics and the environment, wanting to help people through their work, helping friends move house, loaning money to people or simply “being there” for friends. They did not face the messy, undervalued care obligations that usually befall women such as childcare or domestic work or under-paid, frontline care-sector work (Friedman 1993).

Caring was a choice for these men, and the care they performed was generally not temporally inconvenient for them. Furthermore, rather than renouncing hegemonic masculinity, they made use of discursive distancing and strategic borrowing, continuing to draw on a version of this closed, centre masculinity that was reformulated to surmount the changed requirements of the current day. They therefore reflected Bridges and Pascoe’s (2014) critique of hybrid

---

<sup>6</sup> However, as I established in chapter three, the margin is not just a site of repression but also one of resistance; in resistance, spaces of radical openness are created (hooks 2004a).



masculinities as perpetuating inequalities and obscuring this perpetuation rather than challenging structures of power, domination and inequality.

I begin exploring the continuation of this more closed, centre masculinity by presenting the distancing manoeuvres the men in Australia carried out in order to position themselves as different to “traditional” or “stereotypical” Australian men. I then analyse the hard work at least four of these participants invested into achieving muscular, normative masculine bodies. I finally consider the caring, to an extent, these participants in Australia spoke of in their work lives and friendships but also the limits of this caring. These aspects — distancing from protest masculinity, hard work for hard bodies and present but limited caring — paint a picture of some changes but also of the continuing influence of more closed, centre versions of masculinity.

### *Distancing from closed masculinity*

Contradictions and inconsistencies emerged in discourses of masculinity amongst the men in Australia. Six of them suggested they did not care or think about masculinity often. This was illustrated by phrases such as ‘it’s just not talked about’ (Toby) and ‘it’s something you just sort of do, I think, don’t you?’ (Ryan). Men in Australia like Toby and Ryan did not identify with masculinity or a male gender. They tended instead to think of themselves just as “me”, reflecting Meuser’s (2003) finding that while women are viewed as gendered, the men in his study had the privilege of experiencing themselves as non-gendered. Meuser (2003, p. 131) argues that in his research:

[t]he men were not able to answer the question about the meaning of being a man, because [they] had no experiences of difference that would enable them to observe themselves as gendered beings. [They] had no other perspective than the one of being a human.

Amongst the participants in my research, Joseph stated, for example, ‘I don’t think gender is relevant to me’, while Ryan argued that being a man ‘is not something I’m particularly sensitive to. I just feel like I’m me’.

However, when the topic of masculinity was raised with these men, all but Alan (who was not Australian but was living there) and Anthony were eager not to be associated with stereotypes of traditional Australian masculinity. Those who demonstrated this distancing painted a relatively consistent picture of “what it means to be a stereotypical man in Australia”. This was an image of heavy alcohol consumption, being a sports fan or “sports mad”, working out at the

gym in order to achieve a muscular body, treating women as sexual objects, being dominant and a leader, being strong or tough and not showing emotions. One participant added that in his regional Australian city, masculinity exhibited by conservative men involved providing and protecting.

With this picture of stereotypical or traditional masculinity, these participants were describing an Australian version of protest masculinity (Connell 2005). The participants in Australia distanced themselves from this protest masculinity by ridiculing it, and at times they extended their negative evaluations to the men they believed embodied protest masculinity. This reflected a similar pattern to the one discovered by Roberts (2012, p. 678) amongst working-class young men employed in the retail sector in England, who ‘disparaged the undesirable elements of masculinity that “other men” perceived to be appropriate’, such as working as a labourer.

In my study, Ryan, for example, suggested he had eschewed structures and expectations of masculinity despite conforming to ‘a number of male attributed elements’. However, he positioned these seemingly masculine attributes as different to those of “stereotypical” men, stating:

I think there are definitely structures or sort of expectations of maleness, and I think I’ve eschewed most of them. Like I have no desire to be a father, I just don’t see that as validating. I go to the gym, but I’m not pursuing some men’s health ideal. Like I go to the gym to be fit, and okay, I stay reasonably fit as a result of that. But I’m not like trying to sculpt myself into a Greek statue or anything like that. I don’t feel the pressure to do that. I don’t drink heavily, I’m extremely light weight [unable to drink large amounts of alcohol] actually.

Ryan also positioned his supposed typically masculine attributes as not the same as those of traditional men in relation to the time he had spent in the army. He distinguished himself as different from those he saw as unintelligent, heavy-drinking army men, resolutely positioning himself as “not like them”. He called men who did adhere to traits such as these ‘idiots, because it’s a fairly shallow kind of thing to aspire to’.

Similarly, Toby was involved in competitive martial arts, but spoke of the difference between “good eggs” in martial arts and the “bad eggs” attending his dojo with selfish intentions. Toby distanced himself from these ‘bad kind of people’ who he believed perpetuated violence for the wrong reasons and were naturally more aggressive, stating:

if you get a bad egg in amongst the group, someone who's going in there to learn this stuff for bad means, they don't really fit in, because everyone's there for good purposes. So yeah, those bad kind of people, they got a tendency to be more aggressive and violent.

Nathan said he and his friends all had 'a softer, gentler side', but admitted that he and a close male friend:

make fun of those guys [who are] macho [or] alpha ... purely because of their small mindedness. Actually it is a little bit because of the way they act, but purely because their way of thinking is outdated.

In ways such as these, Ryan, Toby and Nathan, but Joseph, Phillip and Evan too, soundly positioned themselves as different to the traditional men they saw as backward, stupid and "not like them".

### *Hard work for hard bodies*

Despite this distancing, at least five of these men in Australia in fact borrowed from this more traditional protest masculinity. A number, for example, enjoyed playing contact sport, some at quite a serious level. Alcohol was commonly an important component of their friendships with other men, and Ryan had even spent time in the army, a profession closely linked to closed expressions of violent, aggressive, centre masculinity. Yet one of the most visible signs of this borrowing from protest masculinity, or maintaining a link to more closed, centre forms of masculinity, was at the site of the body. At least three of these men, for example, regularly spent time at the gym and four to five were purposely large, muscular men. They had visibly invested considerable time, effort and work into crafting these hard, masculine bodies.

Participants living in Berlin made important observations about dictates surrounding appropriately hard, large bodies for men. Alex (Aus/Ber), for instance, spoke about the number of 'really massive' men in Australia. He believed that in Australia there was an insecurity for men 'seeking so desperately to identify themselves with masculinity', which drove the production of, and insistence on, those large bodies. Alex discussed football players in the Australian Football League (AFL) or rugby in Australia as masculine role models, stating 'people, I think, automatically without control, will look to these men that are big physical presences'. On the other hand, Alex described himself and his male friends in Australia as 'small bodies' without typically masculine appearances. However, Alex admitted that

sometimes when he saw a man who did conform to the hard bodied stereotype and expectation of masculine appearance, he could not escape the feeling of wanting to “be a real man”.

Grant (Aus/Ber) similarly labelled himself ‘scrawny’ in comparison to a man in Australia with whom he had had an altercation. Grant described this man as having a ‘drunk, thick, muscle body skull [and as] dumb. He had like the deepest voice. It was like the classic, big, dumb, fucking goofy brick head’. He later portrayed men such as this as ‘fucking brick headed, “wanna fight some dude, still getting laid tonight”’ kind of people. Grant, like Alex, felt that men in Australia placed a lot more importance on achieving large, muscular bodies than men in Berlin. He said:

in Australia so many people go to the gym. ‘Coz so many Australians *are* the big macho guy. Even the ones who are like “well, you don’t need to be”, even though they are (laughs) ... Here not as many people get ripped (laughs) ... Maybe it’s the convicts thing from ages ago. We’re just like “we don’t care”. It’s just “everything’s rough and that’s good enough!”

Bernd (German), reflecting on the German context, recounted that as a gay man there had been times in his life where he had invested everything, including his bodily bearing (*Körperhaltung*), into the project of being perceived as a “real man”. He explained:

there was nothing more important for me than to be a man. I know the feeling of wanting nothing more than that people would say “you’re a man, you’re a real man” (*ich kenne auch zum Beispiel in der Zeit in mein Leben wo es nichts wichtigeres für mich gab als Mann zu sein, ja? Ich kenne das Gefühl, nichts anderes eigentlich zu wollen als das Leute sagen „du bist ein Mann, du bist ein richtiger Mann“*).

Bernd, like Alex, felt acutely at times that he needed to have, or should have, a large, hard body in order to be a “real man”. Kevin (Aus/Ber), on the other hand, stated that he lacked concern for his appearance and emphasised that he never visited the gym. He contrasted this attitude with typical ideals of masculinity. Lars (German), however, was worried about his bodily comportment as a man. He pointed out that during his interview he was sitting with his legs crossed and worried that heterosexual ‘men don’t do this’.

Manni (German) felt that as a queer man it was important for safety reasons to maintain a masculine appearance, as I explore in depth in chapter six. Ashley (Aus/Ber) said that in Australia men, but also women, believed they needed to adhere to particular kinds of characteristics and body images. He suggested:

the female energy in Australia is so caught up on material, like it seems like it’s very much driven, like to be a female you need to have this materialistic, you need to be this big, you need

to have this kind of body. It's all very superficial, and exactly the same as on the male side. You need to be strong, you need to be this kind of image, this character, otherwise you're just not a man.

Felix (Aus/Ber) echoed this critique of bodily norms of femininity and masculinity in Australia. He reflected that when spending a night out in his home city in Australia:

all the girls are *dressed* as if they're going to a cocktail party. Just really short dresses, and exposing as much skin as they can. And they don't look comfortable! And the thing about the guys' side of things, like the whole stereotype, or the whole kind of game, felt like that kind of girl goes for the big, strong, muscular guy. You know, who wears a T-shirt that's a few sizes too small so, you know, he looks really strong. And it's up to the man to make the first move and to show that he's interested.

The issue of the body raised somewhat different implications for Will (Aus/Ber). Will spoke of his body as “fucked” as a result of having had cancer and chemotherapy when he was younger. He said ‘my body’s fucked from having chemotherapy [and] my kidneys are just fucking wrecked’. This raises the question of what it means for a man to have a body that is “fucked”, an embodied state usually attributed to women or sometimes subordinated men. Will himself pointed out that his “wrecked kidneys” meant he could not drink coffee. He also avoided alcohol for personal reasons and could not drink hot chocolate because he was vegan. The only option left for Will when catching up with friends, then, was to drink herbal tea. Will pointed out that drinking herbal tea is not seen as masculine or as ‘hip [or] cool, [qualities he felt were] wrapped up a little bit together [with masculinity]’. As I will argue in chapter six, Will in fact expressed much more open and fluid iterations of masculinity than many of the participants in this study, partly influenced by his experience of cancer.

These narratives from participants in Germany shine a light on the issue of male bodies and the significance of the hard bodies of at least four of the participants in Australia. As Bordo (1999) argues, bodies reveal both biology and cultural inscriptions, and since the end of the nineteenth century western men have been expected to be both cultured gentlemen and sexually “animalistic”. As Tanner, Maher and Fraser (2013) argue, men in the contemporary era face conflicting expectations of softer masculinities and hard bodies. The men in Australia were able to manoeuvre themselves into positions of progressive, modern men who treated women well and valued intellect rather than violence and domination by denigrating an Australian version of protest masculinity. Simultaneously, however, their significant investment in and work on their bodies enabled them to shape the hard, muscular bodies expected of young men. This body work, along with their involvement in other markers of more closed, centre

masculinities such as violent, competitive sport and frequent alcohol consumption with male friends, helped to facilitate their continued hold on a more closed, hegemonic version of masculinity.

*Care in work and friendships: balancing contradictory requirements*

Another way the men in Australia were able to manage the balancing act between hard bodies and softer masculinities in their interviews was through talk of their caring in certain aspects of their lives. They were eager to respond to the topic of care, and seven of them, again with the exception of Alan who was not from Australia but was living there, tended to emphasise caring in their lives to a greater extent than the men interviewed in Germany. The men in Australia spoke in more concrete terms and in more detail than other participants about care they performed or the ways in which they cared. As I discussed in chapter three, this was significant in terms of my original study questions and design. I had set out hoping to find instances of caring masculinity, and in Australia most of the men who responded to my call for participants were particularly interested in outlining the ways in which they cared. As I argue here, however, this caring generally fell into the categories of ideological care or helping and usually posed no temporal inconvenience to the men. Their caring was a choice, and while this choice was encouraging, it contrasted with the obligations that fall to women to undertake messy, under-valued, time costly care work (Friedman 1993).

Joseph, Nathan and Evan, for instance, told me they were working in or pursuing their current careers in order to improve life for others or make a positive impact. Joseph explained ‘I want to feel like what I’m doing is obviously not only motivating and pushing my own self-interest, but it actually has a positive impact on something’. Nathan suggested he connected his desire to help people to his career choices, stating:

I think I’ve always had a kind of inkling to help people in some regard. I guess that’s sort of been a job choice, or that I’ve been looking at going down career paths like nursing ... So I guess that’s always been a little bit of, maybe a calling.

Similarly, Evan was working in a care-sector profession in Australia and stated ‘I think I was probably attracted to a field where I can work with people’. Although Anthony was not employed, he played an active role as a volunteer because, he said, ‘I kind of felt selfish never really doing it before’. Being kind to people and helping them were important values for

Anthony. He explained ‘I find that very important, like from a morality standpoint and just in general, sort of doing what I feel is right’.

In terms of friendships, Joseph, Phillip and Nathan described caring for friends as “being there” or talking and listening to friends. Nathan said that catching up with a close friend regularly counted as care for him, stating:

I guess even being able to catch up with [friend’s name] on that regular basis is caring in a way ... I’m concerned about him and his life, and I want to be a part of that. So yeah I guess it is just that everyday discussion.

Though Nathan emphasised the “everyday discussion” in his friendship as care, listening and talking to friends for Joseph and Phillip usually occurred when something went wrong, such as a breakup with a girlfriend. For Phillip, caring could also involve going out for a beer with friends or just generally “hanging out” and being there for them.

Evan, Ryan and Toby, on the other hand, tended to deemphasise these emotional aspects of caring for their friends and focus on practical care. Evan and his circle of male friends, for example, could not express their emotions to one another. Instead, they demonstrated their feelings through material exchanges such as making or buying dinner for one another, bringing home beer, watching sport together or loaning each other money. Ryan professed a lack of patience for the emotional problems of his friends, preferring to help them in areas in which he believed they were deficient. As he put it:

I have short patience for a lot of situations in which friends might feel they should be cared for. Like you know, when I was in the army, sort of experiencing real hardship and then transitioning back to the civilian world and being confronted with, you know, first world problems. And a lot of the time my attitude is just like “suck it up, get over it, you can deal with this, there’s a lot more horrible things going on in the world”. So I think a lot of the time when you get a situation where you might sort of implement a regime of care, I just kind of go “I’m not doing it”. That being said, when I see something that I perceive as hardship I try to be as helpful as possible. So I tend to be very, I try to kind of make up for what I see as the flaws sometimes in my friends’ personalities and help them out in that regard ... I will often go out of my way to do that for people who I consider to be friends.

Ryan measured out the care he provided and tightly controlled who received it. This version of care Ryan recounted was a very bounded one, a highly regimented “care” that departs quite markedly from interdependent care as envisioned in the feminist ethic of care.

These iterations of care in friendships and work can be seen as ideological care (caring about, for example, politics, injustice, equality) or as helping (for instance, loaning money, helping

friends move house, helping others through work). In some instances, however, such as being there for friends or talking and listening, the care the participants in Australia performed moved to the emotional realm. However, this care was generally not the undervalued, messy care work carried out largely by women. For instance, none of the participants in Australia had any care-giving responsibilities towards dependents such as children, older parents or grandparents. Evan, furthermore, was working in a caring profession but was considering moving into management within that profession. As Huppatz and Goodwin (2013) suggest, men working in caring occupations such as this can draw on male or masculine gender capital and even feminine capital in order to gain managerial or more senior positions. In Pease's (2011) discussion of the profession of social work, he contends that while social work is a female-dominated profession, men dominate in the higher echelons, including in managerial positions.

The kinds of care these men in Australia performed also tended not to be temporally disruptive or inconvenient for them, with the exception of Anthony's volunteering work. Having a beer with friends, for example, was spoken of as care by some of the participants, but is also a pleasurable activity that participants often engaged in anyway in their social lives. For others, care was simultaneous with their everyday working lives, again not causing a temporal disruption. Furthermore, these men would have faced few repercussions if they ceased this caring, reflecting Friedman's (1993) argument that women are judged more harshly than men for abandoning caregiving responsibilities. Another side of this equation is the extra praise men receive when they decide to care. The care work the men I interviewed in Australia were doing therefore reflected the idea that caring is a choice for men but a moral imperative for women (Hanlon 2012).

It was encouraging that these men were doing this caring despite having few or no obligations to do so. Anthony in particular demonstrated a strong, seemingly sincere commitment to his values of being kind and helping others through his volunteering, and he was unconcerned with working on a hard, masculine body. Nathan, furthermore, explicitly labelled himself a feminist, though he was one of the participants who worked hard to craft a strong, muscular body and played a centre, contact sport (Messner 2002). However, despite the caring this group of men said they performed, most remained unaware of privileges surrounding masculinity and care work. In chapter six I will show that an interplay of mobility of location and re-evaluation of the importance of career to life enabled Australian men who had moved to Berlin to move towards more open, fluid expressions of masculinity. However, participants in Australia



positioning themselves as caring men again meant placing themselves in contradistinction to other men they perceived to be stupid or traditional. This can be seen as another way in which they attempted to fulfil the requirements to work on hard bodies while concurrently expressing “softer” masculinities.

### *Hegemonic masculinity reformulated*

These contradictory requirements for men to be both hard and caring, highlighted by Bordo (1999) and Tanner, Maher and Fraser (2013), coalesced for several of the young men in Australia at the site of the body. These participants disparaged the protest masculinity emphasis on gym culture, muscular bodies, physical strength, alcohol and violence, yet strategically borrowed from this culture by working on and maintaining large, muscular bodies themselves. They justified these bodies by positioning themselves as “not like those other, stereotypically masculine men” in an act of discursive distancing (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). In doing so, they could position themselves as gentlemen of education and culture who cared about the world and their friends, and they could inscribe values of the strong, virile, “animalistic” man into their flesh and bone (Bordo 1999). These processes of distancing yet borrowing are similar to Hopkins’ (2006, p. 341) finding of ‘contradictory masculine subject positions’ amongst young Muslim men in Scotland who, for example, adopted certain sexist attitudes or stereotypes, yet distanced themselves from patriarchal ideals and promoted equality between women and men.

Balancing hard bodies with the requirements of softer masculinity, men in Australia in this research spoke of the ideological or helping care they did in their friendships and work lives. These men had the autonomy to be situated as caring, progressive men, but also to move away from these identities when it suited. They retained the privilege of mobility in, out of and between spaces of progressiveness or traditionality, either disavowing or drawing on closed, hegemonic masculinity as needed. Despite this ability to move between expressions of masculinity, these men in Australia largely remained in the closed centre. As the theory of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 2005) suggests, and as Bridges and Pascoe (2014) illustrate through Demetriou’s (2001) concept of dialectical pragmatism, hegemonic masculinity can shift and change in the face of challenges in order to maintain its hegemony. Amongst the largely white, middle-class, heterosexual participants living in Australia in this research, shifts had taken place, but hegemonic masculinity retained its legitimacy and these men their

privilege and autonomy. As Bridges and Pascoe (2014) suggest of such hybrid masculinities, change had occurred, but inequalities persisted.

### **Sameness and difference: German men on gender equality**

In certain ways I found notable windows of potentiality amongst the German men interviewed in Berlin for the beginnings of movement towards openness, as I explore in chapter six. Nevertheless, a discourse of difference between men and women held currency for several of these German participants. This difference was not described in terms of a gender equitable notion of men and women as “different but equal”, nor did it concern women’s supposed role as mothers, as might be expected. Rather, the German men who spoke of this difference drew on discourses of women as ruled by emotions and unsuited to career, suggesting a rather closed relationship for these men to gender equality and women in Germany. Complicating these ideas of difference, however, was the fact that German participants, including those who spoke of differences between men and women, also asserted that women and men were the same, or very similar. Most of the German men suggested they believed in gender equality and supported the influence of the women’s movement in Germany, and four stated directly that they saw very few differences between men and women.

This contradiction for some of the German participants between seeing women and men as the same, but also as different, was striking yet unexplained in their interviews. The incongruity can perhaps partly be clarified by Sven’s (German) admission, explored in depth in this section, that in Germany the subject of difference between women and men is a sensitive one. Still, four of the German participants drew on discourses informed by much older, essentialist ideas of emotional women, belying their assertions of the sameness of women and men in Germany. The movement highlighted in these discourses was the drawing of these German participants back towards the closed centre. This sat alongside the beginnings of movement towards greater openness that I explore in chapter six. I begin this section by outlining the German participants’ thoughts on gender equality and their assertions of the sameness of women and men. I then consider how four of the German men continued to believe in differences that perpetuated an idea of separate and unequal roles for men and women.

### *Men, women and gender equality in Germany*

The German participants were able to speak about the state of gender affairs in Germany and were more acquainted with debates and issues surrounding gender than their counterparts in Australia. In their discussions of gender in Germany, the German participants often asserted that there were very few differences between men and women, and that Germany, or at least Berlin, was “ahead of the game” in terms of gender equality. Bernd, for example, believed a dialogue was taking place around questions of gender and tackling inequality in Germany because the women’s movement had set this firmly on the agenda. He felt the presence of this dialogue set Germany apart from many other countries.

Torsten, who had holidayed in Australia, found Australia ‘way more backward’ than Germany in terms of gender issues and felt that ‘women in Germany are more emancipated. And the same goes for men. In Germany they are more, yeah, it’s already more balanced’. Reflecting on the purported normativity of ideals of gender equality in Germany, Frank said he had been raised by a feminist mother and therefore would always ‘consider the position of the woman’ without having to think about it. Frank also echoed the discourse of sameness between men and women when he stated ‘don’t think there’s so much difference between a man and a woman’. As explored further in chapter six, Sebastian thought that in more conservative locations in Germany, or in other countries he had visited, distinctions were made more clearly between men and women. He suggested that he, however, found it hard to distinguish what was “manly” and was less likely to differentiate between men and women. Martin also said that men and women were ‘not so different anymore [and] we also see a lot of successful women outside there, and successful men. Think we can both do what we want with our lives’.

Sven’s narratives were significant in that he delved deeper into these understandings of men and women as the same in Germany by suggesting that although sameness was the proper discourse to adopt in Germany, it was not in fact what many men really believed. In contrast to Bernd, who believed dialogue around gender was taking place in Germany, Sven felt strongly that in Germany talking about differences between men and women was a sensitive topic. He explained:

in Germany it’s like a big topic. If you say it out loud people will say “woah, you cannot say this” ... it’s hard to say something like this in Germany, and people are really sensitive about this topic, especially women.

Sven later reiterated:

if you say it out loud [that men and women are different], some people will get really angry at you. You have to be really sensitive to say it, you know? ‘Coz yeah, this is a big thing.

Sven pointed out, however, that despite this sensitivity in Germany, inequalities between men and women persisted. He suggested, for example, that men in Germany were still viewed as the primary breadwinners, stating ‘there is still this kind of role in [people’s] heads that the man is earning money and the woman is like, I don’t know. It’s still there you know?’.

### *Women as different but not equal*

Despite these German participants generally subscribing to a discourse of men and women in Germany as the same, or as not very different, some (but not all) also adopted the idea that men and women’s roles, and men and women themselves, were very different. These differences were most often perceived in relation to the world of work, where the participants viewed men as more career oriented than women or as more suited to breadwinning. The men who outlined supposed differences drew on essentialist ideas about women as controlled by emotions. I argue these discourses of difference cannot be viewed in a framework of gender equity, or of men and women as “different but equal”. Rather, their narratives of difference perpetuated ideas of women as inferior to men.

Sebastian, for example, despite suggesting he found it hard to distinguish what was “manly” or not, clearly believed in differences between men and women in terms of their suitability for career. He stated:

I think this whole career thing is a man’s thing. Or perhaps men place more value on it than women, that could also be the case (*dieses ganze karriere Ding ist, glaube ich, schon viel Männersache. Oder vielleicht legen Männer auch mehr Wert auf als Frauen, das könnte aber auch sein*).

He believed some of the gender wage gap could be explained by men’s greater willingness to negotiate higher salaries, while women, he suggested, ‘tend to be more like “ah I’m going to be more careful”’ (*Frauen [sind] tendenziell jedenfalls eher so „ah, ich bin eher vorsichtig“*).

Though Martin believed there were few differences between men and women in the current period, he admitted his girlfriend was the one who did the cooking in their relationship. After

Martin stated that men and women can both do as they please, the following exchange took place:

Martin: I enjoy my girl being strong and working hard.

Karla: You don't expect her to be like, cooking dinner or? (Laughs).

Martin: No, no I don't so much. (Laughing) She still does it because she likes to bake.

Martin furthermore suggested that a man should stand up for and protect his girlfriend. Normative roles around housework and protecting therefore seemed to continue in his relationship with his girlfriend. Furthermore, he did not seem to problematise the fact that a love of baking does not necessarily equate to a love of cooking dinner.

Unlike other participants, Derrick did not follow the convention of stating that men and women in Germany are the same. Instead, he clearly drew distinctions between the two. For example, he saw being a man as:

sort of a differentiation from women [and stated] I like being a man. It certainly has some advantages. And I don't have any problem with being a man. No problem.

Derrick believed drinking alcohol competitively with friends was part of the experience of being a man and was something men in Germany excluded women from. He explained:

when we drink in Germany we often make a competition out of it. And we don't normally compete with girls, because if you compete with girls it's not the manly condition. If you lose then it's even worse, so you try to avoid that. But drinking is actually part of the man experience. You're only considered real friends if you've had a night of drinking together, you know?

Derrick's ideas about drinking with friends intersected with Tomsen's (2008) findings in the Australian context that drinking offered his young participants opportunities for socialisation and friendship between men.

Derrick suggested that girlfriends might be able to integrate into his close circle of male friends, but could never become full members of the group. He was also very surprised by, and very dismissive of, the stereotype I raised that women's friendships are seen as stronger than men's. He responded by asking:

who is saying that? Because I think it's, I mean I would say it's completely different. 'Coz men have like a bro code, you know? [He added] I don't have an example where I see a friendship between women that is as close as the friendship I experience.

When I explained the stereotype that women have closer, more emotional friendships while men's friendships are more activity based, Derrick answered 'really?! I don't know, but I think in Germany most people, I mean I guess men, see it on the contrary'.

Derrick saw men's friendships as stronger than women's and suggested that men do not betray their friends, while women are more likely to do so. He believed that women's friendships end more easily as women are quicker to fight, while men 'don't tend to make so many emotional problems'. He later emphasised again how strongly he disagreed with the idea that women's friendships are stronger than men's, stating:

I mean you would be *offended*, I mean, if you would say men can't have close friends. Everyone I know would be offended by that statement! Because it's so, I mean it's seriously ridiculous, from my point of view.

Derrick believed in clear differences between men and women, particularly in relation to their capacity for friendship. In positioning men's friendships as stronger than women's, Derrick drew on very old ideas, explored and problematised by Blatterer (2015), that women are incapable of true friendship. Furthermore, although Derrick stated that the idea of women's friendships as stronger than men's was 'seriously ridiculous', he did not notice that stating the opposite, as he did, might be similarly problematic.

Lars, by comparison, found the suggestion that men's friendships are stronger than women's 'very strange'. He said 'I think women have usually the closer friendships', but he also agreed with the idea that women are more "bitchy". He said:

I feel that women, they talk more behind each other's backs ... I definitely have the feeling that men don't hang out that much together, but I guess they could be more honest in their friendships.

Roseneil (2006) argues that this contemporary view of women as more "bitchy" or "catty" towards one another than men is a surviving artefact of the old idea that true friendship between women cannot exist.

Sven, who felt that talking about differences between women and men in Germany was a sensitive subject, outlined a series of differences he himself perceived between men and women. He preferred to "hang out" with male friends, for example, because he found that 'guys for me are always, like, more relaxed'. Sven felt that women are 'quite a bit more emotional' and less settled than men. Sven summarised this perceived emotional, unsettled state of women with a metaphor of a ship on an ocean:

it's my imagination that the female part is like a, I was once reading it you know? It's like the female part is like the ocean, you know? And it's like, I don't know, it's like raging sometimes,

sometimes it's really quiet. And the man is like the ship, you know? It's like, always has a direction and has a purpose.

Bordo (1999) points out a similar metaphor of women as waves in John Gray's (1992) pop psychology book *Men are from Mars, women are from Venus*. Gray, writes Bordo (1999, p. 230), describes women as 'like waves (our self-esteem naturally rises, falls, and then rises again, like a tide obeying the moon)'.

Continuing from his similes of women as like the ocean and men as like ships, Sven believed that men have more purpose in life, while 'women are more free' in certain respects. Sven explained:

men know more where they belong in life, I have the feeling. They know they have to work someday, they know they have to, I don't know, perhaps raise a family. They know that everything, they can achieve it. With women, I think they do not know sometimes where they belong. Sometimes they don't know if they wanna have a career or do what they love. Like men always, most of them I know, choose more something that brings like money or so on.

Sven believed it is harder for women to 'define themselves' because of the range of options available to them, while men 'know where they have to go'. He explained that while women:

do not really know where they want to be right now, for men it's just clear from here. They know what they have to do, you know? [He believed] women are more, can I say, they can be more happy than men, you know? They have more joy sometimes I think. Men are just like chilled, and they are not excited about anything sometimes.

These rather closed ideas expressed by Sven about the differences between men and women rehashed notions of men as more suited to career than women, women as directionless and less rational than men and men as commanding, purposeful and in control compared to women as more driven by and connected to emotions. Sven also inadvertently pointed to continuing prohibitions against men expressing emotion, in this case joy or excitability, and to continuing beliefs that the correct role for men in Germany is that of the breadwinner. Sven did not necessarily suggest that these perceived differences stemmed from any biological or essential difference between men and women, though the discourses of difference he drew upon are grounded in essentialist thought. He wondered instead whether this difference 'comes perhaps from society, you know? How you're raised up'. Regardless, Sven suggested there were different roles for men and women in Germany, in particular in relation to career or work and to an extent as a result of the supposed influence of women's emotions.

On the other hand, as I explore in chapter six, windows of opportunity for more open, fluid conceptions of masculinity could be found amongst the German participants. As Sven spoke in his interview about his thoughts and feelings around men, women and difference in Germany, he came to notice that his ideas were problematic. He confessed it was not easy to answer questions about these issues, but ‘in general actually it’s a good question. It’s a really good question I wasn’t asking myself before’. He later continued:

it’s really interesting, because I also recognise right now when you asked this question how (pauses), that I have like another role in my head for women. And that’s I think not fair. It’s like, perhaps not fair to say this, you know? I don’t know if it’s fair to, or if I should think about this, whether it’s fair or not.

The process of talking and thinking about his beliefs about men and women, something he suggested was not the norm in Germany, seemed to help Sven deconstruct his essentialist notions to an extent.

Despite three of the German men suggesting that men and women in Germany are largely the same, narratives from four of these men about differences between men and women point to continuing closed ideas about gender relations. They saw women as ruled by and confined to their emotions in friendships or career, drawing on older, essentialist ideas about women’s roles and capabilities. It might be argued that these discourses could be seen in terms of gender equity as equal respect for different roles of men and women. However, the rather exclusionary and closed way these men spoke about women suggested this idea of equal respect for different roles might not be an appropriate framing for these discourses. Rather, I suggest this talk of difference perpetuated an idea of women as inferior to men in realms such as work and friendships. Sven’s realisation about the unfairness of his ideas of difference demonstrates that some windows of potentiality existed amongst these German participants for more open forms of masculinity, and these possibilities will be explored in chapter six. In terms of their beliefs about differences between men and women, though, closed notions about men, women and gender equality continued for several of the German men. This reflected the drawing of these men back towards the closed centre.

### **Masculinity, femininity and gay men in Berlin**

For Australian men in Berlin, closed, centre expressions of masculinity pertained particularly to the topic of gay men, which was raised surprisingly often by these participants. The



frequency with which the topic of homosexuality and insecurities around it arose in the interviews with the Australian men in Berlin suggests it was a salient issue for them. Five of participants in Berlin remarked on how visible gay people were in Berlin. All five stated that they thought this visibility was good, or at least that they had “no problem” with gay men. In this sense they were making a gesture towards inclusive masculinity (Anderson 2009), where men of the centre become at least outwardly more willing to include gay men and adopt practices associated with them. Most of these participants accepted gay men more broadly, but a deeper reading of their narratives suggests that more closed, centre ideas of hegemonic masculinity pertaining to femininity, masculinity and homosexuality continued for these participants.

In particular, they seemed to worry that they themselves might be mistaken as gay. According to these men, mistakenly being perceived as gay was connected to appearing or being feminine. Thus, the insecurity I discovered amongst these Australian men in Berlin pertained to being seen as “feminine”, and therefore as “un-masculine”, and therefore being misidentified as gay. While they demonstrated inclusivity towards gay men rather than homophobia, they were uncomfortable with the challenge ideas about male homosexuality appeared to present to their own identities as men. In this section I look at how several Australian participants in Berlin noted the visibility of gay people in the city, equated male homosexuality with femininity and expressed discomfort at the idea of being seen as gay themselves. As I explore in chapter six, these Australian men of the centre living in Berlin were those who were moving most significantly towards increased openness of masculinities. However, like the German participants considered previously, here I unpack the simultaneous pull of the centre for these Australian men and the continuation of more closed, centre expressions of masculinity.

#### *Gay men as feminine, straight men as masculine*

Alex’s narratives reveal much about the complex attitudes and anxieties of the Australian participants in Berlin in relation to homosexuality. Alex noted the visibility and size of the gay community in Berlin, asserting that he found this ‘great’. He was questioning his own sexuality and seemed genuine in his acceptance of gay people. As an example of this acceptance, he angrily narrated his somewhat incorrect recollection of an online video clip he had seen of the

then Prime Minister of Australia, Tony Abbott. Alex said that in this video, Abbott responded to a question from a man about the topic of marriage equality by saying:

how about we have a question from a bloke? So looking at the Prime Minister at the very top, our *Prime Minister* is saying “how about a question from a bloke?” It’s really showing that someone who’s gay is therefore associated not with masculinity.

It does not matter here that Alex’s recollection of the video was somewhat incorrect. What is important is what this story reveals about Alex’s views on gay men, firstly that they are treated badly, but secondly that they are commonly perceived by others as un-masculine.

Alex, however, spoke very honestly about the anxiety he and other men had around being seen as gay if they demonstrated any behaviours perceived to be “feminine”, such as being open and talking about feelings and emotions. As Alex put it, ‘I think it’s more the association with not being masculine maybe. Associated with maybe, you being feminine. Being feminine applied to a man equals “gay”’. He went on to discuss the thought process around this for him and other men in light of the fact that he did value being open about feelings and emotions. He explained:

that goes through my head a lot. Am I being gay? Am I, am I gay!? Hey shit, I can’t relate to any other men out there. Woah, you know what that means? I’m gay, right? I think that goes through not just my head, but I think it goes through a lot of guys’ heads when they’re talking to another guy. It’s like, “don’t be gay, don’t be feminine, don’t”, you know?

Alex himself was questioning his (hetero)sexuality at the time of his interview, so that he had these worries particularly highlights the exclusionary strength of the notion that a feminine man must be gay. Even as a man who felt he might have been somewhat gay, Alex had to be concerned with not being perceived as such.

Shane’s narratives too conveyed worry around being perceived as gay. Shane, again rather candidly, spoke of men supposedly being naturally ‘protective of their sexuality. In terms of they’re very like, “oh I can’t say anything that’s gonna make me perceived to be weak”’. Shane affirmed the idea of being seen as weak as a threat to perceived (hetero)sexuality, again connecting a supposedly feminine trait (weakness) with being seen as un-masculine and therefore gay. Shane made this statement some way into his interview, once trust and familiarity had been established. He then admitted that despite him being ‘a very open sort of guy’, my question ‘what is your sexuality?’ at the beginning of the interview had elicited some discomfort for him. He told me:

it's even like, you know, I hesitated when you, like when you said that [referring to the question about sexuality]. Having, really not, I have no problem with gay people whatsoever. Especially in Germany, like I mean it's in your face everywhere. But yeah, just still, you still get that like [Shane makes a gesture of hesitation or discomfort].

In explaining his discomfort around the topic of homosexuality, Shane emphasised he had 'no problem' with gay people. As did other participants, Shane demonstrated the double movement of outwardly suggesting an appropriate attitude of inclusivity towards gay men, yet feeling worried that he himself would be seen as gay. Shane's words 'it's in your face everywhere' further highlighted some uneasiness with homosexuality. This statement suggested that Shane felt "bombarded" with homosexuality in Berlin, a perceived incursion that goes against sensibilities in Australia such as "I don't care what someone does, so long as they do it in private/don't try to impose it on me".

Ashley was one of the very few participants across all three groups to identify as gay. Yet even he made connections between femininity and gay men, in his case in relation to having finally been able to make '*straight* male friends' in Berlin. He said:

the male friends that I was kind of having in Australia are a little bit more, like they're either super feminine or they were like, gay. And now it's just interesting that straight male friends are also, yeah. To have like, proper guy friends. And I realised I'm actually lacking that kind of like, *guy* friend.

Ashley identified two groups: heterosexual, "proper guy" men and feminine or gay men. He also believed that men in Germany had become too feminine, as will be explored in chapter five, and he told me that because of this, in Berlin 'it's even difficult for me to distinguish who's straight and who's gay. The masculinity is so, so *lacking*'. As I explore in more depth in chapter six, Ashley's upbringing in a conservative part of Australia and his struggles to rid himself of conservative thinking might have had a role to play in his discourses equating male homosexuality and femininity.

Jason was another participant who equated femininity and gay men. He stated:

what does it mean to be a man? I think it still holds true, the whole, you know, you're strong, you're the protector. The feminine side of the relationship, whether it's a woman *or* I guess a gay, more *female* partner, should feel really protected and safe.

Here Jason drew on a heteronormative idea that couples, even same sex ones, consist of a "masculine" male and a "feminine" other. He also spoke about the visibility of gay men in Berlin, especially in comparison to Australia, stating:

I think Australia's probably the same, but maybe it's just not as socially acceptable. And what I mean by that is, I've never been hit on by more guys in my *life* than coming here. And it's just normal here. Like so, so normal.

Jason described this normalisation of gay men in Berlin as 'pretty cool', joking that Berlin might be 'more advanced! More evolved' than Australia.

Nevertheless, Jason later told a story that belied a wholly comfortable attitude towards gay men. His story was about going clubbing in Berlin with some male friends and acquaintances. Of one of these acquaintances, Jason said he 'would've thought this bloke's pretty blokey'. This "blokey bloke", however, told Jason he had "hooked up" with a man the weekend before. Jason explained his reaction as follows:

Jason: He just said it so casually! I was like "holy shit" I, I. He's like definitely not gay this guy, like he's into girls, and I was like that just doesn't get said in Australia. Like aw, okay. And I felt, I actually felt, I was like er!/? This bloke's hitting on me! (Laughs).

Karla: Maybe he was.

Jason: (Laughing) He kept following me around and I was like ah. Oh well, whatever. Just like, take it as a compliment.

Jason seemed both confronted and surprised by this event and uncomfortable at the thought that a man's sexual attentions might have been directed towards him. Again for Jason, the broad idea of gay men in Berlin seemed to be acceptable, but the directing of homosexual desire towards Jason, or the suggestion that Jason might in fact have wanted to "hook up" with a man, caused him discomfort.

Kevin was yet another Australian participant to point out the visibility of gay people in Berlin. He distinguished between different districts in Berlin, first saying that in the suburb of Neukölln it was common to see Turkish men holding hands. He said this 'doesn't mean they're gay, it's just because they're Turkish'. Kevin then spoke of the "gay districts" in Berlin, saying:

then you've got the districts where it *is* the gay district and there's, you know, gays everywhere, and they're friendly and happy and stuff like that. [And] there's a lot of gay people here in Berlin, and people are very open and cool about it. Which is fantastic *I* think.

Like other participants, Kevin stated that the visibility and number of gay people in Berlin was positive. Yet similarly to Shane, statements of Kevin's such as 'gays everywhere' somewhat belie an entirely inclusive set of beliefs around homosexuality.

Kevin suggested that because he had grown up around women and had not had a male father figure, a notion that will be explored in the following section of this chapter, he 'got a lot of

shit at school, you know? Being called gay'. Again here, male homosexuality was equated with femininity and was posed in a negative light. However, as with other topics and issues explored throughout this thesis, it was difficult to clearly categorise Kevin's narratives of masculinity as open or closed or to locate him on the margin–centre schema. There were no clear indicators in his interview that Kevin did feel the discomfort around homosexuality that I have attributed to him here and that was demonstrated by several other Australian participants in Berlin. Nevertheless, even if he did not feel this discomfort, he did still note the visibility of gay people in Berlin and confirmed the salience of this topic based on how often it was raised by Australia participants in Berlin.

Felix did not comment on gay men in Berlin specifically, but he picked up on the assumed connection between femininity, male homosexuality and masculinity. He felt that in Australia men who did not fit into dictates of hegemonic masculinity, such as himself, were perceived as:

*this kind of man. And usually [this] kind of man is associated with, if you're not a man man, then either you're a weak man, you're an effeminate man or homosexual. But in the sense that like a homo–, being homosexual's not cool. It's not meant to be a man.*

Four of the Australian participants in Berlin went against the tendencies to express discomfort around homosexuality and to equate gay men with femininity. Unlike most of this group of participants, Will, Xavier and Grant did not bring up the topic of homosexuality at all. Christopher, who I had met before the interview, was surprised that I did not know he was heterosexual but was not uncomfortable about this ambiguity. He spoke about gay men respectfully and without drawing on discriminatory or exclusionary discourses or modes of speech. Christopher had been in Berlin much longer than any of the other Australian participants interviewed there, and the full significance of this for leading to a more open, fluid expression of masculinity is explored in chapter six. This more open masculinity fostered in a diverse, open city like Berlin with its visibility of gay people offers a possible insight into why Christopher did not demonstrate discomfort around the topic of homosexuality like some of the other Australians in Berlin.

### *Homosexuality and the continuing influence of closed masculinity*

The men who demonstrated discomfort around the topic of gay men and who linked femininity and male homosexuality were nevertheless careful to confirm that at the very least they “had no problem” with homosexuality, or that they found the visibility of gay people in Berlin good. These participants appropriately subscribed to behaviours of progressive, modern men and to ideals of inclusivity and diversity expected in a place like Berlin. In this way they mapped onto Anderson’s (2009) concept of inclusive masculinity. However, their discomfort at the suggestion of homosexuality applied to them was apparent in their stories and in the ways they narrated these. I suggest that these men understood that inclusivity was required of them in the context in which they found themselves, but was not entirely what they felt.

Anderson (2009, p. 98, original emphasis) argues that one indicator of a culture of inclusive masculinity might be that men ‘are *more* willing to engage in activities or display behaviors that were once stigmatized as feminine’. At least on this indicator, inclusion of gay men and their practices into the centre by the Australian men I interviewed in Berlin seemed to be somewhat skin deep. Rather, I suggest that more closed ideas of femininity, masculinity and homosexuality, closer in line with hegemonic masculinity than a conception of inclusive or caring masculinity, continued amongst these men in relation to the topic of gay men. This potentially mapped onto Sedgwick’s (2008) consideration of the fear of one’s potential for homosexual desire as a structuring force of homosocial bonds between men. The issue of homosexuality was one that revealed the pull of the centre for several of these Australian participants in Berlin as they demonstrated expressions of more closed, centre masculinities. On the other hand, as I explore in chapter six, these were the men amongst whom I found some of the most significant movements towards more open expressions of masculinity.

### **Fathers**

The double movement of participants suggesting more forward-thinking attitudes while continuing to draw on closed, centre narratives of masculinity explored throughout this chapter so far was set against stories from across all three groups of participants about fathers. 17 of the 28 participants offered narratives about fathers. The frequency of this topic suggests it was an especially relevant one, particularly as it was not part of the interview schedule. As I will

demonstrate in more detail in chapter six, changes were occurring amongst the participants as some moved towards more fluid, open expressions of masculinity. However, in most cases their fathers represented, at least in the participants' narratives, more traditional, closed, centre conceptions of masculinity typically associated with hegemonic masculinity. For some participants, the inability to have closer relationships with their fathers was a source of disappointment in their lives. Several also spoke of wishing their fathers would be better male role models.

While participants sometimes talked about their mothers, it was usually in a more cursory manner. They saw their relationships, or lack of relationships, with their fathers as much more important for shaping the kind of men they were at the time of their interviews. Here, I explore narratives from participants about their fathers as emotionally distant and closed off and as (usually poor) role models for their sons. I then consider participants who spoke of good relationships with their fathers. Two of these participants, however, still depicted their fathers as somewhat distant. The picture of closed, centre masculinity amongst fathers I paint throughout this section provides a backdrop to the expressions of closed, centre masculinity amongst participants already explored in this chapter.

### *Fathers as emotionally closed*

Nine participants spoke about their fathers' emotional distance or difficulties, which were often sources of sadness for these participants. Alex (Aus/Ber), for example, felt he was 'left wanting' with his father. He emotively highlighted desiring more communication, closeness and affection from his father, saying:

I want him to say "I love you". I wanna get to know him, I wanna talk about life, philosophy and ontology, but he's a simple guy. My mum said to me "dad doesn't talk to you because he feels he can't". And that's really sad ... If we do talk, we talk about the weather. And that's great! Just every little morsel that I get, I'm like, "I want to talk". There's so much *more*, I want that connection, I really want to get what I want, and what I need ... my relationship with my dad, I want more from it. We don't talk that much, I want to talk more. I want to be more affectionate, I want to spend more time together, I want to connect on a much deeper level than I can. It's just really sad.

Alex desperately wanted to connect more deeply with his father, emphasising 'in my relationship between my dad and me, he was inaccessible. I don't think he wanted to be accessible'.

Felix (Aus/Ber) spoke of wanting to connect with his father and discuss what he had learned in Berlin about self-love, something he thought his father had trouble with. Felix said:

recently I've had this urge to reach out to my dad and to talk with him about *his* relationship with himself, and what's going on with him ... I talked with him the other day, and I just said "hey, I'd like to talk to you about this stuff". And he was like "wow, okay, this is not an area I, you know, have all my strengths in". And this is part of the reason why I wanted to talk to him. I don't want to talk to him as his son, I want to talk to him as someone who cares about him, as a person. And I want to share some of the things I've realised for myself. And maybe he can get some benefit from that and care for himself a bit more.

Both Jason (Aus/Ber) and Manni (German) emphasised that they wanted to avoid becoming closed off like their fathers, something they noticed particularly in their fathers' lack of friends. Jason explained that despite his father's success in life:

he has not many friends. I would say almost none. He does, but he'll *never ever* pick up the phone just to have a chat with someone and see how *they* are. It's *only* ever if he wants something. I observe that and I'm just like "woah, no, that's not for me".

In light of his father's behaviour, Jason said 'I guess I made a conscious decision a long time ago just to give people a call! If you're not doing anything. Just to chat!'

Similar to Jason, Manni (German) admitted that his father was:

terribly afraid of people. Where like, every other person is a potential danger ... And I recently talked with him about retirement, like "what do you want to do when you retire?" ... And he was like, you know, he'd be happy to retire and not see any people anymore and just be by himself.

Manni described his father's reclusiveness as 'terrifying', emphasising the contrast to himself: 'I'm a fucking social being, I want to have people around me all the time. So I'm more social'.

Manni also spoke about his father's emotional distance, particularly highlighted in a story he told about his father standing in the way of an experience Manni had worked hard to organise.

Manni described this as:

heartbreaking. Because I mean, I was investing, basically I tried for years to like, get this thing set up. And my dad was like "I never even knew you wanted that". I was like, "I did stuff for *years!*" You know?

Here Manni expressed the frustration and even "heartbreak" that resulted from his father's distance from Manni's life. However, Manni said that more recently he had become a support person for his father. Manni explained:



nowadays I'm there for my dad ... And I think I'm maybe one of the few people my dad can talk to. My dad cried in front of me, you know? Which he never did in the past.

The emotional distance between Manni and his father seemed to have lessened over time, with the roles between father and son becoming somewhat inverted.

Phillip (Australian) was another participant who said his father did not have many friends. He described his relationship with his father by saying 'we don't have a great friendship or anything'. Phillip's father had a long-term illness, and Phillip said:

I'm always busy, and he's never doing anything that interests me, or that, I'm doing that interests him. We don't share that, and I'm always too busy to be doing stuff with him. [My father] spends his life on the phone or on Facebook trying to find some form of human communication because he hasn't been in the outside world for years because he's been sick. He doesn't go anywhere.

This rather sad portrayal of Phillip's father does not conjure up ideals of strong, powerful hegemonic masculinity, but it does demonstrate another distant relationship between father and son.

Torsten (German) described being the mediator between his brother and his father, who would 'clash. And I was usually the one who would go step inbetween'. Meanwhile, Anthony (Australian) described his father as 'a little bit of a gossip', saying:

anything I told him would probably get related to others. Not that that bothers me too much, but it's just the fact that obviously I feel that anything I said to him wouldn't exactly be private, or I probably at this point wouldn't trust his advice.

Anthony therefore described a more closed relationship to his father and stated that this was a reason he did not rely on his parents for help. Christopher (Aus/Ber) also spoke of the emotional distance between him and his father. He said 'I don't think my family is very expressive' and told me that whenever he and his father met, 'he always goes to shake my hand, still!' Christopher felt that his family's inexpressiveness had in turn made him inexpressive. He said 'I guess that's something about me as well, because I've grown up like, in that'. Nonetheless, Christopher said that whenever his father tried to shake his hand, 'I always hug him'.

Finally, the identity of Kevin's biological father was unknown. Nevertheless, two men had played the role of 'father figure' to him throughout his life. Kevin disclosed that one of these men:

used to physically and mentally abuse me. In terms of, so, hitting me and smacking me and all that kind of stuff. But it was more the mental abuse, you know? Mocking me, putting me down,

things he would say when my mum wasn't around. And I'd tell my mum this shit was happening, mum didn't believe me. And I was *so* angry as a kid growing up to my mum, because she never believed *me*.

Kevin had an improved relationship with his other father figure, who he referred to in his interview as 'my dad'. Kevin spoke of the possibility of a paternity test to find out who his biological father was, but was not interested in this at the time of his interview because:

for me it wouldn't change a thing, you know? Whether ... my dad is my dad or not, you know? I am who I am. And it doesn't change anything. It doesn't change a *thing* of who I am, so I just don't see the importance of it at all ... it's not gonna change anything, so why bother?

In summary, one of Kevin's father figures had been abusive, while the other had been closer to Kevin. However, as explored in the next section, Kevin felt that he had predominantly spent his youth without a male role model.

### *Fathers as role models*

This idea of fathers as role models was brought up by Kevin and four other participants. Some of these men wished their fathers could be better male role models to their sons, though others spoke about their fathers as good role models. Derrick (German) said he loved his parents but felt he was very different to his father, whose work Derrick said was 'not the kind of stuff I can do. Or want to do'. Alex (Aus/Ber), along with seeing his father as very emotionally closed off as explored formerly, said his father was 'not a very masculine man, like he's not a hugely significant male identified presence physically'. Alex, however, placed his father in a typically masculine role, explaining:

the way I *see* him and my *perception* of him is that I put *him* in the role of being responsible, I put him in the role of taking charge.

As I will explore in chapter five, Alex felt that his father therefore ought to have initiated him into masculinity, and blamed his difficulty with identifying as a man partly on his relationship with his father. Alex said of his father 'I think to bring me up, I need him to come back down and pull me up'.

Alex further expressed his desire for an initiation into masculinity by speaking of 'tribes in the world doing initiation [into] masculinity to say "right, after tonight you're a man". I think we don't have that anymore, do we? Especially in the West'. Alex again emphasised his wish that

his father had been a more traditional role model of masculinity when he continued 'I think it's important for my father figure to somehow initiate his [idea of] "what is manhood?" Alex's idea of a proper male role model was one who would help him discover some kind of essential, true, but lost masculinity that he felt he needed to recover. Alex's longing for a more suitable male role model was not, then, necessarily a longing for a more open father, despite his disappointment at how emotionally closed his father was. I explore Alex's search for a supposed essential masculinity further in chapter five in my consideration of discourses of the loss of men's place and identity in late modernity.

Grant spoke of his father as personifying how a man should be, though did not comment on whether they had a positive or problematic relationship. Grant described his father as 'Mr Smooth Talker' and:

the cheeky young boy and school captain. And he was always that sort of cheeky, playful dude. Still is ... Yeah old ladies love him. Just, he's this charming dude.

Grant saw his father as a role model for social skills, which he believed were:

one of the things you need to be good at as a man ... Because then you can live your life any way, you can do anything. That's at the core of like "well you just need to go for what you want".

As stated previously, Kevin felt he had not had a male role model growing up, saying:

I grew up with a lot of females in the family, it wasn't a lot of guys in the family. So I never had kind of, I suppose, a role model, or an image or a father figure who said how I had to be, or how I had to act, or how a man should be.

Kevin later spoke of role models again, arguing:

I think of role models, you know, if you grow up with a guy, you know, a role model that teaches you to be masculine in a certain way, 'coz I didn't have that. I always grew up with all females in my family. And the one male I did have, my mum's ex-husband, was a total wanker! I don't know whether that had any influence on me, like it doesn't make me a bad person, it doesn't make me a better person.

Kevin felt his father figures had not played a significant role in shaping his masculinity.

Will (Aus/Ber) too saw his father as a role model, but a positive one. His father had raised him on his own, and therefore Will grew up watching his father do all the tasks around the house without distinguishing between traditionally male or female ones. Will explained:

there's no kind of like, "well that's a woman's job", it's just like, no, it's just a household chore. So growing up that was the perspective I sort of had through that.

Will suggested that when he was young there was no impetus from his father for Will to “be a man”. Will felt he had inherited these more open traits of masculinity from his father, and as I demonstrate in chapter six, Will did narrate a more open conception of masculinity.

Will described his father as a ‘fucking awesome role model [who] did a really good job [of raising him]’. He said his father made him a priority, made sacrifices to be a responsible father and was always there to support Will. Will emphasised ‘I think he just did that *so so so* well. And that had a pretty, I guess, profound impact’. Will found his father’s parenting particularly impressive because, he said ‘you hear a lot of horror stories about dads being abusive or hitting their kids and stuff, and that’s been perpetuated through the generations’. Will said that from growing up in this supportive, caring environment, which was also fostered by his extended family, ‘I think I had a pretty good foundation’.

#### *Positive relationships with fathers*

Like Will, other participants spoke of good relationships with their fathers. For some, these relationships were warm and close, but for others their relationships with their fathers were still described as somewhat distant or less emotive. Joseph (Australian), for example, described his relationship with his father as ‘very caring, loving’, but differentiated between his mother’s caring and his father’s caring. He described his mother as ‘more of a caring figure, the sort of Mother Theresa, nurse type figure’, while his father he described in terms of a mentor. Joseph said of his father ‘I see him more as a guardian figure, similarly to my mother perhaps, but more as a mentor, and more as closer to a friend perhaps’. Joseph drew on two animal metaphors to explain the different relationships he had to his father and mother, the first being that of a koala:

if I were a koala, I’d hang out with mum on her back a bit more. Obviously I could pop into her pouch for a nice warm snuggle, but I’d hang out on mum’s back more than on my dad’s. I’d just go, “hey dad, let’s have a chat, should we go for dinner? Have a beer?”

Joseph’s second metaphor related to an eagle:

if I were an eagle, and I lived on a rock, you know, dad would be there to hang around and [it would] be good to have dad there. But mum would be the one who would, you know, keep me under her feathers to warm me.

Joseph therefore had a good relationship with his father, but saw him as more removed than his mother, as less nurturing and as more of a mentor, with its connotations of some distance between parties. These animal examples furthermore point to the idea of care as optional for fathers, with mothers expected to perform the primary, crucial care work.

Shane (Aus/Ber) too had a good relationship with his father, who became more of a friend after Shane's mother died. Signalling his relationship with his father in terms of a friendship gave it in some ways a more removed sense than the familial bonds of father and son. He wondered, however, if his father's relationship to him would become more grandfatherly once he had his own children. Becoming a father was on Shane's mind because his friends in Australia were beginning to have children, while he was 'on the other side of the world partying'. Having children someday seemed to be a foregone conclusion for Shane, with him saying 'got lots of time ahead of me, hopefully'.

Frank (German) had a strong relationship with his entire immediate family. He said they were the 'people that care the most about me and take the least', and he was closer to them than to anybody else. Nathan (Australian) also described a good relationship between him and his father, stressing that his family, including his father, 'never placed pressure on me to, I guess, be a manly man'. Evan (Australian) was another participant who spoke of a sound relationship with his father, where Evan would spend time with him or make gestures of care in certain ways. Now that he was older, Evan saw the relationship with his father as more of a mutual one than a parent-child relationship. He said 'neither of us have violent or aggressive tendencies'. Evan therefore portrayed a different picture of his father to the traditional fathers of the centre described in the previous two sections by other participants. Evan did, however, point out that 'my dad won't even go to the doctor, and I think a lot of men in his generation wouldn't', highlighting continuing generational differences and costs of masculinity. Finally, as explored, Will's relationship with his father was very strong, emotional and close. These four men, Frank, Nathan, Evan and Will, did not convey the sense of distance Joseph and Shane did when telling stories about their fathers.

The fathers spoken about by these four men suggest that closer, more connected relationships with fathers existed amongst some participants, contrasting with the more emotionally closed relationships to fathers investigated previously. Though some of the men had good relationships with their fathers, it was more common that these relationships were a source of

disappointment, tension or even sadness. Participants regretted not being able to have closer, more emotional relationships with their fathers, who they saw as distant or closed off, or wished their fathers had been better male role models. For most participants explored in this section, then, any movements towards increasing openness of masculinities, which will be explored particularly in chapter six, were balanced against this closed, more traditional version of masculinity from their father figures. This closed masculinity of fathers provided a backdrop to the closed, centre expressions of masculinity amongst participants explored throughout this chapter.

## **Conclusion**

Throughout this chapter I have investigated the pull of the closed centre and continuing expressions of closed, centre masculinities. I considered the privileged ability of participants in Australia to manoeuvre through expressions of traditional or progressive masculinity but suggested that they nevertheless remained in the closed centre in particular through their discursive distancing and strategic borrowing (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). Distancing themselves from Australian protest masculinity, as well as their assertions of doing care work to an extent, allowed these participants to position themselves as progressive, caring men in line with expectations today that men adhere to softer masculinities. For some of them, work on their bodies, however, enabled them to juggle the requirements of hard bodies and softer masculinities. For these participants in Australia some shifts had occurred, but hegemonic masculinity retained its legitimacy. Meanwhile, the pattern of a pull back towards the centre played out amongst German participants in assertions of men and women as the same, while discourses of difference between men and women were retained. Some German men drew on older, essentialist, often sexist notions of women as ruled by emotions to position them as unsuited to career or breadwinning. This contradiction of expressions of sameness but beliefs of difference speaks to continuing closed, centre masculinities amongst some of these German men in certain ways.

For the Australian men in Berlin, the pull of the closed centre pertained largely to the issue of male homosexuality. While several of the Australians in Berlin expressed acceptance of gay men in general, the idea that they might be seen as gay themselves caused them discomfort. These anxieties were even evident to an extent amongst those participants who identified as

gay or who were questioning their sexuality. Finally, I explored the salience of fathers in the narratives told by participants from all three groups. Many participants were generally disappointed or sad that their fathers were, in their opinions, emotionally distant and poor role models. Their fathers represented traditional, closed masculinities without some of the participants' more progressive attitudes outlined in this chapter and without the emerging openness of masculinities found amongst participants that I explore in chapter six. The themes explored in this chapter illustrate a pattern across all three groups of men: some participants declared a changed, more progressive attitude in line with expectations of softer masculinities amongst men, yet continued to exhibit closed, centre expressions of masculinity and be drawn back to the centre.

These men showed some changes from the emotionally closed masculinities they saw represented in their fathers, and as I explore in chapter six some of the participants demonstrated movements towards greater openness of masculinities. However, the focus on the pull of the centre and continuing closed, centre expressions of masculinity in this chapter is crucial. These expressions of closed, centre masculinities have implications for those who are not as privileged as the participants on axes such as gender, class, ethnicity and sexuality. This includes women, who were seen as inferior to men in their roles by some of the German participants; gay men when homosexuality was regarded with discomfort by Australian men in Berlin; and women, subordinated men and marginalised men when the participants in Australia made fun of protest masculinity but perpetuated hegemonic masculinity. Acknowledging, investigating and critiquing closed, centre masculinities is integral to the project of encouraging men to move towards greater openness of masculinities. This is a movement that will be explored in chapter six. In the next chapter I turn to investigating challenges and possibilities of mobile masculinities.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### MOVEMENTS OF MASCULINITIES

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I explore the contradictions, challenges and possibilities that arise through mobile expressions of masculinities that move between closed and open. I investigate threads of mobility across the physical, social and theoretical spaces of masculinity. Some participants performed norms of closed, centre masculinity strategically, thereby moving back towards the closed centre. However, they identified the boundaries of this masculinity and challenged these norms at times and in doing so moved towards greater openness. They furthermore appeared to be seeking more options for masculine expression but struggled to find support for this. Possibilities emerged from these contradictions and nuances of masculinity.

The effects of neoliberal late modernity, especially in relation to patterns of men's employment, emerge as a salient factor in the topics explored throughout this chapter. For example, I discuss the physical mobility of German participants and those living in Australia in pursuit of career advancement. Furthermore, the sense of loss of a place and identity for men that some of the participants conveyed was connected to grief over the disappearance of traditional men's employment in post-industrial economies. I begin this chapter by approaching physical mobility amongst German participants and those living in Australia as a generative disruption in that it led to personal and professional progress. Furthermore, mobility was a way for German men to challenge stasis in their lives. Several of the German participants directly spoke of "inbetweenness", reflecting again the requirements of flexibility and mobility in climates of labour market precarity. The connection to paid work and career, valued aspects of closed, centre masculinities (Heilmann 2015; Meuser 2010; Scholz 2012), remained in place for these participants as they adapted to the challenges of neoliberal employment precarity.

I then consider narratives of the privileges and pressures of masculinity. Participants benefited from masculinity in various ways but spoke too of the threat of violence, expectations around alcohol consumption and behaviour and proscriptions against men showing emotion or seeking help. These pressures further revealed resistance to norms of masculinity in some ways, but



strategic use of them in others. Contradictions of masculinity explored in this section demonstrate some of the fault lines of closed, centre masculinities that offer possibilities for movement towards greater openness.

In the final section of this chapter I explore narratives of the loss of men's place and identity in a world of supposed feminist successes and the search for "true" or "essential" masculinity by some participants. This search and sense of loss sat alongside the stories participants offered about the costs of masculinity, again revealing the contradictions of contemporary masculinities amongst young men in post-industrial societies. Blame for these feelings of loss was at times directed towards feminism, when in fact these narratives reveal struggles around masculinities and work in neoliberal late modernity. The themes explored in this chapter reveal masculinities in movement as complex and contradictory and with both challenges and possibilities. I begin unpacking these nuances through a consideration of mobility and its generative possibilities.

### **Career, mobility and generative disruption**

A story emerged amongst the German participants in particular, and the men living in Australia to an extent, of mobility of location leading to progression in both personal and professional lives. Geographic mobility provided a way for these men to maintain a connection to paid work and career — key components of closed, centre masculinities — in neoliberal late modernity with its demands of flexibility and mobility for young people (Gärtner & Höyng 2005; Pocock 2005; Scholz 2012; Stokes & Wyn 2007). I therefore suggest that this mobility was generative for these men of the centre. However, the boundaries of closed, centre masculinities with strong connections to paid work remained in place through this particular mobility.

For the German participants, mobility challenged inertia and stasis and advanced their working lives, and they valued the progression and momentum it afforded. This mobility was commonly in the form of relocation from their small hometowns to the big city of Berlin. Several of these men were in "inbetween" states at the times of their interviews as they considered moving away from Berlin again in further pursuit of careers. The concept of inbetweenness arose as a result of the grounded approach I took to the data, as it was mentioned by several participants during their interviews. Mobility was a common experience amongst participants living in Australia,

but they tended to focus less on future movement than the German men. Nevertheless, the participants in Australia had experienced productive mobility, particularly in relation to studying for their desired careers. These patterns facilitated the creation of opportunities without high risk.

Maher (2013), drawing on Trentmann (2009) and exploring family care needs and employment amongst female nurses, reconceptualises disruptions as ‘the fabric of life’ (p. 172) and as ‘connection and resilience’ (p. 179) rather than as fracturing or fraying. Here, I consider the mobility I found amongst German participants in particular and participants in Australia to an extent as contributing to disruption; disruption that was productive and generative rather than a hindrance. The focus on career as part of this mobility nevertheless contrasted with the mobility of the Australian men in Berlin I explore in the following chapter, which was connected to deprioritising career and adopting more open expressions of masculinity. In this section I initially investigate mobility as a generative disruption in terms of professional and personal lives amongst the German participants. This is followed by my discussion of the idea of inbetweenness amongst these participants, which signalled potential future mobility. Finally, I consider the participants living in Australia and their mobility in connection with career.

### *Generative mobility and the progression of personal and professional lives*

Mobility amongst the German participants constituted a disruption, particularly for those who left their lives in smaller towns and cities and moved to Berlin. This mobility was generative in that it enabled them to move forward in their careers and life projects. Six of the German participants had grown up in small, rural German towns. A seventh, Manni, grew up in a much smaller German city, which he described as ‘kind of small [and] not quite diverse’. Of the remaining German participants, one had lived in several different towns and cities throughout his upbringing, and although two had grown up in Berlin they were both highly mobile. The large number of German men from rural or regional towns or smaller cities was noteworthy; as stated in chapter three, this pattern was matched across all three groups of participants.

Martin was one of the German participants who had moved to Berlin because he found it more diverse, artistic and exciting than his very small hometown, which he described as ‘only full of old people [and] not so exciting’. As a creative person, the disruption of moving to Berlin

potentially offered Martin a more generative setting in which to pursue his future goals. Dirk was another German man who moved away from his small hometown, living in several different locations in Germany and abroad before moving to Berlin to be with a member of his family. Berlin was an ideal location for Dirk's studies. Furthermore, he liked Berlin in relation to the smaller places in which he had previously lived, finding it more accessible and enjoyable. Dirk told me 'I really enjoy Berlin, it's great'. For Dirk, the disruption of his mobility to Berlin propelled both his personal and professional lives forward. It enabled him to be near his family member, experience the opportunities and lifestyle of a big city and pursue his studies and career.

Bernd also grew up in a small town in Germany and moved to Berlin in order to study at university. He explained that he moved to Berlin because he had very much wanted to live in the "big city" (*Großstadt*). He dreamt specifically of a life in the city living in a WG (flat share), with all its political, communal connotations. He explained:

I wanted this WG, I wanted my *Altbau*<sup>7</sup>, people, music, drugs — no drugs anymore, but back then. And that is, simply, a bit funny, chaotic, human (*ich wollte diese WG, ich wollte meinen Altbau, Leute, Musik, Drogen — keine Drogen mehr, aber damals. Und das ist einfach so ein bisschen lustig, chaotisch, menschlich*).

A WG, short for *Wohngemeinschaft* (literally "residential community"), can be translated into English as "flat share", but collective living in Germany has a rather different history to a country such as Australia. *Wohngemeinschaft* living, in various forms, arose from ideological and politicised contexts in Germany including the student movement (Bertels 1990), and this was key for Bernd. He spoke of students moving out of their family homes and into spaces of shared political commitment and like-mindedness. Bernd was hoping to begin his career in the near future. With the hindsight afforded to him by many years in Berlin, he could appreciate the value of his small hometown. He saw it as a good place to relax, see his family and visit if he was ever in need. However, Bernd explained 'it's just not the place where I see my future' (*es ist halt nicht der Ort wo ich meine Zukunft sehe*). Bernd's career prospects and future life plans were connected to his mobility away from his hometown, or the disruption of his former life there.

---

<sup>7</sup> *Altbau* can loosely be defined as a pre-World War II residential building, popular in Berlin.

Like Bernd and many of the participants from all three groups, Sebastian grew up in a small town. He moved to several different locations in Germany and abroad and finally moved to Berlin to study and work. Unlike Bernd, Sebastian had not been attracted to what he described as the:

classic or the clichéd Berlin way of life, involving doing a thousand crazy things and every weekend going totally hard in some clubs in the city or something (*ich habe auch nicht, glaube ich, diesen klassischen oder diesen klischee Berlin Weg gemacht ... sie sind hierher gekommen, und dann irgendwie tausende verrückte Sachen machen, und jedes Wochenende total krass in welchen Clubs der Stadt oder so was*).

At the time of his interview, Sebastian was expecting to soon begin full time work. Furthermore, living in Berlin allowed him to be close to his girlfriend. He did not name this proximity to his girlfriend as one of his motivations for moving to the city, though he did find it good. His mobility to Berlin was productive in that it had progressed his life both professionally and personally. As I discuss in the following section, Sebastian's mobility was not necessarily finished, despite his upcoming full time job and proximity to his girlfriend.

Lars was yet another German participant who had moved to Berlin from a rural hometown in order to study. He felt there were 'more like minded people to me' in Berlin than in his hometown. In this sense of being around more like minded people, Lars' mobility to Berlin can be seen as socially generative. He described his hometown as 'really small' and explained 'I don't want to judge people living there, but for me it's kind of boring, and still too close minded'. As I discuss in the following section, Lars was another participant who was inbetween in his journey, as he was planning to move away from Berlin again.

The German men discussed so far had all been eager to leave their small hometowns. However, two participants, Sven and Manni, spoke about their moves as escapes. Sven was studying in Berlin and had chosen to move there after hearing positive stories about the city from friends. However, he spoke of how he had desperately wanted to leave his small hometown but had felt trapped there. He explained these feelings of entrapment and escape in detail when I asked him to tell me about his friends:

Sven: So friends is like, a difficult topic for me. Because when I was younger, like this was actually also the reason why I wanted to leave my hometown, I really didn't like it there. Because there was this kind of different way of treating each other, you know? Like in the village where I lived, nobody was really, um, *man hat sich nichts gegönnt, verstehst du das?* [People in the village where I lived did not like it when others had good fortune, do you understand that phrase?].

Karla: Yeah.

Sven: Like if you achieved something, nobody was really happy for you, you know? They were trying to get themselves up more when somebody was doing a fault, you know?<sup>8</sup> Yeah and then I had really low self-esteem then, and I was really like, I had a really bad time when I was a teenager. And I knew I always wanted to leave, but I felt kind of like in a prison in my hometown. I also felt like there was something wrong with me then. But actually there was something wrong with my friends, I recognised when I left my hometown. It was kind of a big thing for me then. So I don't have so much to do with my friends of the past anymore, because they haven't been really good friends.

Sven suggested, in this emotional exchange, that for him, mobility away from his hometown was not just a matter of advancing professionally. It was also a case of escaping from an unhappy, "prison-like" life in which he could not move forward or flourish. As I explain in the following section of this chapter, Sven found that men in Berlin, including his male friends, could be more intimate and emotional with one another, marking a contrast to the poor friends from his hometown.

Like Sven, Manni, who identified as queer, spoke of his desire to flee his hometown, which he found small and lacking in diversity. He said:

I do think that there was quite often, for a long time, a kind of urge to (pauses) flee. In a sense that, I don't know why exactly, but I was kind of fascinating [fantasising] about wanting to go to boarding school. Because I do think I kind of idealised it, you know? A lot of friends, a really nice place, self-development blah blah blah. So maybe that is like, something like a way to like, go away.

Manni had subsequently moved to Berlin and to several different places, mobility that had usually been connected to his studies. Disrupting his life in his hometown and becoming mobile allowed him to advance his education and fulfil his desire to flee. He furthermore found it 'really exciting to go somewhere, to a really new place, and explore'. However, he also spoke of missing his social networks as a result of moving so much.

Two of the German participants, Derrick and Torsten, had been born in Berlin. However, mobility still played a generative role in their lives. Torsten, for example, had moved several times to study. Derrick stated that Berlin was 'actually quite important for me, because I do find myself [to be] a Berliner. Because there's also an attitude towards life and stuff'. When I asked Derrick what this attitude towards life was, he explained 'Berlin is the best, coolest town in the world, you know? And I'm very unfriendly most of the time'. Nevertheless, Derrick had

---

<sup>8</sup> I interpret this sentence as meaning that in Sven's hometown, people took advantage of the mistakes of others for their own benefit.

experienced the disruption of moving several times for his profession, stating ‘career is relatively important for me’.

*Inbetween: future mobility*

Six of the German participants spoke of future mobility and of a sense of “inbetweenness”. Some were contemplating moving away from Berlin, often to further pursue their careers, again reflecting the flexibility and mobility required of young people in a climate of labour market precarity. Furthermore, three of these men used the word “inbetween” to describe themselves. Bernd, for example, wanted to remain in Berlin but was in an inbetween state at the time of his interview. His future was unclear, and he explained:

who am I? Well, I’m currently in a place where I still don’t know that. That is to say, I’m now finished with studying, I’m now going into the world and orienting myself professionally (*wer bin ich? Also ich bin jetzt gerade genau da wo ich das noch nicht weiß. Das ist so zu sagen, jetzt bin ich mit dem Studium fertig. Ich gehe jetzt gerade in die Welt raus und orientiere mich beruflich*).

He later added:

everything is still very new. Now it will probably take a while until I’ve established myself somewhere or so. I would really like to stay in Berlin, but that’s also not certain. That means that at the moment for me so much that’s existential is really not so clear (*alles ist noch sehr neu also, wird jetzt wahrscheinlich noch eine Zeitlang dauern bis ich mich irgendwo etabliert habe oder so. Ich würde doch gerne in Berlin bleiben, aber das ist auch nicht sicher. Das heißt, dass gerade bei mir so sehr viel existentielles gar nicht so klar ist*).

In addition to what Bernd described as inbetweenness and uncertainty existentially, his story of mobility had not necessarily ended. As he stated, he wanted to remain in Berlin but this was not assured. Presumably, the pursuit of his career might have required Bernd to move again. This demonstrates the productive potential German participants such as Bernd saw in mobility for avoiding stasis and lack of growth and for changing or disrupting their lives in Berlin. Furthermore, though Bernd had disrupted his former life in his small hometown by moving to Berlin, he spoke of seeing the value of his hometown and of going back there in moments of need. In this way he was, again, placed inbetween former, present and future configurations of his life.

Sebastian was one German participant who directly used the English term “inbetween” in his interview to describe his situation. He said ‘I’m currently, well, inbetween’ (*ich bin gerade so*

inbetween’). He was in this inbetween state as he was waiting to begin his full time job. Unlike Bernd, though, Sebastian was not convinced he wanted to stay in Berlin. He enjoyed Berlin but explained:

I’ve noticed that I (pauses), sooner or later I could imagine living somewhere else, in a smaller city again (*ich merke dass ich (Pause) früher oder später mir vorstellen könnte nochmal woanders, irgendwie in einer kleineren Stadt, zu leben*).

However, he had decided he would stay in Berlin if he could not find a job elsewhere. Sebastian’s mobility had not necessarily come to an end in Berlin.

As mentioned, Lars was inbetween as he had moved from his hometown to Berlin and was getting ready to move on again. Lars was gradually winding down his life in Berlin and explained his motivations for moving after I joked about his Berlin lifestyle. He agreed and stated:

but that’s why I want to get out of here, because it’s too much (laughs). I feel like a change of setting. Yeah. And I’ve been here for many years and that’s enough.

Lars wanted to make a ‘clean cut’ from Berlin and told me:

I don’t really want to come back that often after I move away ... I kind of also want some distance. But I want people to visit me obviously. And of course I’m going to visit. But I’m not going to be like “oh no I’m away, I miss everyone” and “I’ve got to go back” after two weeks. I don’t want to be like that.

Mobility was a way for Lars to avoid stasis and to move forward with his life, and he indicated that for the most part he was not interested in looking back.

Manni, who like Sven spoke of fleeing his hometown, was similarly inbetween in several senses. The first was connected to ongoing mobility, like other German participants discussed here. As he put it:

if I’m in Germany, I want to stay in Berlin, but I would also be open to going somewhere completely [different]. Which is I guess kind of the problem, that I don’t really know where I want to be. Because maybe it would be easier to like, apply for a job if I actually know *where* I want to be.

Manni was also inbetween as a *Tunte*, a German, highly politicised enactment of drag. He introduced himself as ‘Manni. Um, at least most of the time’, then later described two different aspects of himself:

Manni: when I do that [be a *Tunte*] I recently started to, like I’m not fixed on a name yet, but recently I most often introduce myself as Sable. Yeah. So I guess this is like an alternate persona.

Karla: Okay. So that's why you're Manni [Manni: yeah] some of the time.  
Manni: Yes. Yes. So when I'm in boy drag, I'm Manni [Karla: okay], basically.

Manni could therefore be seen as neither wholly Manni, nor wholly Sable, but as, perhaps, neither, both, or somewhere inbetween. I discuss Manni's *tunten* practices and identities in further detail in chapter six as an instance of his commitment to politics and deconstructing gender roles, which were important components of his adoption of caring masculinity.

Derrick and Torsten, who had both grown up in Berlin, also spoke of inbetweenness in certain senses. Torsten applied the notion of "inbetween" to himself and several different arenas of his life. For example, he described himself as 'inbetween degrees' and 'inbetween a geek and a normal person'. He described his location as inbetween in the following exchange:

Karla: The question is, what does it mean to you to be a man? And usually I would say "in the place you live", but seeing as you're kind of  
Torsten: Inbetween.

Finally, as discussed in chapter four, Torsten was usually the one who would 'step inbetween' conflicts between his father and brother that often arose from misunderstood 'inbetween' messages of communication. Derrick, like several other German participants, was inbetween in terms of his career prospects. He was getting ready to move away from Berlin for work, and believed he would ultimately have to live elsewhere in Germany to pursue his career. When I asked if he would like to stay in Berlin, he answered 'I would love to, but I don't think that's very likely, because the job opportunities are much better in different towns in Germany'. Again, then, Derrick was considering moving on from Berlin in order to ensure further progression and avoid stasis.

### *Focusing on the present in Australia*

All the men living in Australia had, like most participants, experienced mobility. Four of the men in Australia had moved from regional locations to Melbourne, and two still lived in their regional hometown. Six had moved for work or study purposes. There was, then, some generative mobility amongst the men in Australia in terms of moving in order to advance their careers, similar to the German participants. In contrast to the German participants, while most of the men in Australia had ideas about their futures, their focus tended to be on their current studying or work situations. A desire for forward-motion and mobility was not as prevalent amongst these men interviewed in Australia, and their focus on the present provided



possibilities for the future without the risk of further disruptive mobility. This difference between the German participants and those living in Australia potentially related to the fact that fewer of those in Australia had recently finished studying. Indeed, like these men, one participant from Germany was still in the middle of his university studies and was not looking to future mobility as much as other German participants.

Amongst the men in Australia, Toby, Phillip and Alan were all focused on their university studies. They spoke of hoping to get jobs in their fields once they graduated, but their main focus at the time of the interviews was their studies. Similarly, Evan was not planning any mobility away from his home or job at the time of his interview. He was considering different ways of moving into higher positions at his work, but was not hoping to progress his career through mobility to a new location. Nathan joked that at the time of his interview he was a ‘freeloader [or] drifter’ and was trying to find work. He had been quite mobile throughout his life. However, he had little sense of a future career. As he told me:

almost being 30 and not having a career is particularly, here in [regional town] it seems a little bit strange, particularly when everyone around you is having kids and getting husbands and wives and all of that nonsense (laughs).

A lack of focus on a future career contrasted with both the importance of mobility amongst the German participants for advancing careers and the deprioritising of career as a result of mobility I explore amongst Australian men in Berlin in chapter six.

Like Nathan, Anthony was unemployed and was not studying at the time of his interview. Anthony, the youngest participant in the research, described his lack of studies or work as ‘my personal shame’ and called himself ‘lazy’, despite the fact that he was an active volunteer. Anthony felt he was not progressing, saying:

I feel like I should be a bit more active with my life ... I’ve been taking quite a while to sort of do anything, which yeah, is really sad, [and] I need to get a job, and probably study.

This perceived lack of progression connected saliently with Anthony’s self-diagnosis of behavioural problems, which he believed stemmed from ‘stunted development sort of behaviourally’ in primary school. Anthony therefore told a story of perceived inertia in various ways, rather than one of progression.

Joseph was a participant in Australia whose mobility mapped more closely onto that of the German participants. Joseph had already moved several times to different countries and cities in order to advance his career and was planning to move abroad again. He said:

I'm moving because I want to move towards a career that allows me to work *with* people and *for* people to make a positive difference in something ... I've spent quite a bit of time thinking about why I'm doing this, what I want to get out of that experience. So, I want to further my experience, so more or less I can further my impact on, I don't want to say the world because I mean that's a bit lofty for me, but maybe certain sections of the community.

Here Joseph even utilised expressions of motion such as 'move towards' and 'further my experience'. His narratives around work and mobility, like those of the German participants, reflected the notion of mobility as generative and as having the potential to advance his professional life.

I uncovered an emphasis on career in the stories of mobility told by many of the German participants and those living in Australia. The participants in Australia were focussed on their studies or current jobs, even if they were not looking as far ahead into the future as their German counterparts. The disruption that came as a result of mobility for the German participants, several of whom were at inbetween stages of their lives, was normally generative in that it enabled them to take steps closer towards their chosen careers. Advancing careers was one of the main reasons given for their past or future mobility, though several of these men benefited in their personal lives too. This focus on progressing career through mobility and the uncertainty of inbetweenness connects with the need for mobility and flexibility of young people in a neoliberal climate. As I will illuminate in chapter six, disconnecting life from career was bound up with more open expressions of masculinity amongst Australian men who had moved to Berlin. The German participants and those in Australia, on the other hand, were men in varying states of geographic mobility, which they were able to utilise to their advantage. Their connection to paid work and career, key aspects of closed, centre masculinities, persisted.

### **Privileges and pressures of masculinity**

Narratives about the privileges and pressures of masculinity revealed both resistance to norms of closed, centre masculinities in some ways but strategic use of them in others. There was considerable movement and contradiction here. Participants unsettled norms of closed, centre masculinities through their resistance, but could utilise these norms when they were useful.

Men from all three groups spoke of the costs, or usually in their words the pressures, of masculinity, and some were able to acknowledge their privileges too. They discussed pressures surrounding violence from other men in public spaces, alcohol consumption, expected male behaviours and proscriptions against men's emotions and help seeking. This list reveals some of the harmful costs of masculinity for men of the centre, while in chapter four the discussion of closedness and the centre revealed costs of masculinity for men of the margin and for women.

Narratives of the privileges and pressures of masculinity demonstrated that participants benefited in certain ways from closed, centre masculinities, but suffered from the costs in others. They were not entirely convinced of the merits of closed, centre masculinities and resisted these norms at times, but they were not ready to entirely let them go either. There was a resulting contradiction here of narratives and experiences of masculinity. These inconsistencies revealed cracks that suggest possibilities for masculinities to become more open, which I address further in the following chapter. In this section I explore narratives of pressures or costs of masculinity, beginning with the threat of male violence in public spaces. This is followed by a discussion of pressures surrounding alcohol consumption and expected masculine behaviours. I then consider the difficulties participants from all three groups had expressing emotion and asking for and accepting help. Dictates of closed, centre masculinities for men to be independent largely drove this suppression of the emotional lives of these participants.

### *Danger and male violence in public spaces*

The fear of violence perpetrated by other men in public spaces was a particularly notable pressure of masculinity discussed by several participants. Bernd (German) said he believed that:

to be a man has something to do with social structures ... and with power, above all (*es ist irgendwie klar, das Mann sein irgendwie was mit sozialen Strukturen zu tun hat ... und mit Macht vor allem*).

He noted the privileges men in Germany had over women, saying:

I believe that as a man in Germany, you still have advantages in comparison to women. Many concrete advantages professionally ... I believe that it's easier in a sense for men to be acknowledged (*ich glaube das man als Mann in Deutschland immer noch Vorteile hat*

*gegenüber Frauen. Viele Vorteile konkret beruflich ... Ich glaube, dass man gewisse Hinsicht es leichter hat wahrgenommen zu werden).*

However, Bernd continued by discussing the complications of these privileges for him as a gay man, despite the relative openness of Germany to gay people:

at the same time, it's also the case that I'm a gay man. So, one is a man, has all these privileges, of course. But at the same time, one is not really properly a man, or is not really perceived as one in many situations. That is also something for me in Germany, when you can now say "okay, as a gay person you can live here relatively well, you're not threatened most of the time, there are rights you can sue over". However, that is a kind of conflict in me ... Because I somehow know that to be a man has something dangerous, it also has something to do with violence (*gleichzeitig ist es aber jetzt auch so, dass ich ein schwuler Mann bin. Also man ist ein Mann, man hat diese ganzen Privilegien natürlich schon. Aber gleichzeitig ist man nicht so richtig ein Mann, oder wirklich so richtig als einer wahrgenommen in vielen Situationen. Das ist was für mich selbst in Deutschland, wenn man jetzt sagen kann „okay als Schwuler kann man hier ziemlich gut leben, man ist nicht bedroht die meiste Zeit, es gibt Rechte wo man einklagen kann“. Doch das ist was so einen Konflikt auch in mir ... Gerade weil ich irgendwie weiß, Mann sein hat was gefährliches, es hat auch was mit Gewalt zu tun*).

Bernd's final sentence here was interestingly ambiguous. He might have meant that he was afraid of the violence attached to masculinity, or that to be a man meant embracing violence and danger. In either case, in this passage Bernd outlined issues of violence and danger for men, even in a relatively safe country for gay people such as Germany. Bernd then told me there had been times in his life when he had wanted nothing more than to be perceived as a "real man", as I discussed in chapter four. Bernd summed up these conflicting experiences and expectations of masculinity by saying 'I believe being a man in Germany means having privileges but also pressure' (*ich glaube Mann zu sein in Deutschland heißt, Privilegien zu haben, aber auch Druck*).

Manni (German) found himself adhering to masculine standards of appearance and presentation because these made him feel safer and more protected. For example, he spoke about wearing 'boy drag' on the way to and from his *Tunte* performances for safety reasons, saying:

when I perform, like when I don't have boy drag but when I have dresses and something, I would not dress up at home and then go in my dress to a performance. I would never do that because it's unsafe. I'm really conscious about not presenting myself as entirely masculine. Because I'm afraid. Because I know that people will give you looks, they might harass you, verbally as well as physically. And I *am* afraid of being harassed physically. And I know my friend Markus, he weighs like 100 kilograms and is like two metres tall. He wears his wig and his dress in public and you know, nobody's going to bother him. But (sighs) I feel more unsafe. And sometimes maybe even more so than I should.

With this narrative, Manni emphasised the dangers of masculinity, in particular the potential for and danger of violence between men in public spaces. However, he noted the contradictions of masculinity: that it had protective aspects for him as well as dangers. By presenting with a male appearance rather than as a *Tunte*, Manni felt safer in public spaces and more protected from violence.

Manni recognised the privileges he had as a man, despite his commitment to deconstructing gender, which I investigate in chapter six. He said:

I think masculinity is something I've been struggling with for my whole life in a way. Where I have a very ambiguous relationship to it. I mean, sometimes it can also be a tool, which I find interesting, that I can be very aware of my masculine privileges. And I also know that sometimes I can exercise them. For instance, I mean, I have a beard right? And it's for aesthetical reasons as well as it helps to appear older. But I also do think it's interesting what people ascribe to it, because they ascribe to it a certain masculinity, and they ascribe to it competences and skills.

Manni pointed out some of the strategic uses of norms of closed, centre masculinities with this statement and noted the possibility for masculinity to be a “tool”. This raises interesting possibilities for masculinity to become a tool in crafting more open expressions of gender rather than working for closed masculinity. Masculinity might be particularly usefully wielded as a tool for more open masculinities by men of the margin such as Manni who, I argue in chapter six, could be seen to have adopted caring masculinity.

Bernd and Manni, who identified as gay and queer respectively, both discussed the violences of masculinity and the danger of violence perpetrated by men in public spaces. Several other participants spoke of this threat of violence from other men. Grant (Aus/Ber), like Bernd, noted that masculinity or being a man is bound up with violence and danger when he stated:

the first thing that comes to mind when you say “dangerous situation” maybe is the fact that I am a man. Like, I just think, physical danger. I suppose like, maybe an emotional situation was my socially anxious friend, he would talk about killing himself. He would talk about suicide a bit.

Grant spoke about his hesitation to get involved in violent situations if they involved strangers, but felt that an important part of being a man was:

removing a lot of this hesitation. I think you gotta come out with a few scratches, then you learn (laughs). But if you hesitate, then you don't make that mistake. But then also when you don't hesitate, you take all the rewards ... You gotta learn, but you can't be afraid of failing, you can't be afraid of getting a few scratches. It's difficult! And I'm not an amazing dude at that.

I explore Grant's more closed ideas of masculinity further in chapter six when I consider the few Australian men in Berlin who, unlike the others, had not moved significantly towards more open expressions of masculinity.

Christopher (Aus/Ber), as I will explore in chapter six, was concerned about the aggression of men in Australia. He told a story about a night when a man in Melbourne had wanted to fight with him in an unprovoked instance of hostility. Phillip (Australian) spoke about the dangers of going clubbing in his regional hometown in Australia, saying 'in [hometown] there's some pretty rough people [and it] can be quite dangerous, especially walking between clubs late at night'. He continued by telling a story about a man who became aggressive towards Phillip when he intervened in an altercation while out clubbing one night. Phillip's narratives were similar to those of young participants in Lindsay's (2012) study of alcohol fuelled violence in the night time economy in Victoria, Australia. Threats of violence in public spaces from other men such as those discussed by Phillip and other participants in this study were pressing costs or pressures of masculinity for several men from across all three groups of participants. Some participants, however, saw danger and violence as essential to masculinity and as aspects that could be used strategically as part of being a man.

#### *Alcohol consumption and expected masculine behaviours*

Some participants discussed alcohol consumption and the behaviours expected of men as further pressures of masculinity. At times they also spoke of their resistance to these tenets of closed, centre masculinities. Dirk (German), for example, believed he had the resilience to resist these pressures. He spoke about the difficulty of defining "what a man is" because of the complication of issues such as sexuality and location. However, he continued by stating:

I've never felt that much pressure on, yeah, "you have to fit into this certain role model", because, um, I don't know. Or maybe I was more resilient to it.

Dirk pointed to having taken up an artistic hobby as a child as an example of his resilience in the face of the pressures of masculinity because, he said:

that hobby is not really an activity men usually do. Boys of that age play football or something else. So it was always this kind of "oh yeah, he [does that hobby] and he's a bit different" or something.

Dirk furthermore spoke of resisting the pressure on men to mark their masculinity by drinking alcohol. He explained:

I don't know, I guess I never had this feeling that someone would say "hey, come on, be a man", you know? "Have another one" or something. And even if someone said that to me I'd say "no, I'm done, I'm good". I never felt this pressure, [or] that people rejected me [because I was] not trying to give in to what they wanted from me.

Dirk recognised some of the pressures of masculinity, but felt that he was resilient enough to resist them. He also suggested that he had not experienced negative consequences as a result of not conforming to expectations of closed, centre masculinities, unlike the participants who spoke of violence and danger as pressures of masculinity.

Will (Aus/Ber) discussed not conforming to the pressures and expectations of masculinity, particularly in relation to the pressure to drink alcohol. However, he described having developed the ability to ignore these pressures through his experience of having cancer when he was younger. One of Will's guiding principles since having cancer was not to have regrets, and this he achieved through always embracing opportunities. He explained 'basically if an opportunity comes along, you know, it's like they say, you regret the things you don't do'. Another statement integral to Will's ethos was 'feels wrong, stop doing it', and this he also related to expectations that men behave in particular ways. For example, Will discussed living in a small town as a teenager before being diagnosed with cancer, where he said drinking to excess was the norm for young people. As he described it, 'you get that sort of small town mentality, and like you're fucking thirteen, fourteen [years old], and kids are getting pissed on weekends and stuff like that'. He explained that he was 'getting dragged into that sort of shit and just like, it's kind of what you gotta do to fit in'.

When Will moved away from that small town, he realised he did not have to drink to excess anymore. In terms of the discussion of mobility as disruption, mobility to another location for Will caused a disruption that allowed him to cease this behaviour he found so undesirable. However, in his new town Will said that not engaging in binge drinking meant he felt that 'I still don't really know how that works, how that feels. Like am I supposed to still kind of conform or whatever in a different city?' Shortly after moving, Will was diagnosed with cancer. He said his cancer 'kind of validated things, more so than motivated in a sense'. Explaining this in relation to conforming to or resisting expectations in his new town, particularly around alcohol consumption, he said:

again it wasn't *because of* cancer, but it sort of validated that notion of just like, "no, like, you can live this for yourself". Um and yeah just kind of like, express yourself in whatever way that comes out, you know? And in that case it's just like "oh, I don't have to drink, that's cool". And I haven't drunk since.

Pressures of masculinity were playing out in Will's life at the time of his interview, as discussed in chapter four, around his inability for various reasons to drink coffee, milk and alcohol, leaving herbal tea as his only option when meeting friends. Will noted this was 'certainly not masculine in a sense', recognising further pressures of masculinity. However, at least in relation to alcohol consumption, he felt that his ethos of doing what felt good or right was more important than adherence to these pressure and norms.

Will, like Dirk and the large majority of participants, was a man from the centre and therefore had some capital to ignore or resist these pressures of masculinity. Will acknowledged his multiple, intersecting privileges, including the privileges of masculinity, stating 'I tick so many of those boxes of privilege, you know? It's like, white, cis, male, hetero, middle-class'. He pointed out that as a man he was instantly perceived as more competent in work situations, for example, than women. On the other hand, he joked:

I feel like on paper there's so many things that, you know, there's single working parent<sup>9</sup>, moving around. Like ticks in all these boxes, like "man you should be broken! Just incapable of human contact!" or something, you know? And you know like cancer as an adolescent, like all these sort of things, like "wow!".

Will recognised both privileges and pressures relating to masculinity but also surrounding other aspects of his life. He pointed out his privileges, but simultaneously narrated both the influence of, and his resistance to, pressures.

Lars (German) also spoke of the expectations around masculine behaviour. He felt there was pressure from society for heterosexual men to behave in a typically masculine way, saying 'there's also some kind of pressure, obviously, in society to be masculine. At least if you're straight'. For example, of sitting with his legs crossed, discussed in chapter four, Lars said:

like now I'm sitting with legs crossed because it's very comfortable. But at the same time I'm wondering "okay, I'm a straight man, I shouldn't sit like this, at least not for a long time. Men don't do this". [He later added] if I look at my male friends, most of them don't sit with legs crossed. Except one guy who is gay, so there we have that.

---

<sup>9</sup> Will was raised by his father.



Lars pointed out the pressures of appropriate masculine behaviour and sexual expression, and also the perpetuation of these pressures even within friendship groups. On the other hand, he was adamant that he did not like this pressure from society surrounding masculinity, and that he did not want to be ruled by it. Yet he was eager to have the ‘opportunity of connecting to my masculine side’, which will be explored in the subsequent section of this chapter. Lars said:

but also at the same time, I want to reduce that pressure that I make for myself. Because I don’t know, there also doesn’t need to be any pressure on me. I should be free to be the person that I want to be (laughs). So there’s this kind of pressure coming from society, when at the same time I want to free myself from that pressure, but then I also want to be more masculine. I don’t know. It’s very confusing to be a man.

Lars noted the contradictions, and in his words the confusion, of masculinities and of being a man. He did not enjoy the pressures of masculinity and wanted to resist these to an extent, but as I will explore he simultaneously had a desire to reconnect with what he perceived to be “true” or “essential” masculinity. Lars and participants who spoke of expectations surrounding men’s behaviour and alcohol consumption highlighted the contradictions and pressures of contemporary, closed masculinities, noting the ways they were influenced by these pressures but also how they resisted them in some respects.

### *Proscriptions against men’s emotions*

Participants spoke of the pressures on men to deny emotion and not seek help for problems. Men’s lack of help seeking is a particularly pressing topic given the rate of men’s suicide in Australia and Germany. In Australia 75 per cent of suicides each year are by men, and for men under 54 years of age suicide is the foremost cause of death (beyondblue n.d.). Only one in four men in Australia seek treatment for anxiety or depression (beyondblue n.d.). Meanwhile, in Germany in 2013 the death rate for suicide was 18.94 per 100,000 inhabitants for men compared to 5.82 for women (Eurostat n.d.).

The pressure to remain independent and to hide emotion left participants from all three groups to face their problems for the most part alone. Several of the men spoke of their difficulty expressing their emotions to others, particularly to other men, or spoke of their frustration that this denial of emotion was a requirement of masculinity. Evan (Australian), for example, said that he and his best, male friends could not express their emotions to one another, stating:

I know that in my friendship group, none of us sort of talk about, you know, kind of feelings, or emotions, or that kind of inner, experiential sort of stuff. I was sort of trying to, I guess, unpack a bit myself why that is, and I think potentially that it's about kind of presenting as strong, and presenting as, you know, masculine. And I think that's a bit sad.

I asked Evan if he meant that men had to look physically strong, and he replied:

no, more sort of just emotionally strong I think. Looking like you're not affected by things. Yeah, and I think that's sad because I think, I mean there's nothing wrong with having feelings or being affected by different situations.

Toby (Australian) spoke about requirements in his martial arts dojo for men who trained there not to express emotion despite the violence and pain experienced in that space. He said 'you don't want to really show weakness as such, but you're in an environment where you're bound to show weakness'. He told a story about a serious injury sustained by someone in his dojo, saying:

you don't cry or anything (laughs) like that, but you show obvious concern. And all the guys just flocked around the one dude who's trying his hardest not to yell or carry on or anything. Like it hurts, we all understand it would hurt like crap. It's hard not to worry about that kind of thing.

Toby later confirmed:

we don't talk about the pain, because there's obviously pain but it's just never addressed with a reaction or a response as such. If it was inflicted it's just kind of a quick word like "harden up" or "do you want me to go easier?"

Though Toby posited these experiences as building trust and respect between members of the dojo, his narratives paint a picture of the suppression of pain and emotion amongst men. Statements such as 'do you want me to go easier' might indicate concern amongst members for one another. However, these phrases could be seen as small insults or reprimands directed at fellow dojo members designed to call into question their ability to withstand pain. Interestingly, Toby revealed that this pain was a poorly kept secret; the men of the dojo knew the pain existed and even worried about it, but collectively downplayed it anyway. Toby also spoke about the suppression of emotion between him and his brothers and again about the collective denial of feelings in the following exchange:

Toby: We never say I enjoy your company, I don't think we've ever said I love you to one another. Me and my brothers have never had that, but it doesn't need to be said, as such.

Karla: It's just understood kind of?

Toby: Yeah. We don't say anything like that, we never get on even an emotional level and an advice level ... we don't really show when those bad things are happening either. We just kind of keep it all packed in, me and my brothers.

The words “packed in” conjure a fitting picture of the emotions men such as Toby have, but must nevertheless keep hidden and tightly locked away.

Participants such as Nathan (Australian), Will (Aus/Ber) and Grant (Aus/Ber) pointed out the traditional parameters of closed, centre masculinities but challenged these too. Nathan, for example, believed men should be able to express their emotions and that masculinity was:

slowly becoming a little bit more of a generalised term. It’s not as specific. [He found this] good because yeah, I don’t think men should have to be seen as men. They can be emotional when they want to.

Nathan then told a story about a time he ‘cried my eyes out’, something he said he was not afraid to admit. However, he continued:

Nathan: I think there are still definitely some people in this day and age that think that men still have that macho role to play, and they should always take the lead and yeah’.

Karla: Not show emotion and stuff.

Nathan: That’s right.

Furthermore, Will (Aus/Ber) told a story about a male friend who had spoken to him about his mental health. Will saw this emotional disclosure as positive, but noted:

it’s not a manly thing to be discussing or laying out there, like that’s the sort of thing like you suppress. Like you don’t show signs of weakness, you know? You’re supposed to be that strong, just like a solid rock, you know?

Grant (Aus/Ber) relatedly thought it was important to him to have meaningful conversations with his friends, but that some men were unable to reciprocate this level of disclosure. He explained:

I don’t fuck around, I go deep. I go deep with my buddies. And some guys you talk to, you can’t go deep with them. Just like they’ve got so much of a block, or they’re just like totally oblivious.

On the other hand, Grant indicated a kind of blockage of his own in terms of emotional disclosure within his family. He said of his brother:

we still care for each other, we still do things for each other, but we just never, ever, ever talk (laughs). Um, same with my parents, like they’ll, you know, want to talk to me, but I just want my own space.

Felix (Aus/Ber) had decided since moving to Berlin that he was no longer interested in small talk with friends. He said ‘I’ve identified that I want to have very *deep* friendships, deep connections with people’. He was grateful that he had this deep connection with an Australian

male friend who was also living in Berlin, but thought this was ‘quite a unique connection for two Australians, two Australian men’. Alex (Aus/Ber), as I explore in chapter six, struggled deeply with issues of masculinity, particularly because he wanted so desperately to have male friends with whom he could talk about emotions and who would open up and disclose their feelings and fears to him.

Ashley (Aus/Ber) was another participant who felt that his male friends in Australia were out of touch with their feelings, and Sven (German) noted the prohibitions against men expressing emotion, but felt that in Berlin it was more acceptable. Sven had been surprised upon moving away from his small hometown to find that his male friends in Berlin would tell him they missed him or express more emotive attitudes. Sven somewhat bemusedly recounted:

the guys [in Berlin] were telling me this, you know, and I was like “fuck, you cannot say this”, you know? Because [in] my hometown it’s not like easy to say something like this. Like you have to be a guy, you know?

Several of the participants I interviewed found it somewhat easier to express their feelings and emotions to women, generally to female friends. They nevertheless painted a picture of the difficulties they experienced opening up, especially to men, and confiding their emotions to others, or even admitting they had emotions at all. They suppressed emotion, at times collectively downplayed or denied it and presented themselves as strong and unhurt under a rather thin, yet durable veneer of secrecy.

### *Independence and (lack of) help seeking*

Connected to these blockages to expressing emotion was the desire of some participants to remain independent, and their inability or unwillingness to ask for or accept help from others. Dependence was deeply challenging for some men and help seeking was difficult, though some participants could do it or were learning to become more competent at it. Anthony (Australian), for example, had learnt through his volunteer work that:

for men it’s a bit hard for them to go and get help. Like say, for example, they might sort of go and talk to their friends about things. But generally, maybe as opposed to girls, they tend to keep bottled up a bit more often and don’t deal with it as much ... because in terms of masculinity, even though it’s not really that applicable these days, it’s sort of more a draw back to the old days, but it’s sort of seen as a weakness to need to get help or something like that.

Anthony acknowledged change in masculinities in this statement along with ‘a draw back to the old days’. He confessed that he himself was not good at seeking help, stating ‘being a guy myself, I sort of know how hard it can be to get help [and] it’s sort of difficult to push yourself to get that help’. At one point Anthony had, however, sought help from a friend. Nevertheless, he said:

I generally try not to reveal too much of what’s going on in my life to most people, because either I don’t feel close enough to them, or I just don’t really want to bother them. A lot of the time I feel like I sort of would be burdening someone if I let them know that I was going through a hard time.

Sebastian (German) confirmed that it was ‘a guy thing’ (*‘eine Typ Sache’*) to not call friends and admit to problems, and Torsten (German) illustrated this reluctance to seek help or accept care. Torsten said ‘due to my family history I like to (pauses) be as capable as possible, care for myself’. However, Torsten also suggested that care helps the carer, saying ‘a big lesson I learnt is, if someone wants to care for you, you let them care, because it helps them’. Lars (German) felt very strongly about remaining independent. He stressed:

that’s an important point, I try not to be dependent on any friends or group of friends [and] I’m always very independent and I can do what I want. [He continued] maybe I even have some kind of issues with getting too close to people.

Lars believed that his fear of becoming dependent on anyone else stemmed from anxiety over what would happen to him if the connection to that person was lost. However, he also suggested ‘I just never ask for [help] because I don’t need so much [of it]’.

Ashley (Aus/Ber) was yet another participant who struggled to accept care or help from others because, he said, ‘there’s this real independent side of me that’s like “I have to do all this by myself, and like I’ll care for myself”’. Ashley felt that self-care was very important and he was happy to care for himself, but this was connected to the independence of doing everything on his own. He wondered whether this idea of independence:

comes from this male mentality. Or if that’s the male mentality of “no no no no no no I can’t (pauses) I can’t, like you can help, but at the end of the day I have to do this myself.

Discussing independence again later in his interview, Ashley said ‘the independence is always so driving and can be a little bit, um, can become the shadow side I guess’.

However, Ashley said that more recently he had allowed himself to:

be in a situation that's like "no, I need help". To accept that I actually need help. And I need the support, and it's not a w— it's okay to be weak. It's okay to have that weakness of being. It's okay that you need to rely, not rely, but receive that extra care.

Ashley said, though, that arriving at a point where he could accept help had taken him a very long time. Felix (Aus/Ber) too thought he was getting better at accepting care, but in general felt that he was not as deserving of care as others. He said 'I feel more comfortable giving care than receiving care. Or being the supportive one rather than being supported'.

Jason (Aus/Ber) was another participant who was reluctant to go to others for help, feeling he should not 'wallow' in his problems. He said 'if I'm in a shit place, I actually don't ring friends normally. I get myself out of it [and] only I can pull myself out of a problem'. Although Jason said friends might help by distracting him from his troubles, these troubles were never spoken about amongst his friends and affection for one another was almost always implied rather than expressed. Jason would, however, seek help from a woman he described as having 'some cool, I guess non-mainstream techniques of helping you work through things'. These techniques included beating or shouting at objects, which Jason found helped him to feel better. Methods such as these, however, link to closed ideas of men's violence and aggression and perhaps reflect the quest to uncover "true" or "essential" masculinity, a theme I explore in the final section of this chapter.

Bernd (German) stated 'I always think I can do everything on my own, but it's just not the case' (*'ich denke halt immer ich kann alles alleine machen, aber ist halt nicht'*). Even Manni, who as I explore in chapter six had taken on caring masculinity, had struggled with seeking help for himself. He described himself as 'more the person who listens than to go out and talk' and as 'very much a caretaker'. Manni said he was not very good at taking care of himself, even though he believed it was important. This was because, he said:

I spend so much time trying to take care of others that I don't take care of myself. But for one, I think it's a better way than, you know, just taking care of yourself.

Although Manni felt his friends would help him if he asked, he said 'I'm just not as forthcoming with my own problems'. Later he repeated:

I think the biggest problem is actually me taking the initiative to go to people and ask for help, which was more difficult for me when I was younger, and which I did not do so often when I was younger.

However, he felt he had become better with seeking help, saying ‘nowadays I’m like “yeah sure”, if I have the feeling I need it then I go and ask for help’. Furthermore, Manni, along with participants such as Anthony (Australian), Will (Aus/Ber) and Alex (Aus/Ber), in fact found their interviews with me to be very positive experiences. This was precisely because it was a situation in which they were able to, and in fact were required to, talk about their emotions.

However, in their everyday lives the participants discussed in this section found they could not, or would not, ask others for help. Furthermore, some believed that it was inappropriate to offer help to others, or demonstrated care incompetence to an extent. They were willing to assist those in need, but suggested that people first had to ask for assistance. Evan (Australian), for example, spoke of helping a friend in need. He said ‘I think, you know, I had to let him probably approach me, for that to be a safe place for him to talk about that’. Martin (German) said ‘people need to tell you also that they are not fine’. Furthermore, Sven spoke of trying very hard in the past to help a sick friend, but finding out later that ‘when I was trying to help him, I always put more pressure on him. So for him it was like kind of bad when I tried to help’. Sven, putting a somewhat different spin on the idea of openness to the one I explore in chapter six, continued by saying:

so I’m not trying to do that anymore. I just say to people if they need me, I’m here, you know? And I always tell everybody if they want, if they need somebody, I’m definitely there to help, but they have to say it, you know? So I’m not on my own there, like I don’t want to push people, they have to come to me, or they have to say something if they want help. First they have to be open for help.

### *Contradictions and costs: the fault lines of closed masculinities*

Narratives from the participants about men’s emotions and help seeking demonstrated that they faced numerous barriers in their emotional lives, particularly surrounding the challenges of accepting help or becoming dependent. The desire to retain independence and proscriptions against men expressing emotion meant that they did not ask for help. Some even felt that directly offering help was inappropriate. The participants were, therefore, largely alone in dealing with their problems. The emphasis on independence in the closed centre contrasts with the valuing of interdependence, or dependence free from domination, in the feminist ethic of care as conceptualised by Held (2006), Kittay (1999) and Tronto (1993). Maintaining independence and suppressing emotion or emotional needs were serious costs of masculinity

for many of the participants across all three groups, despite the simultaneous privileges of masculinity they enjoyed. This reveals the importance of challenging closed, centre masculinities with their insistence on independence and their erasure of men's emotional lives and concerns.

Participants spoke about the costs, or pressures, of masculinity in relation to the threat of violence between men, alcohol consumption, expected male behaviours and difficulties seeking help. Some participants were able to recognise the privileges of masculinity, but few were entirely convinced that it did not involve costs. Many participants both resisted norms of closed, centre masculinities and drew on them when useful. On the other hand, the costs and contradictions discussed in this section reveal some of the fault lines of ideals of closed, centre masculinities. These fractures highlight the possibility for change, particularly when participants questioned dictates of closed, centre masculinities and their costs. As Kimmel (2010) and Messner (1997) suggest, focusing on both the costs of masculinity and men's privileges can lead to more effective interventions aimed at men's change than arguments based solely on moral responsibility. The participants' experiences and recognition of the pressures of masculinity might therefore provide useful starting points for furthering the conversation around men adopting more open expressions of masculinity.

### **“Essential” masculinity: lost but recoverable**

Another contradiction of masculinity was that despite the pressures outlined in the previous section and costs of masculinity noted by participants, some of these men were not willing to retire older, more traditional versions of closed masculinity. Several participants from all three groups were concerned about the vanishing of place and identity for men in the contemporary world, which they believed was partly the result of the successes of the women's movement. Some felt that what they saw as “true” or “essential” masculinity had been lost to them, but existed somewhere and was recoverable or re-discoverable. These ideas reflected discourses of backlash against feminism found in, for example, the mass media or the mythopoeic men's movement, as explored by Heilmann (2015), Kimmel (2010), Messner (1997) and Whitehead (2002). However, they were simultaneously reflections of men's sense of loss or grief in post-industrial economies, particularly with the decline of traditional work for men. These participants were searching for a masculinity they felt would be more authentic for them.



In this section I begin by investigating stories from participants suggesting that men's place and identity had been lost. At times they blamed their grief over a loss of men's traditional employment or roles in neoliberal late modernity on feminism. I then consider the search for "true" or "essential" masculinity, focussing on the narratives told by three participants: Lars (German), Grant (Aus/Ber) and Alex (Aus/Ber). These narratives of true masculinity were told along with their acknowledgements of the pressures, dangers and violences of masculinity, pointing again to contradictions, challenges and also possibilities of ideas, beliefs and hopes about masculine projects amongst these men.

### *Narratives of loss of men's place and identity*

Hearn (2001) suggests that men's sense of entitlement to power constitutes a barrier to engaging men in gender equality, and Kimmel (2010) points out the defensiveness of men when they are asked by feminism to relinquish some of this power. Men from all three groups of participants in my study spoke about a perceived loss of place and identity for men in a world of feminist successes. They conveyed a sense of grief over the loss of men's traditional roles in post-industrial economies, but seemed to posit feminism and women's empowerment as some of the main reasons for men's feeling of being adrift in the world. They nevertheless stated that feminism and equality were positive, thereby confirming expected attitudes of progressive young men in the contemporary era.

Ashley (Aus/Ber), who identified as gay, clearly reflected notions of loss for men as a result of women's empowerment in his narratives. He believed there had been a kind of gender reversal in Berlin that had gone too far. He spoke of this at length after discussing his dissatisfaction with how constricted and bounded he believed masculinity in Australia to be:

it's almost gone a little bit too far in Germany, where the masculinity and femininity have almost switched, and the females have such this independence that the males have become almost made redundant. It's like, they're so emasculated. It's interesting because ... German women, and women in general, are realising that there's no need for this housewife role ... like it's not necessary, "we [women] can do everything, if not more, on our own". And the male, which is also a little terrifying, has reached the point where he doesn't know where he's supposed to stand. He's no longer the provider, he's no longer the hunter gatherer ... He has an independent character, and therefore this becomes a lot more complex. Not necessarily because it's not equal, it's because it's once again that the roles aren't clear. There's no way of working out how they can like, complete each other or function in that sense. So I'm not saying that males should become these real feminine - which is super present here in Berlin, that it's even

difficult for me to distinguish who's straight and who's gay. The masculinity is so, so *lacking*. It's so, like the males are so very uncertain. Just that feeling that there's this real "who am I?" in masculinity here.

Ashley's narrative portrayed men in Germany as lost, directionless and overly effeminate and posed some resistance to more openness of masculinities. He felt the complementarity of the sexes had been lost and that the separate roles for men and women in Germany were unclear, a statement that was slightly puzzling given his own identification as a gay man. On the contrary, as I explored in chapter four, Sven from Germany actually portrayed women in Germany as the directionless sex. Ashley still stated that he preferred German masculinity even though he thought it had become too effeminate, as I explore in chapter six. Yet he said the reason for men's uncertainty in Germany, or their questioning of their identity, was 'because they've had such a strong movement of females here. And it's just this very, very empowering female country'. Ashley believed the 'powerful feminine figure', as he described German women, was positive. However, he did still seem to posit the cause of this empowered female figure — the women's movement in Germany — as the root of the problem of men's feminisation and their lack of place and identity in the late modern world.

Jason, another Australian man living in Berlin, explained his sense that men had become more feminine in recent years, saying:

traditionally if you think man is the strong killer (laughs), but like you know, that holds the family together. And I guess yeah, that's definitely changing. *I* think men are becoming more and more feminine. Like I seriously, I really do. And I think it's definitely evident here [in Berlin] more than in Australia. Um, yeah *definitely*.

Jason spoke about masculine energy as strong and confident and feminine energy as supportive, intuitive and in touch with feelings, then later asserted again:

Jason: I think we all have elements of both [energies] ... and I think that men are starting to get in touch with those elements more. Or maybe it's always been the case, but it's just what I'm noticing.

Karla: Like a change over time kind of?

Jason: I guess so. I really, yeah, actually no, I really do, I think so, like yeah. And you see it ... in like younger kids coming through. They're *so*, like they're *so* feminine. Like it's, younger males. Like um I really, ah.

Karla: So they're not like the sporty type kind of?

Jason: They're not like the macho, like fight in the school yard type of, yeah. That's still out there, for sure. But um, yeah.

Karla: Less so?

Jason: Yeah, less so I think.

Jason was not the only participant to use gendered frames of reference to discuss masculine and feminine “energies”. Ashley (Aus/Ber) described “masculine energy” as pertaining to qualities such as strength and perseverance and “feminine energy” as involving nurturing, care and tenderness. Like Jason, Ashley believed both men and women could have aspects of masculine and feminine energies, which he saw as ‘that driving force within the individual that I guess paints or colours the way they act’. The narratives considered so far in this section reveal the idea of men having become more feminine. Though this was seen as a loss of masculinity or a gender reversal, the changing nature of work in the post-industrial context requires men to increasingly take on more “feminine” characteristics in employment in order to be successful in service and white collar work (Hopkins 2009; Huppatz & Goodwin 2013; Roberts 2012).

Lars (German) was another participant to convey a sense of being adrift or out of place in the world, saying ‘I find being a man especially hard in today’s times’. The idea that masculinity had been lost was also taken up by Evan (Australian) in the following conversation:

Evan: I think it’s an interesting time for the concept of masculinity because we live in a time where those traditional ideas of what it means are breaking down. And there’s *greater* equality between the genders. Probably not full equality still, there’s [still] different work to sort of go. But I think that’s kind of, you know, even sort of with the rise of feminism and that sort of stuff, I think it’s shaped what it means to be male quite dramatically in the space of thirty or forty years.

Karla: I was talking about that today actually, it’s amazing how quickly things have changed. Not just for women but also for men in a way.

Evan: Yeah, sure. And I mean a lot of it’s really positive. But I think when you get that sort of drastic change, at the same time I think, you know? I guess, I suppose men are kind of left behind in a sense to establish, well, what is the place? What’s the way to act?

Evan supported feminism and equality in this narrative but at the same time was aware that it required a change from men. This was a change he believed men were struggling with to an extent.

Alex (Aus/Ber) similarly felt that men had lost their place and identity in the modern world. As discussed in chapter four, he felt that rituals of and initiations into masculinity had disappeared from post-industrial societies and could only to be found amongst “tribes”, as he put it. With this belief, Alex echoed Messner’s (1997, p. 20) analysis of the mythopoeic men’s movement as lamenting the loss of “tribal” ‘emotional communion and collective spiritual transcendence’. Alex furthermore drew on the discourse of men in crisis and attributed this crisis partly to the changing roles of women. He noted that ‘women have had it tough’ and that

this had improved somewhat ‘in the western, modern world’, a development he found positive. However, lamenting the loss of separate spheres for women and men he continued:

I think conversely that men are sort of losing their identity. If women stay at home and cook [inaudible]. She’s got a role. She’s safe and secure knowing who she is, that’s her identity. The man? He’s safe and secure knowing who he is! While he’s got the wife that’s going to stay at home, all he needs to worry about is taking care of the kids and the wife, earning the money, and when the time comes being responsible and taking charge. He’s got a really nice, secure “I am a man. This is what it means to be a man”. And so now, do we have these roles anymore? Do we have the identity as [inaudible]? We don’t!

A short time later, Alex conveyed a lay understanding of reflexive modernisation (Beck, Bonss & Lau 2003) and a sense of grief over the loss of security in gender roles, saying:

I think that’s why men are in crisis ... here we’ve got lots of choice, everyone’s free and blah blah blah, and it’s like “oh, that’s all great”. But there’s all these undercurrents of change that are happening, and they’re really making people second guess and really question their identities.

Manni drew attention to the challenges facing men in East Germany after the fall of the wall. He stated:

for the last 25 years since the wall fell down, you have the interesting situation that quite often now the woman is actually the big provider of family income. So apart from, you know, being unemployed, I do think that for many men it feels kind of emasculated. So I do think that a big part of the rage and problem also against, for instance recently foreigners, or what they perceive as foreigners, is also part of them feeling kind of emasculated. So I do think part of trying to combat all of that hate is enabling people to deconstruct their own strict ways of how they view themselves as a masculine man.

Manni’s analysis, and the narratives considered in this section from other participants, are reminders of structural problems young men face in neoliberal late modernity in conjunction with closed, centre masculinities. Some participants in this research directed blame for those problems towards feminism and the women’s movement, while their sense of loss more accurately pertained to changed roles for men in neoliberal, post-industrial economies.

### *The search for “true” masculinity*

Three participants, Lars (German), Grant (Aus/Ber) and Alex (Aus/Ber), spoke of their search for a more “essential” masculinity. Lars said ‘it’s hard to define what masculinity means for me’, yet described himself as ‘obviously not the macho type of man’. He explained:

Lars: Sometimes I struggle a bit with how to express my masculinity or how to be masculine. Because I dunno, especially in today's times, where a lot of people. I don't know, I'm not a man who goes out hunting, I'm a man who sits in front of the computer all day.

Karla: But you said it's something you struggle to express, or, or did you say that?

Lars: Yeah I did.

Karla: Because you're not going out hunting animals? Or like?

Lars: Yeah. Or not going out hunting women.

Karla: Yeah. Okay.

Lars: (Laughing) Or hunting. Exactly. I don't know, yeah.

Lars felt he had been locked out of a more essential, authentic masculinity as a man in a late modern, de-industrialised society in which desk and computer based work dominated. The phrase '[e]xactly. I don't know' further highlighted his confusion and questioning around masculinity and being a man.

Lars' statement about 'hunting women' revealed his discontent with masculinity was connected not just with work but also with changed relationships between women and men in late modernity. He admitted he looked up to very masculine seeming men, saying 'I think "okay, I want, I would like to at least be able to express my masculinity in a way that he does"'. Lars' motivation for this pursuit of what seemed to him like true masculinity was, in his words, 'I guess to make this kind of impression [of] what women maybe want'. As described, Lars felt there was pressure from society for heterosexual men to act in typically masculine ways. He therefore painted a picture of an essential, "hunter" masculinity that women found attractive.

Lars told me 'I would definitely say I want the opportunity of connecting to my masculine side (laughing) in a way. I guess that's something I want to explore'. However, when I asked him what getting in touch with his masculine side would mean, he answered:

I don't know, I really don't know. I guess it's thinking about it and talking to other people about it. And being more relaxed about it, so I can just express my natural personality.

Here, Lars interestingly suggested a movement away from more closed, centre masculinities: rather than exploring masculinity through hunting, he wanted to get in touch with it through talking with others. This reflected the back and forth movement that characterised narratives of masculinity explored throughout this chapter. Again as discussed, Lars wanted to reduce the pressure he placed on himself and the pressure from society surrounding expectations of masculinity. He expressed the idea that there was a natural, essential Lars hidden under mounds of self-inflicted pressure and societal pressure and expectations, such as the expectation discussed in the previous section that men sit and act in certain, heterosexually appropriate ways.

Lars seemed to believe that he should have been able to simply ignore society's pressures surrounding masculinity, which somewhat paradoxically would have enabled him to be himself and uncover his true, essential masculinity. One way in which Lars had attempted to explore his masculinity was by getting together with some male friends to discuss issues of masculinity. Lars explained that the idea of this meeting, at which women were not allowed, was 'to do manly stuff and talk about what it means to be a man'. However, he said that in the end he and his friends simply played a "male sport" and 'didn't really talk'.

Like Lars, Grant (Aus/Ber) said he tried not to worry about masculinity, believing that simply following one's own path was part of being a man. Grant nevertheless found ignoring masculinity difficult at times. He felt that men were given messages about appropriate masculinity from, for example, the media, but like Lars he spoke about trying to ignore these messages and instead follow his own path and passions. He explained:

Grant: The part [of masculinity] that I choose to engage in is kind of just (pauses) trying *not* to worry about it. 'Coz I do a little bit. Um and just really just focus on my life. Because that, I feel like that is, just going on your own path is what kind of makes you a man, um, is to lead your own way. So I think "Grant, stop worrying about all that sort of stuff".

Karla: I mean, what do you worry about? Or what would you worry about?

Grant: Um, I mean, everyone else has their ideas of like what it means to be a man. Um, the media tries to feed you shit and there's like conspiracy theories and stuff about how they're trying to brainwash you into becoming a little, um, domesticated pussy (laughs), and just like work hard for tax money, and buy cars, and buy this and buy that. Because that gets you the (speaking sarcastically) model woman. Because you have the car and the wrist watch and all the fancy stuff. And really it's not, it's kind of your personality, and just, do you have good energy? That wins you all sorts of stuff amongst men and women. But yeah that's kind of just what I wanna focus on. Like, if I'm just passionate about what I do, not only do I enjoy that, not only do I enjoy my own good energy, but other people do, and it's just like, other people wanna come along for my ride because I'm leading the way, or something like that.

Here Grant touched on issues of masculinity in relation to the media, consumption and the idea that men had become "domesticated pussies". Following one's own path and being true to one's self were offered by Grant as a remedies to what he saw as these ills of post-industrial society.

Alex was another participant who spoke of searching for true masculinity. This was particularly notable given that he was also one of the participants I explore in chapter six who had moved rather significantly towards more open, fluid expressions of masculinity. This disjuncture again highlights the contradictions of masculinities, showing that while some of these men demonstrated movements towards openness, they continued to be pulled to the closed centre at

the same time. Alex spoke of a desire for more openness and emotional connection between men and for less rigid adherence to gender roles in Australia, as I will address in chapter six. Nevertheless, he expressed some disappointment that he had not been able to find himself “as a man” in Australian society. He stated ‘I’m still looking for it, in society, to tell me “here, you’re a man”. I can’t find it’. Alex was seeking a form of masculinity that would feel authentic for him in his context, a form of masculinity for which he felt there were few role models in his life. This perceived lack of role models was illustrated by his yearning for the masculinity initiation rituals of “tribes” and his disappointment that his father had not been a good masculine role model for him, as explored in chapter four.

The search for a true or essential masculinity and lamentations over its loss in a world of supposed feminist successes sat for several of these participants alongside their acknowledgement of the pressures and costs of masculinity. The privileges of masculinity further complicate this picture, again highlighting the contradictions and challenges of masculinities. Some participants stated feminism and equality were positive but nevertheless blamed feminism for a perceived loss of place and identity for men. They largely failed to see the role of neoliberal late modernity in contributing to their feelings of being cast adrift, and some did not recognise the continuing privileges they enjoyed alongside their sense of loss.

The search for true masculinity highlights the importance of collective interventions by feminists and profeminist men. Men such as Alex, Grant and Lars were searching for a different kind of masculinity to the one offered to them in the closed centre. They hoped to expand the possibilities of masculine expression, but struggled to find ways to do so or to be supported in these endeavours. This suggests the necessity of challenging continuing closed discourses of masculinity and instead ensuring options are available for young men searching for alternative modes of masculinity to move towards the greater openness of masculinities fostered by those in the margin.

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I have explored both challenges and possibilities for more open masculinities through the nuances of mobile masculinities. I began by looking at mobility as generative disruption as it progressed the careers and personal lives of German participants in particular

and participants in Australia to an extent. Boundaries of closed, centre masculinities remained in place with the continuing connection to paid work and career as these young men adapted to employment precarity through mobility and flexibility. On the other hand, as I demonstrate in the following chapter, Australian men living in Berlin tended to reject this focus on career in conjunction with developing more open expressions of masculinity.

The narratives of privileges and pressures of masculinity I subsequently explored revealed that although some men recognised the costs of masculinity, they were not ready to give up more closed, centre expressions of masculinity entirely. Again, they drew on norms of masculinity strategically at times and resisted them at others. Nevertheless, the costs and contradictions of masculinity reveal fault lines that can offer ways forward for challenging closed, centre masculinities. Finally, I considered narratives of the loss of men's place and identity and the search for "true" or "essential" masculinity. The search for this masculinity despite its costs highlighted yearning amongst some participants for the certainty of earlier gender roles or for new ways to experience an authentic version of masculinity that would be viable in post-industrial Berlin. This finding underscores the importance of collective interventions by feminists and profeminist men aimed at fostering more open alternatives such as caring masculinity for young men.

Alex's (Aus/Ber) narratives highlighted the contradictions and possibilities of mobile masculinities particularly clearly. He spoke of his disappointment that men could not be open with their emotions, and he longed for emotive, close connections with male friends, as I explore in chapter six. In chapter four I showed that he was upset at the emotional closedness of his father. Yet at the same time, Alex was searching for what he saw as lost, essential masculinity, which he thought was recoverable but difficult for him to find. This was, furthermore, a masculinity into which he felt he should have been initiated by his father. As I noted in chapter four, Alex's idea of a good male role model was not necessarily an open, emotive one, despite his sadness at his father's emotional closedness. Then again, as I explore in the next chapter, Alex was a participant who had made significant steps towards more open expressions of masculinity. Alex's narratives offered some of the clearest examples of the contradictions of masculinity uncovered amongst the participants. However, these nuances crossed all three groups of men, revealing both possibilities for trajectories towards openness combined with continuing challenges to this movement.



## CHAPTER SIX

### EMERGING OPENNESS OF MASCULINITIES

#### Introduction

In the previous two chapters I considered firstly continuing expressions of closed, centre masculinities and the pull of the centre and secondly challenges and possibilities of mobile masculinities. In this chapter, I move to exploring trajectories towards openness of masculinities discovered amongst participants, particularly those living in Berlin. I have argued throughout this thesis that the intersecting of margin and centre highlights that men of the centre can move towards the greater openness fostered by those in the margin. Amongst some of the participants living in Berlin, steps of varying length and number towards openness of masculinities could be discerned. Australian men in Berlin were taking significant steps towards openness as their move to the city assisted them to reconfigure the connections between paid work, life and masculinity. Examples of the emerging movements towards increased openness were present in certain of the practices and ideas amongst the young German men I interviewed. In this chapter I also explore narratives of caring masculinity from one participant in the margin, Manni. These narratives demonstrate the richness of open masculinities in the margin.

Openness was a quality that was valued by participants, and many of those in Germany saw Berlin as an open city welcoming of people of diverse cultures, ethnicities and, in particular, sexualities. I nevertheless continue to focus on the pull of the closed centre and on more closed narratives of masculinity throughout this chapter. I begin this chapter by exploring the ways in which participants saw Berlin as an open city, and their extension of openness and of “reflectivity” to themselves and others close to them. I then analyse the interplay of mobility, work and masculinity amongst longer-term Australian men in Berlin. Moving to Berlin allowed these men to break the importance of career to life. With paid work no longer a defining feature of their lives, a link to closed, centre masculinities was broken, and these participants demonstrated more fluid, open expressions of masculinity. In addition, however, I consider the shorter-term participants in Berlin who continued to exhibit more closed forms of masculinity.

Next, I investigate some of the practices and modes of masculinity amongst the German participants that could be considered windows of potentiality for a movement towards openness, while keeping their more closed discourses around different and unequal roles for women, explored in chapter four, firmly in mind. Finally, I present the narratives of Manni, a German participant from the margin who, I suggest, had adopted caring masculinity. Manni's stories illuminate the richness and possibilities of the open masculinities that can flourish in the margin as a site of radical openness. Throughout this chapter I therefore reveal openness in the margin and trajectories of men of the centre towards more open expressions of masculinity.

### **Openness, reflectivity and Berlin**

Openness was a commonly mentioned theme amongst the German participants and the Australian men living in Berlin. These men described Berlin as an open city and valued openness and "reflectivity" both in themselves and others. They believed Berlin was diverse in terms of culture and migration and in particular saw this city as open because it was accepting and supportive of gay people. This open city provided the setting for the Australian participants in Berlin to find alternative ways of life and expressions of masculinity after the disruption of their move away from Australia. In this section I first consider ideas amongst the participants of Berlin as an open city before exploring the value several of the participants placed on openness and reflectivity, both in themselves and others.

#### *Diverse cultures and sexualities in Berlin*

One way participants viewed Berlin as open was that they saw it as a place full of cultural diversity and one welcoming of people from outside Germany. For instance, one reason Xavier (Aus/Ber) chose to move to Berlin specifically was he 'kind of thought Berlin was a good mix of having lots of expats and international people of my own age living here'. Xavier also found Berlin less 'hectic' than where he had lived in Australia. This sentiment was echoed by Jason (Aus/Ber), who described Berlin as 'really relaxing' and Lars (German), who called Berlin 'actually pretty relaxed for a big city'. Ashley (Aus/Ber) spoke of Berlin as allowing people the space for self-reflection and exploration, stating he:

had a bit of a like existential crisis, "what am I?" Like, 'coz Berlin can bring that upon you as well because there's just so much possibility, and you're I guess confronted with yourself on a

more regular basis. 'Coz there is just a little bit *less*. It's less busy than other cities, you have that time.

Ashley laughingly described Berlin as:

almost like not a real city [and] an exception to the rest of the world. [He said] this city is so filled with like, such a wide range of people.

Will (Aus/Ber) spoke of having:

tapped into parts of communities here where I just feel like I can fit in, belong there. [He continued] I just find, yeah, just cities with more diversity I guess just feel, like you can, I mean just by being, the virtue of being more diverse, there's more chance that people will be more aligned to your values somewhere in that gradient of personalities. Like that's my spot.

Felix (Aus/Ber) did not speak about the perceived openness of Berlin specifically in relation to cultures or sexualities, but he did see the city as a very welcoming and open one, which as I explore subsequently enabled him to explore more fluid, open expressions of masculinity. He described the people he had met in Berlin as open and accepting, for example calling them:

*great*, just amazing people. Like the kind of people I wanted to meet, kind of with this more, this openness to really learning about who you are and not kind of looking at you and just judging you.

Grant (Aus/Ber), on the other hand, expressed the opposite sentiment to many other participants. He felt that people in Berlin were:

actually so alternative that they're actually a bit close minded to, I suppose, mainstream ways, because they really reject it ... it's one thing to be open minded and just let everyone be, it's another thing to think differently and start making judgements and attacks on other people.

Grant said he had experienced some disdain from people in Berlin as a result of this closed-mindedness. He furthermore felt that people there did not talk with strangers as much as they did where he had lived in Australia.

German participants such as Lars compared Berlin to the small hometowns in which they had grown up. Lars described his hometown as 'kind of boring and still too close-minded', while Frank (German) suggested 'of course there are regions in Germany where people are generally more open or less open'. Martin (German) too described his hometown as very different to Berlin and not as exciting, and Manni (German) left his hometown for Berlin because he wanted to 'have a more diverse experience and, like, more interesting people and more international [in] the big city'. Manni described Berlin as 'more fluid' than his hometown and

Alex (Aus/Ber) called it 'such an open place'. Finally, Christopher (Aus/Ber) spoke of his friends in Berlin as 'a lot more mixtures of cultural backgrounds', while in his small hometown in Australia most of his friends were white Australians. Referring to my own regional Australian hometown, Christopher explained:

we're both from smallish towns, it's not as though there's many people of an immigrant background ... But here [in Berlin] it adds something to it, it makes a difference I guess.

Participants from Germany and Australian participants in Berlin viewed Berlin as open in its acceptance of gay people and people who do not conform to conventionally accepted gender expressions. Dirk (German) for instance found Germany, and Berlin in particular, liberal in terms of gender expression, roles and behaviours, stating:

I guess in that regard Germany is pretty liberal, and people don't frown upon you for, especially in Berlin if you think about it, you know; you can see men wearing women's clothes and everyone's like "yup, seen that today. Nothing too exciting" (laughs). But I guess if you live in a smaller town somewhere most people would stare at you, I assume.

Martin (German) similarly believed Berlin was an open city in terms of masculinity, describing it as 'quite an open city. Open minded city', alluding to less strict norms in Berlin about what it means to be a man or a woman.

Manni (German, queer) meanwhile named Berlin as 'kind of like the queer capital in Europe in a way', saying that in Berlin 'there is much more fluidity in people and the way they present themselves'. He especially compared this to the more homogenous experience he had had of queer communities in the USA. Manni explained:

the kind of variety you have, or like the spectrum you have [of] what is considered masculine in Germany, or at least in Berlin, [is] more open than a lot of places in the US. But I also do think it very much depends on where in Germany you are. I mean in Berlin, like most parts of Berlin, I think it's more, it's easier not to, to not fulfil very narrow masculine traits.

Four of the Australian men in Berlin spoke about this openness of Berlin in regards to sexuality and gender, in particular noting the visibility of gay people in Berlin. Jason (Aus/Ber) discussed his belief that men were becoming more and more feminine, particularly in Germany. As discussed in chapter four, he expressed what he saw as the normalcy of non-heterosexual patterns of sexuality in Berlin, seeing this as more socially acceptable than in Australia. Alex (Aus/Ber) saw the gay community in Berlin as 'massive, it's open, it's great', and Kevin (Aus/Ber) said 'I think they're very open though here to, um, there's a lot of gay people here

in Berlin, and people are very open and cool about it'. Shane (Aus/Ber), on the other hand, did not focus specifically on Berlin as an open city, believing instead that men can be more open about their sexuality in general when they are travelling or away from their usual environments. However, as discussed in chapter four, while these Australian men in Berlin noted the openness in Berlin to sexuality, they retained some discomfort around being perceived as gay themselves.

### *Open men in an open city*

Twelve of the twenty participants living in Berlin attributed the quality of openness to themselves or to those close to them or valued openness highly. The trait of "reflectivity" was similarly valued amongst some of the German participants. Martin (German) was one participant who called himself open minded, and Sven (German) spoke about both Berlin and his openness when describing himself, stating:

I like to be in Berlin, I like to live in a big city. I would consider myself as an open, you know like, to everybody. You know I don't know, to homosexuals<sup>10</sup>, to people from other countries, to everything you know? Just, I would consider myself like this.

As noted in chapter five, Sven found his male friends in Berlin more open in expressing their emotions and feelings for one another than men in his hometown. On the contrary, Torsten (German) argued that 'Australians in general are more positive, more open minded'.

Alex (Aus/Ber) described himself as 'a very open person' and highly valued openness. He emphasised the importance to him of emotional openness in his relationships with friends and his father and in relationships between men in general. Felix (Aus/Ber) was one participant who had found a very close, male friend in Berlin. Of this friend Felix told me:

it's interesting thinking about what it actually is, like what this friendship actually is. It's more of a feeling. And when I think about him, and when we hang out, it's more of a really relaxed, open feeling. It's like I can be myself and he can be himself.

Felix valued the accepting friends he had made in Berlin around whom he felt he could be himself, often describing these people as open in various ways. Felix furthermore wanted to

---

<sup>10</sup> Describing gay people as "homosexuals" jars in the English language and is generally avoided in its German form (*homosexuell*) in gay communities in Germany too. Nevertheless, "homosexual" is still commonly used by German speakers when they are speaking English and describing gay people. This usage, in cases like Sven's, is not intended to be offensive. Rather, it lacks an English native speaker's awareness of the problematic aspects of the word and of the views of gay people themselves about it.

live an “open life”. He wished to break away from the security and restriction of labels such as “man”, as I explain in the following section, stating:

I think a lot of people use labels to feel safe ... but I don't wanna be safe. I don't wanna live safe. I'd rather live vulnerably and openly, but fully, rather than safely and like a tiny, restricted version of myself.

In addition, Shane (Aus/Ber) described himself as ‘a very open sort of guy’ and enjoyed meeting fellow Australians who travelled alone, finding them to be ‘very open and friendly and accepting’. Finally, Christopher (Aus/Ber) explained that his friends in Berlin were ‘all very open [and that there was almost] nothing we won't talk about’. Grant (Aus/Ber) spoke about his relationship with a woman, which they were:

keeping open so as we can still live our lives and meet other people to make us grow ... It's just the way that we treat each other: it's just like it's open and nice.

Though Ashley spoke of reflectivity rather than openness, he did discuss the benefits of travel and having moved to Europe for expanding one's mind and moving away from conservative beliefs, as I explore in depth in the final section of this chapter. Similarly, Will stated:

I feel people that travel usually have a more broad, open perspective. [He later continued] I think I just find people in general that like I say, people who travel are probably more like, *accepting* as opposed to just being *accepted* because they're abroad. You know just like, you open your eyes to more other things, like “people are different but they're the same, that's cool, that's fine”.

He suggested people who had not travelled were less open, stating:

I feel like just when I go back to Australia like I'm just bumping into people that just have those kind of like insular thoughts or whatever. And it's just like, yeah, because they're not exposing themselves to kind of just like greater, like ideas and stuff.

Openness was also a quality valued by two of the participants interviewed in Australia, though these participants did not relate this to Berlin. Joseph, for example, described his family and friends as ‘pretty liberal people, pretty accepting people, pretty open people’. Nathan, who described himself as a feminist, told me ‘I like to think that I'm quite approachable, quite open as far as views are concerned, whether they be political, social, environmental, anything of that nature’. Nathan furthermore spoke about the profoundness of being open with a very close friend.

Closely related to the value participants placed on openness was the importance some of the German men and Ashley (Aus/Ber) saw of “reflectivity” (*Reflektivität*). Though the participants possibly meant to talk of “reflexivity”, the word they used was “reflectivity”, and I therefore also discuss reflectivity here.<sup>11</sup> Sebastian (German), for example, believed that in some smaller, more conservative locations than Berlin people made stronger distinctions between men and women and masculine and feminine behaviours and that this was also a result of their being less reflective or contemplative. Sebastian stated that how a person is raised, and how reflective a person is, influences how strictly they define distinctions between men and women.

Similarly, Lars (German) spoke about having ‘some friends who are really self-reflective’, who because of their reflectivity were interested in discussing aspects of life such as masculinity. Manni also spoke of ‘caring Christianity’, which he believed could occur amongst ‘reflected Christians’. Ashley (Aus/Ber) spoke of his female friends as women who balanced masculine traits such as independence and drive with a femininity that was ‘soft, caring, reflective’. These German men and Australian men in Berlin saw openness, and “reflectivity” for Ashley and some German participants, as important. They directly described Berlin as an open city in terms of, for example, its cultural diversity, acceptance of gay people and its relaxed way of life. As I convey in the following sections of this chapter, some of the participants living in this space they perceived as open demonstrated more open practices and expressions of masculinity than those found, for instance, amongst participants living in Australia.

### **Mobility, work and masculinity amongst Australian men in Berlin**

Openness and reflectivity were spoken about and valued by many of the men of the centre in Germany. However, it was the Australian participants who had been in Berlin longer-term who were moving most significantly towards more openness of masculinities. These men had rejected certain tenets of closed, centre masculinities, in particular through re-evaluating the relationship between work and self. Furthermore, they had adopted more open, fluid expressions and behaviours of masculinity. These were men who had been living in Berlin for longer periods, generally a year or more, and who had made Berlin their home at the time. In

---

<sup>11</sup> Ashley’s use of the word “reflective” was perhaps a result of the fact that he had lived in Berlin for many years and fluently spoke German in his everyday life.

most cases they had left Australia in search of new experiences or ways of life. It is important to situate the movement towards greater openness of masculinities I observed amongst Australian men in Berlin alongside their discomfort at being perceived as gay, as I explored in chapter four. Nevertheless, it was these men of the centre amongst whom more open expressions of masculinity were emerging, and this was tightly bound up with their mobility to Berlin and their changed relationships to work.

The relationship between these three elements — mobility, masculinity and work — was one of interdependence; each aspect was integrally connected, and together they formed the broader picture of the move to more open expressions of masculinity. Moving to Berlin enabled several of these men to gradually deprioritise career in their lives, until work became simply that which sustained their lifestyles or at best involved making money from their passions. With one of the critical links men have to closed, centre forms of masculinity — work — disintegrating, these men simultaneously began adopting more open expressions of masculinity. On the other hand, those Australian men who had been in Berlin for shorter periods of time (from one to four months), or who were in Berlin for short-term breaks, retained more closed, centre attitudes and behaviours of masculinity. In the following I first investigate the more open expressions of masculinity, linked to geographic mobility and changed relationships to work, discovered amongst the longer-term participants in Berlin. I then consider the men who had been in Berlin for shorter periods of time and who retained more closed expressions of masculinity.

### *The move to Berlin*

Mobility away from Australia played a significant role for seven of the Australian men in Berlin in fostering their move to more open expressions of masculinity. A series of similar themes were revealed across their narratives of mobility, including opportunity, personal growth, freedom, making the most of youth, rejecting the mainstream and making one's own biography. As noted, all the participants living in Berlin had grown up in rural or regional towns or small cities in Australia. The journeys of these men often began before their move to Berlin, as was the case with Alex. Alex had been able to explore different ways of living as a result of mobility between countries, and he spoke of his mobility in terms of a personal journey of self-discovery. Before moving to Berlin, he had moved to another European city to get away from



what he described as a ‘very proscribed life’ in Australia. However, he said in this city ‘soon enough ... I’d achieved my goals, my dreams’. He had a high powered career there, an ‘international lifestyle’, wore expensive clothes and had a girlfriend, signifiers of hegemonically masculine achievement. However, in this socially valued life of highly successful career, Alex found himself thinking:

I’ve achieved everything, so why the hell am I so unhappy? And I realised I’d sold myself out. I sold myself out *completely*. [He came to realise he had been] looking at so many things outside of me to complete or to fulfil me.

He therefore decided to try life in another country. He broke up with his girlfriend, finished his work and apartment contracts and moved to Berlin. In Berlin, Alex worked to re-evaluate his priorities and break his dependence on things external to him, such as work and relationships. He described this process as a:

journey [that had been] really hard [but] really good for me. [In Berlin he had] really done my own exploring, [had] come to myself [and felt] things are far better for me now.

He became interested in spirituality, philosophy and:

much deeper kind of introspection into myself that doesn’t require the whole basic socially accepted “this is my work, this is what I do”. I like to really explore myself and what’s socially recognised’.

A crucial aspect of Alex’s journey was, then, deprioritising career in his life, though notably he had already built the economic capital to do this. This disconnecting of life and career will be discussed in detail in the following section.

Similarly, Felix had felt ‘unsettled’ in Australia, despite having secure paid work that he enjoyed. He felt an urge to explore both the world and himself, and his move to Berlin was part of this personal journey of discovery. Felix explained his urge to move and find himself in the following exchange:

Felix: I just felt this urge like “okay, no, it’s time, it’s actually overdue to just get out of there, and just really go and explore”.

Karla: And you didn’t want to go somewhere else in Australia? Just like “nah, gonna go to the other side of the world?” (Felix and Karla laugh).

Felix: Yeah, I’m not sure why that was, but Australia seemed, anywhere in Australia seemed too close [Karla: mm]. I really wanted to shake things up. I wanted like, “who am I in this new place?” And it worked.

Xavier had held a well-paid, professional job in Australia. He moved to Berlin because he wanted to live overseas and felt he needed to change jobs. He wanted to ‘do something completely different’, having just “fallen into” his profession in Australia. The move to Berlin had allowed Xavier to pursue a life he found more satisfactory, as will be discussed in the following section. Christopher had lived in Berlin for far longer than any of the other Australian men there. He had moved to Berlin, as he put it, ‘just by chance’ after drifting towards the city while travelling in Europe. He had started travelling because, he explained:

I was a bit bored in Australia. I think this happens a lot to people as well: post relationship blues or something like that. And I literally came travelling to kind of, I don’t know, get away from that, get out of the rut which I was in.

After spending a lot of time in Berlin, Christopher decided ‘this was probably the best place for me at the time’, and he described himself as a local of Berlin. Christopher had attempted to move back to Australia at one point, but could not reconnect with old friends there or find work. He explained:

I went back home and tried to like, re-settle or whatever you wanna call it. And I didn’t really have a good time. [He realised] I don’t think I was wanting to be there at all [and stated] in the end I was a bit annoyed. I’m like, “I have friends in Berlin, I feel comfortable in the city, I’ve got work there as well. I think I’m gonna go back”. And so I came back!

Like Alex, Kevin had had a successful, well-paid career, a girlfriend and a house in Australia. Unlike Alex, though, Kevin had been happy with this. However, he decided to give it all up ‘for no reason, no rhyme’ and move to a European city, where he lived for some years. Kevin made this change, despite it being a difficult one, because he wanted to grasp the opportunity to do so while he could. In contrast to Alex, Kevin’s narratives centred less on a personal journey in Berlin and more around “making the most of things”. He explained that in Australia:

I thought, I don’t know, I didn’t feel unfulfilled but I thought “I need to do this now”. I didn’t want get older and go “aw I *wish* I had done that. I really wish I had pissed off overseas”.

After living in another European city, Kevin had moved to Berlin. As a result of difficult personal circumstances around the time of his interview, he had been wondering whether he had made the right decision to leave his life in Australia. Nevertheless, Kevin believed living in Europe:

made me a better person, [and he was in Berlin] trying to do the right thing. [He was] excited to [*sic*] the opportunities [in Berlin and said] I wanted to move to Berlin anyway, I wanted to be here.

Ashley, who identified as gay, had moved to Europe from his conservative location in Australia in order to have new life experiences. After living in several different places in Europe, Ashley ‘spontaneously decided to move to Berlin’ because, he said, it was the cheapest city at the time. Since moving to Berlin he had experienced many personal changes and discoveries and said he had been ‘going through this real personal growth kind of phase’. One example of this growth and change was the “existential crisis” he felt he had gone through, as explained previously. A trip to South America also ‘flipped my life on its head’, he said. He came to realise in Berlin that the profession he had been pursuing since his teenage years was no longer right for him, the salience of which I explore more fully in the following section. It was therefore Ashley’s mobility to and throughout different countries, rather than mobility just to Berlin, that assisted him in his personal journey.

Challenge was important to Ashley, who had sought challenge through, for example, moving to Europe. As I outline subsequently, he was also attempting to challenge his earlier, more conservative thinking now that he had left his place of residence in Australia. Interestingly, however, at the time of his interview Ashley’s new personal challenge was to sit with the stability he had found for himself in Berlin. He wanted to learn to grow in that stability, rather than seek growth and challenge through mobility. He hoped to trouble his earlier belief that ‘you can’t grow in security! You need to grow and challenge!’, and explained that constantly seeking instability meant:

you’re distracting yourself with the challenge. Because I’ve always been the person to have 12,000 different projects going on, and different things going there and there and there. And you *feel* like you’re doing a lot. You *feel* like you’re progressing. But to really dive deeply into something, it’s all very superficial. So therefore, this is the new challenge! To actually sit with being comfortable and to sit with just simplicity.

Will left Australia after finishing his university degree, living in several other countries before moving to Germany. Unlike other longer-term participants in Berlin, Will’s more open expression of masculinity seemed to be less related to deprioritising work and more connected to growing up with his father and his experience of cancer, as I explored in chapters four and five. Nevertheless, mobility was certainly an important aspect of Will’s life. He had always moved frequently and said ‘I just don’t know any other way’, even if he found this high mobility challenging at times. Of his father, Will said:

growing up as well he was used to moving, so it just sort of dripped into my life. And similar now that I'm not with him, I'm still doing the same sort of thing every year or two. It's now not moving around Australia, it's moving countries. Just the opportunity that I have, so why waste it?

Will's mobility allowed him to fulfil his ethos of always taking opportunities so as to avoid having regrets. He admitted, though, that he sometimes compared himself to the 'idealised life' of cars and holidays his friends presented on Facebook, a lifestyle that came with stability. Will sometimes longed for:

that notion of groundedness and unity and stuff. [But, he continued] maybe it was like the cancer stuff, I don't know, but you know, it's just like, I've got one life to live and I've got opportunities I can take. I may as well, you know?

Like Kevin, Will therefore had the desire to grasp opportunities while he could. However, as he approached the age of 30 Will was unsure about his future mobility or 'the rest of my moving' as he put it. As visas became harder to acquire, he felt 'that window of opportunity has sort of shut'. In various ways the Australian participants had moved to Berlin on journeys of self-discovery, to travel or to have experiences beyond their everyday lives in Australia. For these men, mobility to Berlin was tied up with a changed relationship to work, as explored in the following section, and with emerging expressions of more open masculinity, discussed subsequently.

### *Rethinking the relationship between paid work and life*

The Australian men who had been living in Berlin longer-term, and who had made it their home at least temporarily, had largely broken the connection of career to their lives, a crucial aspect of their move towards more open expressions of masculinity. This deprioritising of work was an ongoing project for some of these men, one that required constant maintenance and conscious effort. As stated previously, an important aspect of Alex's personal journey in Berlin was exploring who he was outside of a socially sanctioned life of career and success. In another European city he had worked in a high-powered profession, but in Berlin he worked in freelance jobs. Alex stated:

the best thing is for me to just completely force work away. I've now realised only recently that it's really important. It's a big trigger for me. Psychologically it's a very big stress point.

This deprioritising of career required continual reinforcement and effort for Alex. When asked to talk about himself, he was 'tempted to talk about work, my work experience, my freelance

experience'. Alex consciously re-routed the conversation to his interests in philosophy and spirituality, later stating 'just know that I choose not to talk about my work'.

Felix had moved from his regular, secure work in Melbourne to be a freelancer and artist in Berlin and avoiding a 'nine to five job' was important to him. He was more interested in doing 'odd jobs' in Berlin and stated:

Felix: I've gone through different stages being in Berlin. And now I'm kind of in another stage where I'm kind of, not drift—, yeah a bit drifting around, just kind of meeting people, making some plans on how to survive and do what I wanna do. And not kind of work a nine to five job, and I really feel strongly about that. I feel like my time and energy could be used much more usefully to actually help *other* people and not just do what I wanna do.

Karla: Okay. Because you wanna be doing something that's

Felix: Just something that aligns with me.

Even in Australia Felix questioned the emphasis placed on paid work. He enjoyed that his job in Australia had 'removed this element of contractual work for money', something he found 'great'.

Xavier, as noted, had wanted to do 'something different' to his successful career in Australia. In Berlin he worked in service jobs, marking quite a change from his professional career in Australia. He noted a much healthier work-life balance in Berlin compared to Australia. In Berlin Xavier was still not sure what he 'wanted to do, [describing this as] kind of annoying [but nevertheless continuing] it also doesn't bother me that much at the moment'. Therefore, like Alex, career was not a primary concern for Xavier at the time of his interview in Berlin.

Christopher, as mentioned, was rather settled in Berlin after many years there. Rethinking the connection between life and paid work was not as significant a narrative for Christopher as it was for Alex, Felix, Xavier, Kevin and Ashley. Yet paid work and career were not defining aspects of Christopher's life. For example, he had chosen to move to Berlin because he felt it was the best place for him, despite having job opportunities elsewhere. He explained that 'I think one of the great things about living [in Berlin] is that you can often do a smallish type job and then you have a lot of free time'. Christopher indeed had a "smallish type" casual job that gave him plenty of free time. However, as Christopher drew closer to his 30<sup>th</sup> birthday, he was beginning to feel 'some kind of like society pressure' to return to the "serious" world of work and career, despite feeling 'pretty happy with [his] lifestyle'. He explained he was 'getting towards that 30-year-old mark where everyone's always like "should I do something more

serious with my life?”’. Therefore, even though he enjoyed his lifestyle in Berlin, Christopher could not avoid the societal pressure he felt to re-centre work in his life.

Despite his successful career when he had lived in Australia, Kevin was happy to do ‘whatever’ and to ‘float’ in Berlin. He said:

I don’t care what I do, I don’t care if I work in a hostel or coffee or clean toilets or whatever, you know, I’m happy to do anything. I’ve done it all in [European city] for the last two years anyway.

This allowed Kevin to ‘enjoy travelling’. Nevertheless, despite his contentment with odd, precarious jobs in Berlin, Kevin still spoke about his ability to return to his career in Australia and thought it would be ‘*fantastic*’ to find a job in his field in Berlin. Unlike participants such as Alex, Felix, Xavier, Ashley and, to an extent, Christopher, the salience of career had not entirely disappeared for Kevin; in Kevin’s case the idea of career still offered security.

Ashley reflected cleverly on the socially accepted nature of work as an integral aspect of life when I asked him what his occupation was and he could not easily answer the question. His joking response was ‘occupation, question mark. (Laughing) Who am I?!’. Though a high powered career such as Alex’s or Xavier’s did not seem to ever have been a goal for Ashley, he had been passionate about pursuing a career as an artist. He had initially moved to Europe to gain life experience, which he hoped would lead him closer to this chosen profession. After many years of hard work, Ashley finally managed to manoeuvre himself into a position in which his artistic career was progressing. However, after his “existential crisis” described formerly, he ‘decided okay, I need to make a bit of a change because obviously I’m going down the wrong track’. Ashley described his subsequent change in direction as follows:

Ashley: Once again it was like, everything seems to be going in that right direction. It was like “aw yes, now, you know, the path towards being an artist is there!” And something just clicked in my head, and I’ve gone “that’s actually not what you want”.

Karla: Really?

Ashley: Really. And it’s crazy, because it meant I’d been pursuing this, it’s been a *passion* since I was like 13 years old. “Okay I want to be an artist, I want to be an artist, this is what I want to be doing”. And I’ve reached a point now where I’ve gone “actually, that’s not what I wanna do!”

Ashley felt pursuing a career as an artist was not ‘sitting right [and was not] where I feel the most comfortable, where I feel I can give the most’. As I explore in the following section, he decided instead to take up remedial therapies. Finally, Will was working fulltime in a well-paid

profession in Berlin. Unlike other longer-term inhabitants of Berlin, he did not feel the desire to make a change in his career or find more precarious, fulfilling work. As I discuss in the next section, however, Will's paid work did not appear to be a defining aspect of his life.

### *Work as necessary but secondary*

These longer-term participants in Berlin certainly needed to work. However, they preferred to see work as something that sustained their preferred lifestyles or their passions in Berlin, rather than as a critical component of their lives or self-identities. This reflects the idea of post-work theory and post-work lifestyles, where paid work becomes a means of financing leisure rather than an integral aspect of life and identity (Aronowitz & Cutler 1998; Gorz 1982; Rojek 2002, 2005). The view of paid work as secondary amongst these Australian men in Berlin contrasted to the participants in Australia and the German participants, who tended to orient their lives around career and paid work. For the most part, the jobs the Australian men in Berlin performed to sustain their lifestyles were highly precarious, but this precarious employment facilitated something more important for them than the security of career: the search for themselves and for deeper meaning. Ideally, though, some of the men hoped to work towards a situation in which their passions and life projects could earn them money, thereby again making their lifestyles and passions the more important aspects of their lives.

Alex acknowledged the need for money in Berlin after rethinking the connection between career and life. However, in Berlin he saw paid work as something that sustained his lifestyle and allowed him to continue his personal journey, rather than as itself the point of life. He explained:

before it was like, "I need to find myself and justify myself blah blah blah". Versus now it's like I know who I am ... How am I gonna fund this? How am I gonna fund my passions? What are the avenues for really expressing my true self? My drive, my passion, my success? How am I gonna do that in the material world?

Alex, however, continued to see some of the creative possibilities of work. He had found an opportunity that he hoped would allow him to combine his expertise from his previous career in another European city with his interests in philosophy and spirituality. This would enable him to both make money and continue discovering and expressing his "true self". Of this potential new work path, he stated:

I'd really like to make this a holistic approach in my life. And use this as a source of income primarily. And be able to achieve other goals like being able to travel and build a reputation for myself.

Felix spoke at length about the importance of self-love and was beginning to consider ways in which he could spread his knowledge of this topic to others. As explained, Felix was in a phase of figuring out how to sustain his life in Berlin and engage with the things he was passionate about, which meant working odd jobs rather than searching for a more traditional career. Felix realised the necessity of earning money to fund his ideas and goals, but was unwilling for paid work and money to be driving forces in his life.

Xavier, as discussed, was not concerned about having no future work plans, stating 'I think that's more important to me at the moment. So, being here and enjoying Berlin'. His work in Berlin was therefore a means to sustain his life in the city. In fact, Xavier explained that:

I kept thinking I was gonna go home earlier [and] I should have been home by now, but I didn't wanna leave. [He finally decided] I either need to get serious or go home.

Xavier then got a full time job in the service industry and therefore stayed in Berlin. As he put it, 'I wanted to stay, but I was just looking for that thing to make it, you know, worthwhile'. Xavier's work in Berlin facilitated his desire to remain there rather than acting as a defining factor of his life. Similarly, as explored, Christopher had moved to Berlin and worked in casual employment, despite possibilities for work elsewhere, and this gave him plenty of free time. Furthermore, Kevin's precarious, freelance work in Europe enabled him to travel, one of the reasons he had initially left his stable, secure life in Australia.

Ashley worked in retail in Berlin at the time of his interview in order to 'finance everything that I'm doing here'. While he enjoyed this job, it was also a means of financing and fostering his chosen lifestyle in the city. Since realising his goal of becoming an artist was no longer what he wanted, his plan was to begin working as a remedial therapist. He explained 'I don't really want to do this in the business sense. It was very much more of a personal, intimate process'. His chosen therapies had always been prominent parts of Ashley's life during his time pursuing a career as an artist. Therefore, his new plan to work as a remedial therapist connected something important to him with making money in order to further sustain his chosen life in Berlin. He described his new path as a fork in the road, with being an artist on one side and becoming a remedial therapist on the other:



it really feels now that I'm standing at a forked road, and I can no longer carry on a few paths ... It's at the point now where I'm just like "okay I can't do these parallel, I want to pursue either one or the other and give it my *full* embodiment, like really invest". So yeah! Now it's kind of like following along the other path, which is in a sense a little bit, not daunting, not confronting, what's the word I'm looking for? It's all new. And because it's all new and you've spent however many years doing the other thing, and you've slowly developed techniques, and you *know* that, that's the thing you know. And this is becoming the unknown. It's like "oh do I really, just gonna, baby steps. Gotta keep like, step after step walking in the right direction".

Though Will still worked in a well-paid, professional career in Berlin, he did speak about trying to create distance between himself and his work. He said he tried not to spend time with colleagues outside working hours, for example, explaining:

that's more of just like for a mental health type thing, as well as like, if I hang out with people from work, like my mind just stays on work. It's like, I need a break, I need a weekend. People from work hang out with each other on weekends and invite me and it's just like, you know, Monday's too soon already, and I don't want it to be any shorter.

Paid work therefore seemed to function for Will, like other participants, as a means of financing his life in Berlin and his travels rather than as a defining aspect of his life.

### *Open expressions of masculinity*

More fluid, open expressions of masculinity accompanied the rejection of the prominence of paid work, a crucial link to more closed, centre forms of masculinity. Alex's mobility to Berlin and his personal journey of rethinking life and work, for example, enabled him to seek different ways of being a man. Alex had thought extensively about masculinity and had come to the conclusion that he could not identify with Australian masculinity or see himself reflected in societal ideals of masculinity. 'I find it difficult to identify with being a man' he said. Alex placed very high value on openness and expressing emotion, particularly amongst men. He wanted masculine bravery and courage to be refigured as the bravery and courage to be open. He felt that in general he could not relate to men because of their lack of emotional openness. 'I think if we all just stopped trying so hard to identify with gender roles (laughs) we'd be, so, well I think it's really important' said Alex. He believed that there was less of a polarity of the genders in Germany than in Australia and that men in Europe in general compared to Australia 'don't seek so desperately to identify themselves with masculinity'.

Felix had been questioning dictates of masculinity and had been travelling towards more open expressions of it long before moving to Berlin. For Felix, this more open masculinity was particularly bound up with his desire to “be himself”. The theme of “being yourself” was, as I discuss throughout this thesis, valued by Lars (German), Grant (Aus/Ber), Will (Aus/Ber) and Shane (Aus/Ber), participants who felt that being oneself was the truest form of being a “real man”. For Felix, being himself was framed somewhat differently: he wanted to shake off the dictates of closed, centre masculinities, which demanded he be someone he did not feel comfortable as. Felix felt that in Australia:

it’s up to the man to make the first move and to show that he’s interested, and then the girl does her thing. It just seems like such a, I’ve never felt a part of that kind of whole, like a man has to make the first move or be very upfront and forward about what he wants. It’s just never felt natural, and I’ve tried it! I tried, I’ve tried, I’ve tried to fit into that model, and the whole time it just feels like you’re kind of trying to swim upstream with the water going against you ... I think that there’s a certain *expectation* for the man *to* take the lead, *to* be strong, confident and decisive. And it’s not how everyone is!

It was moving to Berlin that really allowed Felix to explore and discover more open sides of masculinity and of himself in an environment and amongst people he found open and accepting. In Berlin he was trying not to align himself with labels and found it easier to relax and be himself than in Australia. He explained ‘my idea about what it is to be a man has changed a lot, especially after coming to Berlin and meeting the people I did’. After describing the closed, centre masculinity he observed in Australia, which included the ideas about the association between homosexuality and devalued femininity I analysed in chapter four, he told me:

I never really identified with any of those things. However, I realised they were still a part of *me* and how I was thinking when I came here [to Berlin]. And then I was suddenly allowed to be whoever I wanted. And it took *quite a while* for me to venture out and kind of feel *safe* expressing myself as a *person* and not worrying about how I was seen as a man. And that was incredibly liberating, and still it is, and I think that’s a big reason why I’m still here. It just seems so, to be a man, it seems like it’s gotten really confused. And recently I’ve kind of thought “well why do we have to be, why do we have to *be* a man?” Am I a man if I have a deeper voice and have different muscular growth and like sports? Maybe, maybe not. And you know, if I did have those things, is it important to label me as a man or anything else?

Felix was learning about self-love in Berlin and was practicing how to ‘purely just listen’ to people. He was eager to try to help people and practiced yoga regularly. He had come to value physical connection such as hugging, cuddling or giving massages to friends, reflecting Holmes’ (2015) finding that men in her study were able to express emotion towards female partners through tactile means. Felix noted that this desire for touch was not perceived as:

a masculine thing. That's not what a man is, a man's got to be like this fricking statue or warrior. He's like "I can provide everything for myself, I don't need anyone, plus I can provide everything for you, my family, my kids, everyone. I don't cry, I eat bricks, you know, whatever, I'm just indestructible". And it's so bullshit. It's ridiculous. It's ridiculous.

Xavier too demonstrated more fluid enactments of masculinity than participants interviewed in Australia. Xavier admitted he did not think about masculinity a lot, but when asked about it he had nuanced ideas about roles for men and his position as a man, musing:

there's the general concept of what it is to be a man, which I don't necessarily agree with, that like (sarcastically) a man has to be a protector and a provider and all that kind of thing. I think a man can be *anything!* Really. And to me it doesn't matter what anybody else thinks (sarcastically) I should do to be a man. So like I love cooking, ah my girlfriend hardly ever cooks. Like I mean that's a really kind of basic like concept of what everybody thinks it is to be a man or a woman but I mean that's just one like little example. But yeah! Like, I think it's okay to be a protector if that's what you need to be, or your relationship needs in you.

Xavier furthermore conveyed an emotive connection to narratives from his past, breaking with expectations that men deny and hide emotions. He emphasised the importance of respecting that everyone deals with trauma in varying ways and openly and emotively spoke about a traumatic event from his past, almost to the point of tears.

Christopher, who was feeling pressure to re-centre work in his life, also displayed a more open version of masculinity. Questions of masculinity were not as pertinent for Christopher as they were for participants such as Alex, Felix, Xavier, Ashley and Will, again perhaps a result of him being so established in Berlin. Christopher admitted 'sometimes I feel out of place with some of my male friends [in Australia], because they're a lot more blokey, you know?'. Although Christopher got along with men, he had 'never been like, really the football type', and for his entire life his friends had predominantly been women. As explored in more detail subsequently, Christopher was concerned by men in Australia being, in his opinion, more arrogant, macho, aggressive and chauvinistic than in Berlin. Christopher, however, positioned himself as not macho and said 'I just don't have that bone in my body that I wanna fight'. Furthermore, as discussed in chapter four, Christopher was one Australian participant in Berlin who did not appear to be uncomfortable with the topic or visibility of gay men in Berlin, or with being seen as gay himself.

Like Christopher, Kevin felt he was different from men in Australia. He stressed that because he had grown up predominantly with women, he did not adhere to the same kinds of ideas of masculinity as other men in Australia. Furthermore, like Christopher, the majority of Kevin's

friends were women, and Kevin asserted that he did not care about looking manly or having a hard, masculine body. 'Being genuine' was more important to Kevin than ideals of masculinity, and he explained 'I don't tend to be anyone I'm not'. Kevin said he did not like sport for its 'pack mentality' and stated 'I don't like hanging around guys that are chauvinistic or discriminative'. He had, furthermore, actively stood up for women in cases of sexism in the past and had a relatively in-depth understanding of problematic masculine behaviours. In several ways Kevin had, therefore, adopted a more fluid, open conception of masculinity. Kevin summed this up himself, laughingly stating 'I'm not masculine. Probably more feminine. But I'm caring'.

As I outlined in chapter five, Ashley held several uncritical views on masculine and feminine roles. In this chapter, I suggest these views might in part be the result of his upbringing in conservative locations, and that his mobility away from these places helped him to change his values. Despite some continuing closed ideas, Ashley still exhibited a rather more fluid, open expression of masculinity. His plans to become a remedial therapist, for example, can be seen as counter to ideals of closed, centre masculinities, and he spoke of this work as bodily care. He said:

*I love that exchange of being able to really give people the sensation of being back in touch with their bodies ... So yeah that's totally care, but almost like, I guess I see it more as like, not treatment, but I guess kind of like the tools that you can give people to empower themselves.*

Like Alex, Ashley said he preferred when men could be more sensitive and emotional. As already outlined, though Ashley critiqued what he saw as effeminate German masculinity, he still preferred it to masculinity in Australia. In fact, he stated of masculinity in Germany that:

*this is I guess why I've stayed here so long, something that's a little bit more emotional, a little bit more in tune with itself than simply a (pause) being that kind of just parades in this power through life.*

Ashley also had what he described as ethics around avoiding the exploitation of animals, as I will discuss, and people. He explained:

*I started to research a little bit more and realising the horrors that go behind workshops like H&M and Primark and all that. To not put my own interests at number one and to actually care about those people who are over there.*

He admitted, though, that despite seeing gender inequality around him, he did little in the fight against it. Though men's engagement in gender equality is important, Ashley could at least acknowledge where he needed to change.

Will attributed his more open expression of masculinity to his upbringing with his father and his experience of cancer, both aspects of his life that I explored in chapters four and five. Like other participants, though, mobility was very important to Will, and like other Australian men in Berlin paid work did not seem to be a defining aspect of his life. As noted in chapter four, Will felt he had not encountered traditional notions of masculinity from his father. He had an understanding of gendered and other inequalities and a desire to change these. Like some of the men in Australia considered in chapter four, he suggested the topic of masculinity was not:

something I necessarily grapple with because frankly I don't give a shit. At the end of the day like, I'm me, you know? Like in whatever that sort of looks [like].

Nevertheless, Will was very literate in issues surrounding gender and masculinity.

For instance, he discussed binaries such as man:woman and the social construction of masculine or feminine traits. He spoke about the importance of sexual consent for a significant amount of time during his interview and discussed the problems of perpetuating gendered inequalities. His view was, he said:

I guess to a large extent just kind of realising that and opting out of a lot of it. Just like, yeah, there is a better way to treat other humans, you know?

He spoke angrily about witnessing sexism in his workplace but was very aware of other inequalities he perpetuated through his privilege. He felt a sense of guilt, for example, for earning so much in his profession while others earned so little. Furthermore, he had been concerned about moving to Berlin and contributing to gentrification of the city, making it less affordable for families who had lived there for generations. Will spoke of wanting to be able to pass some of his privilege on to others, saying:

I'm in a pretty okay position in life. So it's like, if you can, in whatever sort of way that is, to give some of that away to other people or like loan that to them. [He added later] it's nice not to be an asshole to people basically, and if you can go one step better and actually like help people, whatever that sort of looks like, then sure, go do that.

Another way in which some of these participants revealed more open expressions of masculinity was in their choices around nutrition and what they consumed. For instance, three

of the participants already discussed in this section, Ashley, Will and Felix, were vegans, and both Will and Felix abstained from drinking alcohol. Through their food and beverage choices, these participants resisted closed, centre masculinities, which dictate that being a man is tied to meat eating and alcohol consumption. Ashley became vegan after moving to Berlin, where he noted being exposed to more thought on animal welfare than in a lot of other places. He said he became vegan:

because I started to care a little bit more about my environment. Started to care a little bit more about what was going on in my economy and in the ecosystem. And that care has remained. I'm not prepared to eat foods or other things that I know there's going to be suffering of other creatures or other people.

This ethos of not wanting to perpetuate suffering was also the reason he cared about not exploiting, for example, workers in garment factories, as discussed previously.

Will saw his veganism as an act of compassion and conviction. This was again connected to his ethos of not doing something if it made him feel bad. He explained that after reading and watching information about veganism and the treatment of animals, he realised:

"ah, I feel like an asshole, I can't do that anymore". It's like "I can just stop!" You know? And so that weight's lifted of like that conflict or something. So yeah, there was no real reason [for becoming vegan] other than it just feels wrong [to consume animal products]. Again, like, feels wrong, stop doing it, you know? That's ultimately what it came down to.

Will's veganism furthermore connected to his idea that the supposedly "manly" trait of conviction could be interpreted as the conviction to be compassionate towards animals. In an interesting take on masculinity, he connected being strong and "manly" with compassion, saying:

it's just that kind of notion of just like, in terms of being assertive, you can assert yourself however you want. Like if you decide "I'm going to be kind to animals", and that's what I decide and I'm sticking to that like, strong conviction, then that's in some sense seen as like a manly trait. And like whatever that happens to be. If it's like this act of compassion or if it's this act of brutality or something, that's still like kind of "here's what I'm doing, I'm sticking to it".

In a similar way to his discussion of conviction as a manly trait, Will thought that:

one of the most sort of masculine things that you can do is just [to be] like "here's who I am, if you don't like it, fuck off". Like that kind of thing, like "I don't give a shit", like that kind of burly attitude.

Will's framing of his veganism in terms of the supposedly manly trait of conviction required some further problematisation. Nevertheless, his valuing of compassion and his resolve to not

consume animal products were indicative of a more open expression of masculinity. Furthermore, as highlighted in chapter five, Will did not drink alcohol for personal reasons.

Though he did not discuss it during his interview, it later transpired that Felix was or had become vegan. He refrained from eating sugar, and like Will he stopped drinking alcohol, at times opting for herbal tea instead. During his interview, Felix furthermore spoke of a connection he had felt with the landscape and earth at one point while walking in nature. Veganism and this kind of ecological conscience run counter to the traditional association between meat eating and masculinity (Nath 2011; Sumpter 2015) and suggest an attitude of care towards, for example, the environment, animals or oneself. Nath (2011) furthermore positions choosing plant-based foods instead of meat as a transgressive choice. Alcohol consumption is also bound up with masculinity (Connell 2000; de Visser & Smith 2007; Lindsay 2012; Strate 1992; Tomsen 2008) and abstaining from alcohol is again counter to normative ideals of closed, centre masculinities. In choosing not to consume animal products or alcohol, participants such as Ashley, Will and Felix were resisting demands of closed, centre masculinities and demonstrating more open enactments of masculinity.

As I explored in the previous two chapters of this thesis, closed, centre discourses and beliefs surrounding gender and men's roles persisted in some forms for these men. This was particularly evident in relation to latent discomfort around being perceived as gay and, for some participants, a search for what was thought to be "essential masculinity" or a sense of loss of men's place and identity in a world of feminist successes. However, at the same time the Australian participants in Berlin considered in this section had taken important steps away from the closed centre and towards increased openness. Despite the continuing pull of the closed centre, these longer-term men in Berlin had adopted more open, fluid expressions of masculinity, and this was connected intimately with their mobility to Berlin and their rethinking of the connection between life and career.

#### *Closed masculinities amongst short-term Australian men in Berlin*

Not all the Australian men living in Berlin displayed these more open expressions of masculinity. Three men, Shane, Jason and Grant, continued to adhere to more closed, centre notions of masculinity. Unlike the longer-term inhabitants of Berlin, Grant had recently arrived

in the city at the time of his interview, and Shane and Jason saw Berlin more as a temporary stopover and place to reset rather than as a home. Shane had moved there for a few months to improve his skills in one of his hobbies and because, he said, he ‘just really needed to reset’ after several traumatic life events. Shane planned to spend several more months in Berlin before returning to his well-paid labourer job in Australia.

Shane was not working in Berlin at the time of his interview, but was considering several possible future career paths after his return to Australia. He found the prospect of deciding on his career daunting, stating ‘work out what I wanna do for the rest of my life? Scary thought (laughs)’. Nevertheless, work and career were still critical aspects of the future he saw for himself, at least the future he narrated; he may have been attempting to present his aspirations in a favourable light. His return to his home in Australia and his continuing life there amongst his strong friendship groups and support networks was a matter of fact for Shane. He conceded that if he could get a good job, ‘I don’t think I’d really mind living [in Europe]’. However, in contrast to some of the longer-term participants in Berlin, he stressed that he would not stay in Europe to work in a precarious, freelance position ‘just to live and sort of get by’.

Jason was living in Berlin but travelling frequently at the same time. He was a company director and had moved to Berlin for his work. He said ‘I’m [in Berlin] because I want to be’. Work was one of the most crucial aspects of Jason’s life. He had ‘loved business from a young age’ and emphasised how much he enjoyed the highly masculine field in which his company was situated. He therefore had no desire to deprioritise career from his life, although there were many things he wanted to achieve or experience. He said ‘if I could have anything it would be more years because I feel like there are so many things you can do on this planet’.

Shane and Jason displayed less open expressions of masculinity, tending to adhere more closely to the forms of masculinity identified amongst participants living in Australia. Shane, for instance, had a more traditionally “masculine” appearance compared to other participants in Berlin. As discussed in chapter four, this “masculine” self-presentation has significance for expressions of, and work towards, masculinity and socially sanctioned male bodies. Shane furthermore described being a man as ‘being yourself, like (sighs), not changing what you are for anybody’, but he defined one of men’s roles as that of the protector:

I guess the role of a guy is to, and not to be just protective over like a girl, or women in general, but just to be protective of your group, if that makes sense. Whether that be male or female or



whatever, and that includes family *and* friends. So, I think that's still a guy's role is to be the protector.

Furthermore, Shane believed that built into men was protectiveness of their sexuality and their appearance of strength, as well as a closedness around issues such as these. Shane in fact described himself as 'a very open sort of guy', but told me that even he, as an open person, found it difficult to express anything that might make him appear weak. He confided that my question 'what is your sexuality?' made him feel uncomfortable at the thought that I might have doubted, or been challenging, his heterosexuality, as explored in chapter four.

Jason too demonstrated more closed forms of masculinity than his Australian peers who had been in Berlin for longer periods of time. Jason followed a transnational businessman model of masculinity (Connell 2005; Connell & Wood 2005). He described himself as ambitious, he loved business, was goal-oriented, was hoping to make a lot of money from his company and wanted 'a lot of material things'. He said 'my favourite thing about business is coming up with ideas and then seeing them happen. Um, making them happen'. Here Jason hinted at a desire to control his work by "making things happen" rather than passively watching them occur. Jason was looking forward to working more independently in the future, saying 'I'm more excited about doing some things *completely* of my own. More satisfying I think'.

As discussed in chapter five, Jason would not express his emotions for his friends, believing his feelings for them were implicit rather than spoken, and he would not approach others for help when he needed it. He stated 'I just like getting through it. I don't wanna wallow in it'. Instead of asking for help he would 'sort that out myself' or see a woman with 'non-mainstream techniques' who would help Jason to vent his feelings, frustration and anger, for example by beating a pillow or shouting at a chair. On the other hand, Jason had always had a keen interest in spirituality, something that he had needed to reconcile with his desire for material possessions. He furthermore was one of the few participants who believed he could be friends with women without questions of sex becoming involved. This spirituality and friendship with women could perhaps offer opportunities for beginning to foster more open expressions of masculinity.

Grant had moved to Berlin to pursue his artistic passions. His plan was to see if he liked the city or not before deciding whether to stay there longer-term. Unlike Shane and Jason, career was unimportant to Grant. He was more interested in 'a job for the lifestyle' and in finding

work that would allow him to travel and make enough money to live well. Nevertheless, Grant expressed more closed beliefs and behaviours towards women and around the topic of masculinity. Describing himself as previously introverted and socially awkward, his life had changed when he discovered videos on the internet produced by “pick up artists” who taught men how to approach and convince women to have sex with them — or how to “pick up” women. Picking up women subsequently became a key interest of Grant’s.

I challenged this practice during Grant’s interview to an extent by bringing up an infamous pick up artist from the USA who had been deported from Australia in 2014. This pick up artist’s methods, I told Grant, included grabbing women by the neck. Grant explained that this was not his style, but he did not appear to find it, or being a pick up artist in general, as necessarily problematic. Grant thought that:

in the end, the core principle [of masculinity] is to really just be able to make your own decisions. But I suppose like when you contrast it to like “what is femininity?” and stuff, then it’s like, all the women just want a charismatic, you know, leading man. Like in all cultures girls want that. That is like, what it *means* to be a man.

Later he added:

don’t wait for the right moment. Don’t wait for the right moment to (pauses). I don’t know, it applies like in everything in your life. To try that new thing, to help that stranger, to kiss the girl. To all these things, I feel like that is also part of being a man. It’s just like “just try it!”

Finally, as explored in chapter four, Grant believed good social skills were important tools men needed to possess to be able to achieve the principles of masculinity, and as investigated in chapter five he felt that diving into situations and coming out with ‘a few scratches’ was another important part of being a man.

Closed, centre ideals of masculinity — connected to work in the cases of Shane and Jason — had not been disrupted for Shane, Jason or Grant through their shorter-term moves to Berlin. Shane and Jason were there temporarily or to reset before returning to their working lives in Australia. These two were, then, also eventually returning to norms of masculinity such as those found amongst participants in Australia. Unlike Shane and Jason, normative ideals of paid work were not valued by Grant and he was uncertain as to whether or not he would remain in Berlin longer-term. Yet he spoke of closed, centre beliefs and behaviours, particularly in connection with his hobby of learning how to pick up women. These shorter-term men in Berlin wanted to experience a break from the versions of masculinity they observed in Australia, but

had not adopted more fluid, open expressions, behaviours or beliefs of masculinity as other Australian participants in Berlin had.

Moving to Berlin supported men like Alex, Felix, Xavier, Christopher, Kevin, Ashley and Will to remake their lives outside the boundaries of the socially sanctioned work-masculinity nexus. They demonstrated more open, fluid conceptions of masculinity and used paid work as a means to support their passions, or combined their passions with making money to support their lifestyles. In these ways, these participants were taking steps of varying length and number towards greater openness of masculinities. Those Australian participants who had been in Berlin shorter-term, though, held on to more closed, centre versions of masculinity similar to those discovered amongst participants living in Australia. The rupture of a somewhat more permanent move to the open city of Berlin appeared to be significant in assisting longer-term Australian men there to explore alternative ways of life and masculinity. Furthermore, the rupturing of career from everyday life, interdependent with this mobility, was noteworthy for fostering more open expressions of masculinity. The mobility-work-masculinity nexus was, therefore, significant for uncovering more open, fluid expressions of masculinity amongst Australian participants in Berlin.

### **German men in Berlin: windows of potential**

It was not only amongst the Australian men in Berlin that I discovered emerging openness of masculinities. Possibilities for openness were also hinted at through the narratives of German participants, and by observations about masculinity in Germany from the Australian men in Berlin. I discovered windows of potential amongst German participants for the beginnings of movement away from the closed centre and towards increased openness. This emerged in particular in relation to the assertion by German men of similarity between men and women, greater possibilities for masculine expression and less of an emphasis on hard, strong bodies.

The discussion in chapter four of ideologies amongst German participants of different roles for men and women cautions against reading these narratives as straightforward and unproblematic in terms of equality and a movement towards openness. Nevertheless, keeping these qualifying considerations firmly in mind, some of the practices of the German men I spoke to, and some of the observations Australian men in Berlin had about these practices, were suggestive of

potential windows to an emergence of more open masculinities. In this section I consider the more open practices and beliefs amongst German men and then explore the reflections the Australian participants in Berlin had on their German peers and their expressions of masculinity.

### *Possibilities for masculine expression in Germany*

In chapter four I explored the closed, centre discourses from the German participants of men and women's separate roles in Germany. In these discourses, the idea of women as inferior to men, particularly in the realm of paid work, was perpetuated. These ideas contradictorily emerged alongside avowals from these German participants of the sameness of men and women. Here, I revisit these notions of sameness and suggest that this aspect of the German participants' narratives can also be read as offering windows to more open forms of masculinity. Further opportunities for this open masculinity arose through narratives of perceived greater possibilities for masculine expression in Germany and a lessened emphasis on hard bodies.

Manni (German, queer), who had been to Australia, set the scene for possibilities for more open masculinities amongst German men. He saw masculinity in Australia as 'very traditional, and also I would *link* to that it's actually, I have the feeling there was some big disdain for education'. Manni suggested that on the other hand:

my feeling was in Germany [masculinity] can be linked to a certain kind of educational level or cultural like, sophistication. Where the feeling when I was in Australia was, [it was] less possible to be a cultural, educational, sophisticated, *masculine* person.

Manni highlighted a way of thinking about masculinity in Germany that was less connected to closed, centre ideas of masculinity such as disdain for education and culture.

Manni said:

the kind of variety you have, or like the spectrum you have of like, what is considered masculine in Germany, or at least in Berlin, is more open than in a lot of places in the US.

One example Manni gave of this was when a friend of his visited from the USA and told Manni:

in the subway [in Berlin] he's astonished at how many men look, like would be considered to be gay looking in the US. While here they are like, straight dudes and it's completely normal.

Dirk (German) had also noticed differences in male fashion between the USA and Germany, stating ‘I guess in the United States if you put too much emphasis on fashion, people tend to think you’re probably gay (laughs)’. Indeed, this wider spectrum of possibilities for masculine appearance seemed to apply to the ten German men I interviewed, none of whom inhabited large, muscular bodies like some of the men I spoke to in Australia.

Sven (German), as I highlighted in chapter four, began to question his closed thoughts around women’s and men’s roles through the process of talking about them in his interview. Furthermore, he was one of the first participants I interviewed after the magnitude of refugee flows from Syria to Germany became more generally apparent. Sven, having realised these flows were taking place much earlier, spoke of planning to volunteer with refugees in Berlin, believing:

people are too concentrated on making career and not seeing those things that are happening around. And I was enjoying my life enough last year so (laughs) I can also give a little back I think.

Sven nevertheless admitted ‘I would say that I am a person who talks more than he does’, something he hoped to change.

Manni (German) pointed out the greater gender equality in households from former East Germany, although he recognised women there still did more care work than men. He suggested that women in Germany at the time of his interview were often significant providers of family income, and he thought it was important to combat some of the rage German men felt around this perceived “emasculatation” by ‘deconstructing their own strict ways of how they view themselves as, like, masculine man’.

Frank was one German participant who, to an extent, had a more open version of masculinity. He had, for instance, grown up with a feminist mother, believed differences between men and women were limited and positioned himself as ‘not that macho (laughs). Because I always consider also the female side, because I was raised this way’. Lars (German) described himself as ‘obviously not the macho type of man’. Martin was another German participant who suggested women and men are not very different anymore and, as noted, Sebastian (German) mused that it is those who are less reflective that draw sharp distinctions between men and women. Torsten (German), who had holidayed in Australia, believed that ‘Australia is way more backward’. One example he gave of this backwardness was in relation to dating. He had

similar observations to Felix (Aus/Ber) about the roles of men and women in Australia when it came to dating and painted a more progressive picture of Germany. Torsten said:

Australian girls are more passive. They wait for the men to initiate not only the first contact, which Australian girls can do, but more like, in an ongoing relationship, to be the leading voice, to decide where you go, what you do. While I think in Germany that's more, women are more self, I don't know, they speak up. Whether that's self-confidence or if that's part of the culture I don't know. But it feels, yeah. Women in Germany are more emancipated. And the same goes for men. In Germany they are more, yeah, it's already more balanced. While in Australia the men also act as girls expect: to lead and to say what, where they're going.

The de-emphasising of differences between men and women and talk of greater possibilities for men's gendered expression in Germany could be seen as a preliminary step towards a more open masculinity less defined by a strict set of norms and behaviours. The beliefs about different and unequal roles for men and women held by several of these German participants, explored in chapter four, complicate these narratives. However, despite qualifiers such as this, revisiting aspects of the German participants' discourses reveals certain beliefs amongst these young men that demonstrated potential for a move towards more open masculinities.

#### *Perceptions of masculinity in Germany*

These windows of potential to more open masculinities were recognised by Australian men in Berlin, several of whom identified more open aspects of masculinity amongst German men in Berlin. The Australians in Berlin at times painted this in a somewhat negative light as German men having lost their masculinity and having become more "effeminate", as I explored in the previous chapter. However, these observations can be interpreted as recognition of emerging, more open forms of masculinity. As discussed, for example, Alex had been attracted to Europe because he believed there was less emphasis there on men identifying with masculinity and less of a polarity between the genders in Germany. Alex explained his view of German men as less desperate to be hegemonically masculine by saying:

I think I'm far more inclined to call a man "guys" in Europe than I am to call men "guys" in Australia, because "guys" is associated, it's a level, in my mind, of masculine or male.

Shane spoke about the tendency for "English speaking" men to become angry and protective when other men approach their girlfriends, and noted that he had 'never seen a German guy get angry over something like that, [which is] something that's perceived to be macho, you

know, manly type thing’. Christopher felt that men in Australia were more macho, chauvinistic, arrogant and aggressive than in Berlin. The aggression of men in Australia, he said, ‘kind of concerns me’. In Berlin he felt safer from the threat of male violence, explaining that there ‘I mean just me personally, I do *feel* more comfortable’. Christopher thought that in Berlin ‘there is a bit more of a shyness’ amongst German men. As noted in chapter four, Grant felt that men in Germany were less concerned than men in Australia with achieving large, hard, muscular bodies. Felix too felt people in Berlin were more accepting of behaviours from men that were not traditionally deemed masculine.

Although he argued that men had become overly effeminate in Berlin, Ashley nevertheless favoured what he saw as German masculinity over masculinity in Australia. He described masculinity in Australia as:

almost like Neanderthal [and] *so* constricted. It’s suffocating itself basically. And there’s this real dogma there that the man has to be a man, and the woman has to be a woman, and we still live in such a patriarchal society ... And essentially looking at how the Australian government is there functioning. I mean there is still a ridiculous inequality between the sexes there. And it’s supported. And it’s not just the male, it’s not just the masculinity side that’s supporting it, it’s also the femininity side.

By contrast, Ashley described the state of masculinity affairs in Germany as ‘like a breath of fresh air ... I think males here are definitely a lot more sensitive’. He continued by suggesting again that men in Germany were more “in tune”, stating:

it’s a different type of masculinity. It’s not an aggressive type of masculinity as I guess the Australian ... But there is definitely more here, males, in tune. By no means a minority. I wouldn’t say it’s a majority, but it’s a lot more balanced.

Though these narratives were at odds with his assertions that German masculinity had become too effeminate and ‘lacking’, Ashley noted some of the possibilities for more open expressions of masculinity amongst German men.

These Australian participants in Berlin, then, recognised the possibilities for their German peers to start moving towards more open versions of masculinity. Problematic beliefs around separate roles for women and men and more closed, centre aspects of masculinity amongst German participants, explored in chapter four, cannot be ignored. At the same time, possibilities for a movement towards openness were evident amongst the German men I interviewed. This was particularly illuminated through their ideas about sameness, the diversity of possibilities for male gendered expression in Germany and a lessened focus on the hard male body. Furthermore, German participants demonstrated, and Australian participants in Berlin

noticed, less closed, centre forms of masculinity in Berlin and a decreased need for German men to define themselves in distinction to women. It is worth noting that this reduced emphasis on difference reflects the lessening of distinctions drawn between men and women in Germany after reunification and as a result of neoliberalism, as outlined in chapter one (Scholz 2012). Nevertheless, aspects of masculinity amongst the German participants offer some windows of potential through which more open possibilities for masculinity could be glimpsed.

### **Caring masculinity in the margin**

Opportunities for openness of masculinities were found amongst some of the Australian participants living in Berlin and in some of the practices and ideas of the German men interviewed. However, my initial hope of finding caring masculinity remained largely unrealised except when it came to Manni, a participant I situate in the margin. Manni was a queer, German, working-class man who stood out clearly from the other 27 participants in his adoption of caring masculinity and his resistance in the margin. He challenged axioms of masculinity, gender, sexuality and power in both himself and in others.

Bernd, also German and one of the only other participants to clearly identify as something other than heterosexual (in Bernd's case as gay), similarly understood the importance, inequalities, invisibility and difficulties of care. While not as pronounced as in Manni's narratives, Bernd exhibited several traits of caring masculinity. In this section, I present Manni's narratives of caring masculinity. I then outline some of the ways in which Bernd's stories pointed in the direction of caring masculinity. I furthermore consider Manni's and Bernd's lack of access to privileged modes of closed, centre masculinities. Manni's adoption of caring masculinity in particular provides a rich, real-world example of radically open masculinity fostered in the margin.

*'If you want to conceptualise "this person Manni", I think caring must be something you must talk about'*

Manni described himself as 'queer' or as MSM (men who have sex with men) and was a very self-reflexive person, a trait highly valued by participants I interviewed in Berlin as discussed formerly. He spoke openly about his feelings, emotions and thoughts on issues such as gender,



sexuality and masculinity. As mentioned, he was the only clearly working-class participant in the study, an issue along with his lack of money that featured prominently throughout his interview. His childhood and youth had not been easy for a variety of reasons. As discussed in chapter five, he said that growing up ‘I do think that there was quite often, for a really long time, a kind of urge to (pauses) flee’. Despite, or as I will argue perhaps because of, Manni’s less privileged background in comparison to other participants in the study, Manni was highly political and described himself as a radical, leftist deconstructionist. He had wanted to move into a housing project in Berlin in order to have ‘the radical democratic experience’ and considered himself a ‘queer feminist’. He noted the historical experience of feminism and embraced “queer” as:

a political stance of knowing that all of these things like race, gender, sexuality, what have you, they’re not natural, they’re not fixed. And in the end the goal would be to confuse them, to irritate them, and to deconstruct them’.

One example of Manni’s commitment to politics and deconstructionism was his performances as a *Tunte*, described by Manni as ‘something like a mixture between drag, social activist and a radical fairy’. Manni therefore referred to himself as Manni ‘when I’m in boy drag’. *Tunten* are specific to the German context and therefore cannot simply be labelled as “drag queens”. *Tunten* are explicitly political; Manni recounted a quote from a film: ‘A *Tunte* that is not political is not a *Tunte*’. Being a *Tunte* was for Manni an important way of confusing and deconstructing gender roles and being political, particularly as *Tunten* in Germany are involved not only in gender politics but also in other progressive political and social agendas.

Manni had thoughtful opinions on masculinity that were connected to his deconstructionist values. He was aware of his masculine privileges and that he sometimes exercised them, and he believed men needed to change in order to reach equality. He also stated that masculinity needs to be ‘deconstructed and rearranged in new, progressive ways. Then we can go forward as societies’. Manni suggested that masculinity is ‘very harmful [and] masculinity, as supposedly the norm against which other things get constructed, is extremely fragile’. However, he acknowledged Simone de Beauvoir’s (1997) argument that constructs such as masculinity and femininity are not natural but nevertheless have a reality. The reality of masculinity was something Manni said he had been struggling with for his entire life because of ‘my own problem with my political stance and my lived reality’. That is, Manni explained:

even though politically I would be completely like “fuck gender roles” and whatever, “I walk around the city and be whoever I want to be and dress however I want to”, in reality I don’t do it all the time for safety reasons.

Manni felt that the more he conformed to norms of how a man should appear, the more protected he was:

with minor exceptions here and there, you know like dressing up, or you know, there’s like a certain openness. But in the end I most often choose to be on the protected side.

The threat of danger and violence was very salient and real for Manni as a queer person, having experienced harassment in *tunten* drag himself and knowing friends who had experienced severe physical violence. Manni was afraid of this violence, describing it as:

really, really terrifying. I’m torn. I’m torn apart by this kind of contradiction of like, I would like society to be like that [more open in terms of gender and masculinity], and also to have it become more like that it would be good to show presence and stuff like that. But then on the other hand, I still think a lot about safety. And like in which context can I break gender roles? And like, how protected I am for instance by having other people I know around me.

Despite his fear, Manni did in fact play with gender roles and maintained his commitment to deconstructing gender in many ways, not just as a *Tunte*. One way, for example, was through the importance he placed on physicality and touch, which he believed made him different to many of his heterosexual friends. Interestingly, connection through physicality was also important for Felix (Aus/Ber), as described previously in this chapter. For Manni, as for Felix, this physicality did not have to be sexual; it could be something as simple as stroking a friend’s hair. Manni furthermore spoke of breaking with gendered expectations through resisting normative sexual practices in his relationships. However, Manni recognised that:

masculinity is also something where I see that my desire is to a certain extent structured by that, in the sense that I usually like stuff which is male identified. So like, beards for example. And if you look at the people I had any kind of sexual thing with, I guess the majority of them would fulfil like certain gendered expectations of masculinity.

One of the clearest ways, though, that Manni could be seen to have adopted caring masculinity was his strong commitment to care, emotionally, theoretically and practically. Care was one of the most important parts of Manni’s life, and this was not a tokenistic sentiment on Manni’s part; care was something he committed to, suffered for, believed in and carried out for friends and strangers. He told me:

I think actually taking care is something which is to me like one of the important parts of my life. Or like, if you want to conceptualise “this person Manni”, I think caring must be something you must talk about.

He emphasised the importance of care, stating:

I do think that to live in a society and to live as a social being, one of the most important things is to go beyond yourself and care, [and] I think this will be something which will be always part of my life. I do think that taking care of others is one of the most important things humans ought to do.

Manni cared for strangers and friends in many different ways, including through his paid work in care-related jobs, his voluntary work, his engagements in political advocacy and in his social and personal life. Of his future job prospects, for example, Manni explained:

I think in the end it all boils down to helping other people to have a better life and/or do what they want to do and/or help them do cool stuff [and] I do think taking care in my professional life is as important as in my social life.

In his social life Manni described himself as a caretaker to his friends. He would listen to friends and help them with their problems regardless of how close the friendship was. However, Manni’s care went beyond listening to practical, time consuming tasks of care for both friends and others. As mentioned, he supported his parents at the time of his interview, saying ‘I think I’m maybe one of the few people my dad can talk to’. Furthermore, he participated in my research because he found the topics interesting but also because he believed it important to support research.

Manni had cared for and supported partners and ex-boyfriends, even when this had been very challenging for him. Manni did suggest that it was important to take care of oneself but admitted ‘I know that I’m actually not that good in that’, and that the biggest problem with this for him was ‘taking the initiative to go to people and ask for help’. He realised he sometimes spent too much time taking care of others and not himself, but still emphasised that he believed this was better than only taking care of himself, as I considered in the previous chapter. Perhaps one of the clearest examples of Manni’s caring was his unconditional care for an unwell friend. This care had involved talking, practical tasks of care and comfort, and Manni had directly contributed to this friend’s recovery. This care even impacted his university exams, which he potentially allowed to suffer in order to care for his friend. As he explained:

I tried to *be* there for her. And I mean that continued until I was actually about to do my exams, I was actually really short on time and I was like “god I, like I can’t actually, I don’t have the time to take care of you right now”. But I still did. And like, so my exams were maybe not as

good as they should have been, I don't know. Because I did not want to compromise the wellbeing of my friend.

In contrast to participants in Australia, for whom care tended not to be temporally inconvenient, Manni's caring was not cursory or incidental. Rather, it was in-depth, committed and ongoing. Manni carried out the messy, unpleasant work of care, even suffering at times for this, as well as enjoying the rewarding aspects of caring. Manni rejected the call of the closed centre, which he was locked out of, rather than aspiring to move towards its power. He resisted through his political work and activism, his care for others, his commitment to queer realms and ideas and his desire to deconstruct gender. He was dedicated to care ideologically, emotionally and practically. Manni was, I suggest, a participant in the margin who had adopted caring masculinity, including its rejection of domination and incorporation of care. Manni practiced and fostered this open masculinity despite ongoing challenges such as issues of safety and the influence of accepted norms of closed, centre masculinities. Manni's narratives demonstrate some of the rich possibilities for open expressions of masculinity fostered in the margin.

*'I have crazy respect for people who take on all the caring alone, because I actually believe that's too much for one person'*

Bernd shared several similar traits with Manni, although he expressed these in somewhat different ways. Bernd identified as a gay man, rather than as queer or MSM like Manni, but like Manni also had a strong understanding of gender, masculinity and sexuality issues. Again like Manni, Bernd described himself as a political person, stating:

what I know, I would say, is that I am a political person, and I am a man. Gay. They are all things that define me, but also a lot more (*was ich aber schon weiß, würde ich sagen, ich bin ein politischer Mensch, und ich bin ein Mann. Schwul. Das sind alles so Sachen die mich definieren, aber noch viel mehr*).

With this statement Bernd situated himself more firmly as a man than Manni did. Bernd had not adopted practical caring to the extent that Manni had, but like participants living in Australia he did do some tasks of care. He also believed in being there for people and investing time and energy even when it was not convenient. Bernd had never had to "nurse" (*pfllegen*) anyone, and saw care as the small things in life: housemates making one another cups of tea and asking each another about their days; being there for friends when they felt down. At the time of his interview Bernd was attempting to care for a sick friend. He had tried to "be there" in the past in small ways for his mother.

What distinguished Bernd from the majority of participants, though, was his understanding of the importance and inequalities of care. He believed care was something everyone needs and that people do every day, but that is invisible. Care, he said, is a matter of survival, and he pointed out that care would be extremely expensive if it was given monetary value. He believed caring for a person is too big a task for an individual to take on and had:

crazy respect for people who take on all the caring alone, because I actually believe that's too much for one person (*ich hatte dann wahnsinnig Respekt vor Leuten die das einfach komplett allein übernehmen, weil ich eigentlich glaube, das ist zu viel für eine Person*).

Bernd recognised, though, that a man who decides to stay at home and care for his children while his female partner works will be praised and seen as an 'emancipated man', while a woman who works in Germany rather than caring for her children is treated with mistrust. Bernd furthermore pointed out that while some men in Germany now take parental leave, they do not do so to an extent that would damage their careers in the long-term. He realised that the care he had done for his family was 'relatively small in relation to the care my family gave to me' (*'das ist relativ klein gegenüber der Sorge die meine Familie mir gegenüber gebracht hat'*).

Bernd had volunteered with refugees for several years at the time of his interview, beginning this volunteering long before the flow of refugees to Germany in 2015. However, he did not like to think about this volunteering as a top-down relationship where "“I help you all, yeah?” That would be so uncomfortable” (*“ich helfe euch, ja?” Das wäre so unangenehm*”). Instead, he liked to focus on what the refugees gave to him and on what he got out of that work, namely that he had fun doing it and felt good afterwards. Accordingly, Bernd believed there needed to be some sense of exchange in relationships of care.

### *Openness from the margin*

Manni and Bernd were two of the three participants in the sample to identify as queer/MSM and gay respectively, with Ashley (Aus/Ber) also identifying as gay. The only other two participants to question a heterosexual identity were Joseph (Australian), who did not like to categorise his sexuality, and Alex (Aus/Ber), who was contemplating his sexuality. Both Alex and Joseph, however, passed as heterosexual, with Joseph explicitly explaining that 'probably in order to subscribe to the expectations of the community I'd probably say that I'm

heterosexual’. Alex and Joseph both, therefore, largely retained the privilege of heterosexual identities. Manni, Bernd and Ashley, however, did not have access to the privileged, heterosexual modes of masculinity found amongst the other participants. Manni, Bernd and Ashley were from the margin.

Manni was, furthermore, the only clearly working-class participant of the entire group of 28, although as class was not directly ascertained during interviews it is possible that others might also have been working-class. Nevertheless, unlike the other participants, Manni’s working-class background and lack of money structured many of his narratives and had played a determining role in his experiences and opportunities throughout his life. Manni was, therefore, not only excluded from closed, centre masculinity as a result of his sexuality, but also because of his working-class background. As hooks (2004a) argues, the closed centre relies on those from the margin to move to the centre to service it, but they must not stay there. As the man Manni in boy drag, Manni moved to some extent, and always temporarily, “in” to the centre, but as a queer man from a working-class background, or even as a *Tunte*, he was also “out”: “out” as queer and out of the centre as working-class and queer.

Men of the centre who participated in this research performed care in certain ways and in some contexts. However, because of Manni’s position in the margin, rather than despite it, he (along with Bernd to an extent) was the only participant to clearly demonstrate caring masculinity. Locked out of the power and domination of the closed centre, and rejecting it anyway, Manni created spaces of radical openness in the margin. His exclusion from the closed centre conceivably provided him with more space in which to explore and experiment with more open forms of masculinity, though continuing, concrete issues of safety and desire indicate the continuing domination of the closed centre. Gruenewald (2003, p. 632), drawing on hooks (1990), argues, ‘marginality becomes a place of hope where through “radical openness” to other forms of marginality, communities of affiliation can emerge that oppose multiple forms of domination’. Occupying a position in the margin, Manni was aware of constructions, contradictions and problems of gender, sexuality and masculinity from his ‘oppositional world-view — a mode of seeing unknown to most of our oppressors’ (hooks 2004a, p. 156).

As I have noted, Ashley (Aus/Ber) was the third participant to identify as gay. Though he demonstrated more open, fluid conceptions of masculinity, as I outlined previously in this chapter, I have not included him in this section on caring masculinity more explicitly. Despite

his more open version of masculinity in certain senses, and despite being positioned in the margin, Ashley simultaneously held strong views about masculine and feminine roles and the supposed reversal of these in Berlin, as discussed in chapter five. Ashley himself pointed out the challenges he had gone through of changing his mindset and struggling with internal conflicts once he moved away from the conservative regional areas in Australia in which he had grown up. He explained:

I noticed as well when I travel— moved to Europe, like what you develop as like a mentality over other people. Over like, how your socie— like how your culture, how your like community can really shape your understanding or your perception of the world. And that was scary, that was like, you have to like really, really push, not push through, but like really battle a lot of inner conflicts and inner contradictions when you come and you're exposed to a new environment. And I would almost say it should be a prerequisite for everyone that lives in the country to *expand* their perception and to really leave, and to actually see other things because otherwise you're in this like box mentality. And it's sometimes really, really scary speaking to my family because they obviously still have that same conservative mentality. And I mean these [are the] people that like raised you, and you're now seeing it in a completely different light. Like a little bit more distance. And you're going "no!" Like, "really, this is what you think about racial affairs? This is what you think about sexuality affairs, this is your standpoint on it?" Like "this is how I've grown up? This is what *I* was also thinking?" And it's like that uncomfortable kind of feeling that grows and you're suddenly like "ahh! Ahh that's me, but like that's not me anymore! But this is my family!"

Ashley's narratives point to the influence of intersections of culture, background and location, not just of sexuality and class, on expressions and iterations of masculinities. They reveal the importance of considering local, regional and global formulations of masculinity (Connell 2005).

It is important not to ignore the harmful and often violent exclusions and incursions of the closed centre into the lives of queer, gay and working-class men and others who are subordinated, marginalised or dominated by the centre, or to forget the deprivations of the margin (hooks 2004a). Nevertheless, Manni's case, and Bernd's to an extent, point to some of the possibilities for those outside the privileges of closed, centre masculinities — those in the margin — to model, or be the vanguard for, more open forms of masculinity. The margin is for hooks (2004a, p. 153) a space 'where we begin the process of re-vision'. This reading of marginality and Manni's narratives empower the margin as a space of radical openness while not erasing its deprivations. Manni's narratives of caring masculinity highlight the value of men of the centre moving towards greater openness of masculinities as fostered by men of the margin.

## Conclusion

Throughout this chapter I have traced the openness of masculinities I discovered amongst participants. The city of Berlin emerged as a significant site for exploring and uncovering this openness, which was connected to issues of national and transnational mobility and precarious work. I first explored the ways in which participants saw Berlin as a city welcoming to those of diverse cultures, ethnicities and sexualities. Men in Germany valued openness in the city, in themselves and in others. My consideration of openness in Berlin was followed by an analysis of the interdependencies of mobility, career and masculinity for Australian men in Berlin. However, amongst shorter-term Australian men there, for whom there had been little rupture of self, career and masculinity, connections to more closed, centre masculinities such as those explored in chapter four endured.

Subsequently, I illuminated the windows of opportunity for openness of masculinity found in relation to certain of the ideas and practices of the German men in Berlin. A decreased emphasis on the body and strict modes of expression for men, as well as on stark differentiations between women and men, could be seen as sites of possibility for openness amongst these young men. The continuing closed discourses from the German participants explored in chapter four, however, remain salient and qualify the potentials for more open masculinities glimpsed through their narratives. Finally, I investigated narratives of caring masculinity found in particular with one German participant of the margin, Manni. These narratives show the significance of open, caring masculinity and reveal the margin as a site where more open masculinities can develop.

My investigation in this chapter illuminates the possibilities for men of the centre to move towards greater openness. Nevertheless, the continuing pull of the centre and connections to more closed, centre masculinities stressed throughout this thesis demonstrate that inequalities and gendered relations of power played roles in the lives and discourses of many of these young men. There is still profound progress to be made amongst men of the centre such as these in their journeys towards openness and their rejection of the domination of the closed centre. Nevertheless, my investigation in this chapter has uncovered movements that trouble ties to closed, centre masculinities. These movements contribute to fostering more open masculinities and offer possibilities for further work towards gender equality.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CONCLUSION

#### Summary

Throughout this thesis I have traced mobile masculinities across the spaces of margin–centre. I explored movements of participants, most of whom were from the centre, to and from increased openness and investigated both closed and more open expressions of masculinity. In addition, I discovered narratives of caring masculinity in the open margin. I began in chapter one by considering the evolution of this research and definitional distinctions, as well as setting the scenes of Melbourne and Berlin in relation to culture, society, work and gender in neoliberal climates. In chapter two I discussed the CSMM and feminist literature on masculinities and care upon which my own research builds. CSMM has documented and theorised closed, centre masculinities such as hegemonic and transnational business masculinities and discourses such as the crisis of masculinity. CSMM also offers suggestions for how men could be engaged in gender equality. I considered feminist care theory in chapter two, which challenges the closed centre and bounded subjectivity through its focus on interdependence.

I subsequently discussed contemporary masculinities and change, focusing on men’s bodies and emotions and theories of change such as inclusive masculinity, caring masculinity and hybrid masculinities. In theoretical terms, both inclusive and caring masculinities pay attention to movement across the spaces of margin–centre and to openness, though in different ways. In light of critiques of hybrid masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014), I contend that both aspects of caring masculinity — the rejection of domination and the incorporation of care — are crucial. I therefore drew primarily on the concept of caring masculinity throughout this thesis when discussing open masculinities fostered in the margin towards which men of the centre can move, while keeping in mind the useful contribution of inclusive masculinity theory (Anderson 2009).

In chapter three I addressed my theoretical and methodological approaches to the research. Drawing in particular on hooks’ (2004a) and Shildrick’s (2006) work, I first developed the schema of margin–centre, focussing on movement, mobilities and the mutual constitution of

the whole. I demonstrated that margin and centre intersect with recourse to the device of two clasped hands with fingers interlocked. I aligned the margin as a space of openness and the centre as a closed one and finally traced the mobility of participants across the spaces of the margin–centre schema. I highlighted four main movements in particular, along with the discovery of narratives of caring masculinity in the margin and nuances, contradictions and possibilities of mobile masculinities. These movements and nuances were then considered throughout the three analysis chapters of this thesis.

I next considered the implications of narrative, meaning making and language for my research. Narrative methods helped to cut through some of the silences surrounding masculinities. Participants in this study could tell stories about their lives they found important, even if masculinity and care were not topics they commonly thought about. I outlined my data collection and analysis methods, which were designed in accordance with feminist research methodologies and ethics, and I considered further implications of feminist ethics for my study. In particular, my own reflexivity around issues of power and the distinct positionings of myself and the study participants led to a challenge and commitment to be both generous and critical throughout this work.

I began my analysis of participants' narratives in chapter four, considering stories of closed, centre masculinities and the drawing of participants to the closed centre. These narratives followed a double movement. On the one hand, participants claimed to have changed, softer attitudes in line with expectations of contemporary men and masculinities. On the other, they continued to express beliefs and behaviours more closely aligned with the power and domination of the closed centre. For men in Australia this involved a distancing from and ridiculing of protest masculinity but simultaneously a borrowing from it, particularly at the site of the body. Furthermore, while these men spoke of caring to an extent, this was generally care that was not temporally disruptive or undervalued.

For several of the German participants, the double movement involved stating women and men in Germany were very similar, while still portraying women as ruled by emotions and unsuited to career. Australian men in Berlin, despite being those amongst whom I found the most significant movements towards more open masculinities, nevertheless continued to worry that they would be perceived as gay. These narratives of more closed, centre masculinities from participants in all three groups were balanced against the prevalence of stories about their

fathers, who tended to be portrayed as adhering to much more traditional, closed versions of masculinity than participants.

In chapter five, I delved into the nuances of mobile masculinities that could not easily be captured in terms of closed or open. I revealed continuing challenges surrounding the strategic use of norms of closed, centre masculinities at times and longings for older, more “essential” masculinities. However, I noted possibilities for change that emerged, particularly from the contradictions of masculinity. I explored physical mobility of German participants and those living in Australia as a means of advancing careers under neoliberal labour market conditions. Narratives of the privileges and pressures of masculinity surrounding, for example, violence, alcohol consumption, expected male behaviours and proscriptions against men’s emotive lives and help seeking revealed resistance to norms of closed, centre masculinities at times but strategic use of these norms at others. Finally, discourses of essential, true masculinity highlighted a complicated and potentially more conservative search for alternatives for masculinities. This finding raises the necessity of collective feminist interventions aimed at fostering more open expressions of masculinity for young men.

In chapter six, the final analysis chapter, I investigated emerging openness of masculinities amongst participants, while nevertheless keeping closed, centre expressions of masculinity considered throughout the previous two chapters firmly in mind. The positioning of Berlin as an open city by participants emerged clearly from the data. Australian men in this city had moved, I argue, towards more open expressions of masculinity through their mobility and their revaluing of career. Windows of potentiality for a move towards openness appeared amongst the German participants in Berlin, particularly in the possibilities they saw available for masculine expression. However, my goal of finding caring masculinity was borne out with just one participant, Manni, whose narratives I presented in chapter six. Manni’s position in the margin enabled him to create spaces of radical openness for masculinity and gender and to demonstrate an open, caring alternative for masculinity.

## Contributions and conclusions

### *Key findings and future research directions*

I discovered significant movement towards more open expressions of masculinity amongst some of the participants from the centre, particularly in the group of Australian men living in Berlin. Possibilities and potentials amongst all three groups for further movement towards openness could, furthermore, be detected. My research reveals that men of the centre can move towards more open masculinities. Berlin, which was positioned by many of the participants as a space of openness, emerged as a salient backdrop to their movements. Importantly, I discovered an example of caring masculinity in the margin, which I explored in detail in chapter six. Further research into similar instances of openness of masculinities located in the margin would extend this insight and could explore more fully the intricacies of this radical, open masculinity.

Though some steps towards openness were being taken by certain participants, the continuing pull of the centre was a significant finding to emerge from this research. The men of the centre in this study continued to be drawn to that closed centre, placing limitations on the steps they were taking towards openness. hooks (2004a) writes of both speaking and silences in her consideration of the margin. Part of the silences of masculinity I uncovered through this research related to the fact that most of the participants were unable to speak in the ways I had initially hoped: in terms of caring masculinity. The continuing attraction to the closed centre remains a pressing challenge for both critical studies on men and masculinities and feminist theory and research.

Notable further considerations and nuances arise from this tension between moves towards openness and the pull of the centre. For example, though I have positioned the margin throughout this dissertation as a site of radical openness, the potential exists for less open masculinities to be located in the margin. As noted in chapter three, for example, protest masculinity (Connell 2005) is conceived of as being adopted by marginalised men, but cannot be considered open. The aim of this thesis was to consider mobilities of masculinities rather than to categorise types of masculinities neatly within the realms of open margin or closed centre. Nevertheless, connections between marginalisation and potential closedness warrant

further consideration. A related issue that arises from this research is that flexibility of masculinities does not necessarily guarantee gender progressiveness, as de Boise (2017) and de Boise and Hearn (2017) have discussed in relation to emotions, and as critiques of inclusive masculinity suggest. This matter too deserves additional future exploration.

Movement and mobility have been significant threads running throughout this dissertation. My research begins to indicate that mobility, often in connection with work, can be a productive state that has the potential to trouble closed, centre masculinities. The insecurity of mobility and precarity cannot be ignored, but movement nevertheless appeared at times to provide a rupture of more closed, centre masculinities, particularly in the case of the Australian men who had moved longer-term to Berlin. Further work on the possibilities of mobility and precarity for openness of masculinities could assist in teasing out these patterns further.

Overall I discovered shifts and movements across the spaces of margin–centre, and towards both openness and closedness of masculinities, amongst the participants from the centre. Men in Australia manoeuvred through expressions of masculinity depending on the situation, but largely remained within the closed centre. Windows of potential for a movement towards openness were emerging amongst German participants, while some of the Australian men in Berlin were on significant trajectories towards more open expressions of masculinity. Nevertheless, the closed centre retained its influence alongside these movements. In addition, contradictions and nuances of masculinity revealed back and forth movement between the spaces of margin–centre. Finally, narratives of resistance and of open, caring masculinity from Manni suggest that rich possibilities and alternatives for masculinity can be found in the margin.

### *Theoretical insights and concluding thoughts*

My framework of margin–centre, based on the work of hooks (2004a) and Shildrick (2006), enabled my exploration of mobile masculinities in Melbourne and Berlin throughout this thesis. Margin–centre offers a way to think about masculinities in mobility and to trace both openness and closedness of masculinities. Margin–centre furthermore provides a theoretical account of how change could happen. This schema values the margin as a space of radical openness, as hooks (2004a) does, contesting the centre as the locus of new languages of masculinities.

Margin–centre suggests the marginalised have valuable stories, experiences and ways of being to share. The schema also allows for intersecting access to the power of the centre to be considered and for the continuing influence and attraction of the centre to be highlighted.

A key feature of my schema of margin–centre is that these two spaces intersect. This intersecting of margin and centre I considered based on the image of two clasped hands with fingers interlocked, hands that extend Irigaray’s (1993) imagining of two hands in mutual touch as if in prayer. The space between the palms of two clasped hands belongs to neither left hand nor right; it is created through both, two hands that are themselves neither open nor closed. The two hands overlap and the fingers intertwine, highlighting the interdependencies of margin and centre and the constitution of the whole by both. The intersection of margin and centre furthermore highlights movement across these spaces.

Throughout this thesis, and particularly in chapter five, I have highlighted contradictions and tensions of masculinities. These contradictions reveal both continuing challenges but also possibilities for movement towards greater openness. Capturing and communicating the intricate, often contradictory nuances of the data in this research required some tightness and clarity of terminology, particularly around the concepts of closed centre and open margin. Despite my choice to use these categories throughout this thesis for theoretical and analytical purposes, I note that masculinities and men themselves are always more nuanced and mixed.

I have drawn on my theorisation of caring masculinity (Elliott 2016) in this thesis as an example of open masculinity in the margin, as key to this theory are both the rejection of domination and the embracing of values of care. My theorisations of both margin–centre and caring masculinity engage with the suggested ‘feminist theory deficit’ (Berggren 2014, p. 231) in some Anglophone CSMM or the potential contemporary divergence of CSMM and feminist theory (Beasley 2015) by drawing on both knowledge traditions. The integration of CSMM and feminist theory throughout this thesis seeks to draw from and contribute to both fields, and acknowledges the long lineage of feminist and profeminist work that does the same. In doing so, this thesis provides theoretical tools that enable the consideration of movement between closed and open masculinities and possibilities and challenges for this movement.

I have argued here that although it is highly difficult for men of the centre to leave behind their privilege, they can and must move towards the greater openness of masculinities fostered in

the margin. My research highlights the importance of continuing to challenge closed narratives of centre masculinities. It illuminates the possibilities of openness in the margin and indicates that the movement of centre men towards increased openness of masculinities is possible.

## REFERENCES

Anderson, Eric 2009, *Inclusive masculinity: the changing nature of masculinities*, Routledge, New York.

Anderson, Eric & McGuire, Rhidian 2010, 'Inclusive masculinity theory and the gendered politics of men's rugby', *Journal of Gender Studies*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 249-61.

Aronowitz, Stanley & Cutler, Jonathan (eds) 1998, *Post-work: the wages of cybernation*, Routledge, New York.

Australia-Germany Advisory Group 2015, *Collaboration, innovation & opportunity*, viewed 11 January 2017, <<http://dfat.gov.au/about-us/publications/international-relations/Documents/australia-germany-advisory-group.pdf>>.

Baker, John, Lynch, Kathleen, Cantillon, Sara & Walsh, Judy 2004, *Equality: from theory to action*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Bartholomaeus, Clare 2013, 'Colluding with or challenging hegemonic masculinity?', *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 28, no. 77, pp. 279-93.

Beasley, Chris 2012, 'Problematizing contemporary men/masculinities theorizing: the contribution of Raewyn Connell and conceptual-terminological tensions today', *The British Journal of Sociology*, vol. 63, no. 4, pp. 747-65.

Beasley, Chris 2015, 'Caution! Hazards ahead: considering the potential gap between feminist thinking and men/masculinities theory and practice', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 51, no. 3, pp. 566-81.

Beck, Ulrich, Bonss, Wolfgang & Lau, Christoph 2003, 'The theory of reflexive modernization: problematic, hypotheses and research programme', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 1-33.



Berggren, Kalle 2014, 'Sticky masculinity: post-structuralism, phenomenology and subjectivity in critical studies on men', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 231-52.

Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie 2016, *The population of the capital region*, viewed 10 January 2017, <<http://www.businesslocationcenter.de/en/business-location/business-location/economic-data/demographic-data>>.

Bertels, Lothar 1990, *Gemeinschaftsformen in der modernen Stadt*, Leske + Budrich, Opladen.

Beynon, John 2002, *Masculinities and culture*, Open University Press, Philadelphia.

beyondblue n.d., *Statistics and references*, viewed 14 January 2017, <<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/about-us/research-projects/statistics-and-references?sec=sec-men>>.

Blatterer, Harry 2015, *Everyday friendships: intimacy as freedom in a complex world*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Bly, Robert 1990, *Iron John*, Addison-Wesley, New York.

Bordo, Susan 1999, *The male body: a new look at men in public and in private*, Farrar, Straus and Girous, New York.

Braidotti, Rosi 2011, *Nomadic subjects: embodiment and sexual difference in contemporary feminist theory*, 2nd edn, Columbia University Press, New York.

Brandes, Holger 2007, 'Hegemonic masculinities in East and West Germany (German Democratic Republic and Federal Republic of Germany)', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 178-96.

Bridges, Tristan & Pascoe, C. J. 2014, 'Hybrid masculinities: new directions in the sociology of men and masculinities', *Sociology Compass*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 246-58.

Bundesamt für Familie und zivilgesellschaftliche Aufgaben n.d., *Chronik*, viewed 10 January 2017, <<http://www.bafza.de/das-bundesamt/chronik.html>>.

Butera, Karina J. 2008, ‘‘Neo-mateship’ in the 21st century: changes in the performance of Australian masculinity’, *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 265-81.

Chase, Susan E. 2005, ‘Narrative inquiry: multiple lenses, approaches, voices’, in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 3rd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 651-79.

Chase, Susan E. 2011, ‘Narrative inquiry: still a field in the making’, in Norman K. Denzin & Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*, 4th edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 421-34.

City of Melbourne 2017a, *Facts about Melbourne*, viewed 11 January 2017, <<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/melbourne-profile/pages/facts-about-melbourne.aspx>>.

City of Melbourne 2017b, *Multicultural communities*, viewed 11 January 2017, <<http://www.melbourne.vic.gov.au/about-melbourne/melbourne-profile/pages/multicultural-communities.aspx>>.

Cixous, Hélène 1981, ‘Sorties’, trans. Ann Liddle, in Elaine Marks & Isabelle de Courtivron (eds), *New French feminisms*, Harvester Press, Brighton, pp. 90-8.

Coffey, Julia 2016, *Body work: youth, gender and health*, Routledge, Abingdon; New York.

Coltrane, Scott 1996, *Family man: fatherhood, housework, and gender equity*, Oxford University Press, Oxford; New York.

Connell, R. W. 1987, *Gender and power: society, the person and sexual politics*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

Connell, R. W. 2000, *The men and the boys*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards.

Connell, R. W. 2003a, 'Introduction: Australian masculinities', in Stephen Tomsen & Mike Donaldson (eds), *Male trouble: looking at Australian masculinities*, Pluto Press Australia, Melbourne, pp. 9-21.

Connell, R. W. 2003b, *The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality*, The United Nations Expert Group Meeting, Division for the Advancement of Women, Brasilia, Brazil.

Connell, R. W. 2005, *Masculinities*, 2nd edn, University of California Press, Berkeley.

Connell, R. W. & Messerschmidt, James W. 2005, 'Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept', *Gender & Society*, vol. 19, no. 6, pp. 829-59.

Connell, R. W. & Wood, Julian 2005, 'Globalization and business masculinities', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 347-64.

Connell, Raewyn 2007, *Southern theory: the global dynamics of knowledge in social science*, Polity Press, Cambridge; Malden.

Connell, Raewyn 2014, 'Margin becoming centre: for a world-centred rethinking of masculinities', *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, vol. 9, no. 4, pp. 217-31.

Daly, Mary 2001, 'Care policies in Western Europe', in Mary Daly (ed.), *Carework: the quest for security*, International Labour Office, Geneva.

Daly, Mary & Rake, Katherine 2003, *Gender and the welfare state: care, work and welfare in Europe and the USA*, Polity Press, Cambridge.

de Beauvoir, Simone 1997, *The second sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley, Vintage Books, London.

de Boise, Sam 2015, 'I'm not homophobic, "I've got gay friends": evaluating the validity of inclusive masculinity', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 318-39.

de Boise, Sam 2017, 'The personal is political ... just not always progressive: affective interruptions and their promise for CSMM', *NORMA: International Journal for Masculinity Studies*, pp. 1-17, DOI: 10.1080/18902138.2017.1325098.

de Boise, Sam & Hearn, Jeff 2017, 'Are men getting more emotional? Critical sociological perspectives on men, masculinities and emotions', *The Sociological Review*, pp. 1-18, DOI: 10.1177/0038026116686500.

de Visser, Richard O. & Smith, Jonathan A. 2007, 'Alcohol consumption and masculine identity among young men', *Psychology & Health*, vol. 22, no. 5, pp. 595-614.

Demetriou, Demetrakis Z. 2001, 'Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: a critique', *Theory and Society*, vol. 30, no. 3, pp. 337-61.

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade n.d., *German country brief*, Australian Government, viewed 11 January 2017, <<http://dfat.gov.au/geo/germany/Pages/germany-country-brief.aspx>>.

Donaldson, Mike 2003, 'Studying up: the masculinity of the hegemonic', in Stephen Tomsen & Mike Donaldson (eds), *Male trouble: looking at Australian masculinities*, Pluto Press Australia, Melbourne, pp. 156-243.

Doucet, Andrea 2006, *Do men mother?: Fathering, care, and domestic responsibility*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

Dwyer, Peter, Smith, Graeme, Tyler, Debra & Wyn, Johanna 2003, *Life-patterns, career outcomes and adult choices*, Australian Youth Research Centre, Melbourne.

Egeberg Holmgren, Linn 2011, 'Cofielding in qualitative interviews: gender, knowledge, and interaction in a study of (pro)feminist men', *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 17, no. 4, pp. 364-78.

Elias, Juanita & Beasley, Christine 2009, 'Hegemonic masculinity and globalization: 'transnational business masculinities' and beyond', *Globalizations*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 281-96.

Elliott, Karla 2011, 'Disrespect and the absence of responsibility: masculinity, femininity and the Australian Football League', honours thesis, Monash University, Melbourne.

Elliott, Karla 2016, 'Caring masculinities: theorizing an emerging concept', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 19, no. 3, pp. 240-59.

Ettelson, Todd Richard 2002, 'The Nazi "new man": embodying masculinity and regulating sexuality in the SA and SS, 1930-1939', doctoral thesis, The University of Michigan, Ann Arbor.

European Commission 2006, *A roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010*, Communication from the Commission. Brussels, Belgium.

European Commission 2010, *Strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015*, Communication from the Commission. Brussels, Belgium, <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0491:FIN:EN:PDF>>.

Eurostat n.d., *Death due to suicide, by sex*, viewed 14 January 2017, <<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/table.do?tab=table&init=1&language=en&pcode=tps00122&plugin=1>>.

Fine, Michael & Glendinning, Caroline 2005, 'Dependence, independence or inter-dependence? Revisiting the concepts of 'care' and 'dependency'', *Ageing & Society*, vol. 25, pp. 601-22.

Friedman, Marilyn 1993, *What are friends for? Feminist perspectives on personal relationships and moral theory*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca; London.

Gärtner, Marc & Höyng, Stephan 2005, 'Introduction', in Ralf Puchert, Marc Gärtner & Stephan Höyng (eds), *Work changes gender: men and equality in the transition of labour forms*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen, pp. 15-20.

Gärtner, Marc, Schwerma, Klaus & Beier, Stefan 2007, *Fostering caring masculinities. Documentation of the German gender expert study*, Dissens e.V. and genderWerk, Berlin, Germany.

Gilligan, Carol 1982, *In a different voice: psychological theory and women's development*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge; London.

Gorz, André 1982, *Farewell to the working class*, Pluto, London.

Gray, John 1992, *Men are from Mars, women are from Venus*, HarperCollins, New York.

Gruenewald, David A 2003, 'Foundations of place: a multidisciplinary framework for place-conscious education', *American Educational Research Journal*, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 619-54.

Hanlon, Niall 2012, *Masculinities, care and equality: identity and nurture in men's lives*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Hartmann, Michael 2007, *Eliten und Macht in Europa. Ein internationaler Vergleich*, Campus, Frankfurt; New York.

Hearn, Jeff 2001, 'Men and gender equality: resistance, responsibilities and reaching out', keynote paper, *Men and Gender Equality*, 15-16 March, Örebro, Sweden.

Hearn, Jeff 2004, 'From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men', *Feminist Theory*, vol. 5, no. 1, pp. 49-72.

Hearn, Jeff 2012, 'A multi-faceted power analysis of men's violence to known women: from hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men', *The Sociological Review*, vol. 60, no. 4, pp. 589-610.

Hearn, Jeff & Pringle, Keith 2006, *European perspectives on men and masculinities: national and transnational approaches*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Heilmann, Andreas 2015, 'Männlichkeit im Reproduktionsdilemma? Sozial- und zeitdiagnostische Perspektiven von Krisenanalysen', in Andreas Heilmann, Gabriele Jähnert, Falko Schnicke, Charlott Schönwetter & Mascha Vollhardt (eds), *Männlichkeit und*

*Reproduktion: zum gesellschaftlichen Ort historischer und aktueller Männlichkeitsproduktionen*, Springer VS, Wiesbaden, pp. 99-116.

Held, Virginia 2006, *The ethics of care: personal, political, and global*, Oxford University Press, New York.

Hollway, Wendy & Jefferson, Tony 2005, 'Panic and perjury: a psychosocial exploration of agency', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 44, pp. 147-63.

Hollway, Wendy & Jefferson, Tony 2013, *Doing qualitative research differently: a psychosocial approach*, 2nd edn, Sage, London.

Holmes, Mary 2015, 'Men's emotions: heteromascularity, emotional reflexivity, and intimate relationships', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 176-92.

hooks, bell 1990, *Yearning: race, gender, and cultural politics*, South End Press, Boston.

hooks, bell 2000, *Feminist theory: from margin to center*, 2nd edn, South End Press, Cambridge, MA.

hooks, bell 2004a, 'Choosing the margin as a space of radical openness', in Sandra Harding (ed.), *The feminist theory standpoint reader: intellectual and political controversies*, Routledge, New York, pp. 153-9.

hooks, bell 2004b, *The will to change: men, masculinity, and love*, Atria Books, New York.

Hopkins, Peter E. 2006, 'Youthful Muslim masculinities: gender and generational relations', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 31, no. 3, pp. 337-52.

Hopkins, Peter E. 2009, 'Responding to the 'crisis of masculinity': the perspectives of young Muslim men from Glasgow and Edinburgh, Scotland', *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 299-312.

Hopkins, Peter E. & Pain, Rachel 2007, 'Geographies of age: thinking relationally', *Area*, vol. 39, no. 3, pp. 287-94.

Hopkins, Peter E. & Smith, Susan J. 2008, 'Scaling segregation; racialising fear', in Rachel Pain & Susan J. Smith (eds), *Fear: critical geopolitics and everyday life*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 103-16.

Höyng, Stephan, Puchert, Ralf & Holter, Øystein Gullvåg 2005, 'Labour market changes and gender', in Ralf Puchert, Marc Gärtner & Stephan Höyng (eds), *Work changes gender: men and equality in the transition of labour forms*, Barbara Budrich Publishers, Opladen, pp. 21-72.

Huppatz, Kate & Goodwin, Susan 2013, 'Masculinised jobs, feminised jobs and men's 'gender capital' experiences: understanding occupational segregation in Australia', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 49, no. 2-3, pp. 291-308.

Irigaray, Luce 1985a, *Speculum of the other woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Irigaray, Luce 1985b, *This sex which is not one*, trans. Catherine Porter, Cornell University Press, Ithaca.

Irigaray, Luce 1993, *Sex and genealogies*, trans. Gillian C. Gill, Columbia University Press, New York.

Jupp, James 1995, 'From 'White Australia' to 'Part of Asia': recent shifts in Australian immigration policy towards the region', *International Migration Review*, vol. 29, no. 1, pp. 207-28.

Jupp, James 2007, *From white Australia to Woomera: the story of Australian immigration*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge; New York.

Kimmel, Michael S. 2010, *Misframing men: the politics of contemporary masculinities*, Rutgers University Press, New Brunswick; New Jersey; London.



Kittay, Eva Feder 1999, *Love's labor: essays on women, equality, and dependency*, Routledge, New York.

Langvasbråten, Trude & Teigen, Mari 2006, *Fostering caring masculinities. FOCUS - the European dimension*, Institute for Social Research, Oslo, Norway.

Letherby, Gale 2003, *Feminist research in theory and practice*, Open University Press, Buckingham; Philadelphia.

Lindsay, Jo 2012, 'The gendered trouble with alcohol: young people managing alcohol related violence', *International Journal of Drug Policy*, vol. 23, no. 3, pp. 236-41.

Lorber, Judith 2010, *Gender inequality: feminist theories and politics*, 4th edn, New York.

Lynch, Kathleen 1999, 'Equality studies, the academy and the role of research in emancipatory social change', *The Economic and Social Review*, vol. 30, no. 1, pp. 41-69.

Lynch, Kathleen, Baker, John & Lyons, Maureen 2009a, 'Introduction', in Kathleen Lynch, John Baker & Maureen Lyons (eds), *Affective equality: love, care and injustice*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, pp. 1-11.

Lynch, Kathleen, Baker, John & Lyons, Maureen (eds) 2009b, *Affective equality: love, care and injustice*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York.

MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1987, *Feminism unmodified: discourses on life and law*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge.

Maher, JaneMaree 2013, 'Women's care/career changes as connection and resilience: challenging discourses of breakdown and conflict', *Gender, Work & Organization*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 172-83.

Massey, Doreen 1994, *Space, place, and gender*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

McCormack, Mark 2012, *The declining significance of homophobia: how teenage boys are redefining masculinity and heterosexuality*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

McDowell, Linda & Massey, Doreen 1984, 'A woman's place?', in Doreen Massey & John Allen (eds), *Geography matters! A reader*, Cambridge University Press in association with The Open University, Cambridge; New York; Melbourne, pp. 128-47.

McMahon, Anthony 1999, *Taking care of men: sexual politics in the public mind*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Merritt, Richard L 1969, 'The student protest movement in West Berlin', *Comparative Politics*, vol. 1, no. 4, pp. 516-33.

Messner, Michael A. 1990, 'When bodies are weapons: masculinity and violence in sport', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 203-20.

Messner, Michael A. 1997, *Politics of masculinities: men in movements*, Sage, Thousand Oaks; London; New Delhi.

Messner, Michael A. 2002, *Taking the field: women, men, and sports*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis.

Messner, Michael A. & Sabo, Donald F. 1990, 'Toward a critical feminist reappraisal of sport, men, and the gender order', in Michael A. Messner & Donald F. Sabo (eds), *Sport, men, and the gender order: critical feminist perspectives*, Human Kinetics, Illinois, pp. 1-16.

Meuser, Michael 2003, 'Modernized masculinities? Continuities, challenges and changes in men's lives', in Søren Ervø & Thomas Johansson (eds), *Among men: moulding masculinities, volume 1*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 127-48.

Meuser, Michael 2010, 'Geschlecht, Macht, Männlichkeit - Strukturwandel von Erwerbsarbeit und hegemoniale Männlichkeit', *Erwägen Wissen Ethik*, vol. 21, no. 3, pp. 325-36.

Nath, Jemál 2011, 'Gendered fare? A qualitative investigation of alternative food and masculinities', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 261-78.

Neate, Rupert 2014, 'Berlin's 'poor but sexy' appeal turning city into European Silicon Valley', *The Guardian*, 4 January, viewed 15 December 2016, <<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2014/jan/03/berlin-poor-sexy-silicon-valley-microsoft-google>>.

Nickel, Hildegard Maria 2008, 'Care - Black Box der Arbeitspolitik', *Berliner Journal für Soziologie*, vol. 18, no. 2, pp. 185-92.

O'Neill, Rachel 2015, 'Whither critical masculinity studies? Notes on inclusive masculinity theory, postfeminism, and sexual politics', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 100-20.

Pease, Bob 2001, 'Moving beyond mateship: reconstructing Australian men's practices', in Bob Pease & Keith Pringle (eds), *A man's world?: changing men's practices in a globalized world*, Zed Books, London; New York, pp. 191-204.

Pease, Bob 2011, 'Men in social work: challenging or reproducing an unequal gender regime?', *Affilia: Journal of Women and Social Work*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 406-18.

Petersen, A 2003, 'Research on men and masculinities: some implications of recent theory for future work', *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 54-69.

Philadelphoff-Puren, Nina 2004, 'Dereliction: women, rape and football', *The Australian Feminist Law Journal*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 35-51.

Pickering, Sharon & Weber, Leanne 2014, 'New deterrence scripts in Australia's rejuvenated offshore detention regime for asylum seekers', *Law & Social Inquiry*, vol. 39, no. 4, pp. 1006-26.

Pini, Barbara 2005, 'Interviewing men: gender and the collection and interpretation of qualitative data', *Journal of Sociology*, vol. 41, no. 2, pp. 201-16.

Pocock, Barbara 2005, 'Work/care regimes: institutions, culture and behaviour and the Australian case', *Gender, Work & Organization*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 32-49.

Pocock, Barbara, Charlesworth, Sara & Chapman, Janine 2013, 'Work-family and work-life pressures in Australia: advancing gender equality in "good times"?', *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy*, vol. 33, no. 9/10, pp. 594-612.

Roberts, Steven 2012, 'Boys will be boys ... won't they? Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities', *Sociology*, vol. 47, no. 4, pp. 671-86.

Roberts, Steven 2014a, 'Introduction: masculinities in crisis? Opening the debate', in Steven Roberts (ed.), *Debating modern masculinities: change, continuity, crisis?*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Roberts, Steven (ed.) 2014b, *Debating modern masculinities: change, continuity, crisis?*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke; New York.

Roberts, Steven, Anderson, Eric & Magrath, Rory 2016, 'Continuity, change and complexity in the performance of masculinity among elite young footballers in England', *The British Journal of Sociology*, October 31, DOI: 10.1111/1468-4446.12237.

Rojek, Chris 2002, 'Civil labour, leisure and post work society', *Society and Leisure*, vol. 25, no. 1, pp. 21-35.

Rojek, Chris 2005, 'Leisure and tourism', in Craig Calhoun, Chris Rojek & Bryan Turner (eds), *The SAGE handbook of sociology*, Sage, London, pp. 302-13.

Roseneil, Sasha 2004, 'Why we should care about friends: an argument for queering the care imaginary in social policy', *Social Policy and Society*, vol. 3, no. 4, pp. 409-19.

Roseneil, Sasha 2006, 'Foregrounding friendship: feminist pasts, feminist futures', in Kathy Davis, Mary Evans & Judith Lorber (eds), *Handbook of gender and women's studies*, Sage, London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi, pp. 322-41.

Roseneil, Sasha & Budgeon, Shelley 2004, 'Cultures of intimacy and care beyond 'the family': personal life and social change in the early 21st century', *Current Sociology*, vol. 52, no. 2, pp. 135-59.

Scambor, Elli, Wojnicka, Katarzyna & Bergmann, Nadja 2013, *The role of men in gender equality - European strategies & insights*, Study prepared for the European Commission, DG Justice - Unit D2 Gender equality, with contributions by Sophia Belghiti-Mahut, Nadja Bergmann, Marc Gärtner, Jeff Hearn, Øystein Gullvåg Holter, Majda Hrženjak, Ralf Puchert, Christian Scambor, Elli Scambor, Hartwig Schuck, Victor Seidler, Alan White & Katarzyna Wojnicka, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Scholz, Sylka 2012, *Männlichkeitssoziologie: Studien aus den sozialen Feldern Arbeit, Politik und Militär im vereinten Deutschland*, Westfälisches Dampfboot, Münster.

Schwalbe, Michael 1995, 'Mythopoetic men's work as a search for communitas', in Michael S. Kimmel & Michael A. Messner (eds), *Men's lives*, 3rd edn, Allyn & Bacon, Boston.

Schwalbe, Michael 1996, *Unlocking the iron cage: the men's movement, gender politics, and American culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Scott, Sara 1998, 'Here be dragons: researching the unbelievable, hearing the unthinkable. A feminist sociologist in uncharted territory', *Sociological Research Online*, vol. 3, no. 3.

Sedgwick, Eve Kosofsky 2008, *Epistemology of the closet*, 2nd edn, University of California Press, Berkeley; Los Angeles.

Seidler, Victor J. 2006, *Young men and masculinities: global cultures and intimate lives*, Zed Books, London; New York.

Shildrick, Margrit 2006, 'Monstrous reflections on the mirror of the self-same', in Deborah Orr, Linda López McAllister, Eileen Kahl & Kathleen Earle (eds), *Belief, bodies, and being: feminist reflections on embodiment*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Lanham, pp. 37-48.

Simonson, Julia, Gordo, Laura Romeu & Kelle, Nadiya 2015, 'Separate paths, same direction? De-standardization of male employment biographies in East and West Germany', *Current Sociology*, vol. 63, no. 3, pp. 387-410.

Squire, Corinne, Davis, Mark, Esin, Cigdem, Andrews, Molly, Harrison, Barbara, Hydén, Lars Christer & Hydén, Margareta 2014, *What is narrative research?*, Bloomsbury Academic, New York.

Stanley, Liz 1990, 'Feminist praxis and the academic mode of production: an editorial introduction', in Liz Stanley (ed.), *Feminist praxis: research, theory and epistemology in feminist sociology*, Routledge, London, pp. 3-19.

Stanley, Liz & Wise, Sue 1990, 'Method, methodology and epistemology in feminist research processes', in Liz Stanley (ed.), *Feminist praxis: research, theory and epistemology in feminist sociology*, Routledge, London, pp. 20-60.

Stokes, Helen & Wyn, Johanna 2007, 'Constructing identities and making careers: young people's perspectives on work and learning', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, vol. 25, no. 5, pp. 495-511.

Strate, Lance 1992, 'Beer commercials: a manual on masculinity', in Steve Craig (ed.), *Men, masculinity, and the media*, Sage, Newbury Park, pp. 88-102.

Sumpter, Kristen C. 2015, 'Masculinity and meat consumption: an analysis through the theoretical lens of hegemonic masculinity and alternative masculinity theories', *Sociology Compass*, vol. 9, no. 2, pp. 104-14.

Tanner, Claire, Maher, JaneMaree & Fraser, Suzanne 2013, *Vanity: 21st century selves*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke.

Tomsen, Stephen 2008, '“Boozers and bouncers”: masculine conflict, disengagement and the contemporary governance of drinking-related violence and disorder', in Stephen Tomsen (ed.), *Crime, criminal justice and masculinities*, Ashgate, Aldershot, pp. 297-311.

Trade & Investment Victoria n.d., *Greater Melbourne Demographics*, viewed 11 January 2017, <<http://www.invest.vic.gov.au/resources/statistics/greater-melbourne-demographics>>.

Trentmann, Frank 2009, 'Disruption is normal: blackouts, breakdowns and the elasticity of everyday life', in Elizabeth Shove, Frank Trentmann & Richard Wilk (eds), *Time, consumption, and everyday life*, Berg, Oxford, pp. 67-84.

Tronto, Joan C. 1993, *Moral boundaries: a political argument for an ethic of care*, Routledge, New York; London.

Ungerson, Clare 2006, 'Gender, care, and the welfare state', in Kathy Davis, Mary Evans & Judith Lorber (eds), *Handbook of gender and women's studies*, Sage, London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi, pp. 272-86.

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs 2010, *The world's women 2010: trends and statistics*, United Nations, New York, <<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/Worldswomen/WW2010pub.htm>>.

Waling, Andrea 2014, 'Heroes, retros and metros: narratives of conflicting masculinities within contemporary Australian media', *Outskirts: feminisms along the edge*, vol. 30, pp. 1-13.

Walker, Karen 2010, "'I'm not friends the way she's friends": ideological and behavioral constructions of masculinity in men's friendships', in Michael S. Kimmel & Michael A. Messner (eds), *Men's lives*, 8th edn, Allyn & Bacon, Boston, pp. 303-15.

Whitehead, Stephen M. 2002, *Men and masculinities: key themes and new directions*, Polity Press, Malden.

Whitehead, Stephen M. & Barrett, Frank J. 2001, 'The sociology of masculinity', in Stephen M. Whitehead & Frank J. Barrett (eds), *The masculinities reader*, Polity Press, Malden, pp. 1-26.

Young, Iris Marion 1990, *Throwing like a girl and other essays in feminist philosophy and social theory*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington; Indianapolis.