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Between Want and Should:

Masculinities and Neoliberal Subjectivity in Men Enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts

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Abstract

This thesis examines constructions of masculinity in the context of a neoliberal university. It draws primarily from the theory of hegemonic masculinity, a theory of masculinity that posits that gender is organised hierarchically with a narrow 'ideal' and dominant construction of masculinity in the premier position of power over women, femininity, and other marginalised expressions of masculinity (Connell, 2005). In the Aotearoa New Zealand context, strength, stoicism, heterosexuality, and practicality describe the hegemonic form of masculinity, despite greater fluidity of gender expression in recent years. Concurrently with hegemonic masculinity, dominant ideals of neoliberalism stress personal control, management, and responsibility via a highly individualised understanding of (economic) success. In higher education, deeply financialised discourses shape how institutions offer their qualifications and how students engage with and utilise their education. Narratives around employability and personal returns are dominant as students must emphasise how their education will allow them to best exploit the job market for their personal benefit. Together, the discourses of dominant masculinities and neoliberal higher education profoundly shape the way men navigate university.

I carried out semi-structured interviews with six men enrolled in Bachelor of Arts degrees at Massey University in Albany, Aotearoa New Zealand. The interviews were analysed discursively to elucidate the way men construct ideas about their educational choices in line with ideals of masculinity and neoliberalism. The most dominant emergent themes were: conceptualising arts degrees as 'risks'; the role of interpersonal care; and the containment of men within normative ideas about what they should be doing at university.

Together, masculine and neoliberal ideals reveal a profound tension within the lives of participants. They are caught between the expectations of traditional values of masculinity and profit-focussed neoliberal self-management which compel them to make educational choices that satisfy the expectations of both. This results in participants implicitly and explicitly positioning themselves within the ideals of both systems, despite also knowing that their education is outside of the norms of said systems. They use economic and gendered discourses to justify their choices to pursue arts degrees, which redeems and repositions their degrees within normative expectations for education. Despite the challenges of being placed between these ideals, participants show that there are ways to successfully balance the demands of both through conscious efforts to connect masculinity and neoliberal outlooks to their current education and planned futures.

The construction of hegemonic masculinity pressures men into behaviours and values related to stable and productive employment futures for the purpose of being able to provide for dependents. This aids in the continuation of the current gender order by guiding men into choosing careers which allow them to gain access to a provider position. To make an employment or education decision that does not readily connect to future stability as a provider is perceived as inherently risky and imperils one's ability to appear normatively masculine. Although participants view themselves as atypical for their choice of education, contemporary discourses around masculinities provide a flexible and adaptive resource for participants to nonetheless firmly position themselves in ways that highlighted their masculinity. Participants can manage the riskiness their chosen careers present to their gender identity by stressing outcomes from their education that allow them to achieve masculine ideals, for example, favouring a clinical counselling path through psychology due to the expected financial returns.

To this end, neoliberal economic discourses around profitability play an important role in the ability for men to justify their study decisions. Actively assessing the ability of their chosen paths to result in financial success enabled participants to circumvent a risk to personal profitability related to arts degrees' unclear connection to marketable skills. Financialised framing provided by neoliberal values allowed participants to elucidate the educational path most likely to grant good returns and connect these returns to the expected future stability of employment traditionally valued by masculinity. In this way, the areas of crossover between masculinity and neoliberalism provided the most effective justification for their choices to study arts degrees and allowed them to connect their personal desires for ameliorative social action to existing norms around what men should expect from work.

For participants, arts degrees carry gendered and economic connotations that needed to be acknowledged and managed in order to highlight the personal possibility for success and maintain connections to norms of masculinity. Participants' future careers necessitate engagement with interpersonal and emotional labour via care work. As care work has feminine connotations, and femininity is expected to be avoided by men, there was a need to 'masculinise' their expected labour to create a distance from appearing feminine. To do this, participants stressed longer term successes and achieving positions of authority to 'fix' society, as well as financial returns, to place the care work they would perform within normatively masculine expectations of future successes. This processes of redrawing boundaries around labour and emphasising specific outcomes to stress normative successes illustrates the remarkable flexibility drawn from masculine and neoliberal values for men to position themselves as part of a continuation of the existing gender order.

Identifying and redrawing the boundaries of acceptable behaviour for men was an important strategy for participants rationalising their decisions to study an arts degree. Participants were perceptive of the social constructions of arts degrees as 'frivolous' or relatively disconnected from contemporary conceptualisations of success. However, they could actively access neoliberal and masculine discourses to assert how their decisions reflected a carefully chosen path with 'realistic' achievements. The difference between 'realistic' and 'unrealistic' employment outcomes from an arts degree were deeply influenced by the ability for participants to construct their education within normative boundaries for financial stability. This meant that participants ideal outcomes from their education were always placed within employment and employability frames that fit within the boundaries of neoliberal and normatively masculine career aspirations.

The findings of this research demonstrate that dominant ideas about masculinity and how one should compete in the labour market simultaneously dictate what men should do and expect at university. Men's goals in university are contained within gendered and economic realities which make educational options that conform to those realities more attractive to pursue than those options that do not. As a result, this thesis speaks to the way men and masculinities change due to contextual pressures, and how these changes can occur without destabilising the overall normative structure of gender and a neoliberal sense of self.

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Chapter One

Introduction

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In her introductory textbook *Gender,* Raewyn Connell (2002) asserts that "in everyday life we take gender for granted" (p. 5). Gender and gendered expressions form a major part of the ways we carry ourselves through life, yet we often miss how we actively reproduce and engage with gendered norms. The wide ranging and deeply impactful, but also at times remarkably subtle, force that gender applies to our lives can shape the futures we plan for ourselves as much as the present we exist in. Traditionally, masculinity was denoted by such things as physical strength and toughness, heterosexuality, and social assertiveness, although contemporary considerations reveal that gendered expressions are not static and prone to changes in relation to time and place (Connell, 2002). For example, women may act in ways that are traditionally aligned with masculine expression at times, and men might perform in traditionally feminine ways (Connell, 2002). Equally, non-binary people have an actively dynamic relationship to gender, for example, simultaneously representing themselves with characteristics traditionally associated with masculinity and femininity (National Center for Transgender Equality, 2018).

The masculinity of men is one of the key areas of interest for this thesis. Notwithstanding the fluidity of gendered expression, masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand often reflects traditional westernised understandings as well as expressions more unique to the local context. Stereotypical 'kiwi' blokes are expected to be straight, stoic, beer drinking, rugby playing, and sensible, practical-minded men (Campbell et al., 1999; Pringle, 2017; Star, 1999). This construction of masculinity reflects a set of characteristics epitomised in champion rugby players, legendary mountaineers, world conquering sailors, and *Speights* beer mascots.

While these ideas exist in the national imagination, the lived reality of everyday men's gendered lives is marked with tremendous variability related to a range of personal contexts. Masculinity is shaped by many intersecting social factors, from ethnicity and socio-economic status to geography.

This thesis brings gender into focus through the accounts of men studying towards a Bachelor of Arts degree at Massey University in Auckland, Aotearoa New Zealand. A key focus of this research is how the norms of masculinity impact men's paths through their higher education, an education firmly located within a neoliberal economic agenda. This topic largely emerged from my own experiences of completing a Bachelor of Arts. Often, I found myself to be one of the few men in my classes, at one point the only man, and this generated questions as to why that might be the case. There was nothing about the college, disciplines, or courses I enrolled in that seemed particularly gendered, and I knew historically these fields were dominated by men. My awareness of gendered representation increased as my exposure to, and engagement with, an academic perspective of society and its norms also increased. The trajectory into this thesis was a seemingly natural extension of this musing over how my experience as a man enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts related to the experiences of others and how this might explain the gendered realities I was seeing. So, in one sense, this project is deeply personal; I want to understand my own gender and place in the world and connect this to the larger narrative of my lived experiences. But it would also be inaccurate to say that this thesis is purely self-indulgent. Although masculinities scholarship in Aotearoa New Zealand has its place, there is surprisingly little scholarship on the relationship between masculinity and tertiary study—'men at university now'. This thesis seeks to respond to this gap in research.

The gendered aspect of university life is useful for understanding *who* is participating in higher education, economic factors can provide additional understanding as to *why* people study. One of the primary, if not *the* primary, reasons people enter higher education is to get a good job (Crothers, 2018). Since the 1980s Aotearoa New Zealand has operated under a 'neoliberal' economic framework that stresses personal responsibility, an idea that is realised in the education and labour market sectors. Economic reorientations place immense pressure on individuals to 'get ahead' by reading and responding to market forces for personal gain (Rowe-Williams, 2018). Neoliberal economic and social restructuring and marketized reforms have had a tremendous impact on higher education. Students are expected to make informed and market-reactive decisions regarding their choice of degrees in order to maximise personal (financial) benefit (Rowe-Williams, 2018). Enrolment in higher education invariably involves

taking on significant debt as universities in the neoliberal age operate under a partially user-pays system (Rowe-Williams, 2018). These aspects, among others, have fundamentally altered people's approach to university education as the needs of the market drives student decision-making

Contemporary scholarship on both masculinities and neoliberalism reveal the multitude of ways people's lives are shaped and moved by the expectations of economy and gender. This thesis examines the interplay of neoliberal and masculine ideals on the lives of men in the context of university education. It brings these two fields together through the lives of men enrolled in arts degrees to illustrate how these normative pressures operate and how men wrestle (or not) with normative gendered and economic expectations. In particular, the research examines:

- What are the experiences of men enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts and how do they position their choice to study that degree?
- How does neoliberal ideology influence men's higher education pathways?
- To what extend to normative pressures of gender and the economy shape men's decision making around education and career paths?
- How do men negotiate masculinity when studying toward 'feminised' careers?

Critically examining these questions will extend and illuminate contemporary scholarship on gender, masculinity, and neoliberalism in the context of tertiary education.

Roadmap of the Thesis

This thesis comprises seven chapters. Following this introductory chapter, Chapter Two offers a review of the literature pertaining to the fields of gender studies, with a particular focus on masculinities, and neoliberalism. I introduce hegemonic masculinity as a foundational concept before considering alternative contemporary and adjacent forms of masculinity that have extended Connell's work, including hybrid masculinity and caring masculinity. Understandings of masculinity in the local Aotearoa New Zealand context is also explored. This examination provides a theoretical framework for thinking about, and discussing, how masculinity is expressed, articulated, and performed. The chapter also introduces neoliberalism as a local and international ideological force that has profoundly challenged the way society is organised. Particular attention is paid to the role of neoliberalism on the way universities are organised in relation to the student body, and on individual self-making.

Chapter Three details my methodological approach to this research as well as the methods I used to carry out the fieldwork and data analysis. Specifically, I more thoroughly introduce the research site, describe the participant cohort, and the interview framework. I also outline my use of discourse and thematic analysis as well as ethical considerations related to the research.

Chapters Four, Five, and Six comprise the results of this research. These chapters focus on the accounts of participants and investigates how they make sense of their decisions to complete a Bachelor of Arts. While each chapter takes a different angle and brings a different theoretical framework to the fore, the common focus is on the intersection of masculinity and neoliberalism and their influence on participants' education and career goals. Specifically, Chapter Four explores how norms of masculinity and neoliberalism define some education paths as 'risky', but also illuminates the ways that participants navigate perceptions of risk. Chapter Five focuses on the concept of care. Specifically, this chapter discusses how participants' choice to 'care', whether it be caring about people or society, is shaped by both neoliberal and masculine ideals. Here, I discuss the way that participants reframe conceptualisations of 'women's work' in order to emphasise specific 'masculinised' versions of care work and care-related education to show how it fits into masculine and financial norms. And finally, chapter Six considers how ideals of neoliberalism and masculinity can create 'boundaries' which contain men and encourage behaviours, beliefs, and attitudes that fit within normative bounds.

Chapter Seven offers a conclusion in which I tie together the results of the research and suggest that neoliberalism and masculinity create a profound tension that must be navigated for men. Both the areas of overlap between neoliberalism and masculinity are highlighted to show how these concepts simultaneously support and 'naturalise' each other's norms. Overall revealing the multifaceted and adaptable ways gendered and economic pressures impact the lives of men pursuing Bachelor of Arts degrees.

Chapter Two

Masculinities in the Market:
A Review of the Literature

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Introduction

Decades of scholarship on both masculinities and neoliberalism have granted many insights into how people's lives are deeply impacted by the norms, ideals, and practices that emerge from these concepts. This chapter reviews some of the scholarship from these two broad fields. It traverses a range of disciplines, including anthropology, sociology, psychology, and education from Aotearoa New Zealand and further afield, including Australia, the United States, Germany, the United Kingdom, Scandinavia and more.

Much of the gender-focused literature reflects a social constructionist perspective that is underpinned by an assumption that gender is a "routine accomplishment embedded in everyday interaction" (West & Zimmerman, 1987, p. 125). A social constructionist perspective also understands gender as fluid and prone to change throughout time and place (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Despite the potentiality for change, contemporary genders are arranged in within structures of power which privilege some genders over others and produce unequal outcomes. Masculinity, in the context of contemporary western patriarchy, occupies a privileged hegemonic position of power compared to others, and indeed, hegemonic masculinity is of key importance to this thesis. Focussing on the Aotearoa New Zealand context, this chapter also explores the normative ideals of masculinity in this country.

Aotearoa New Zealand's dominant social and ethnic structures alongside its colonial history have played pivotal roles in constructing the pragmatic, resilient, skilled, unemotional, intelligent—but anti-intellectual—and knowledgeable idealised masculine character that is prevalent in the country today.

The impact of neoliberalism is also discussed in this chapter, focusing on society, the individuals, and, most importantly, neoliberalism's impact on the contemporary university. Universities are undoubtedly neoliberal organisations that are the site of gendered norms. The economic market-focussed restructuring of the 1980s onward has significantly impacted the position and purposes of tertiary education organisations. Universities as a whole have a long-gendered history punctuated by men's dominance in both the student body and academic staffing. To this end, this chapter also explores neoliberal norms around (gendered) self-making which have played a significant role in shaping both student interactions with universities and the ways in which universities, including those in Aotearoa New Zealand, present themselves.

Hegemonic Masculinity: Men, Masculinity, and Multiplicity

Contemporary understandings of gender emphasise that there is no 'one way' to do gender, and that the specific forms gendered performances and expressions take is highly reliant on wider social contexts (West & Zimmerman, 1987). 'Hegemonic masculinity' is a theoretical perspective which rests on the idea that gender is a diverse and multifaceted set of ideals. However, within this multiplicity of ways to do gender, Raewyn Connell (1987) described two forms which were considered exemplary and operated from a place of privilege for establishing dominant norms, namely: hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity. 'Hegemonic masculinity' denotes the idea that within society there is one form of masculinity which is "honoured or desired" above the others (Connell, 2000, p. 10). In contrast, emphasised femininity describes idealised feminine behaviours which operate in subordinated support of hegemonic masculinity and the inegalitarian gender order it necessitates.

The use of the term 'hegemonic' to describe this form of masculinity is drawn from Marxist philosopher Antonio Gramsci, who posited that class hegemony allowed for the maintenance of structural dominance over the working class (Law et al., 1999). Gramscian class hegemony explains the stabilisation of class relations and shows how capitalist elites

maintain power through the manipulation of ideology and the naturalisation of the exploitative relationship between the bourgeoisie and proletariat (Law et al., 1999). When applied to gender, hegemonic masculinity describes how a particular form of masculinity becomes both normalised and naturalised, not only in its subordination of women in the form of patriarchy, but also domination over other competing forms of masculinity which come to be seen as 'lesser' (Connell, 2005).

Hegemonic masculinity does not need to be the most numerously practiced form of masculinity, nor, in Connell's (2000) words, "the most comfortable" (p. 11). Groes-Green (2009) succinctly describes hegemonic masculinity as:

> "...a normative male ideal in a society which supports the gender hierarchy and subordinates marginal masculinities and men who do not comply with it. Hence, hegemonic masculinity is to be seen as a cultural prototype or ideal masculinity which is largely acknowledged and accepted by both women and men in a society, even if they have no chance of conforming to the ideal." (p. 292)

Hegemonic masculinity may be partially embodied or symbolised by men with socially prestigious positions. Rugby player Richie McCaw, for example, has sporting and leadership prowess that strongly reflects ideal norms of masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand. In addition, he possesses physical strength, stoicism, identifies as heterosexual, and is a great outdoorsman with ingenious practicality. These characteristics secure his place in this country as the consummate man and expression of masculinity. That said, any single person's representation of masculinity, even McCaw's, will always be partial because they may not fully encapsulate the hegemonic form in all ways and at all times. More generally, men form relationships to the cultural ideas of hegemonic masculinity as opposed to completely embodying it (Connell, 2000).

Hegemonic forms of masculinity do not remain static and are prone to shifts and adaptions through time, including reformation in response to wider shifting societal norms (Connell, 2005). For example, the wider acceptance and relative normalisation of gay men and expressions of gay masculinity in the global north necessitated a change in hegemonic masculinities that moved away from historical hostilities expressed toward gay masculinities (Messerschmidt, 2018). Such 'hybridisation' (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014) recognises the ability of masculinities to adapt in response to exterior pressures and adopt traits not historically associated with normative hegemonic masculinities.

The gender order necessitated by hegemonic masculinity sees two ways which hegemonic power is expressed to organise gender. These are *'external hegemony'* and *'internal hegemony'*, originally articulated by Demetriou (2001). External hegemony describes the ways in which the attitudes, beliefs, and actions of hegemonic masculinity control and dominate women as a group (Demetriou, 2001). Conversely, internal hegemony describes how hegemonic masculinity's attitudes, beliefs, and actions impact and control the actions of men as a group (Demetriou, 2001). The impacts of 'internal hegemony' echo illustrations by hooks (2010) who points out that norms of patriarchy do not only negatively impact women, but also men. The articulation of internal and external hegemonies is important as it highlights the ways in which hegemonic masculinity as a culturally endorsed system runs in different ways depending on the groups targeted by its effects. Specifically, hegemonic masculinities endorse and involve systems which control both femininities and other, less powerful, forms of masculinity.

Other forms of non-hegemonic masculinity do not simply form a nondescript mass of possibility, but, in Connell's theory, fulfil several categorical modes based on their relationship, challenges, and social position related to the hegemonic form. These categories are: subordinate masculinity, marginalised masculinity, and complicit masculinity (Connell, 2005). Subordinated masculinities are those which exist in a kind of loathed and rejected relationship toward hegemonic masculinity. Connell (2005) cites gay masculinity in American and European societies as fulfilling this subordinated position, as gay identity in the construction of hegemonic masculinity aligns itself too closely with traits considered feminine. In short, subordinated masculinities are forms of masculinity oppressed by the hegemonic form (Pascoe, 2007) and are often identified, symbolically or otherwise, with femininity (Connell, 2005).

Marginalised masculinities are those which are empowered in terms of gender alone, but not with regards to class or race (Pascoe, 2007). They exist as forms of masculinity which are specifically categorised, minimised, and compartmentalised by, and in relation to, the hegemonic form. Rather than occupying a totally empowered and dominant form of masculinity, they represent a form from which those in power might appropriate without acknowledging its source (Kraack, 1999). Marginalised masculinities also reflect a necessarily intersectional approach to understanding gendered expression and power, taking stock of a broad range of intersecting social categories within the person, which can help to recognise a masculinity as marginalised (see Cho et al., 2013). Related to the hegemonic white American masculinity is African American masculinities. African American men may be able to

exemplify the bodily esteems of masculinity as high-level sports stars without having the entirety of African American masculinity entering a dominant space for hegemonic masculinity in itself. The exact specificities of marginalised masculinities can be elusive to define given the shifting states of social relations in given moments, with researchers like Kraack (1999) defining the term as "ambiguous" (p. 155) and Connell (2005) herself labelling the term "not ideal" (p. 80). This space of ambiguity is, again, an opportunity to introduce an intersectional approach to illuminate how the categories of ethnicity, socio-economic status, and more makes a masculinity marginalised in relation to a hegemonic form. Ambiguities aside, a key aspect of the relationship between hegemonic and marginalised masculinity is that of authorisation of marginalised masculine expressions within and by the normative hegemony (Connell, 2005), an authorisation that reproduces cultural dominance (Aboim, 2010).

Finally, complicit masculinities are forms which benefit from a society's hegemonic masculinity, but do not actively enact it (Pascoe, 2007). Connell contends that the majority of men enact complicit masculinity and passively receive the social power and positional benefits of a society's hegemonic masculinity via a "patriarchal dividend" (Connell, 2005, p. 79). This is a general advantage that men receive from the subordination of women (Connell, 2005) as well as providing an incentive for retaining and reproducing existing structures of gender relations (Connell, 2000). The widespread nature of complicit masculinities means that its form is typically a relatively 'plain' one, as Connell states: "[Men who enact complicit masculinity] respect their wives and mothers, are never violent towards women, do their accustomed share of the housework, bring home the family wage, and can convince themselves that feminists must be bra-burning extremists" (Connell, 2005, p. 80). Men who enact complicit masculinity simply act in ways which serve to legitimise hegemonic masculinity and receive a largely uncontested or unrealised benefit from its overarching structure (Aboim, 2010).

The nature of the connections between hegemonic masculinity and subordinated, marginalised, and complicit masculinities is of relationships in motion. They are relationships that are constantly being reformed and renegotiated around the acceptability of specific forms of masculinity with the primary constant being men's overall dominance over women. For example, the more recent acceptance of queer masculinity at a socio-cultural level (Aboim, 2010) in the form of television shows such as *Queer Eye* (Collins, 2018) illustrate that previously subordinated forms of masculinity have instead entered a place of marginalisation. This illustrates that the domination of hegemonic masculinity is often a subtle affair of

discourse and attitudes as opposed to overt violence, although violence is not out of the scope for the retention of hegemonic structures. Furthermore, because of this relational-based approach to the reproduction of the gendered order, hegemonic masculinity as a theory demonstrates its adaptability to see masculinities in a variety of contexts.

Almost twenty years after the original assertion of hegemonic masculinity and its place in a gendered hierarchy, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) collected and collated several critiques of the theory and both addressed and pointed towards new directions. These critiques are helpful for illustrating where the theory currently resides in contemporary scholarship and how it has changed. The broad categories of critique put forward by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) are as follows:

- Critiques toward the underlying concept of masculinity itself as playing a part in the general reproduction of narrow essentialist perspectives of sex and gender.
- Critiques concerning ambiguity regarding who in a society actually represents hegemonic masculinity, as many men with great social power did not seem to represent this position.
- Hegemonic masculinity was described as reducing characteristics to simply perspectives of "power or toxicity" whereby it becomes difficult to see the label of 'hegemonic masculinity' as something other than a synonym for a range of empowered socially negative traits.
- The difficultly in adapting to the lived circumstances of individuals, where hegemonic masculinity could only see community and societal structures.
- And finally, that hegemonic masculinity, in its earlier days, did not explore or explain the relationship between internal and external hegemony, and resulted in ambiguity of the coercive and dominative functions of hegemonic masculinity.

In response, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) "reformulate[d hegemonic masculinity theory] in four main areas: the nature of gender hierarchy, the geography of masculine configurations, the process of social embodiment, and the dynamics of masculinities" (p. 847). Each of these reformations took into account the above critiques to help direct where the theory should head in future.

The 'nature of gender hierarchy' reformulation was a call for understanding hegemonic masculinity in a more gender-diverse way. The reformulation was suggested to not only see the subordination of some forms of masculinity, but how these forms may adapt and fortify themselves in a kind of opposition to a hegemonic masculinity. Examples of this include research that analyses how specific expressions and groupings of masculinity are formed with or against other forms, especially the hegemonic (see Elliott, 2019; Walker, 2006).

Additionally, as part of this reformation Connell and Messerschmidt called for increased focus on women's identities when relating to the construction of contemporary masculinities. In this case, inter-gender relationships (e.g women's relationships to subordinated/marginalised masculinities) were put forward as another important area for investigating how hegemonic masculinities achieve and maintain their dominant positions.

Understanding the specific local and global contexts in which (hegemonic) masculinity is constructed is also important for establishing how dominant forms of masculinity develop around the world. Increasing demands were made for a theory of hegemonic masculinity that better accounted for the perceived geographic 'levels' of hegemonic masculinity, namely the local, regional, and global modes (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). These discrete geographic scales permit an understanding that global and regional norms influence localised expressions of masculinity. Furthermore, it was recognised that actions and attitudes of larger geographic scales (e.g. regional or global scales) would impact how local hegemonic masculinities were shaped. Ultimately, investigating the relationship between scales further deepens our understanding of normative and hegemonic masculinities.

The way masculinity is embodied and performed is vital for the construction and reification of hegemonic masculinity. The reformation concerning the 'process of social embodiment' involves the way bodies act or perform particular (gendered) identities in social practices. By asserting the roles of embodied ways of achieving hegemonic masculinity, or at least directing one's body towards it, embodiment can be seen as a reification of conceptualised understandings of norms and dominance. In this sense, a focussed investigation on embodied practices in association to hegemonic ideals can further create connections between concepts or stereotypes of one context's 'ideal men's behaviours' and how men actually express themselves in day-to-day life.

Finally, the reformation concerning the dynamics of masculinities suggests the further investigation of "specific patterns of internal division and emotional conflict" with relation to the existing gender order. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) highlight familial relationships, divisions of labour, and attitudes around women's liberation as contributions to emerging tensions to normative masculinities in space and time that force masculinities to change. Masculinities as 'dynamic' and adaptive to the shifts and demands of specific contexts demonstrates how norms around masculinities and gender in general are in constant debate, and investigations into masculinities can find value in focussing on how societal pressures impact specific ideas around normative masculinities.

From these four reformations, some earlier considerations of hegemonic masculinities theory came to be rejected. These included: the idea that the global gender order involved all masculinities in positions of power over all femininities; and that hegemonic masculinity necessitated a reduction to a series of traits alone without consideration of the interpersonal relationships that hegemonic masculinity creates. These two perspectives proved to either run counter to evidence given by masculinities scholars or could lead to a reduction in understanding of how masculinities form and are used or performed in actual circumstances. Focussing on the four core areas of reformulation and articulating what could be 'left behind' allowed for a sharpening of the focus and investigation by those working with hegemonic masculinity as a theory.

These critiques and subsequent reformulations present a pivot toward the contemporary moment for hegemonic masculinity theory. However, despite revising the concept, some issues remain. The vagueness of who counts in which category remains, to some extent, problematic. As pointed out by Beasley (2008) globalised hegemonic masculinities remain as a relatively narrow descriptor, applicable to small populations of men whose ability to internationally set trends may be limited. Similarly, Aboim (2010) claims 'complicit masculinities' covers a wide field of individual men who have no real impact on the symbols of normative masculinities.[1]

One possibility for future theoretical direction of hegemonic masculinity is a renewed focus on intersectionality. By integrating the hierarchal notions of gender and power reproductions with intersectionality more readily, the explanations of how and why hierarchies form the way they do may become clearer (Messerschmidt, 2012). For example, when considering subordinate masculinities and their relationship to the hegemonic, taking stock of class, ethnicity, age, and sexuality could more deeply illustrate the exact nature of that subordinate relationship (Messerschmidt, 2012). At a more general level, an intersectional approach grants a more well-rounded perspective on the lives of individuals and is more capable of explaining the idiosyncratic circumstances and uneven development of power within people, overall deepening the analysis a hegemonic masculinity perspective is capable of giving (Christensen & Jensen, 2014; Phipps & Young, 2015). Finally, an intersectional approach reveals how those with the most social privilege are most able to adapt their gendered performances to the pressures which might expect them to change. For example,

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[1] Although in the rest of her book *Plural Masculinities: The Remaking of the Self in Private Life* (2010), Aboim works to try and resolve some of the general ambiguity around complicit masculinities.

young, white, and heterosexual men are believed to have the most social resources available to alter their masculine performance while still being accepted as presenting a masculine identity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Elliott, 2019).

The final point I would like to underline with regards to hegemonic masculinity expands on the adaptability of the mechanics of hegemonic masculinity. As described by Aboim (2010) dominant forms of masculinity are prone to shift based on contexts, especially as we scale between the local, regional, and global (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). As this scaling happens, global and regional hegemonic forms structure the within-group nature of accepted gender performances in different localised arenas. Men do not perform a simple monolith of hegemonic behaviour (Aboim, 2010), instead adapting expressions of masculinity based on context. For example, specific work environments draw out specific performances of masculinity (Robinson & Hockey, 2011) that are reflective of the class, ethnicity, sexuality and so on of the individual. This emphasis on plurality within men helps to both contextualise and underline two of the most recent concepts to be explored from the gendered hierarchy of 'hegemonic masculinities' theory.

Firstly, 'hybrid masculinities' describes how normative masculinities are able to adapt to changing circumstances of wider society while keeping masculinities in the dominant, hegemonic, position (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). Those who practice hybrid masculinities are able to outwardly 'soften' their relationship to the dominant hegemonic masculinity through changes to their expression of masculinity. This softening, however, does not actually fundamentally challenge the underlying gender order that places men and masculinity in a dominant position. Bridges and Pascoe (2018) assert that there are two main forces in a masculinity hybridising: '*strategic borrowing'* and '*discursive distancing'*.

Strategic borrowing refers to selectively borrowing traits from other, less powerful, masculinities and femininities. By strategically borrowing other gendered performances, men can symbolically frame themselves as part of socially subordinated groups, obfuscating their connection and support of the current gender order. An example from Bridges' (2010) research is men dressing in women's clothing during a protest march to demonstrate their solidarity with women against domestic violence. In doing so, however, the men emphasised their own masculinity and disparaged femininity through joking and mocking the unusualness of the situation. Although the men acted in support of a pro-women cause, taking a non-masculine performance and moving it into the scope of a more acceptable gendered expression through joking reified and reinforced the current gender order.

But such expressions of hybridity are not necessarily so overt. Compared with strategic borrowing, 'discursive distancing' describes the way men use language to express their distance to hegemonic masculinity, especially its more violent or socially unacceptable expressions. Men engaging in self-care and grooming (previously associated with women or femininity) is a good example. Collating work by Barber (2008; 2016) on men who patronise hair salons, Messerschmidt (2018) describes how men distanced themselves from traditionally masculine barber shops by emphasising the value they felt in hair salons instead. For example, the men would disparage work-class men's use of barber shops for the overt masculinity of the environment while upholding the 'classy' nature of women's salons. The men patronising salons used discourses that distanced them from some ideals of masculinity while nonetheless uncritically accepting the underlying gender order. This involved shifting the values they placed on salons to connect the services they received to masculine ideals, like changing concepts of beauty to relate to professionalism (Messerschmidt, 2018). Shifting these values effectively neutralised the impact of the feminine-associated salon and, again, reproduced the gender order in favour of the hegemonic status-quo.

In contrast to hybrid masculinities which continue to reflect the current gender order, several scholars have investigated new emergent masculinities that challenge the norms of domination and general inequality associated with hegemonic masculinity. These take on different forms, but all seek to find a path within masculinity that addresses the problems associated with hegemonic masculinity. These new masculinities are described variously as "inclusive masculinities" (Anderson, 2009), "caring masculinities" (Scambor et al., 2014) or the "new masculinities" of the Nordic states described by, among others, Lund et al. (2019). Whatever form they take, the search for 'better' masculinities reflects what Messerschmidt (2018) describes as the effort to find and create expressions of gender-egalitarian masculinity rather than simply abandoning, and encouraging the abandonment of, masculinities in general.

Of these new "better" masculinities, 'caring masculinities' is, for this thesis, the most revealing and fruitful in context with 'hybrid masculinities' and hegemonic masculinity theory in general. Caring masculinities are described as alternate forms of masculinity which integrate previously feminine associated values around care, emotionality, interdependence, and relationality into masculine identities (Elliott, 2016). Men who embody this form of masculinity move beyond simple hybridisation because their integration of these characteristics is done as part of a critical engagement with gender-as-a-concept and a want to address the current inegalitarian gendered order.

Caring masculinities are imagined as a practice-based alternative framework for the development of new masculine identities that move away from values of domination and aggression and toward values of interdependence and care (Elliott, 2016). Although relatively new in masculinity studies, I include it here, above the other concepts listed above, because in its novelty Elliott opens a space to explore emergent masculinities in men who are already challenging normative structures to see how they might bring with them practices, beliefs, or expressions that genuinely challenge hegemonic masculinities as they exist today.

Raewyn Connell's gender hierarchy model works as a flexible tool for understanding the relationships and reproductions of power in gender. It provides an adaptive perspective which can fit to a variety of contexts and has seen significant use in the study of masculinity since its early development. By stratifying forms of masculinity into groups arranged under a hegemonic empowered form, one is able to engage in an understanding of contemporary masculinity in both its historical developmental context and its current constitution. The more recent scholarship that builds on this theory captures the remarkable adaptability and flexibility of masculinities as they attempt to maintain themselves and the gendered status-quo. With this exploration of hegemonic masculinities established, I want to turn to the Aotearoa New Zealand context to illustrate how this theory has been applied and explored in this regional context.

Top Blokes: Men and Masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand

The early days of colonisation of Aotearoa New Zealand set the stage for some of the core values of normative masculine identity. Jock Phillips' book *A Man's Country* (1996) serves as a foundational investigation into the history and form of men and masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Phillips described how the early colonial era saw the antipodal islands receive a large influx of European, mainly British, men looking for labour and employment opportunities, among other draws. As most of the early colonisers were men, they could predominantly only look to each other for interpersonal support (Macdonald, 1999), which became a fundamental origin of the contemporarily valued 'mateship' between Aotearoa New Zealand men (Pringle, 2017). However, despite these relationships, this era also saw the paradoxical emergence of valued modes of stoic individualism, physical strength, and lone capability as these were traits deemed necessary for early Pākehā men to effectively cope with the terrain of pre-European Aotearoa New Zealand (Macdonald, 1999). Altogether, the nature

of the earliest days of the colonial era embedded foundational legends around men's homosociality and strong self-reliance which became adopted as cultural archetypes (Macdonald, 1999) that continue to be articulated today in various forms.

Moving into the 20th century, when Aotearoa New Zealand was firmly settled and subjugated as a British colony, two significant events cemented aspects of masculinity in the country: one from conflict, the other from the economy. The First World War occupied a position that not only asserted Aotearoa New Zealand's position on the world stage (Cooper, 1999), but underlined qualities of gallantry, determination, and ability associated with the nation's masculinity (Cooper, 1999). The Great War became a point of normative embodiment for masculinity, and the idea of 'being a man' thus necessitated a connection to national pride and servitude (Schick & Dolan, 1999). Additionally, the early 20th century saw the emergence of the breadwinner role as a normative economic position for men (Frank, 1999). Although the right to work and earn an income being solely the domain of men became evermore contested through the early 20th century, men's identities remained tied to the idea of supporting a spouse and children as primary income earners (Frank, 1999). As with the earlier founding characteristics, these aspects continue to echo into normative masculinity today.

An important aspect of contemporary masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand also rooted in the colonial era is the notion of 'anti-femininity'. While many definitions of masculinity broadly rely on being 'not-feminine' (Butler, 1999; Hatfield, 2010; Jackson & Dempster, 2009) masculine anti-femininity in Aotearoa New Zealand is attached to a range of behaviours, attitudes, and expectations, beyond simple demarcation of non-masculinity. The specific nature of anti-feminine attitudes and behaviours have developed through time in Aotearoa New Zealand. As women entered into areas of the previously men-dominated 1950s workforce, there was concern over a feminising presence that would result in 'demasculisation' and loss of breadwinner status for men (Andrews, 1999). Women have also gradually become accepted in previously 'men only' spaces like pubs, although the gendered nature of such spaces remains masculine (Kraack, 1999). Such developments have often necessitated the articulation of overtly masculine performances and attitudes to relinquish the contestation presented by women and femininity. Examples of masculine-asserting behaviours include high beer consumption (Kraack, 1999; Willott & Lyons, 2012) or participation or engagement with sport, particularly rugby (Gerdin, 2017; Pringle, 2017).

The stoicism expected of normative Aotearoa New Zealand men can be seen as a rejection of the feminine, as the world of emotionality (except perhaps anger and sport-related

passion) is related to women (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). This stoicism finds its roots in the colonial image of the tough frontiersman, who through grit and determination is alone able to solve the problems which beset him (Pringle, 2017). By creating a social dividing line through emotionality of masculine/feminine, men acting within hegemonic expectations can use their reserved stoicism to symbolise their own masculine adherence while actively rejecting traits associated with women and femininity.

Finally, Aotearoa New Zealand's dominant masculinity is connected to other western hegemonic masculinities through its emphasis on heterosexuality (Town, 1999). Men in Aotearoa New Zealand who either are queer or eschew normatively masculine behaviours run the risk of ridicule for their association with the feminine (Town, 1999; Gerdin, 2017). This type of operation is a familiar feature within the relationship between hegemonic and subordinated masculinities/femininity, and the negotiation of this relationship plays a significant role in what men believe is 'okay' when trying to embody masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Place is an important feature of contemporary normative or hegemonic masculinities. Three locations in particular stand out as key relators of, or contributors to, hegemonic masculinity: the pub, the rugby club, and the shed. The pub as a fixture of normative masculinity in the west can be traced back centuries (Willott & Lyons, 2012), and although men-only pubs are no longer the norm (Kraack, 1999; Willott & Lyons, 2012) they retain a masculine-leaning characterisation. Pubs in Aotearoa New Zealand are seen as places where men form bonds, compete with one another, and generally where one sees-and-is-seen adhering to normative masculine performances. Drinking large quantities of beer, being rowdy, and objectifying women are key performances for young men who wish to assert their overt masculinity (Kraack, 1999). Alcohol, especially beer, is important to hegemonic masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand. Beer can often be seen as a physical 'prop' of normative masculine behaviour (Campbell et al., 1999). Beer companies regularly associate themselves with normative versions of masculinity, perhaps most famously in the *Speights Southern Man* advertisements (Campbell et al., 1999). Men, as consumers of specific brands of beer, functionally align themselves with these representations of masculinity (Willott & Lyons, 2012). Alcohol in this case serves as an important factor in the cumulative expression of one's relationship to hegemonic masculinity. Essentially, the act of choosing beer in a place of contested or ambiguous gender can operate as a quiet statement of masculine conformity for individual men (Pringle, 2017). Altogether, drinking in the pub acts to shore up men's masculinity. In the contemporary era the type of alcohol consumed, alongside the individuals'

socio-economic status, articulates and accentuates individual masculinity. This is especially the case when further combined with existing implications around men's physical prowess and endurance (Willott & Lyons, 2012).

The rugby club, and rugby (typically union over league) in general, together form a major aspect of not only normative masculinity but Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity as a whole. Rugby in Aotearoa New Zealand is associated with traits of bravery, strength, and endurance, and association with the sport through playing or spectating indicates conformity with, and reverence toward, these traits, especially for men (Morin, Longhurst, & Johnston, 2001; Van Campenhout & Van Hoven, 2014). The value of rugby as a formative tool for 'helping boys become men' is an additional aspect of the impact of the sport in relaying and affirming normative masculinity, as boys are thought to become tougher and more respectable through engagement with the game (Gerdin, 2017; Pringle, 2008; Town, 1999).

The characteristics of rugby players and the sport in general draw some clear allusions to war and combat, which echoes back and parallels the characterisation of soldiers established in normative masculinity (Van Campenhout & Van Hoven, 2014). Rugby occupies a place of assumed homogenisation and egalitarianism for men in Aotearoa New Zealand, where success on the field is a powerful assertion of masculinity, and where the action of non-Pākehā men and masculinities are valued inclusions to the game. The restrictions of class and ethnicity are assumed to somewhat collapse as men who engage in sport may be minimised to a pure expression of masculine performance (Star, 1999). The (apparent) egalitarianism of the sporting arena also reflects on expectations of egalitarianism more generally. This expectation exists regardless of the actual state of power relations in Aotearoa New Zealand and therefore occupies a normative force regarding attitudes of 'ideal Kiwi-ness' (Cosgrove & Bruce, 2005). Sport offers an exemplary moment for men to express their national identity and relationship to egalitarianism in a particularly masculine manner. Specifically, in the way that players on a sports team are expected to, and accepted for, giving their best in the context of the game. Cosgrove and Bruce (2005) succinctly describe the centrality of this characteristic:

> "[men] are family men yet one-of-the-boys. They are loyal to their teammates and willing to repress their own desires for the larger good or for the team. In addition, male achievement has been determined outside of paid employment through participation in sports teams, drinking, and war, thus obscuring the realities of a classed and raced (not to mention gendered) society." (p. 341)

Being a 'team player' is central to normative masculinity and is underpinned by ideas of egalitarianism. The rugby club then acts as a focal point for rugby culture in a community, as Van Campenhout and Van Hoven (2014) put it: "a place where blokes can be blokes" (p. 1090). The rugby club allows for the collective performance and construction of masculine norms (Van Campenhout & Van Hoven, 2014). While the specifics of masculine performances may change from club to club, between the changing rooms or the field, and between players and spectators, the overall gendered 'point' of the environment becomes part of the reification and honouring of central pillars of normative hegemonic masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Finally, 'the shed' captures a range of normative behaviours of Aotearoa New Zealand men. While also taking the forms of private garages, workshops, or similar "man caves", a shed as a private usually solitary place within the home where men may enact the 'ingenious practicality' (Cox, 2016) expected of them (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010). Through the shed, the characteristics of hard-working, resourceful, and practical men can be embodied. These characteristics do not originate from these private shed-spaces alone, they simply provide a useful boundary to pin them to. Pringle (2017), citing Phillips (1996), connected these characteristics to the historical pioneering and rural men that once held significant symbolic resonance for identifying normative behaviour. While in the contemporary sense most men are not working in rural environments, the shed as a place to practice these honoured traits brings these aspects into the home. For example, 'do it yourself' (DIY) home maintenance acts as a way for men to directly practice and exhibit their adherence with masculine norms and is such a visible feature of society that hardware stores will use this trope for marketing purposes (Cox, 2016). Additionally, the value of hands-on practicality has been described by Hodgetts and Rua (2010) as exemplifying a tactic for interpersonal relationship maintenance. Specifically, practicality creates channels for socially acceptable reifications of love and care by men towards their family and friends. The social norms may prohibit them from overt emotion expression, but sheds allow men to express themselves through other means.

The grounded practicality of 'the shed' stands in loose opposition with the perceived airy nature of intellectualism. Intellectual pursuits are perceived to lack value because of their disconnection from a material use (Cox, 2016). This is likely related to the inability for intellectual activities to demonstrate normative masculinity and intellectualism's more general association with the world of the feminine (Cox, 2016). Additionally, the values of plain speaking and not 'taking one's self too seriously' further create a normative distance to the type of theoretical engagement one may find in many academic areas (Hodgetts & Rua, 2010).

In discussing these three specifically gendered places I have sought to contextualise normative hegemonic traits of masculinity as they are constructed and expressed in Aotearoa New Zealand. These traits of masculinity appear to be just as adaptive as the other hegemonic forms and tendencies I have discussed and thus exist within cultural expectations in various strengths in other national contexts. However, one important characteristic of these norms regards *who* generally most represents the ideal forms.

The hegemonic form of masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand is a Pākehā masculinity. In the opening to his chapter on masculinity, Richard Pringle (2017) describes challenging his students to articulate who, in their mind, are the greatest New Zealanders. From a host of influential and significant names from history his class whittled their list down to three: mountaineer Edmund Hillary, yachtsman Peter Blake, and rugby captain Richie McCaw. Hillary in particular is often held up in the literature as embodying an ideal image of a 'good Kiwi bloke' (Cosgrove & Bruce, 2005; Law et al., 1999; Morin et al., 2001). Each of these 'ideal masculine men' are Pākehā, which illustrates how dominant a European New Zealander perspective is on the construction of masculinity.

Pringle (2017) goes on to describe how Māori masculinities have been fundamentally contorted, as with many other aspects of the Māori world, to fit with Pākehā normalities. Māori masculinities in Aotearoa New Zealand are now often emphasised around physicality, passion, and violence, and thus Māori men came to be associated with manual and agricultural labour, war, and/or rugby. While Pringle highlights that Māori men's adherence to these activities gave them a route to access and find acceptance in the national normative (Pākehā) masculinity, there is also a clear narrowing of acceptable masculine forms and lack of agency that emerge from such characterisation. Because of this, using Connell's hierarchy, it is clear that Māori masculinities are marginalised masculinities.

This section has described the regional expression of hegemonic masculinity for Aotearoa New Zealand. Aotearoa New Zealand's prevailing social and ethnic structures alongside its colonial history have deeply shaped the specificities of masculine norms seen in the country today. The regional hegemonic form creates and wrestles with local and regional marginalised and subordinated masculinities, underlining the power it has for defining norms other masculinities operate in relation to. The economic intersection of neoliberal society both supports and is supported by the establishment of these gendered norms, and thus this neoliberal connection will be discussed in the next section.

Neoliberal Universities and Gendered Paths:
Men, Masculinity, and Higher Education

For the past several decades free market economic ideas, collectively called neoliberalism, have profoundly shaped the contemporary world. 'Neoliberal' is a term which refers to the massive international process of marketisation, deregulation, and intensified individualisation in western society which broadly began in the 1980s and was spearheaded by the U.S. and U.K. (Hearn, 2017; Larner, 2003). This wide-ranging systemic change has had intensive impacts across society, one of the most common being the significant growth of income inequality (Humpage, 2017). Established welfare programmes and social support systems were largely dismantled, public services and resource management were privatised, and a focus on personal accountability and agency were stressed in neoliberalising nations faithful to the idea of the market's ability to universally provide for society (Humpage, 2017).

Many nations across the west, including the U.S., U.K., Australia, and Aotearoa New Zealand, have pursued the neoliberal transformation at different speeds and depths for the past several decades, and the intensive privatisation and marketisation of society has had many impacts on the world. This includes an increase in income inequality (Salzinger, 2016), growth in employment precarity due to changes to job markets (Walsh, 2016), and several multi-national 'free trade' deals intended to encourage easy exchange between signatories.

The development, spread, and entrenchment of neoliberalism, and neoliberalised ideas of the self, have impacted many normative expectations in Aotearoa New Zealand, including in the employment and education markets. During a significant financial crisis during the 1980s, Aotearoa New Zealand became an early and keen adopter of neoliberalism's 'market model' of social organisation (Humpage, 2017). Broadly, as with many other neoliberalised western nations, the societal changes brought on by neoliberal policy have primarily benefitted the wealthy, strengthened corporate entities, rolled back and restricted social welfare, and created labour insecurity and precarity which has disproportionately negatively impacted lower-and-middle income people (Humpage, 2017). At the individual level, neoliberal reforms have placed an intensive focus on the self. Self-responsibility and -control have become generally normative understandings of 'being a productive individual' in contemporary Aotearoa New Zealand society (Humpage, 2017). More recently, the current Labour-led coalition government has made some critical comments of neoliberalism's effects

(Cooke, 2017) on society but has largely continued the previous decades' trends of neoliberal-style governance.

The economic neoliberal restructuring of the 1980s onward has significantly impacted the position and purposes of tertiary education organisations such as universities. Many universities, including those in Aotearoa New Zealand, saw a shift in funding which resulted in many institutions' fees skyrocketing as higher education was constructed as a 'personal investment' beyond what society should provide (Molesworth, Nixon, & Scullion, 2009; Holborow, 2012). This led to students being reconstituted as consumers of education rather than simply seekers of said education (Molesworth et al., 2009). Because of this shift, the relationship between students and universities moved into a 'financialised' space of purchasing as customers as opposed to traditional notions of student-hood (Crothers, 2018; Rowe-Williams, 2018). This, in turn, has shaped the ways students seek the 'best' education in a neoliberalised world and how universities market the 'products' of their campuses (Roper, 2018). For example, careers that are understood to be financially lucrative become more attractive to 'purchase' due to the imagined returns on such an investment (Rowe-Williams, 2018).

Increased student debt is also associated with the neoliberal impulse of university. As most prospective students do not have the capital to invest in education, many rely on student loans, leading to high levels of student debt across many western nations. In the context of Aotearoa New Zealand, loans on average are around $21,000 and take seven years to pay off (Ministry of Education, 2017b). In turn, these financial pressures have generated new stresses and challenges for a large population of heavily indebted young people (Nissen et al., 2019).

The shift to marketized consumer-supplier language around university education emerged alongside several other administrative and ideological changes. Universities' primary function became, and largely remains, to provide employers with a workforce that is skilled in areas valuable to dominant market industries (Holborow, 2012). The needs of industry and corporate involvement in higher education has become a consistent feature of university life and universities are expected to adapt to these new trends (Naidoo, 2003). The language of good neoliberal employees entered the discourse of what universities could offer perspective students (Burke, 2011; Naidoo, 2003). For example, 'employability', 'flexibility', 'adaptability', 'marketability', 'competitiveness', and finding 'better jobs' or succeeding in a 'globalised marketplace' are common in the promotional material and advertising for higher education both internationally (Burke, 2011) and across the major universities of Aotearoa New Zealand

(see Massey University, 2019; University of Auckland, 2019; University of Canterbury, 2019; Victoria University, 2019). This emphasis on individualised characteristics designed to give students an edge in a competitive market has recalibrated the student experience away from education for its own sake and towards 'getting a good job' (Molesworth et al., 2009; Phipps & Young, 2015).

As 'consumers' of education, student decisions over where to study now centrally concern getting 'the best education for the best price' (Molesworth et al., 2009). This concern led to the introduction of university competition tables and rankings, focused on academic research rather than teaching, as a way to indicate which universities would be the best 'suppliers' of education (Davies et al., 2005; Riegraf & Weber, 2017). Without doubt, university rankings reflect the principles of neoliberal values. The student-as-consumer model has also altered expectations of academics regarding their teaching and research. Academics now find themselves in a self-driven, self-managed environment, with ever-growing employment precarity and a focus on being 'productive workers' (Castree et al., 2008; Dowling, 2008; Hearn, 2017).

Many humanities and social science disciplines have found it difficult to rework their course offerings into marketable and profitable forms, instead of the more esoteric knowledge generation of previous eras (Dowling, 2008). New regulatory systems provide an underlying structural reality for academics in neoliberalised higher education. In Aotearoa New Zealand this includes new regulatory systems, such as the Performance-Based Research Fund (PBRF), intended to maximise research outputs, enhance academic productivity, and increase the government funding contribution. In turn the PBRF result is commodified, positively impacting the market position of the university (Atikins & Vicars, 2016; Davies et al., 2005).

The shift from the knowledge transferal mode of the classical university to "factory farms of the mind" (Coulter, 2011) was matched by a shift in values in wider society as neoliberal perspectives took root in the west. For individuals, Phoenix (2004) states:

> "[n]eoliberalism is ... about continually changing the self, making informed choices, engaging in competition, and taking chances offered by the market and the government to consume and take advantage of lifelong learning."
> (p. 229)

This new mode of self-management contradicts with some traditional ideas about how one should behave, including masculine ideas about breadwinning which emphasised non-risky

stable employment to support a family (Connell, 2005; Salzinger, 2016). Despite such misalignments, neoliberalism has ultimately resulted in not only widespread economic change, but also intensive changes to how individuals go about their day-to-day lives.

In *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* Mark Fisher (2009) describes the ways in which the contemporary neoliberal conditions upon the world shape the way individuals perceive and react to boundaries which neoliberalism defines as 'real'. This stems from Fisher's assertion that there is a "widespread sense that not only is capitalism the only viable political and economic system, but also that it is now impossible to even *imagine* a coherent alternative to it" (Fisher, 2009, p. 2). This all-encompassing characteristic of the neoliberal worldview means that all expressions within-and-by individuals become repackaged to be congruent with the logic of neoliberal marketized profit seeking. One of Fisher's examples of this process is counter-cultural anti-capitalist musical acts being mainstreamed and turned into profitable products despite the content or intent of the messages present in their music. The musicians could identify the problems of the neoliberal order, but such an identification could provide no alternative to the neoliberal status quo (Fisher, 2009).

Capitalist realism is "like a pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action" (Fisher, 2009, p. 16). Because of this, neoliberalism and its ideas become ubiquitous and the ontology of business (investment, production, and the like) have become "simply obvious" (Fisher, 2009, p. 17). This 'obviousness' in turn, explains the inevitability behind organising so much of society, including education, in the terms of a marketable business. In the context of universities, and speaking about British students, in particular, Fisher observes that students appear to be stuck between two positions, the old role of 'subjects of disciplinary institutions' and the new role of consumers of educational services (Fisher, 2009), an idea supported in the Aotearoa New Zealand context (see Crothers, 2018; Roper, 2018). This position for students means that teaching staff too are forced to operate in a way that is stuck between "facilitator-entertainers" and "disciplinarian-authoritarians" in order to fulfil the expected education outcomes of the neoliberal university for students (Fisher, 2009). Furthermore, with students acting as an important income source for universities, the role of teaching staff as front-line salespeople becomes more necessary as they must tailor their education-products precisely to the consumption desires of modern students to ensure the productivity and profitability of the university they work for.

This type of university environment reflects a specific mode of education consumption by students. Students are so used to consuming a wide array of goods, services, and entertainment that their university lives become just one more competing element vying for their attention (Fisher, 2009). Fisher describes how his students would constantly eat, talk, text, or be otherwise distracted in his classes; symptoms of the constant stimulus students experience as modern consumers, especially as consumers who have known nothing but the neoliberal era's constant bombardment of attention-demanding consumption stimuli. Because of this constant array of distractions, Fisher says it is no wonder that students tend to find university studies boring, as the traditional focus required to engage with learning material is foreign to the normal ways contemporary students consume the other stimuli in their lives (Fisher, 2009).

Despite the typical distraction-filled behaviours Fisher describes of neoliberalised students, there remains an underlying expectation regarding the 'purpose' of higher education. University operates as part of an expected upskilling and a path to 'meaningful' employment as opposed to the precarity of 'unskilled' labour. Fisher states that universities are constructed as the 'easier, safer' option for one to pursue with regards to secure employment, regardless of the actual outcomes of their education (Fisher, 2009). This reasserts the point made above that a neoliberalised education serves employers by producing a specifically skilled labour-force and affirms a sense of self-control and -regulation in individuals as they ostensibly make the best decision for themselves and their futures. But the ability for individuals to leverage opportunities and reflect expectations of neoliberal self-making is not equally shared (Salzinger, 2016), as the neoliberal context produces numerous inequalities, including gendered inequalities (Connell, 2005).

On the one hand, men and masculinity in the west are well positioned to take advantage of the self-making norms and expectations of neoliberalism. Competitiveness is a common feature of hegemonic masculinities in the west, describing normative attitudes to sexuality, wealth, and personal competence, for example (Griffin, 2012; Phipps & Young, 2015; Phoenix, 2004). Similarly, social dominance is another feature of hegemonic masculinity: one should compete with the idea of being the best, and men's existing social dominance allows for the (easier) attainment and reproduction of current power dynamics. The fact of men's continued consolidation of managerial power within businesses, including within universities (Hearn, 2017), further reflects and implies the reified way that neoliberal normalities resonate with men and masculinities (Connell, 2005). Finally, the flexibility expected of neoliberal individuals in pursuit of the market in general fits more closely with western norms of

masculinity than femininity. Not only is this system defined through empowered masculine norms, but men-as-entrepreneurs reflects an agile adaptive base, loosened from the demands of traditional displays of masculinity or feminine-related ties to interpersonal care or unequal familial expectations (Connell, 2005; Salzinger, 2016).

On the other hand, some lingering expectations of hegemonic masculinities create tensions for men in the pursuit of neoliberal self-making. The aforementioned emphasis on flexibility can reach points of strain where men have to resolve expectations of masculinity against expectations of being an ideal neoliberalised individual. For example, in education the pursuit of success can conflict with the notion of men's effortless authority (Jackson & Dempster, 2009) or make young men seem like "swots" or "nerds", which positions them dangerously close to femininity (Burke, 2007; Phoenix, 2004) a characteristic to be avoided by normative men (Messerschmidt, 2018). Another point of tension is illustrated through the juggling of men's private/public sexuality within the expectations of hegemonic masculinities and neoliberal self-making. Apostolidis and Williams (2017) point out that hegemonic forms of masculinity often emphasise patterns of overt sexual 'conquest' as a path to affirmation of masculinity, but that simultaneously neoliberalised individuality demands a carefully managed public reputation as a symbol of successful self-making. Failing to balance these two aspects results in a (usually) temporary questioning of self-control by the public, indicating a cost to a reckless claim to hegemonic masculinity. The commonality between these two tensions is that normative neoliberal self-making requires active and careful negotiation with ideals presented by hegemonic masculinity by men in order to successfully present both. Finding a comfortable middle ground between these forces is a constant challenge to self-presentation.

Despite the tension, neoliberal norms are tightly linked to masculine norms. Not only are men most often in the best positions to reify expectations of neoliberal self-making without compromise to their masculinity, hegemonic forms of masculinity are often able to adapt to suit expectations. Hegemonic masculinity adapts and reforms to expectations around negotiation of the neoliberal self, as men often retain their power and position despite the apparent follies of overt sexuality (Apostolidis & Williams, 2017). Further, Burke (2007) details how men can readily navigate and take advantage of perceptions of risk-taking and self-responsibility of the neoliberal citizen in a complimentary fashion to their own masculinity. Neoliberal self-making has certainly changed normative masculinity, but the changes are side-steps and adaptions as opposed to substantive renegotiations of what it means to be a man and what, or who, constitutes the idealised neoliberal subject.

Given the educational focus of this study, it is interesting to consider how some men might 'make sense' of higher education through the neoliberal lens. In her article exploring migrant men's access to higher education, Burke (2011) explains that the norms of masculinity and neoliberalised self-regulation interact to inform the choices her participants make with regards to university studies. As the neoliberal environment places a great deal of pressure on individuals to use education to maximise 'employability' the norms of masculinity too guide men into making the 'best' choices to maximise an image of normative masculinity and financial stability. Burke shows that, together, a neoliberal expectation of strict self-regulation combined with idealised visions of masculinity can guide men into both university and imagined futures, thereby providing a sense of direction and purpose for their involvement in higher education.

Universities are strongly gendered places with more women than men at the undergraduate level in most western universities (Smith, 2004; Speer, 2017). One of the most dramatic gendered distinctions is found in Aotearoa New Zealand where women comprise around 60 percent of university students in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2017a). In both Aotearoa New Zealand and the rest of the west, this population split is not consistent across colleges, disciplines, and degrees. For example, Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) degrees are usually majority men (Speer, 2017). In contrast, humanities and social sciences degrees have a much larger proportion of women enrolled, as high as 90 percent in one case of a psychology course (Speer, 2017). Based on these gendered differences, it is no stretch to expect socio-cultural perspectives driving their existence.

One of the clear attributions regarding gendered study paths can be connected to the larger context of hegemonic masculinity and emphasised femininity; that the norms of gender are in-part dictating what people consider available to themselves for study. Aside from this, there are indications that the internal learning milieu of particular degrees has an impact on the reception of students to certain subjects, particularly those with more dramatic gendered divisions. For example, in some science degrees women may find themselves unwelcome or in the midst of a 'chilly' social climate, as the performances of masculinity more readily adapt to, and are well received by, dominant constructions of what it means to be a scientist (Simon, Wagner, & Killion, 2017). Similarly in computer science, despite the difficulty of course work, gender of lecturers, or the numerical gender balance of students not impacting women's ability to succeed in the degree, the social climate of the men dominant degree appears to

have an impact in the perceived suitability of women 'doing' computer science (Miliszewska et al., 2006).

Although there is no evidence of 'chilliness' towards men enrolled in traditionally feminine-associated disciplines, Schmitz and Kazyak (2017) suggest that men self-censor in gender studies or feminism-related classes or discussions, due to concern over personal relationships to themes of domination and oppression. This demonstrates an active wrestling by some men in such classes with their position within gendered power dynamics. More generally, men within the arts, humanities, and care-related subjects often have lower self-reported affiliation with normative masculinity, are critical of existing gender structures, and/or have higher affiliation with normative femininity (Schmitz & Kazyak, 2017; Jome & Tokar, 1998). In contrast, men who pursue majors within the boundaries of normative gender ideals (STEM subjects, construction, etc) are often shown to be more supportive of traditional gendered norms (Jome & Tokar, 1998). Altogether, this illustrates that men enrolled in university do follow gendered patterns of behaviour and have varying degrees of consciousness with regards to the mechanics of gendered experiences on campuses.

With regard to personal gendered expressions in context with degree selection, Simon, Wagner, and Killion (2017) found that men with feminine-related nurturing or communal characteristics were more likely to enrol in STEM subjects, but men who instead/also had high feminine-related altruistic or communitarian traits were less likely to study STEM. This illustrates a potential reconstitution of the perceived-feminine aspects of their degrees into overtly masculine ones alongside a possible internal resolution or criticality of the local gender norms which would otherwise bind them to a normative path (see Schmitz & Kazyak, 2017). For those men who are within the gendered minority in their classes, existing scholarship shows that there are strategies of masculine reconstitution of position (e.g. hybrid masculinities) which may mean that men do not necessarily have to 'lose' masculinity in order to participate within normatively-feminine arenas.

The impacts of gendered norms go beyond enrolment and participation figures and impact students' attitudes toward their studies. Research in the U.K. and the U.S. has shown that women are more focussed on academic life and men are more focussed on social life at university (Harris & Harper, 2014; Phipps & Young, 2015; Smith, 2004). This is not to say that women do not participate in the social aspects of university life, but that they appear better at compartmentalising 'the social' and the academic work. Undergraduate women often have more interest in dedicating time to reading, research, and learning and expect to put more

effort into their academic work to succeed (Harris, 2010; Smith, 2004). This could suggest that women appear to be more conscious of the masculine power structures of the contemporary world and need to attain success in study as a step towards finding some career success in an unequal job market (Smith, 2004).

In contrast, undergraduate men have more explicit interests in sports, drinking, partying, dating, and sex (Harris & Harper, 2014; Jackson & Dempster, 2009) with an expectation of 'effortless mastery' to their study (Harris, 2010; Jackson & Dempster, 2009). In addition, and despite men's emphasis on university social lives, a sense of entitlement with regard to success and good grades is more frequently demonstrated among men than women (Ciani et al., 2008). In the U.S. and U.K., the fraternity and 'lad' cultures have a central place in defining how men should behave on campus, with serious academic work being a somewhat derided path compared with the new freedom to 'be a man' away from parents or guardians (Harris, 2010; Harris & Harper, 2014; Phipps & Young, 2015). Even within gay men's fraternities in the U.S. (arguably a site in which masculinities less combative toward femininity would emerge or be performed), the maintenance of women-as-other persists despite gay men occupying a marginalised or subordinated masculinity in a hegemonic masculinity order (Yeung, Stombler, and Wharton, 2004). Similarly, in the U.K. 'lad cultures' emphasise a narrow expression of young masculinity to adhere to which revolve around drinking, overt shows of masculinity, anti-woman behaviours, and heterosexuality (Phipps, 2017; Phipps & Young, 2015). Many of the hegemonically masculine behaviours of U.S. and U.K. undergraduate men are not only a historical fixture of university life, but also a continued point of corrosiveness regarding men's academic success, emotional stability, health and wellbeing, and often is a festering ground for sexism and violence (Edwards & Jones, 2009; Jackson et al., 2015; Phipps & Young, 2015).

The applicability of this U.S. and U.K.-based research to student life in Aotearoa New Zealand is difficult to determine. While there is considerable demographic and statistical information on Aotearoa New Zealand students, there is little qualitative information on the *lives* of students *as students* (Crothers, 2018), including their specifically gendered experiences. Typically, university-related research indicates toward, but does not deeply explore, underlying social values and engagement with universities. For example, reports that detail the relationship between men's and women's undergraduate failure rate (Callister & Newell, 2008) or student alcohol consumption patterns (Riordan et al., 2017) exemplify the type of research being done about students here. Research like this is an important aspect to

understanding students but misses the depth qualitative research grants to illuminate student lives beyond straightforward statistics.

Conclusion

This chapter has brought together theoretical, conceptual, and empirical research on masculinity and neoliberalism. With regard to masculinity I have argued that there are multiple ways to 'do' masculinity which are arranged within a hierarchal structure. Which modes of masculinity are most apparent and most accepted by society relates to the social contexts which shape these ideals, with 'hegemonic masculinity' being the norm-setter against which other masculinities are positioned. In scenarios where some traditional masculine behaviours are unacceptable, men have an ability to be flexible with their approach and gendered expression to react to contemporary demands, while retaining the 'core hierarchy' of masculine dominance. These features of masculinity exist throughout the world, including in Aotearoa New Zealand.

With regards to neoliberalism I have argued that intensive and globalised economic privatisation impacts the physical, mental, and ideological circumstances of both societies and individuals. Practically, the shift in values toward a marketized world has meant the rolling back of public services, reflecting the assumption that the dynamics of the market should be the main determining factor in the allocation of resources. This has accompanied an ideological shift in the individual sense of self and a specific kind of responsibility towards one's future. The neoliberal subject must seek to maximise one's own profitability and competitiveness in the market to make the best return on personal investment. It is a system that demands individuals make choices that always result in profitable outcomes, and if they do not, responsibility is placed at the feet of the individual. This has a profound impact on how one approaches employment and education.

In the totality of the neoliberal perspective, universities have also adapted to the expectations of ideal market engagement. This engagement has impacted how tertiary providers interact with government, other higher education institutions, and academic staff and students. The environment of the university, and the expectation it has from society, is to produce highly and specifically skilled workers to exploit market conditions. This marketisation of learning has necessitated a shift for students from learners to consumers. In a

consumption mode, in addition to the expectations on the self, students are expected to make decisions about their education and their use of education within the framework of a service being carefully chosen and purchased which will enhance their ability to engage in the job market.

Bringing these fields together has illuminated the extent to which hegemonic masculinity and neoliberalism use the norms and ideals established by each other to help legitimise their positions. The pressure and norms of neoliberalism, especially those around self-making and self-regulation, become a valuable intersecting element to my research. Making the best choice for one's self and one's future becomes an important hallmark of neoliberal identity, and the 'hidden' factors of gender, ethnicity, and socio-economic status all combine to impact the actual feasibility of achieving an ideal neoliberal self. While there can, at times, be contradictions between these norms, I argue that overall men benefit from the structure and assumptions created by neoliberal self-making and a neoliberalised world. The evolving and often subtle changes to masculinities and neoliberalism work to complement one another, ultimately reinforcing and continuing the status quo in terms of gendered hierarchies and the self-focussed pressures of neoliberalism.

Chapter Three

Creating Connections
and Conducting Research:
Methodology and Method

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Introduction

I wanted this research to build a robust connection between theories of neoliberalism and masculinities, but I also wanted to ground my research in the experiences of those who occupy neoliberal, masculinist spaces within the educational context; this research was always going to involve talking with people. I sought a methodological approach that would allow people to share their in-depth insights about their lives so that I could situate those insights alongside the existing literature to see points of connection, contradiction, and tension. Talking with people would allow me to better understand the relationship between masculinity, neoliberalism, and men's experiences of being enrolled in an arts degree at university.

This chapter begins by outlining the methodological approach taken in this research, which are broadly social constructionist and interpretivist. This approach was taken to capture the multiple ways that men enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts construct their identities in relation to the norms of hegemonic masculinities and neoliberal self-making. The second part of this chapter describes the method employed throughout, including recruitment, the

fieldwork site, a description of contributing participants, the interview approach and schedule, and data analysis. I also detail ethical considerations arising from the research.

Methodology

This thesis is concerned with the crossroads between neoliberalism and Aotearoa New Zealand masculinities. Specifically, I am interested in how ideals of hegemonic masculinity interact with ideals of neoliberal self-making in the context of an Aotearoa New Zealand university. This reflects an understanding that ideals of the self are socially constructed in ways that are contextual to time and place. Understanding ideals from a social constructionist perspective necessitates investigating the shared perspectives between people from a similar social group to gain insight into how they make sense of their worlds with regard to ideas like 'gender' or 'economy'.

Given I am interested in the subjective understandings of men enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts, I took a qualitative approach, drawing on the anthropological tradition in which the researcher co-generates data with research participants through their interactions. However, I chose a qualitative approach not only because of the anthropological precedence. Qualitative research allows for a deeper investigation of an issue and generates possibilities for reflection rather than a more surface understanding that a quantitative approach might yield. A qualitative methodology allows participants to reveal, in the context of this thesis, the nuanced ideals imposed by both neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinities through their accounts. Given that both neoliberalism and masculinities can work in subtle manners upon people's lives, an approach that allows the space for participants to articulate their understandings of the ways these social systems impact them, especially within the university setting, was important.

The research reflects a social constructionist perspective, underpinned by my interest in understanding how society shapes the way people feel about a given phenomenon. A social constructionist angle allows me to understand my participant's viewpoints as reflecting and emerging from the norms, language, and practices put forward by society, and the extent to which those norms, language, and practices construct limited capacities for performing masculinity. Importantly, how participants identify and position themselves alongside or against specific cultural constructions, like normative masculinity, becomes a key way of

revealing how those norms operate and their authority in constructing masculinity as hegemonic.

My own personal history was also an important methodological feature of this research. My common ground with my participants as a man who has recently completed a Bachelor of Arts degree at the same campus as the participants gives me a claim to 'insider status'. The term 'insider status' refers to situations where the researcher has common characteristics with research participants, for example, ethnic, gendered, or location-based commonalities (Taylor, 2001a). Primarily, insider status helps build my interpretation of the data (Taylor, 2001a) because I am able to use my experiences to better understand the participants' experiences.

Altogether, the qualitative approach allows for the recording of the unique life stories of participants for academic analysis. By using participants' comments as both representative and reflective of norms around masculinities and self-making in neoliberalism I am able to understand how they both produce and reproduce knowledge about their world. These approaches also allow for a flexible interpretative analysis where I can bring in different and novel theoretical perspectives to see how my participants may support or contradict recent findings and proposals in relevant fields.

Recruitment, Location, and Participants

Six participants were recruited from (and most of the fieldwork was physically done at) Massey University's Albany campus in Auckland over the course of one semester. This campus was built in the 1990s, which was a period of great transformation for tertiary education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Because Massey Albany emerged during this period, it was a campus built at the height of the neoliberalisation of higher education and 'financialised' ideals shaped the campus's purpose. Massey Albany evolved over several conceptions and iterations throughout its early development, from an international language school to a small and focussed campus for business studies and social work education (Belgrave, 2016). Each of these proposals in some way revolved around the campus becoming a sound and financially successful investment (Belgrave, 2016), illustrating the neoliberalised considerations and ideals the campus was fashioned by. While the initial vision of Massey Albany as a campus specifically focussed on a narrow list of specialisations seemed to largely fall away over time

(the campus has since branched out to offer a wide range of subjects, and acts as a hub for the significant population of distance students), its status as a premier neoliberalised satellite of Massey's main campus at Palmerston North in the competitive Auckland market became its ultimate form (Belgrave, 2016).

This history of the university, and my familiarity with the campus from my undergraduate years, made it an ideal location for this research. To recruit participants, I posted flyers on campus (see Appendices A & B) and online on Facebook via both a student-community page and the official Massey Albany Student Association page. The flyer contained information about the research and contact details for those interested in taking part. These were distributed on campus in the second week of Semester Two 2018, primarily in areas I understood to be well trafficked by students, such as the library or outside major lecture theatres. Unfortunately, after three weeks I had only recruited two participants, so I had to alter my recruitment approach. I began to offer a small koha in appreciation of those who participated. With permission, I also briefly presented on the research in compulsory Bachelor of Arts courses, inviting those who met the criteria to contact me. This new approach combined with my previous efforts yielded six participants in total; two recruited from flyers, one from Facebook, and three from presentations at the start or end of lectures.

The primary criterion for participation was to self-identify as a man enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts degree at Massey University Albany. With regard to age, ethnicity, and sexuality, I intentionally left these open for two reasons: first to try and gain a diversity of perspectives, and second, because the pool of possible participants was relatively small given the comparative few men enrolled in arts-related courses and degrees. The six recruited participants can be broadly described as follows: three identified as Pākehā and three were European descent migrants from British commonwealth nations; three were in their early twenties and three were in their early thirties; and one participant is gay, but all others identified as heterosexual. In terms of education and discipline, four were studying psychology with the intention of entering a psychology-based career and the other two were studying history, with interest in potentially becoming an academic and a secondary school teacher, respectively.

Participants are represented by pseudonyms throughout this thesis. For each participant, the Bachelor of Arts was not their first choice post- high school, instead arriving at the degree after either careers in different fields or transferring to the degree after initially desiring or pursuing another degree. The three participants in their thirties are Joel, Kyle, and

Michael. Joel and Michael arrived at their arts degrees after spending a few years working in the tech industry and Kyle previously worked in health. Adam, Dean, and Taylor are the three participants in their twenties. Dean and Taylor transferred to an arts degree after initially studying a Bachelor of Science and Adam had initially wanted to study a computer science.

Conducting Interviews

I carried out face to face open-ended individual interviews with each of the participants. I designed the interview to both quickly build rapport while staying focussed on my topic areas. I used a questionnaire as a framework for my conversation (see Appendix C) that was designed around a series of 'conversation starters' intended to generate about one hour's worth of topical discussion. I did not typically ask every question from my questionnaire, only referring back to it if our conversation reached a lull. Some examples of questions that were asked include:

- What type of high schooling did you have, and do you think this experience influenced your choice to study your chosen subjects?
- What do your family/whānau think about your decision to study a BA?
- Do you find this work stressful?
- What do you think your BA is giving you? Both now and future?

I provided each participant with a copy of the questionnaire to read before we began, usually as I was away from the table getting coffees. This allowed participants to familiarise themselves with the proposed content of the interview and reflect on their answers. It also helped reduce the formality of the interaction as participants could offer more substantive information and life narratives in a conversational interview.

Each interview opened with an 'ice breaker' question, typically: "what are you studying at university and why?". This encouraged participants to start talking and helped to set the general tone of the conversation. Further questions branched off their responses and, as detailed above, other topics were chosen from the questionnaire if the discussion faltered. In practice, I found we were able to simply talk about their educational experiences once we had generated some rapport. I also built rapport by sharing my experiences of completing an arts degree. Not only did this help relax the conversation, but also helped illustrate my subjectivity as an insider researcher. This showed participants that, because of my shared experiences, I could be trusted to understand their experiences.

Each interview took around one hour and was conducted at a café of the participants' choosing. This helped break down some of the formality of the interaction. They were all voice recorded rather than taking notes throughout the discussion. This allowed me to focus on what my participants were saying without the distraction of pausing to take notes. It also helped minimise the formality of the discussion as well as providing me with a much more complete record of our interaction. Relatedly, it aided analysis as, once transcribed, it gave me a document to refer back to for discursive and thematic analysis.

Data Analysis

Considering the qualitative approach to this research, thematic analysis presented itself as a way to guide me towards specific elements for investigation. Thematic analysis "involves the searching across a data set be that a number of interviews or focus groups, or a range of texts to find repeated patterns of meaning" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 86). Thematic analysis reveals connections between participants responses, which are grouped into similar thematic categories. Thematic analysis provided the broad categories of interest that shaped the results while discourse analysis allowed me to investigate in greater depth the emergent thematic insights. From these themes I could extrapolate meaning and create associations with theory.

In addition to thematic analysis, discourse analysis was a useful tool to make sense of the ways participants articulated their experiences. Discourse analysis involves "the discourse analyst [searching] for patterns in language use, building on and referring back to the assumptions [they are] making about the nature of language, interaction, and society and the interrelationships between them" (Taylor, 2001b, p. 39). Discourse analysis is well suited for the study of gender as "masculinity is something constructed through and in discourse" (Edley, 2001, p. 191). Discourse analysis allowed me to hone in on the meaning participants hold about their worlds and make sense of how they discursively constructed, resisted, contested, or affirmed dominant ideas about masculinity and neoliberal ideals of the self. Both thematic and discourse analysis allowed me to systematically make connections in an iterative way between participants' talk and theoretical concepts and ideas.

Following the interviews with participants, each conversation was fully transcribed which gave me a verbatim copy of our discussions from which to analyse the data. Following the transcription, I first reviewed the data by carefully examining the contents of each

discussion for shared thematic elements and specific occurrences of language, especially in relation to gender or reflective of a neoliberalised perspective on education. Once this initial process of coding the data to reflect emergent themes was complete, I created three organisational documents from the most substantive themes and dominant discourses between participants. I then worked with these substantive themes and the literature on masculinity and neoliberalism to foster analytic insights. This process helped solidify the emergent themes and identify the ways participants' discourses either supported and/or contradicted established scholarship on masculinities and neoliberal self-making.

Ethics

The study was classified as "low risk" by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Upon registering interest in taking part in the research, participants were provided information sheets (see Appendix D) that outlined the research and their prospective involvement. I informed them that taking part was voluntary, and they had the option to withdraw or retract specific aspects of their data up to two months after their interview. They were informed that our conversations would be audio-recorded which could be switched off at any point of our discussion at their request. They could also choose not to answer specific questions if it made them uncomfortable. Once they confirmed they wanted to participate, each participant signed a consent form (see Appendix E).

Following the interview, I provided each participant with a transcript of our conversation for their own records, and to give them the opportunity to review their contribution and request any part of our discussion be removed. All digital data, including audio files and the transcripts, were 'anonymised' to secure confidentiality, in accordance with Massey's requirements.

Beyond these actions, I meditated on several ethical aspects of the research that were specific to my participants' circumstances. My greatest concern was ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of my participants due to small class sizes at Massey Albany and small numbers of men enrolled in these courses. I sought to protect participants' identities throughout this thesis by not identifying migrant pathways, providing only broad age ranges, and discussing details such as previous work history only in general terms.

Conclusion

This chapter has outlined the methodological approach employed in this research, as well as the method used. The challenge of this research was always to meaningfully bring two large areas of theory together (hegemonic masculinity and neoliberalism) and see how they materialise in the lives of participants. A qualitative, social constructionist approach that employed conversational interviews allowed participants to tell their stories on their own terms; to articulate their experiences, thoughts, and beliefs about the Bachelor of Arts in a way that reflected their own way of being in the world. Analysing their articulations using discursive and thematic analysis ensured the results were always grounded in those stories. In the following chapters, I turn to the results of this analytic process.

Chapter Four

Perilous University:
The Risk of Higher Education

Michael: "it's harder to come to university because you're taking that initial
risk... where you have to pay money first and then you may get a job, but if
you pick up an apprenticeship, you're getting paid—you have a job."

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Introduction

Universities today largely operate to prepare young people for the neoliberalised job market
and charge substantial fees for the career paths they offer. Choosing the 'best' path through
higher education involves estimating the risks and benefits offered by that path, ideas that are
mediated by both economic and gendered norms. Engagement with and negotiation of these
risks form and important part of one's journey through university. Risk was one of the most
consistent and prominent themes to emerge in the participant interviews. Each participant
arrived at their Bachelor of Arts either from another career or after transferring from a
different degree. These choices were informed by normative constructions of masculinity that
had to be negotiated in terms of the 'risk' these roles created—risks not only to economic
success but also, in a related way, to their ability to be normatively masculine.

This chapter will explore how participants understood their study decisions in relation
to perceived risks. This involves outlining how Aotearoa New Zealand's hegemonic
masculinity and overarching neoliberal norms orient men to understanding their education or

career-related options as 'risky', and then explain how participants negotiate this apparent risk. Whether risk was connected to the masculinised notion of men as breadwinners or imagining what might be a profitable career, participants expressed a need to see, explain, and address perceived risks associated with their chosen education. With this in mind, I begin by discussing the idea of risk as it relates to ideals of masculinity.

It's About Being a Provider:
Understanding Risk Through Masculinity

Hegemonic masculinities throughout the west have often valued traits of authority, security, strength, and self-reliance (among others) as part of the normative constructions of masculinity. In the local context, hegemonic masculinity also posits that men should be effective breadwinners and providers for their families (Elizabeth, 2017a)—expectations that usually require a level of employment stability. Historically, men have been able to find careers which express their masculinity through the physicality of the work they perform as well as through the normally stable long-term wage associated with such work which allowed one to support a family (Pringle, 2017; Walker & Roberts, 2018). However, in the current neoliberal era the conditions of work have largely shifted economic opportunities away from physical labour-intensive careers (such as agriculture, construction, etc.) towards the service sector (Walker & Roberts, 2018). This, in turn, has impacted the ways in which men can use their careers or employment as a source to affirm their masculinity, meaning that men must pursue other ways of expressing masculinity (Elliott, 2019).

The need for both economic security and the pressure to find a gender-affirming job were often linked for participants. The study of risk in the context of masculinities is often around 'risk taking' behaviours, like binge drinking alcohol (see Harris & Harper, 2014; Kraack, 1999). In this context, however, risk is related to their ability to express and appear as normatively masculine. Rather than engaging in risky practices, men's career or education choices can risk their ability to appear normatively masculine—a possibility to be avoided. The risk of losing a connection to dominant ideals of masculinity through labour-related pursuits prompts a series of 'risk aversion' strategies by participants. Specifically, this involves choosing careers that have implied financial stability, which means that a connection can be maintained to men's traditional position as stable providers for a family. By seeking careers that pay well

men can avoid the risk of appearing less masculine through employment, despite being employed in 'feminised' fields.

Averting risks to gender identity is a stance that men are socialised into as they build an understanding of what men should do to avoid being associated with feminine characteristics. For participants, the development of these attitudes could be traced back to the way they were socialised into gender roles, either through their own family history or the wider social milieu in which they grew up. Taylor's parents, for example, steered him toward a highly specific, and normatively masculine, path through education, something that he lamented in comparison to their expectations of his sister:

> **Taylor**: "… so like I have a little sister and the talks that I got from my parents compared to what my sister [got]- like for me it was "you have to go to university, you have to get a proper job, and then that's so when you have a family you can support your family." My sister it was "you have to go and get a proper degree or something so that you don't have to depend on other people.""

Taylor's upbringing reveals a gendered difference in the way he and his sister were treated. The values he received from his parents reflect a traditional position of men as breadwinners and supporters of families. This ideal coexists and contrasts with his sister's, where education is pursued in order for her to achieve financial independence. This is illustrative of an interesting paradox of men's and women's traditional gender roles. In Taylor's case, he has been brought up to pay special attention to his future role as a support to an imagined future family. In contrast, his sister's need for economic self-sufficiency implies that (contemporary) men cannot always be expected to fulfil this economic role. There are two gendered understandings of risk emerging from Taylor's parents' instructions. For Taylor, he is being warned to only seek a "proper job" or else risk his ability to provide for a future family. His sister has been told to seek independence to not be at risk of being reliant on someone else, and therefore vulnerable to losing personal agency. This creates a conflicted set of financial values as Taylor is being told to 'get a stable (e.g. non-risky) job to be able to provide' whereas his sister is told to 'expect that men will not provide'. To this end, constructions of risk are highly reflective of gendered values received during upbringing, which for Taylor play a fundamental role in determining how he should choose his education and career.

In the traditional nuclear family, a man's position as respected father and spouse is granted in exchange for his performance of a breadwinner role: he should be the provider of

material stability for familial security (Walker & Roberts, 2018). It should be noted that the gendered difference between men and women here is that men's 'care' for the family stands apart from the care*giving* that women provide in a traditional family structure (Braedly, 2015; Camilleri & Jones, 2001). Taylor's anecdote clearly reflects these assumptions about his role in a future family. Responses like Taylor's highlight that becoming a good provider eliminates risks to one's masculinity, which means being a provider is a worthwhile ideal to pursue to affirm one's masculinity. However, pursuing a non-normative career, perhaps a career that is feminised and thus devalued, poses financial risks in terms of being able to provide for one's family, meaning that pursuits of non-normative options must be carefully managed to not lose a useful option for masculine expression.

Family is also a source of social scrutiny when participants made their decisions to study their arts degrees. Aside from the socialisation participants received to orient themselves toward non-risky employment, parents also provided a direct line of questioning over the wisdom of participants choices to study apparently financially insecure degrees. Joel recalled how his mother interpreted his choice to study, as well as how he planned to address her concerns:

> *Joel*: "… [in] society in general, they generally think there's little economic value in an arts degree. You hear a lot that you won't be able to get a job with an arts degree or… you're wasting your life if you get an arts degree or something. I never particularly agreed with that assessment. I think because … [I am] quite arts minded in the first place, I could see the use. And I could see the value behind that sort of knowledge. But it was definitely— it was tough telling my mum that I was leaving an IT career and going back to university to study history…"

> *Cameron*: "yep. I know that feeling, haha"

> *Joel*: "Yeah, she was like "are you sure? Is this an—have you thought about this?" and I… because I was anticipating that conversation already, I said "yes. These are the things I'm going to do, and this is where I'm headed. I want to focus on history to eventually start writing history books." I [also had] talked to people about postgrad, so I had to sort of prepare beforehand a list of things that was going into the future for her to be okay with that…"

Joel's mother was clearly concerned about his choice to leave his IT career, which seemed more stable than the risk of a higher education in history that might not pay off. Joel's mindfulness of how the conversation with his mother would go resulted in him having to plan ahead to explain his choice and confirm that it had a potential to result in a secure personal return. Although the conversation is not explicitly about being a provider, Joel nonetheless relied on responses that echo masculine values in how he explained his education choice. Explicitly focussing on a tangible end goal of creating history books is reifying abstract arts degree studies into practical objects—books. This overlaps with masculine sensibilities toward practicality in Aotearoa New Zealand, serving to masculinise Joel's choice. Furthermore, emphasising future career advancement connects to normative concepts of men's expected authority in society (Harris, 2010; Nixon, 2018). Underlining both practicality and authority helps Joel to frame his choice to study an arts degree as 'less risky' to his mother in a way that connects with normative ideas of masculinity. In this way, ideals of masculinity can be used to recast educational choices not as risky, but as fully capable of constituting expressions of masculine ideals of practicality in labour.

The all-boys school that Joel attended also stressed the importance of choosing the 'right' (masculinised) career path, but in a different way. The school created a culture which, in Joel's mind, devalued the arts and humanities:

> *Joel: "... there's a lot of things I'm learning now about the idea and the presentation of masculinity in an all-boys school, especially a predominantly white lower class all-boys school: masculinity was seen as the key thing to aspire to and deviation from that norm was definitely something to be hidden. And I have a lot of friends who were closet gay at the time that I've lost track of because it was rough for them in the usually mute country and stuff. So, yeah, I think you could see it a lot in the fact that a lot of those guys I remember from high school and stuff they went into say either trades or STEM sort of fields later on..."*

The fact that Joel was socialised into a gender-norm affirming subject position is no great revelation. But these comments illustrate that while growing up, Joel (and the others) felt their options for success were limited by explicit and implicit norms of masculinity. Four of the six participants shared anecdotes about their parents directly guiding them into more normatively masculine careers, and all in some way indicated that, in their schooling, pursuing humanities or social science qualifications was viewed as undesirable. The potential

preference of participants' younger selves towards engaging in a more personally satisfying career in the arts was often, and easily, disrupted by the signalling of unsuitability of such paths for them as young men. Pursuing a career beyond the gendered norm was constructed as a 'risk' to their sense and display of masculinity. Specifically seeking a non-normative career disrupts their ability to use labour to represent or legitimise their masculinity.

Constructions of risk that connect to dominant masculine norms, as Joel and Taylor show, are rooted in childhood experiences of, and reactions to, discourses which guide men to what they 'should' be. The understandings of these norms are picked up from a variety of sources throughout their upbringings, demonstrating how understanding 'non-masculine' pursuits, like 'non-practical' jobs associated with arts degrees, as a risk is derived from examples found throughout their communities. Participants have been encouraged, both directly by family figures and implicitly by ideals received from schooling, to see options outside normative ideals as unsuitable or insecure, and thus, risky. This means that gendered upbringings continue to play a role in how men evaluate their options with regards to education and careers and narrows what men think is possible for them to pursue as a career in future.

The construction of, and reliance on, traditional gender norms around breadwinning gestured towards by the participants connects notions of economic risk and avoiding insecure employment directly to masculinity. Their need to choose the least-risky financial career path becomes rationalised through the lens of gender and men's idealised position in the family. This perspective echoes other recent research in Aotearoa New Zealand. In her chapter on gender equality Elizabeth (2017b) outlines that while young people recognise that women do not have to do more/most family care, they nonetheless reproduce traditional gendered dynamics. She explains that the reason behind this social reproduction is due to the real and perceived differences in financial rewards for men and women by either continuing to support or transgressing traditional positions (i.e. women get paid less anyway, so they may as well be the primary carer). In the context of economic risk, traditional gender compliance is a less risky way of achieving financial security and one's preferred lifestyle.

The potentially 'feminine' connotations of my participants' chosen education and careers, which were nearly all directly involving interpersonal care, also factored into their gendered calculation of risk. They all recognised that they were part of a gendered minority at university, with almost all classes they took having significantly fewer men than women. This reality never seemed to overtly trouble them, as they did not feel that their learning suffered

or that their identity as men was threatened by these classroom environments. However, when our discussions approached the topic of the gender at university, they would detail how they understood their own masculinity in the context of gendered norms they perceived to be at play in lectures. Interestingly, they drew on rationalising discourse to explain why they saw fewer men studying in their fields which included observing how their education was expressly risky:

> *Kyle: "Well, you're talking about Kiwi stereotypes as well, there's definitely a Kiwi stereotype of men getting into trades or apprenticeships, and I don't know if it's kind of a class thing… or an academic thing, maybe a bit of both, but I know plenty of other classic intelligent tradies so I don't know. I challenge that. I think you could potentially earn way more money getting into a decent trade as well. Like with less risk, it's a safe path, it's a safe… option. Getting a BA, studying history, studying geography, it's a risk, you know? It's not like you're going to studying history or study geography and then become a historian or a geographer, you know like at the end of it you've got to hone it down"*

> *Cameron: "yeah."*

> *Kyle: "and there's plenty of years without earning any money or seeing any reward in this, it's a gamble and I feel like it takes someone to really know what they want, or have a passion about a certain thing, and be good at it to kind of do that, otherwise… you want to go out, you want to be able to afford beers with your mates, you want to be able to have a girlfriend and take her to dinner, and you want to be able to have a family and provide what they need, you can do that a lot quicker by just focussing on a trade. And in terms of our gender assignment and stuff, we're trained and taught from an early age, aren't we? That men should be fighters, they should be carpenters, they should be masons, they should be, mechanics, you know with our plastic guns and our plastic screwdrivers and hammers and cars… that's what we should be doing, that's what's manly. We're providers we provide for our families, that means getting in there, getting a job, getting something that you can do, that you can kind of grab a hold of that you can follow that you can progress that you can be good at, that you can get better at, and you can bring in the bacon and you can share that with your family and your friends."*

Kyle's comments clearly outline what work men are expected to do. Through asserting a construction of 'men's work', Kyle implicitly positions 'women's work' as opposite. This suggests that there are clear barriers to doing what has historically and conceptually been considered women's work for men, even beyond the general avoidance of feminised expressions expected of them. This kind of barrier is not unprecedented in areas where men engage in labour ascribed as 'for women' (see Braedly, 2015). 'Women's work' is typically that involving care work, interpersonal support, nurturance and empathy, like nursing, teaching, social work, and the like (Williams, 2013). From a related economic perspective, such work is frequently undervalued, often with low pay and poor working conditions (Williams, 2013). Given the pressure of becoming a breadwinner, the low pay disqualifies these forms of work, that are traditionally aligned with women's labour market engagement, as being acceptable employment for men. This manifests as a rational economic decision based on the norms the participants have been socialised into. Participants are nonetheless aware of the way norms shape their perceptions of work, but they use the discursive tools of masculinity available to them, which recreates understandings of women's work paying less. This makes them functionally complicit in the reconstruction of women's labour being undervalued and captures the self-fulfilling nature of the current gender order; a gender order skewed to benefit men.

Older participants perceived the continuing normalising pressures of masculinity differently from younger participants. Participants in their thirties were all very comfortable with their decision to choose an arts degree in comparison to younger participants. When they explained their education trajectory, they noted that they can "return to previous careers"—or that "they've already had a career"—to justify or contextualise their decisions to study in an arts-related field. This gives them a normative masculine path to gesture toward when explaining their chosen passion-based interests in studying degrees that have no guaranteed path to the labour market. In this way, they are justifying the social and economic 'risks' of an arts degree by locating their decision first, within their broader life narrative, and second, within the context of their precious success. Their previous careers show that they can operate on the normative path of financial stability, so, with their masculinity legitimised, they are free to explore other career options.

In comparison, the participants in their twenties were far more conscious of their school and parental influences on their decisions to study. This can be clearly seen in the instruction Taylor received from his parents about "[having] to go to university … to get a proper job, and then that's so when you have a family you can support your family". Of the

three participants in their twenties, Taylor was the most direct in describing the impact of gender on his path to education. Getting older and being able to 'prove oneself' in terms of economic viability became a way to navigate norms of masculinity and the construction of their choices as risky or not. Through this, participants' accounts collectively suggest that educational paths and careers located within dominant masculine norms are inherently less risky because careers linked to dominant forms of masculinity allow a secure reproduction of and association with gendered ideals. What is particularly interesting is the way that gendered pressures and perceptions change across the life course, effectively reducing in authority as life experiences confirm a man's relationship to masculinity.

In this sense, employment and the breadwinner role, or the expectation of a breadwinner role, serve as a resource for the affirmation and expression of masculinity. Treating masculinity as a kind of resource to be 'gathered' is seen in other contexts and is also adaptable as men grow older (Peralta, 2007). For example, excessive alcohol consumption is a valued way to gather and express masculinity for young men but can be replaced by fatherhood for older men (Peralta, 2007). Alcohol binging and fatherhood are valuable for expressing masculinity, but men do not have to engage in both at the same time to associate with masculinity. What my participants show is that younger men are more concerned with the overt display of masculinity symbolised through educational or employment choices compared to older men who have already established their masculine identities through their career choices. One of the reasons this age difference emerges could be that as early socialising pressures like those from parents become more distant, men might not feel as closely tied to expectations that their career must fit within gendered ideals. Moreover, older participants have a narrative to fall back on concerning their already successful examples of achieving normative masculinity.

Gendered understandings of failure were also closely aligned with constructions of risk. Men in Aotearoa New Zealand are expected demonstrate practical capability, usually in the physical sense with material work (Cox, 2016). But men who do not possess practical prowess have to find ways to rationalise or explain their failure to align with the dominant ideal. This can emerge as a kind of deference to 'real' masculine expressions (Cox, 2016), an idea signalled by Kyle in his description of the jobs that men "should" do. Furthermore, failing to perform practical tasks is a gendered problem that constructs men as 'lesser than' and delegitimises their alternative forms of masculine expressions. How participants spoke about their education shows that potential failure in their chosen degrees, especially with its connection to women or femininity, can mean a 'risk' to their identities as men.

Although the anecdote is drawn from his school days, Taylor articulates a very gendered understanding of men (or in this case boys) doing feminine associated tasks:

> **Taylor:** *"…When I did drama, for example, there were a few guys doing drama but it was the subject that you took because it was easy you know? like a lot of guys weren't taking drama because they wanted to do drama, a lot of guys were taking drama because they wanted the credits. Because they were like, oh you know, it's an easy pass "I can get an achieved on this and all I have to do is just 'act' and I can do it." Whereas a lot of girls in the class were like "oh, I'm also doing musical theatre, I'm also doing dance, and that crosses over, and I'm doing this…" So, it was more like drama was just a subject that you kinda just- it's like the paper that you do because it fits with your timetable and be like "oh, it doesn't really add to my degree" but it fits, So I'm gonna do it. So, a lot of guys were doing it for credits, and then I realised that a lot of girls were doing it because they actually saw themselves going to a career with it."*

> *[Later in the conversation, speaking further about men's typical engagement in education as he saw it]*

> *"…I think it's to do with like social expectation. So, if you go out with like a group of guys, or whatever… you're not going to sit down and go "hey, did you hear [that] recently scientifically [they've been able to] implant memories inside a rat or whatever…" That's not expected. But you are expected to sit down and say: "hey did you see the rugby on Saturday?" and if you can't do that like, you sort of get secluded. So I think I think there's that, I also think that if guys are continuously told you know "oh, girls always perform better, girls always perform better, girls always perform better" [for] years and years and years, you get told that from like primary school. You know, I'm originally from [outside of Aotearoa New Zealand], I came over here when I was ten I still remember at primary school in [my birth country] I was told the same thing: "girls do better, it's not a weird thing, it's just a fact." And I think it also comes from I think the reason that guys sort of don't commit to subjects is because there's that whole thing of "if I don't commit, and I fail, then I did nothing wrong.""*

Taylor illustrates that seeking something outside of normative masculine endorsement needs to be carefully managed to avoid the potential damage to one's masculinity that might come from failure. While any type of failure can put men at risk of appearing less capable, failure in a feminine-associated pursuit adds another layer of failure that connects to gendered expectations of society. Taylor's explanation indicates an understanding that for men engaging in "feminine-associated" tasks a failure is not just an indication of lack of competence, but an indication that a man failed something *that should be easy* because of its connection to femininity. This kind of sentiment overtly replicates the existing gender order by positioning femininity as lesser to masculinity. It also displays how easily discourses that reinforce the status-quo can be unquestioningly accessed when thinking about gendered constructions of the labour market.

Managing the risk of appearing non-masculine then can energise a very specific mode of engagement with higher education. Explicitly, participants were able to defend their paths from some scrutiny and/or criticism through constructing their study as part of a long-term upskilling. This upskilling was towards normatively masculine academic (Hearn, 2017) or otherwise managerial and authoritative careers. This was exemplified through each participant's intention to pursue postgraduate studies. For example, Dean described how, once he had a postgraduate qualification in clinical psychology "...you have all of the branches open to you, because it's just a slight little bit of retraining to get into any job you want..." Indeed, they felt it was necessary for them to go beyond their bachelor's degrees if they wanted to get employment that was both relevant to their undergraduate studies and provided the best opportunity for success. This approach manages the riskiness of an arts degree's indirect path to the job market by emphasising an end goal that is firmly in terrain that is acceptable to masculine ideals. Specifically, this terrain is that of 'authority', a characteristic that is constructed as a masculine trait that resonates with patriarchal ideals about men's power and social positions (Harris, 2010; Nixon, 2018). These ideals are founded in contemporary society where men continue to hold powerful positions throughout society, so participants' emphasising of this path has easily recognisable real-world templates to reify their educational paths with.

Emphasising a longer-term career trajectory which ends in a position of authority echoes the 'masculinisation' which can occur when men reorient their actions within normatively masculine ideals (Elliott, 2019). The resultant effect from this consolidation of authority allows my participants to at least somewhat dispel the non-masculine nature of the Bachelor of Arts, by plugging it directly into cultural tropes of educated authoritative

masculinity. While they still deviate from a more whole expression of hegemonic masculinity, emphasising a postgraduate path allows them to sidestep some of the associated feminization of their chosen women-majority fields. In this way, participants also show the flexibility of contemporary masculinity as they react to pressures and expectations that have existed traditionally and adapt them to contexts outside of existing ideas about men's places and roles. They demonstrate that masculinities are actively changing and are responsive to the contexts men find themselves in, even within careers associated with femininity. While this section has considered the relationship between masculinity and constructions of risk, the next section examines risk through the lens of neoliberalism.

It's About Getting a Good Job:
Understanding Risk Through Neoliberalism

The intensive financialisation of education in general constructs a particular discursive repertoire for perceiving and contextualising study options in higher education. In Aotearoa New Zealand, "students are increasingly encouraged to view themselves as 'fully financialised subjects' in which tertiary education is considered an 'investment' into one's future self" (Rowe-Williams, 2018, p. 41). Not only is this a clear example of a deployment of a "business ontology" (Fisher, 2009, p. 16), this 'full financialisation' works in relation to higher education by articulating what educational paths offer the best 'return on investment' (Rowe-Williams, 2018). Such a 'financialised' understanding of 'risk management' becomes a key idea that 'good students' need to comprehend in order to succeed at university (Rowe-Williams, 2018). And 'risk management', when applied to higher education gives students a tool to assess "the supposed 'riskiness' of particular courses and degrees for future career prospects when compared to others, as based on their apparent financial 'utility'" (Rowe-Williams, 2018, p. 50). Via such tools, socially circulating neoliberal attitudes towards education are giving students a limited framework for valuing particular aspects of education, a framework that is based on a narrow understanding of financially viable educational trajectories.

All of the participants showed that they had internalised and, to a greater or lesser extent, endorsed this financialised way of thinking about education. Although when thinking about their educational choice and future careers, their inspiration was to do community good, concerns about ensuring that their choice granted financial success were always present. This emerged as a 'common sense' understanding that in order to do the social good they

wanted, they needed to be in a financial position to do so. Therefore, any consideration for their futures needed to contend with the demands of the job market meaning they needed to present their choices as relevant and reactive to labour market demands.

The demands and constraints of neoliberalism were ubiquitous and resulted in participants locating their choices within its logic. The ideals of neoliberalism surround their everyday interactions, and they felt they had to place their education within a neoliberal discourse, both for themselves and when talking with others about their choices. In the following, for example, Joel reflects on how he deals with questions about where his education was going in the future:

> *Joel: "...when I tell people I'm studying history, they'll often ask me "what period are you interested in?" or "what subjects?" and a lot of the time I'll say "I'm not sure what period I'm interested in at this point- I'm interested in a lot of things but I haven't decided exactly where my study is going to go at the moment I'm thinking more into Treaty [of Waitangi] history ... Because you see- it seems like the* Braveheart *or World War II era is very commercially dominant and I don't feel that that's a good use of my time. So, I'd probably avoid those."*

Here, Joel draws attention to a perspective on the study of history that he sees as resulting from a commercialised world. Specifically, history produces real-life consumable stories that can be turned into products for popular culture, like books or movies. When asked about his education choices, he is expected to respond in a way that fits within this expectation of consumable history. This type of recognition and response works by realising that others expect the study of history to produce consumable objects. Being cognisant of the ways others perceive his studies, Joel actively positions his choice within a neoliberalised world view where cultural artefacts are reduced to their expression of monetary value (Fisher, 2009). This turns the study of history into a path capable of producing 'objects' to be marketized. Joel's understanding of this "commercially dominant" mode of historical knowledge illustrates his awareness of and reaction to neoliberal discourses which expect his pursuit of education to relate to a financially successful outcome. By extension, 'risk' enters the frame because he chooses to frame his studies beyond the 'consumable product'.

The commercialisation and reduction of history into an object does not occur without objection. It is a process that Joel recognises and rejects, as it is an understanding of the discipline that does not fit with his primary desire for pursuing it. He simultaneously contests

the dominant construction of history as a product while being familiar with, and using, discourses that highlight its profitability for a career. This shows that a contestation of the status quo can be held personally, but the total normalisation of a neoliberal approach to understanding work means that financialised discourse is the most available for Joel to explain his educational choices. It allowed him to connect to the discourse of personal enrichment and distance himself from financial risk by asserting that a successful and productive path exists in an otherwise 'risky' degree. Overtly creating a connection to personal enrichment enabled him to maintain an underlying link to his personal desired outcomes from his degree that stand up to a financialised scrutiny.

Discourses of economics and business were often more overt compared to the reactive allusions made by Joel above. Financialised framing around higher education was a straightforward way for participants to describe their approach to education. Michael, for example, commented that:

> **Michael:** *"it's harder to come to university because you're taking that initial risk… where you have to pay money first and then you may get a job, but if you pick up an apprenticeship, you're getting paid- you have a job."*

This type of foregrounding of the 'costs' of universities was a common theme, one that is not surprising when contextualised against the significant debt students must incur to gain access to education. There is a broad social, including governmental, valuation of education which asserts that it is a commodity to be purchased (Roper, 2018) which creates a particular kind of relationship between students' attitudes, the wider political economy, and government. Namely, this relationship comprises market providers (universities) producing a product to be purchased (degrees), with the government providing immediate capital support to consumers (students). This produces a power-based relationship in which students become indebted to the state and are under increasing pressure to repay the government's investment in them. The lack of clear financial rewards, and hence the capacity to repay debt, from completing a Bachelor of Arts constructs the degree as a 'risk' requiring management.

The language of the Bachelor of Arts as a financial 'risk' was common among participants, who felt they had to regularly justify to friends, family, and/or their wider communities their non-normative paths. Given that each of the participants transitioned to their Bachelor of Arts from either a different degree or a different career, each of them confronted and articulated the risks they perceived from the Bachelor of Arts in slightly different ways. Age and life experience, for instance, impacted on how participants articulated

their decisions to enrol in an arts degree, and how they justified their decision to others. For example, Joel, Kyle, and Michael, who are all in their early thirties had less need to rely on economic discourse to justify their decision to study a 'risky' degree in light of their existing work history and established adult independence. Across all participants, the economic discourse nonetheless prevailed, and participants expressed their concerns about achieving personal financial success and stability—their 'economic viability'. This 'economic viability' related risk is an example of conceptual overlap with the pressures of masculinity, where the older participants could also rely on the fact that their age and 'confirmed' masculinity meant they were in a less precarious position with regards to expressing their gender through employment. Dean provided an exemplary comment which reflected the centrality of the economic viability of participants' education:

> *Cameron: "Do you think that, with regards to your psychology degree [at the postgraduate level], is clinical [psychology] into criminal [psychology] is the only path for you?"*
>
> *Dean: "No, that's why I was originally going to do my postgrad down at Waikato and do it in social psychology, but upon doing research if you take your path into social psychology there's not really many options... if you study social psychology at master's level then you can only be a social psychologist. If you study clinical psychology you have all of the branches open to you, because it's just a slight little bit of retraining to get into any job you want... plus there's a much greater job market and I do need to be paid eventually, so, yeah, it's a tactical decision."*

Dean's response illustrates his own cognisance of the need to be flexible to achieve the most out of his qualification and the central reality of economic stability regarding his future. He juggled the idea of going through with social psychology, but due to the economic uncertainty and apparent lack of flexibility he rejects social psychology as a suitable future study plan, instead making a "tactical decision" to explore other options. Describing his choices as a matter of 'tactics' deeply echoes both masculinised and economic perspectives on managerialism, power, and authority. This actively illustrates how Dean is embedded within gendered and neoliberal norms and how easily accessible such discourses are to make sense of his world. More explicitly, Dean draws on financialised discourses to coherently understand his education choices and potential career paths. This lets him, as with other participants, place economic stability and future success centre stage in his justification and planning of his

educational route. Despite his personal interest in social psychology, its inability to readily connect to a flexible future with maximum possible returns for his effort rules it 'too risky' as an option for his ideal future.

Each participant understands their arts degree as risky in some way, whether it be that the degree is too intangible or potentially insecure and have developed strategies to mitigate these risks. One strategy was to reorient their position, like how Joel emphasised a future writing history books, to reduce negative traits in ways that highlight the predominant neoliberal (de)valuing of their arts degrees. In the examples below, participants use discursive signals to indicate their overall neoliberal subject positions in relation to the 'product' of a Massey University degree. Although it should be noted that they are critical of the neoliberal regime, often seeing at as dehumanising, they nonetheless seem to have no other way to articulate or interpret their educational paths:

> *Adam:* *"Well, I think it's sort of a necessity for me to get a master's degree, I don't think a BA is going to give me a career in any sense, let alone a job…"*
>
> ————
>
> *Taylor:* (with regards to his writing hobby) *"So my writing is like a thing that I have to focus on later. Like, if I get a degree, I'll focus on my writing later. I can do whatever I want when I have my degree."*
>
> ————
>
> *Michael:* *"I think when I was younger I was happy to take on anything, whereas after you've been to university, or when you're a bit older, you have a bit more of an idea of what you want, or what you expect. So, yeah, I would be less inclined to go for the lower-end jobs, which I might have to do because I might have to build up [my career experience] again. But in terms of if I had to do post-grad study and get the psychology qualification, I don't think I'd be worried about finding work."*

Comments like these echo observations made by other researchers about the consequences of the neoliberalisation of higher education. Participants emphasised the need to 'have a degree', a credential to access specific employment opportunities (Molesworth et al., 2009). This is in opposition to the traditional sense of 'being learners' with the type of non-

economic benefits this would entail (Molesworth et al., 2009), both for the individual and potentially for wider society.

Their comments also echo neoliberal expectations of the need for constant lifelong improvement expected of the ideal flexible worker in the current era. This can be specifically seen in Taylor's goal to focus more on his writing in the future and Michael's comment about "build[ing] up" his experience again. Fisher (2009) contextualised such articulations of education as part of an environment in which one must never stop studying, training, or upgrading because the boundaries between work and life are loosely defined; work can be carried out from at home, and home can be brought into work. This creates an expectation where all parts of an individual's life contribute to their personal marketability. This becomes a way that neoliberal ideals create control over how people perceive the possibilities for their lives. My participants place education within a constant future-oriented continuum related to work and success, once again illustrating how profoundly these attitudes shape their approach to study. By treating their current education as a 'stepping stone' to be attained, they are granted a material marker of their progress at the end of their degrees. This marker delineates their progression through the demands of an ever-constant neoliberal self-expectation of training, studying, or upskilling.

Altogether, the participants show themselves to be firmly located within a neoliberalised understanding of tertiary education and study. The construction of the Bachelor of Arts as 'risky' reflects a 'business ontology' that is underpinned by a 'gamble' with regards to pursuing a non-normative education. The estimation of future successes gets factored into participants' personal desires to do social good resulting in a need to find a balance of how they can do good in their community and achieve a form of financial success. Participants must weigh up the potential benefits and likelihood of success using fundamentally financialised discourses. They become torn between what they want to do and what they feel they should do with their education and futures. As a result, they have to use the discursive resources available to them, provided by neoliberal and masculine ideals, in order to mediate the terrain between 'want' and 'should'.

One way to manage the risk of an unstable or insecure arts degree is to emphasise the productivity of an ideal future within a neoliberal framework. As Dean indicated in his comment, planning, assessing, and executing a path through education, including identifying the 'nice but too risky' paths becomes a key technique to engage with education. Participants can clearly see and articulate their university education as part of a wider neoliberal schema of

upskilling. At the same time, however, they deflect, or reposition, the riskiness of their educational pursuits.

Conclusion

Hegemonic masculinity and neoliberal employment sensibilities play significant roles in determining educational and career paths for men. Each provides discursive repertoires for understanding how to move through education and make the 'best' choices for one's self. These gendered and economic discourses construct some educational options, especially those without a direct path to economic success, as overtly risky. Arts degrees are one such choice that are articulated as risky due to their unclear relationship to traditional ideals of masculinity and financial profit making. Effectively, masculine and economic norms are narrowing how men are able to perceive and explain their choices of education, as their desires have to be tailored to either immediately fit within or eventually enable men to achieve normative expectations. Failing to frame their educational choices in such ways makes them appear risky as they cannot create a clear connection to future (normatively defined) successes.

Dominant masculine ideals around breadwinning and the distancing from attributes, skills, and qualifications associated with femininity, are two of the key ways that ideals of masculinity can make educational and future career options appear risky. These ideals make men acutely aware of their difference when they intentionally choose to enter educational paths that have an unclear relationship to masculine norms. However, men can selectively emphasise aspects of their education which can (either now or in the future) enable the achievement of dominant masculine goals, like breadwinning. Highlighting the potential for gender normative behaviour from their education allows men to mitigate the apparent risks of their chosen education while maintaining some connection to their desired reason for pursuing the education in the first place.

Similarly, neoliberal ideals regarding employment construct educational options that do not present a quick and clear return-on-investment or ability to exploit a specific employment market as a risk. This creates pressure to think about education primarily within the bounds of financial investment, emphasising the aspects of their education that will give them the best chances employment-wise in the future. As a result, even if an altruistic reason exists for the pursuit of a particular career it will become constituted with an underlying

assurance of financial stability. This is because the neoliberal perspective on higher education deeply emphasises the ability for education to serve one's ability to develop specialised skills to compete in the job market. This causes a tension to emerge as men's desired outcomes of their education have to be reworked to reflect their ability to use their education as an instrument for seizing market opportunities.

Men must locate themselves and their choices in masculine and neoliberal normative structures in order to justify and address their current education and future careers in relation to their 'riskiness'. Coping with the intersecting constructions of risk requires careful and conscious engagement with normative ideals and an emphasis on how non-normative choices can work out when executed 'correctly'. The 'correct' path, in this case, means following the option which allows men to fulfil personal reasons for pursuing a non-normative career *and* remain positioned within normal expectations for them as men and neoliberalised individuals.

Chapter Five

New Ways to be a Man?
Masculinities and Care

Dean: "...I mean, you don't choose a career to help people because you want money, you choose it because you want to help people."

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Introduction

Masculinities studies has developed in recent decades to better account for the emergence of new masculine expressions and provides novel ways to explore the intersections of contemporary masculinities, femininities, economy, and more. 'Hybrid masculinities', for example, recognise how masculinities alter and change in different contexts but always in ways that retain a position of patriarchal dominance. The effect is to create a superficial change to a presented masculinity without actually challenging the established gendered status quo (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). The theory of 'Caring masculinities' has also emerged in the context of increased interest in intersectional accounts of masculinity. A 'caring masculinity' represents a 'genuine' challenge to existing gendered power structures and does not rely on recreating an inegalitarian social order (Elliott, 2016). While similar to hybridity in that it incorporates aspects of masculinity not associated with hegemony, it does so in a way that does not support masculinity as the dominant gender force. In this way, caring masculinities contest normative constructions of masculinity.

In this chapter, I use these emergent conceptualisations of masculinity to analyse participants' hopes for their future careers. The role of care was a dominant theme among participants when articulating their imagined futures. I argue that the role of care in participants' discourse can be understood as expressions of both hybrid and caring masculinities but are expressions that are firmly contained within a neoliberal understanding of labour. To begin, I explore hybrid masculinities and the pressures of neoliberal self-regulation and identity demonstrated in participants' discourse. Specifically, I look at the way neoliberal ideals expect each individual to make market-responsive actions that maximise return on investment, and what the place of a care-related career has in relation to these ideals. Following this I investigate the emergence of caring masculinities in participants' talk that reside in opposition to hegemonic masculinity's ideals. In sum, I argue that my participants reflect opportunities to either hybridise their masculinities or reform them into a 'caring' mode.

Care and the Flexibility of Masculinities in a Neoliberal Present

Hybrid masculinities, and the process of hybridisation, can take on many forms and be responsive to a wide array of pressures to change, like changes to social norms or economic circumstances (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). Hybrid masculinities are not a static or shallow rejection of hegemonic masculinity but instead representative of a strategy of masculine expression that, at its core, seeks to retain existing power structures that privilege men and masculinity (Greenebaum & Dexter, 2018). For example, Elliott's (2019) study of young Australian men's identities illustrates how her participants distanced themselves from violence or high alcohol consumption—practices often associated with hegemonic masculinity. At the same time, they emphasised their own 'better' expressions of masculinity. These 'better' versions involved building and supporting interpersonal relationships with friends and family, while simultaneously devaluing the overtly emotional aspects of this support. Hybrid masculinities create these 'better' forms, but do not extend their range of expressions to positions which fundamentally challenge the unequal gendered status quo from which men benefit.

One force associated with the creation of hybrid masculinities is the economic pressure generated by neoliberalism. As discussed in previous chapters, there is a general alignment and benefit to masculinity that occurs within neoliberal self-making. Beyond

demographic observation of who has the most social privilege in this neoliberal moment, there exists a "pervasive individualism" (Gill et al., 2005, p. 38) within men's discourses, where it is socially desirable for men to have complete control and autonomy over themselves in daily life. This valued individualism in turn echoes the mass individualisation that has been attributed to neoliberalisation, especially with regards to self-management (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberalism is a force that shapes available expressions of men's performance of hybridised masculinity. For example, neoliberal norms might necessitate practices of masculinity which are both 'hard and soft' simultaneously (Elliott, 2019). This is to say, contemporary employment norms are not as welcoming of traditional expressions of masculinity, so men have had to 'soften' their masculine performances while simultaneously maintaining connections to hegemonic masculinity's expectation of men to be 'hard', often via bodily strength, capability, or the gathering of social authority.

Finding ways to maintain a relationship to ideals of masculinity requires highlighting the common ground between masculinity and economic stability and success. Participants' discourse often combined an emphasis on personal 'investment' in education with traditional goals of masculinity. For example, Taylor, in describing the perception of psychology studies, connected personal decisions regarding study to the 'best outcomes' for fulfilling a traditional masculine role:

> *Taylor: "I think there's also this perception of "if you study psychology, it's not a lucrative job, you're not going to get as much money" or whatever. Now, you need money, because if you're gonna have a family, if you're gonna have a get a house, if you're gonna— you need money. So you wanna go for... engineering. You wanna go for computer science. You wanna go for all these different things..."*

For Taylor, the ideals of neoliberal success—of needing and having money through personal action—enables the fulfilment of masculine ideals. While Taylor's comments here represent an overt association with expectations of dominant masculinity, he and the other participants will necessarily have to hybridise their masculinities in pursuing care-based employment. Specifically, because values around interpersonal support and emotionality required in such care work are not features of hegemonic masculinity.

Teaching, like psychology, is a career that demands particular modes of gendered expression which do not connect to some of the ideals of Aotearoa New Zealand masculinity. One important expression for teaching is interpersonal care and nurturance of young people

which is normatively associated with women and femininity, and therefore expected to be cautiously engaged with by men in order to not imperil their connection to dominant conceptions masculinity. Choosing to pursue teaching as a career, as one of the participants is, would necessarily hybridise his masculine expression. However, at first glance, hegemonic masculine expectations can carve out space where men who are teachers feel they should occupy limited roles in their schools, such as being sports coaches, due to normative associations around what men *should* do in the world of schooling (Faulstich-Wieland, 2013). The need to express specific ideal and limited traits of masculinity can be understood as functionally limiting men's ability to effectively hybridise, a process that necessarily involves 'borrowing' other gendered expressions to mask a continuation of the dominant gender order (Bridges & Pascoe, 2018). Men who are teachers often feel tension over having to emphasise dominant expressions of masculinity via disciplinarian or authoritative expressions in their employment (Moosa & Bhana, 2018), as this frequently conflicts with their desire to be supportive educators helping children develop and learn (Faulstich-Wieland, 2013; Martino & Ingrey, 2016; Greenslade, 2019).

Despite the pressures to express idealised masculine traits, the theory of hybrid masculinities provides another way of understanding the dynamic movement and adaptability of masculinities which can account for men's need to emphasise the 'hardness' of masculinity in teaching. Specifically, in the logic of hybridisation, the overt underlining of dominant traits of masculinity by men who are teachers is simply another surface alteration over the top of a core acceptance of the current gender order. The explicit expression of masculine ideals of authority or dominance can be used to create a discursive distance from hegemonic masculinity. For men who are teachers, this is done by labelling over emphasised masculine performances as personally unusual, which opens a space for their private/personal gendered expressions to be distinct from hegemonic masculinity. In effect, 'borrowing' upward to the hegemonic instead of downward to a subordinated or marginalised masculinity for the purpose of creating distance from dominant ideals. For participants in this research, especially Kyle who aims to be a teacher, this demonstrates that in professions of care, the pressure to hybridise masculinity can emerge from the culture of the career itself. Caring-based professions provide a direct challenge to aspects of the dominant ideals of masculinity, which must be curtailed in order to effectively engage in the practices of said professions.

Kyle entered university after spending his twenties travelling and working in medical and community support settings. He had what he felt was a grounded expectation of his trajectory in study: a Bachelor of Arts followed by a post graduate diploma. Once achieved his

plan was to teach, ideally in social studies subjects like history, geography, or sociology. Kyle's interest in higher education emerged later in life, as experiences shaped where and how his life could be positively impacted by pursuing a university education. As discussed, teaching, as a career which requires interpersonal relationship building and emotional work, is a vocation that is prime for the development of hybrid masculinities. In Kyle's case, although he is not a teacher yet, the above discussion of teaching reveals that despite the career's association with emotional and interpersonal labour, there is a specific mode of masculinity expected of men who are teachers that requires contextual adaption. Moreover, by choosing to pursue teaching as his 'grounded path' he will likely have to adapt his performances of masculinity to the situation, to allow him to both care and remain connected to his identity as a man.

Teaching as a career has an overtly gendered history and requires specifically gendered expressions from men. These expressions offer a possibility for hybridisation and in context with economic pressures regarding job security or stability can interact with dominant conceptualisations of masculinity in adaptive ways. In our discussion, Kyle described his choice to teach as a practical path to stability:

> **Kyle:** *The only real career path was, the only [one] I can see which is achievable, is teaching. So, I'd imagine I'd get into a postgraduate in teaching, however I do want more than that … I'd love to kind of take this further. I have a lot of ideas and a lot of things I'd like to see about. Like change in the world. … In all honesty I don't see that happening, you know? I guess, who am I? [A] little guy from [my hometown] kind of thing, why would that ever happen?*

Kyle makes a clear association between employment utility rising from his desire to teach and the pressures of the labour market. He explicitly views his teaching as a grounded and achievable expectation following the completion of his studies. In other words, teaching is a 'realistic' employment outcome for an arts degree, and therefore is the employment area he must orient himself towards. While Kyle does not necessarily talk about care, this accordingly means that he is orienting himself towards a profession that is embedded in practices of (interpersonal) care. In seeing teaching as the only real option post-studies, care work is shown that despite its distance from masculinity it is nonetheless still work. To this end, teaching can still be ultimately framed within a masculine mode. Specifically, Kyle demonstrates that by considering teaching the only 'real' career, he can still find success and stability in that field, which are both traits valued by neoliberalism and masculinity. In adapting to the culture of teaching, men may have to alter their gender expressions, so a

hybridised masculine expression within that context may aid men in finding the greatest level of success as a teacher. This is because they can adapt their performance of masculinity to be most effective for interpersonal work while retaining a connection to dominant ideals of masculinity that can help men reach a position of authority within the career.

The economic need to justify employment pursuits as (at least conceptually) financially stable (Connell, 2005) makes some jobs more attractive than others. These gendered and neoliberal elements apply pressure on participants to frame and pursue their education in particular ways, making interpersonal labour function within the expectations of gender and neoliberalism. Even if men would like to work beyond such a limited framework, Kyle's comments illustrate that there is a significant draw through the promise of 'stability' that encourages replication of the status quo.

Hybrid masculinities are developed in response to changes in normal circumstances, where existing norms of masculinity are no longer tenable for oneself or others (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). The tension between personal desire and normative expectation regarding education opens the avenue for men to hybridise their masculinities as a way to resolve this tension. By changing and adopting contextually sensitive gendered performances, men can meet the identity-based demands of an employment context while retaining a position in the underlying power structure. For example, the development of interpersonal care skills necessary for Kyle to pursue teaching or the other participants' therapy-based careers will not connect with the unemotional stoicism of 'Kiwi' men. This means that Kyle would need to perform his gender in a way that suits the teaching environment, effectively changing his performance outwardly while not necessarily needing to challenge existing masculine domination. The dynamic realities of hybridisation involve not only a selective borrowing of other gendered expressions, but a knowledge of—and reaction to—acceptable gendered performances of a care profession. For men pursuing careers in care-related fields, hybridisation offers a way to retain a connection to masculine power and privilege without necessarily challenging the gender order.

Participants' alterations to their masculinity is reflective of who they are as individuals and how they position themselves in relation to their current education and future careers. In contrast to Kyle's grounded direction towards teaching, Adam is more focussed in terms of his ideal career and goals for societal change. Responding to his own experiences at high school, Adam wants to be a force for change in the educational system, challenging what he feels is a blunt and ineffective public-schooling system. Adam described himself as introverted and

experienced a few difficult moments at school. Specifically, when we discussed his in-class engagement he explained:

> **Adam**: *"I'm quite introverted and quite anxious when it comes to the social engagement, so I tend to try and find a nook and take down information that I think is relevant or informative, and just sort of passively consume. I generally won't ask questions, but if I do have like a really nagging question I'll ask at the end when, when I can just, you know, I don't have the weight of like everyone around me, kind of thing."*

This puts Adam at odds with the confidence men are ideally supposed to have (Jackson & Dempster, 2009). He indicated a link between his introverted nature and experiences with bullying during school. Boys often get bullied for non-typical gendered performances (including introversion) or perceptions of femininity, meaning bullying acts to both raise the perpetrator's masculinity through a show of dominance and denigrate the victim's gender through belittlement (Messerschmidt, 2018). Adam's experience reflects these gendered practices, but he also felt that the administrative systems at school failed to actually teach and inspire him or his peers. Instead he felt that students were being 'mass produced' for instrumental placement in a job market. He is clearly attuned to the realities of neoliberal schooling, which focuses heavily on individual student performance and preparing young people for the job market (Phoenix, 2004). Combined with his personal nature he felt that people like him—introverted, shy, and/or targeted by bullies—could miss out on valuable educational opportunities. For him, psychology offers the optimal path of both interest and fulfilment in challenging these issues and helping to change the education system to one that supports and inspires young people. As with Kyle, such a future would necessitate interpersonal care and a 'softened' masculinity as Adam develops and supports relationships with young people for the purpose of bettering their education.

Actively reframing expressions associated with femininity allows care work to be understood within masculine ideals. Adam considers himself "more of a social observer" and, as a result, feels that psychology "came naturally to him". From this perspective, he recognises himself as atypical in terms of gendered employment pursuits and offers an interesting reframing of normative gendered attitudes to redraw the boundaries of his educational path and ideal future:

> **Adam**: *You tend to see that a lot of guys, especially the guys that are in the trades for their careers, it's like that is what they do. That is who they are,*

kind of thing. And they don't seem to have a very good comprehension or understanding of like uni skills or of academics or anything like that.

Cameron: Yeah, my Dad's a tradie and he doesn't- like I've tried to sit down and be like, "okay, so, I'm a scientist-kinda, but that's not…" <laughs> it's very hard to- because my dad's like "I'm a builder. I build houses" and it's like "I'm an anthropologist I… ask people questions?" <laughs>

Adam: Yeah, I think it's just generally probably because the difference, roughly speaking, is that males are interested in things and, roughly speaking, females are interested in people. I'm the kind of guy who looks at people as though they are an object, like, I like to kind of observe people from a distance as opposed to a female who would like… likes people because they like interacting with people. I just like observing and understanding them… So I just treat [people] as 'a thing' <laughs> … I think that's- it's like part of the explanation, but I mean, I haven't really got a clue to be honest…

Adam's framing and cautious essentialism of men and women is a direct example of a hybridised perspective. He takes something he associates with women and femininity—interpersonal labour—and reframes it from a masculinised perspective. Specifically, by separating what 'males and females' are "roughly" interested in, he genders behaviours, ideals, and *labour*. By essentialising the way people interact with their world in gendered terms he is able to reframe his interest in people as being a reformed expression of masculinity, separate from the ideal masculinity, but nonetheless connected.

Although Adam clearly articulates his desire to support people, his reflection that he observes people "like objects" is interesting. The practice of observation, perhaps from a distance, belies the interpersonal skills, relationality and interest in human behaviour that resides at the heart of his chosen profession. Adam's discourse reflects a 'business ontology' (Fisher, 2009) that privileges empirical evidence to support transformational change. This reveals an internalised neoliberal worldview that provides Adam with tools to hybridise his expression of masculinity. Interestingly, Adam straddles the boundaries of masculinised rationality and feminised relationality, shifting (feminised) interpersonal interactions into a masculinised space. Furthermore, creating a connection to objects, Adam can borrow from and connect to neoliberal discourses about market interaction to create a bridge between masculinity and femininity. Adam's choice to pursue a 'feminine' career becomes legitimised

as a masculine practice through this discursive reframing of people as objects and continue his connection to normative ideas of masculinity in this career context.

Psychology, counselling, or therapy work, like teaching, may come too close to the type of care and emotional labour associated with "women's work" (Moosa & Bhana, 2018; Martino, 2008). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the gendered division of practicing psychologists is highly imbalanced, with 70 percent of psychologists being women (Ministry of Health, 2010). This population ratio suggests a gendered value to psychology work and a resonance with emotional labour that a traditional masculinity would preclude. The profession's proximity to the feminine moves it into an 'out of bounds' space within normative masculinity. Four of the six participants are majoring in psychology and hope to use their degrees to access careers that involve significant interpersonal therapeutic interaction. The decision to pursue a career in psychology is a hybridising force on participants' masculinities. As ideal modes of masculinity do not endorse interpersonal support and emotionality, accessing and re-working these traits to enter a psychology career illustrates a core feature of hybrid masculinities. The contact with therapeutic work necessarily involves building empathetic relationships with others which means they will need to recognise and adapt their gendered performance against the ideals of masculinity.

Participants recognise the non-normative gendered aspects of their choices and opt to negotiate a new ambivalent gendered space. As Adam illustrated, this can be done by using neoliberal discourse to masculinise a feminine aspect of work. More generally, in developing emotional and interpersonal skills, a hybridising masculinity gives the option to 'superficially' alter their outward attitudes while retaining their connection to the existing gender order (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). In their attempts to masculinise their education choices, framing them as rational, productive, and stable, participants retain a connection to normative masculinity while locating themselves within "women's work". They can and do actively borrow from the gendered expectations of their education and expected work environment to fit their gender to the appropriate context. The neoliberal background of their educational choices helps to justify their borrowing and maintains a connection to gendered norms. Participants overall recognise that they are outliers in pursuing their chosen careers, but how they choose to frame this recognition, consciously or not, reflects perpetual external pressures to recreate existing gendered norms.

Care as a Route to Egalitarianism

In contrast to the contextual reformation of a hybrid masculinity, a 'caring masculinity' is an expression which meaningfully challenges the existing gender order (Elliott, 2016). Caring masculinities, as alternative emergent forms of masculinity, create and embrace connections with emotionality, inter-dependence, and relationality, concepts that are typically undervalued by dominant conceptualisations of masculinity (Elliott, 2016). In order to develop these caring masculinities, men must enter emotional and physical spaces normatively associated with women and femininity (Elliott, 2016). As such men must actively alter their masculinity to build and value reciprocal interdependent relationships and recognise structures of dominance associated with normative masculinities in their own lives. Caring masculinities offer a competing framework to see participants' educational choices, potentially beyond a replication of the gendered status quo.

In a strictly definitional sense, 'caring masculinities' appear similar to hybrid masculinities. Namely, caring masculinities require using devalued characteristics from an alternate or feminine mode of gender expression and reproducing them within a masculine identity. The key difference of caring masculinities as a concept, however, is the recognition of gendered inequality and the importance of men challenging the gendered order. Essentially hybrid masculinities use other gendered traits for a superficial change and 'caring masculinities' adopt them as part of a deeper attempt to make personal and political change. Within this mode of masculinity, the opportunity to develop truly egalitarian gender relationships emerges. The dismantling of existing gendered power dynamics is a key aspect of caring masculinities, and therefore requires men to adopt expressions which give way to a more equal gendered circumstance. In the act of adopting devalued gendered expressions, this egalitarianism necessarily involves an overt revaluing of these expressions in ways that do not replicate a hybridised reassertion of gendered inequality.

'Caring masculinity' as a theoretical concept remains a novel way of understanding masculinity. This section expands on this nascent scholarship by exploring participants' practices as part of a process of personal gendered identity reorganisation—a reorganisation that incorporates non-normative ideals of "care, emotion, dependency, and interdependence" (Elliott, 2016, p. 255). Caring masculinities in the West exist within a neoliberalised self-making set of norms and thus are responsive to neoliberal pressures. Nordic 'new masculinities', which operate in the same norm-challenging area as 'caring masculinities', are

shaped by neoliberal attitudes which impact the expression and the perceived value of a non-normative 'fairer' versions of masculinity (Lund et al., 2019). Specifically, neoliberal management styles, both self-management and the management of others in the labour market, can lead to the co-opting of 'care' to exemplify one's ability to better manipulate given circumstances for personal benefit (Lund et al., 2019). In the scheme of neoliberal self-mastery, the ability to switch into a 'caring' supportive mode becomes another tool for getting ahead. In an environment of significant individualisation of responsibility, men receive notable praise for doing the type of emotional and interpersonal labour that has historically been a moral imperative for women. The suggestion of new Nordic masculinities is that men receive an additional reward for engaging in care, one that can be reflective of being a 'good neoliberal subject' through an economic logic (Lund et al., 2019). The large amount of common ground between 'caring' and 'new Nordic' masculinities means that this 'bonus' for engaging in interpersonal and emotional labour likely also applies to the caring framework too.

Identifying a 'caring masculinity' is a matter of determining the context in which men cross gendered boundaries. The choice to care is an element which differentiates and identifies novel expressions of masculinity that challenge the existing gender order (Elliott, 2016; Lund et al., 2019). Choosing to care reflects an active overstepping of boundaries of normal gendered behaviour. In making this choice, men are often recognised and receive social rewards for engaging in emotional and interpersonal labour. Explicitly, the reward comes from men noticing and acknowledging a need for the aforementioned labour, and in doing so are praised for their recognition, action, and valuing of something normally associated with femininity (Lund et al., 2019). But within that choice to care, the space to re-masculinise (hybridise) men's expressions of masculinity opens. Because of this, the gap between 'genuine' norm-challenging caring masculinities become difficult to demarcate from hybridisation. Moreover, neoliberal ideals around self-determination provide mechanisms to 'value' men's apparent norm-breaking and assist an expression of care in becoming an avenue of hybridity through connecting gendered boundary crossing to men's self-reliance and economic productivity. Thus, the individualised value of 'choice' becomes an important marker for distinguishing how men might position their actions against the norms of both neoliberal self-making and hegemonic masculinity.

Despite men's engagement with care being able to represent a hybrid masculinity, 'caring masculinity' remains a valuable concept for understanding participants' actions and discourse. A caring masculinity would, within its seeking of a new masculine expression that is

gender-egalitarian, necessarily challenge the dominant neoliberal capitalist norms which fit so neatly with and endorse hegemonic masculinities. As men seek to challenge the way their gender can be disconnected from oppressive power, they would arguably realise how masculinities are privileged and reinforced through economic means, therefore challenging neoliberal ideologies in the process. The idea of challenging existing norms was expressed by participants in the context of their education. Their talk both symbolically and directly indicated a desire to change and challenge gendered systems via a reformation of the values associated with masculinity. In other words, they contested traditional expressions of masculinity through embracing practices of care for the purpose of societal amelioration—a hallmark of caring masculinity.

Examining the reasons participants have chosen their current educations is a primary source of identifying emerging caring masculinities. Joel had come from a previous career in IT which he was raised to value due to its secure practical employment. However, the corporatized environment that emphasised extreme work hours and total dedication to work above all else led to him developing feelings of displeasure towards continued work in that field. Joel expressed his unhappiness with the larger socio-political developments he perceived in society more broadly and could see no way of engaging with or responding to such events while carrying out his IT work. For example, he cited the recent emergence of the 'alt-right'[2] as a catalyst towards him taking a more active role in social justice movements:

> *Joel: "I am quite political focussed. I'm quite interested by, [and] I have connections to, political groups and protest groups... So, it's been a lot of work to, sort of, pushback [against] ... 'alt-right' pseudo-science thinking over the past couple of years. And so I think perhaps, having that context behind me as well spurred me into more of a B.A. academic focus as well. It gave me the push I need to think 'this is something I should be doing right now'."*

As he explains, the arts degree specifically allows him to engage with the political and social aspects of the world that are most important to him right now. The arts path, in comparison to his technology career, gives him direction toward making the world a better place. Joel's socially ameliorative direction for his study indicates a will to challenge existing norms which is a crucial aspect of a caring masculinity. Later in our conversation, he cites his peers as being

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[2] The term 'alt-right' describes a recently emerged decentralised far-right movement that is particularly active on social media. They are known for their anti-immigrant and white supremacist beliefs and support for conservative right-leaning populist politicians, like U.S. President Donald Trump (Panizo-LLedot et al., 2019).

instrumental influences in helping him realise how unfulfilling his technology career was and what opportunities existed for him by completing an arts degree. Community connections like this are also clearly important for helping men realise their personal positions and aid in the emergence of a caring masculinity as men are encouraged and supported to explore and challenge the norms around them.

Caring masculinities emerge based on a multitude of interacting factors which create the spaces for men to develop and be accepted as expressions acceptable for men. Joel's social justice interests, longstanding passion for history, and peer group all aided in his articulation of exactly what his Bachelor of Arts might offer and mean to him, and ultimately what he hopes to get out of the degree:

> **Joel**: *"I feel like I've, to use a phrase, "grown up" enough that, I saw a value for myself to pursue a B.A.— an arts degree because it was something I was interested in, I wanted to do and I also, at this point, I see a value of it for society as a whole, if I had my own stereotypes about arts degrees not being helpful when I was a teenager then that idea is probably quite persuasive and so anything I could add, any work I could give to the arts community in New Zealand was obviously going to be valuable. So I did have more of a selfish reason for coming and doing it, I also saw it as something I could do to help New Zealand as a whole, like my community as well. … When I tell people I'm studying history, they'll often ask me "what period are you interest in?" or, um, "what subjects?" and a lot of the time I'll say "I'm not sure what period I'm interested in at this point- I have a lot of, like, I'm interested in a lot of things but I haven't decided exactly where my study is going to go" at the moment I'm thinking more into Treaty [of Waitangi] history but when I continue the conversation, I hedge myself a little bit and I'll continue the conversation and ask them about what they think and they'll say "oh yeah, I really love, like, medieval history" or "I really love World War II…" and I think those are subjects that have historically had a lot of work done, and I feel are generally, male and Pākehā dominated areas of history, so those ones I would probably avoid. because I feel like they- my time would be better spent researching something that has been ignored."*

> **Cameron**: *"mm, so better spent for your community?"*

> **Joel**: *"yeah, yeah"*

These words clearly highlight Joel's social attentiveness and desire to be a part of a positive force in his world, with the Bachelor of Arts working as a clear stepping-stone on that path. He directly demonstrates both the potential for a 'caring masculinity' in shaping his expectations and interactions with others. With regards to a norm-challenging masculinity, his drive for his studies to be part of an ameliorative force for his community lays the groundwork for the development of an emotionality necessary to break down the expectations of hegemonic masculinity. Put another way, his desire to use his arts degree as part of a process of interpersonal restorative action opens the space for a 'caring masculinity' to emerge.

Neoliberal ideals are an ever-present factor of identity building for participants. In Joel's comments, the overall neoliberalised reality of higher education is present. Joel takes personal responsibility for his education and frames his pursuit as something to be 'valued'. This discursive angle strongly reflects neoliberal values with regards to the 'purpose' and instrumentality of higher education. He actively grapples with this framing in citing the 'selfishness' of his educational choice but nonetheless emphasises the goal of his learning as being beyond himself.

Confronting expectations of higher education's financial instrumentality further illustrate the wide scope of norm challenging that exists around the development of a caring masculinity. In the context of his previous comments, Joel's active resistance towards the financialised outcomes of history later in our conversation is indicative of the neoliberalised reality that faces a caring masculinity:

> *Cameron: "Essentially [your interest in Treaty of Waitangi history is] more relevant or? Not to put words in your mouth..."*

> *Joel: "Yeah more relevant, that's definitely right. Because you see- it seems like the* Braveheart *[or] World War II era is very commercially dominant, and I don't feel that that's a good use of my time. So I'd probably, yeah, avoid those."*

Joel's description of the 'Hollywood' and popular culture 'consumable' history, in addition to his recognition of the community good he could do through Treaty of Waitangi based study, illustrates his awareness of contemporary forces shaping the discipline he hopes to enter. At a wider scale, it also illustrates the neoliberal context in which a caring masculinity would necessarily emerge due to the ubiquity of financialised discourses. Given the interconnection between hegemonic masculinities and neoliberal values around the self, how a 'caring

masculinity' is shaped by and actively engages with financialised norms is key to understanding how it challenges masculinity's power.

The neoliberal logic of 'choosing the best return on investment' is one such shaping factor on how a 'caring masculinity' could form. Like Joel, Kyle also expressed a desire to address the large-scale issues of the world as he understood them. Although he is still mindful of the 'grounded' path teaching offers, his coursework is opening him to other future possibilities. In his arts studies, he has started to feel a personal sense of development which was not there before, along with a greater ability to articulate the ills he sees in the world:

> **Kyle**: *"… you know like all these conversations that I've been like having, all these things I've been studying and talking about, these ideals I can spread that I don't really know how to back up, or I don't really know where, like how to do anything with them, or how to action these things, I mean university is kind of almost training and giving me the tools to kind of like, be able to put ideas into action. And be able to kind of make plans of things, to get investigative skills to kind of research things better, to kind of have an argument better you know? All of the ideas that I had before were there, and like, yes going to university definitely nurtures and grows these ideas and helps me give a shooting gallery of more, but more importantly than that- because, you know, the world's full of ideas right? the world's full of inspiration, but more important than that it's giving me the skills to know what to do with them. Like to document them, to put them to paper, to put them into an argument and to think about them critically … and to question and challenge my own views more. To kind of break it down a little bit, to kind of try and- I mean I've always been quite an open-minded unbiased person who has always tried to look for more than what I believe, because no matter where, how or 'thick' a belief can be, but [university] is helping me to consolidate that idea more in a way and to question things and be more critical."*

Kyle is either at, or approaching, a kind of crossroads. He had a solid plan to fall back on but was also 'daring to dream' of other possibilities offered through his degree. While Kyle did not have a clear picture of this, he articulated a clear desire for social change and wanted to be part of it. For example, Kyle jokingly dismissed the possibility of working for government, saying he did "[not want] to prune the leaves, I want to dig the bugger out!", a pithy quote that

illustrates his inclination for revolutionary social change. Despite this, he feels he must foreground teaching as the option which is (in his mind) going to grant the best returns.

Economic concerns therefore operate as a control on the terrain in which masculinities can change. The way a teaching path is 'grounded' for Kyle, compared to fanciful social revolution, illustrates that overriding norms can limit an expression of care. In Kyle's case there is a tangible gap between the financial safety and security that a teaching path offers and the work he could do in a socially revolutionary way. This gap of 'unreality' shows that for men wanting to find a way to challenge normative structures, as a caring masculinity would, existing gendered and economic systems construct what is 'realistic' and shape how men feel they can actually achieve that social revolution.

The ideals of hegemonic masculinity also shape caring masculinities and grant ways to perceive norm-challenging practices through a hegemonic lens. The language of 'fixing' society present in participants' discourse brings to mind the normatively valued 'practical' masculinity which is part of the hegemonic mode of Aotearoa New Zealand (Cox, 2016). Kyle, and Joel to some extent, frame their societal care in terms of reparative or restorative action which, again, connects to normative and traditional roles of men's labour. They want to work with the mechanics of society in order to resolve the issues they see. It is a way to discuss their hopes for the future that, although this type of societal concern is hardly gender-specific, readily connects to hegemonic ideas around masculinity. This dulls the revolutionary direction of their caring masculinities, as their active challenges to power through social action can be reclaimed as expressions of dominant masculinity through associations with authority, agency, and patriarchal control.

Caring masculinities are most visible in direct interpersonal interaction (Elliott, 2016). In contrast to tackling the mechanics of society broadly like Joel, the four participants studying psychology would, in their future careers, have to more immediately engage in person-to-person care. More intensive interpersonal interactions are understood to be a key emerging point of caring masculinities. This is because the practical changes necessitated by interpersonal care are most impactful with regards to developing a mindful awareness of existing structures of masculine domination in everyday life (Elliott, 2016). Included in this mindful awareness is the hope that a man performing care realises the potential benefits each man receives from the reproduction of unequal gendered norms. A future in psychological and therapeutic work requires careful building of interpersonal relationships as well as intensive emotional labour, making such work an ideal place for the emergence of a 'caring masculinity'.

Participants' active development of skills to help their communities is a straightforward example to use to explore emerging caring masculinities. Psychology students, Michael and Dean, both intend to become private counsellors in mental health and rehabilitation. Compared to the other four, Michael and Dean did not position their career goals as part of a revolutionary society changing project. Michael specifically, now in his early thirties, expressed that he had an ambivalent attitude towards schooling in his teens, but eventually realised that if he were to ever go to university it would be to study psychology:

> **Michael**: *"I think I have an interest in people's behaviour or why they do things and that's probably about trying to make sense of the world or of other people, or myself, something like that. And in my early twenties I had thought about getting into counselling, but I don't know why I never did... I think I felt that the job I had was a good job and I was on a good path so I would stick to that one. But I always felt that I would be good at the counselling side of things and helping people."*

Later in our conversation, Michael also explained that:

> **Michael**: *"I had always enjoyed helping friends with their problems or listening to their problems when- and I thought 'oh, I could probably do this.'"*

Michael is following his passion for working within his community and using the skills he is developing to help the community. In some ways this illustrates the connection between 'helping' and the masculine-valued 'fixing'. But beyond this, it also shows that he inherently values interpersonal work and constructs it as legitimate an option for himself. This is an important aspect of 'caring masculinities'; he actively seeks to engage in care, despite traditional notions against it. The realisation of care work as 'real work' in Michael's comments is an interesting one. Care work being seen as 'real' intersects across the two main axes discussed in this thesis, neoliberalism and masculinities. In terms of neoliberalism, he is viewing care work as a possible commodified resource, a skill that can be sold, which he did not need to do previously as he 'had a good job'. In terms of masculinity Michael's comments intersect against traditional notions of 'good' stable employment. This career assessment created by masculine and neoliberal ideals toward employment had previously obscured the possibility of doing care work in a formal sense, demonstrating the gap that separates emotional and interpersonal labour from men's traditional labour.

While the ideals of hegemonic masculinity are slow to change, other forms of masculinities are deeply and necessarily mobile in order to retain a connection to dominant ideals and adapt to contextual social changes to replicate their positions in society. As stated above, psychological and therapeutic work necessitates interpersonal and emotional labour that sits outside of the boundaries of normative masculinities, but caring masculinities offer a way to reformulate and accept these labour necessities within masculine bounds. Each of the participants has demonstrated their willingness to engage in new ways of performing masculinity or discussed where caring and interpersonal skills could become necessary and supported. This illustrates a willingness for participants to actively move their masculine expressions. However, with these possible connections established there is also an element which might undermine the development of a power-challenging new masculinity, moving their masculinities away from a revolutionary caring form.

The 'scale' of care is an important and defining aspect of participants' imagined futures. When speaking about the purpose of their careers, participants' care is directed toward large societal-wide changes they would like to be a part of, as opposed to finding value in small scale interpersonal care in itself. Although each narrative suggests a place for the development/deployment of a caring masculinity, the revolutionary ideas of social justice or societal change pushes the window of care from interpersonal relationships to social consciousness. This exemplifies a different kind of caring work, work that stems from traditionally masculine-specific characteristics. The participants move from caring *for* individuals to caring *about* society, while still maintaining a connection to the masculine ideal of 'fixing'. In participants' discourses, the small-scale specificities of interpersonal care *must* connect and influence their desires to be a part of a bigger change.

Functionally, this means that a bridge can be made between the idea of the normatively masculine 'caring about' and the normatively feminine 'caring for' (Camilleri & Jones, 2001) whereby it appears the former then *allows* the latter for participants. Participants are about to excuse their engagement with interpersonal care, as it relates to femininity, by emphasising a masculine-connected care for society-at-large. Consider Dean's account of what his ideal employment would look like:

> **Dean**: "...and I want to work in a prison setting helping people who find themselves getting them into the cycle of, you know: they go to prison, they get out, they go back to prison, they get out, they go back. So, I want to help those people find systems and implement ways of helping them figure out

what's going wrong in their lives and fix that. And also deal with those who have mental health issues in prison as well. So that's what I want to do [and] the reason why I'm studying social anthropology along with it is because I feel that psychology often is too individual-focussed and doesn't look at the broader picture. So, I feel that a background in social anthropology would broaden my perspective on things and allow me to help people much better."

Dean wants to resolve the larger scale social issue of people's cyclical incarceration and reincarceration, so he has to engage in individualised interpersonal therapy to resolve this. With the frame of masculine norms applied, there is a pressure to connect his labour with masculinity, and interpersonal care work is typically associated with women. To retain a 'masculine' connection to his labour he emphasises the larger scale 'fixing' of society *over* the personal emotional benefits that come from therapeutic assistance to others. Put another way, he overtly values a larger scale 'caring about' incarceration cycles in society *over* the individual care work, which becomes compartmentalised.

'Caring about' being valued over 'caring for' problematises the potentially egalitarian nature of participants' actions in a 'caring masculinities' frame, as it illustrates another element in play with regards to their choice to care. By emphasising traits of their care which resonate more with normative masculine values they could be disvaluing traits associated with femininities by implication, which repositions their actions within the current unequal status quo. Specifically, the emphasis on large authoritative care is implicitly more important, and gives purpose to, the smaller scale 'feminine' interpersonal care involved in their ideal futures.

The way my participants consider their care work has similarities to the masculinisation of care documented by Braedley (2015) with regard to firefighters in Canada having to become familiar with first aid and supportive care of the public. The firefighters' use, adoption, and expected reimbursement for their care work took on traits of the normatively masculine environment and served to 'elevate' their care work beyond the undervalued feminine-associated realm it had been located within. However, the masculinisation of care participants engage in adapts to the contexts they find themselves in, namely, men entering women-majority fields. This difference of men entering a caring field, rather than Bradley's 'caring coming to men', shapes the way my participants frame their decisions to enter their chosen fields. For example, participants' general comments of "I see a need for it" or "it would allow me to fix X in my community" indicate an approach to care that is 'men entering care', compared to the firefighters who now have to care in addition to their previous duties. In both

cases care work interacts with ideals of masculinity to allow it to be performed by men without interruption to their identities as men.

Altogether what participants have shown is that there is more of a denial of the existence of a 'caring masculinity'. While this section began by distinguishing caring masculinity from hybrid masculinity, these expressions of care are redolent of hybridity. Participants' underlying commentary regarding their care work suggests that feminine-associated work in itself is less valuable, and it has to be 'legitimised' in the light of societal change. Several participants can so clearly see and associate with issues in their world, but the overwhelming normative pressure of masculinity emphasises the reworking of the gendered status quo, instead of a revolutionary challenge to the unequal realities that define gender in Aotearoa New Zealand.

'Caring masculinities' still has value with regards to understanding new emergent forms of masculinity that challenge hegemonic domination. Participants show glimpses of masculinities that could disrupt the existing gendered order—be this via developing their social consciousness, a desire to challenge existing structures they see as faulty, or through engaging in labour not typically or historically associated with men. Each of the participants partially illustrates a caring masculinity and indicate what is needed to encourage further development of this better and egalitarian form of masculinity. However, the pressures created by traditional masculinities and neoliberal conceptualisations of 'good' employment act as a damper on transforming participants' revolutionary energies into a caring masculinity beyond directly interpersonal interaction and into in the world of work.

Conclusion

Neoliberal ideals play an active role in shaping expressions of masculinity. Masculinities might move and hybridise with changing social ideals, but neoliberal norms around employment form a secure connection of their masculine expressions to existing structures of gendered and economic power. Neoliberal employment ideals also keep men from drifting too far from the norms of masculinity. By relating back to normative expectations of neoliberal employment, the mutual reinforcement of neoliberal and hegemonically masculine ideas allows an easy connection to be drawn between making a choice that fits with a neoliberal perspective and making one that fits with normative

masculinities. Concerns about a career's profitability help to reinforce underlying ideas about what men should seek in employment. For men seeking non-normative careers which involve interpersonal care and emotionality, the norms of neoliberalism and men's labour streamline a development of expressions that continue the gendered status quo, as opposed to aid development in power-challenging alternative masculinities.

While recent literature has introduced the concept of 'caring masculinities' this research shows that there are numerous obstacles to fully embodying a caring masculinity in the neoliberal context of education and work. The pressure for men in educational and employment contexts for men is to adapt a masculine performance to suit the context, but not necessarily to go further and meaningfully challenge existing gendered norms. This means that for a caring masculinity to emerge, men have to feel able to also challenge the ways they are expected to seek and engage in the world of work.

Norms of neoliberalism and hybrid masculinities compel men into expressions that reproduce the current order, despite any desires for ameliorative social action. Given the economic link to social inequalities, a 'caring masculinity' necessarily challenges neoliberal capitalist norms and the ways in which capitalism benefits from and supports the construction of hegemonic masculinities. Meaningfully establishing masculinities disconnected from neoliberal considerations of productivity could also break some of the limitations of masculinity, allowing gender expressions that could effectively challenge the norms that define the contemporary gender order.

Chapter Six

Being Realistic:

Norms, Their Boundaries, and the University

Joel: *"...[it was] a relatively recent epiphany to me when I was thinking about where I was going to go at the start of this year. I looked back and I was like "I did do history all [throughout high school]", and I asked myself why I did that? ...because I was very interested in it."*

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Introduction

Mark Fisher's 2009 book *Capitalist Realism: Is there no alternative?* describes and analyses the contemporary neoliberal age in terms of a "pervasive atmosphere, conditioning not only the production of culture but also the regulation of work and education, and acting as a kind of invisible barrier constraining thought and action" (Fisher, 2009, p. 16). Fisher describes how what is determined as 'real' depends on ideological perspectives being widely accepted as unquestionable facts by society (Fisher, 2009). Because of this, what is considered achievable and normal with regards to behaviours, goals, or attitudes are separated and contained by a perspective of what is 'real'. In contrast, hopes to move away from the norms of such a system become cast as 'unreal' or 'impossible'. Both processes necessitate not only an elevated and empowered position of neoliberal ideals, but an interlocking connection from and with other systems of knowledge to help naturalise the 'real' put forward by neoliberalism (Fisher, 2009). In this way, creating and reinforcing barriers between what can and cannot be.

The idea of neoliberalism-as-a-barrier caused me to reflect on the restrictive nature of masculinity and how masculinity both works to 'naturalise' capitalist realism and place its own limits of acceptability and its own 'reality' upon men. In one sense, there are some clear restrictions on how men should act and what roles they should perform which is well established and explored. Connell's (2005) masculine hierarchy expresses the obvious barriers quite thoroughly, including, for example, the importance of creating a conscious and active distance from femininity. However, the negotiation of these realities, namely, the masculine and the neoliberal, become interesting exemplary points towards the tensions, transformations, and limits of what men believe they can do, both in their educational choices and their career trajectories. As such, this chapter explores the boundaries of masculinity and neoliberalism in participants' lives and how those boundaries are perceived, understood, and resisted. Firstly, I seek to locate the boundaries set by norms in participants' lives based on how they choose to navigate their higher education and plan their future careers. Next, I highlight how these boundaries are fundamentally constraining participants' education and career choices through illustrations of what is 'realistic' for them. Following this, I detail how participants express feelings of anxiety related to how they feel they must act to fulfil normative gendered and employment expectations. Finally, I consider participants' accounts as representative of either an active or desired breaking of the boundaries enforced by ideals of masculinity and neoliberalised expectations on the self. Altogether, through illustrating how norms create boundaries in participants' lives, I demonstrate how men's experiences of higher education are subject to definitions of 'reality' drawn from financialised and gendered standards.

Finding the Boundaries

Boundaries can be considered from the perspective of norms that specifically impact behaviour. This means that boundaries are relatively adaptable to specific pressures—in a sense they can hybridise—but that they nonetheless retain and reinforce the existing 'facts' regarding what is or is not 'real'. In thinking about norms as boundaries, it is important to reiterate previously discussed intersections of masculinity and the neoliberal self, as men are often in a position to best utilise or benefit from these interactions (Connell, 2005; Griffin, 2012). For example, normative ideas of 'self-directed, controlled, and competitive workers' supports masculine ideals of men being in charge, in control, and competitive in-and-out of their daily lives (Phoenix, 2004; Van Campenhout & Van Hoven, 2014). In the case of

'stereotypical' Aotearoa New Zealand men, the idea of capable ingeniousness with regards to practical problem-solving fits nicely as a complement to the idea of flexible capable employees (Cox, 2016). Neoliberal norms can work in tandem with masculinity whereby masculinity not only supports neoliberal ideals of the self, but neoliberal ideals of the self also support the dominant form of masculinity. Considering this more widely, existing research suggests idealised neoliberal workers and working conditions provide more opportunity for success to someone with normative masculine traits in the western context (see Phoenix, 2004; Griffin, 2012; Salzinger, 2016). These ideal masculine and neoliberal traits are indicative of the 'boundaries' of acceptable economic pursuits based on their ability to maximise their alignment towards achieving these states of 'idealness'.

The boundaries of masculinity can exist in many forms. One example is the hegemonic construction of men's bodies. Men's bodies are an "indicator of a whole range of lifestyle and identity choices" (Gill et al., 2005, p. 60), with dominant ideals around muscular and well-groomed bodies representing a man's exemplification of hegemonic masculinity (Gill et al, 2005). In short, having and keeping a strong body is a straightforward way to reinforce and replicate ideals of masculinity. There is a contemporary focus by men on specific practices of care and self-expression of their bodies which transgresses a gender norm discouraging overt interest in their own appearance (Gill et al., 2005). Traditionally, men's bodies are expected to be presented in relatively narrow and specific ways, like practical strength relating to or representing physical labour. Therefore, doing body work or using self-care associated with women or femininity breaks this gendered norm, as men are practicing bodily care beyond previous expectations of bodily management. For men who aim to stay within the boundaries, there is a need to be both aware of the boundaries to bodily use and representation and have strategies to navigate them to retain their identities as men (Gill et al., 2005).

The navigation of the boundaries around bodily representation by men can be done in several ways. Gill et al. (2005) for example, illustrated that one tactic involves emphasising the health benefits of body work over simple aesthetic appeal. Their participant group actively foregrounded the health benefits of keeping a strong masculine idealised body, thereby distancing themselves from doing body work for 'vain' reasons. Other ways involve leaning on similar conceptual roots as the 'self-care for health' perception, namely that self-care is primarily being done by men to get the most out of their bodies (regardless of whether this is actually the case). For example, working out at a gym serves to improve cardio-vascular condition or muscle tone, which consequently indicates bodily capabilities, rather than maintaining a particular appearance. Justification for self-care and body work also includes

approaches that emphasised values of autonomy, self-control, and self-reliance in relation to the body, all of which can be used to reclassify men's bodily self-interest, and thus re-adjust corporeal boundaries in their favour. These practices reflect the "pervasive individualism of young men's discourses" (Gill et al., 2005, p. 38). Such individual-oriented practices designed to address masculine corporeal boundaries have clear connections to individualised neoliberal values like personal control and self-investment.

Neoliberal norms of self-making and what constitutes a 'good worker' can also shape normative boundaries of masculinity. There is an expectation that workers are totally committed to their employers and are flexible and available enough to maximise profitability (Stringer et al., 2018). Those wanting to fulfil the role of a 'good worker' are encouraged to fit themselves to, and operate within, bounded ideas of what it means to be a good employee in order to be successful. By extension, this narrow range of expected behaviour to be a 'good worker' carries with it the wider neoliberal values discussed throughout this thesis, like self-responsibility and -control. This means that good workers are expected to have the ability to manage and conduct themselves in a way that maximises personal returns within the context of their employment. Such behaviours are subsumed within larger neoliberal employment narratives as the expectation is that self-responsible employees act in ways that support the profit seeking of their employer, and that as they generate profit for themselves they are also generating profit for their employer (Gahman, 2018; Vanke, 2018).

Contradictions between neoliberalism and normative masculinity have been discussed internationally and offer a glimpse of the boundary lines of normatively acceptable behaviour. For example, physical labour that is often associated with masculinity affirms the bodily strength and capability expected of men. But in the contemporary era, it fails to offer the financial compensation necessary to support dependants or grant the wide or flexible skill set to successfully manipulate market opportunities (Salzinger, 2016). In this case, the boundary of men using their bodies for traditional labour (like labour work in the trades) guides some men to pursue work that does not allow for the development of market-adaptable skills and employment flexibility expected of a neoliberalised worker.

Boundaries for each individual intersect with the societal, economic, and ethnic contexts of their given circumstances. These characteristics define how men position themselves as inside or outside both neoliberal and masculine boundaries and how they navigate their way through these boundaries. For example, those with higher socio-economic status and social privilege often have an easier time navigating the crossroads of neoliberal

ideals and masculinity (Burke, 2011; Elliott, 2019). This is because more privileged men have more resources to be able to successfully position their actions within both neoliberal and masculine ideas. Moreover, white men may more easily reach positions of power in business because of lack of discrimination (Williams, 2013), which complements both their masculinity (as authoritative figures) and perception as 'good workers' (through commitment to their work). To this end, a mindful attention to my participants' personal circumstances is a crucial aid in determining the location and impact of normative boundaries on their lives. For example, as all the participants are white, existing research suggests that they have access to historical examples of white men's dominance in the academy to justify their educational choices within masculine or neoliberal ideals more easily than those of other ethnicities.

Neoliberal discourses suggest the location of boundaries with regards to employment and education. As discussed in chapter four, participants' responses indicated a saturation of neoliberalised language in discussing their university education. This language is most typified with the previously mentioned construction in neoliberalised higher education of 'having' degrees versus 'being learners' (Molesworth et al., 2009). For example, participants often spoke about their degrees using economic idioms. Words like value or investment were often drawn upon to express the significance they placed on their degree. But this language also often also sat alongside individual-focussed concepts, such as self-control and -reliance. These discursive repertoires reflect a neoliberal agenda that underlines the economic utility of a degree:

> **Joel:** *"I saw a value for myself to pursue a BA because it was something I was interested in, I wanted to do and I also I see a value of it for society as a whole…"*
>
> *[later in our conversation]*
>
> **Joel**: *"…so now I feel like I can build on my own future so I can then, depending on where I feel like I want to study, I could go into like Treaty [of Waitangi] history or into like New Zealand history or New Zealand Wars, or… like, I feel in control of my own future is what I'm saying."*

Joel's centring of himself exemplifies the type of neoliberal expectations of education students hold. By using words like 'value' and 'control' he is indicating towards a wider financialised discourse and placing himself within it, as well as projecting the outcomes he expects to receive from pursuing this education. Joel's use of this type of language shows the type of

boundaries that neoliberal ideals produce as the way Joel chooses to describe his future fits within, and resonates with, the neoliberal 'purpose' of education.

Neoliberal and masculine norms also interact in participants' accounts, providing ideals which support the creation of bounds that reflect the ideals of both gender and the economy. Similar to Joel, Adam and Dean expressed familiar types of normatively neoliberal framing with regards to their education:

> *Adam: "…I don't think a BA is going to give me a career in any sense, let alone a job. I think that's quite obvious, I think it's becoming more predominant for a lot of BA's [and] even BSc's. … if it was more valuable then like maybe our degrees would actually show that in the future."*

> ————

> *Dean: "Well, I think one of the things is, in my experience, a lot of men tend to be quite pragmatic when it comes to their careers. They want something that's definitely going to bring in some money, something they can work with, something they can save and build a future off of, and, I don't think a lot of men feel secure financially in taking an arts path. Because, as you probably know, it's not the financially wisest choice, you know, there are no multi-million dollar anthropologists out there unfortunately…"*

In addition to the shared discursive language between participants, these comments also show that they are dealing with comparable kinds of normative boundaries. Joel's search for a meaningful future where he is 'in control', Adam's assessment of the value of his path, and Dean's identification of the pragmatism of particular paths all fit within an understanding of the norms of both neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinity as prompting specific behaviours and attitudes. Put another way, both neoliberal and masculine ideals over what is 'realistic' regarding employment shapes the ways they are planning and pursuing their futures. These comments reflect a fundamental boundary creation where educational choices that are construed within norms are able to produce a value and project a future, whereas educational options that cannot be seen within norms do not. In Adam's case specifically, simply ending education at a bachelor's degree produces nothing—it's out of bounds—so his education must necessarily continue beyond undergraduate studies. In this way, normative ideals are functionally containing participants' engagement with education, shaping it in a fashion

which replicates and reinforces existing gendered and economic forces.

Boundaries as Containing

This thesis has so far revealed more than a few hints of Fisher's (2009) "pervasive atmosphere" of capitalist realism existing alongside, and interacting with, the normative pressures of hegemonic masculinity. In this section, I draw on specific instances from the conversations with participants where the boundaries of masculinity and neoliberalism seem to clearly impact their lives in a restrictive manner. As both hegemonic masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand (Morin et al., 2001) and neoliberalism (Burke, 2007) value self-control and self-determination it was common to see these ideas appear in participant interviews. In the following, Michael articulates this with regards to talking to others about his choice to leave IT to study an arts degree majoring in psychology:

> *Michael: "I think that it's more like, for me, a personal development. So, anyone who's said to me—these people don't know me well—or perhaps even [those at my work] who've said "oh why are you doing a BA? What's that going to get you?" and I generally say to them: "Oh, I'm doing it for personal reasons." Like, "it's what I want to do, I think that it's going to help me in my personal life, it doesn't have to be the professional side of things" and they mostly seem satisfied with that."*

Here Michael is acknowledging the apparently unusual choice he made to leave his personal career and refashioning it into a matter of personal development. He illustrates his awareness of normative expectations of long-term job stability, yet still decides to leave his previous career and follow an arts degree path. But he chooses a specific line of reasoning which repositions his choice within more acceptable social boundaries. Specifically, in this case, choosing to emphasise the 'personal development' angle, despite his self-described non-professionalism, still operates within a normative 'safe' boundary for both a neoliberalised and normatively masculine person. This is because his personal development is, and can be, in service to his end-goal career in mental health which means his degree can be understood as a market-reactive decision to achieve financial stability. Therefore, this personal decision ultimately is reflective of a 'realistic' option contained within norms beyond his choice.

Arts degrees also illustrate masculine and economic boundaries through their socially perceived disconnection from valued productive work. In contrast to Michael, Dean describes arts degrees as non-conforming to a broad range of both masculine and neoliberal ideals through association with 'frivolous' activities:

> *Dean*: *"...if you compare the words, because there's a lot of power in language and the word 'science' holds a lot of weight, it's an intellectual endeavour and there's a lot of you know, everything is science now. We've got all this technology and all this and all that. Whereas you look at the humanities sciences which is obviously what I'm studying, the humanities, obviously there's a scientific aspect of them but they're called 'arts' topics. Which is silly. Now, I believe they're called arts topics because you can't really- you know, if you're studying anthropology you can't take a culture into a lab and dissect them. But, yeah, because it's called an arts degree, people hear the word 'arts', and they associate that with dancing and music and those types of career paths. They don't really associate it with a scientific endeavour."*

Dean's description here aligns his viewpoint—or at least his understanding of the 'common sense' viewpoint—with the idea that 'science' is productive and objectively valuable while the creative arts only allow for subjective expression. Dean was knowingly placing his chosen education path outside the normative route, but still emphasised its potential to be refashioned back into the normal expectations of employment (note the endorsement of dance and music education as relating to 'career paths'). In this way, Dean illustrates his critical acceptance of the social environment he finds himself within and actively draws the boundaries of how an arts degree can be utilised for production.

The ability for normative boundaries to restrict what participants perceive as possible for their education displays how all-encompassing gendered and financial norms are. Dean's and Michael's accounts are also both illustrative of the deeply marketized education environment which is dominant here in Aotearoa New Zealand (Roper, 2018; Rowe-Williams, 2018) and internationally. More directly, they show that there is a tendency to position higher education as something to be acquired for personal development and gain. Michael's discursive defence of his education choice alongside Dean's categorisation of arts as not directly productive mirrors how, in a totally neoliberalised environment, higher education occupies a place of specific career tuning and becomes a reflection of the demands of the private sector for skilled labour (Holborow, 2012). To this end, the pressure of employability

alongside a normative masculine pressure for secure employment creates an interlocking ideological barrier where participants can place themselves on the productive 'right side' of this boundary through expressions, life plans, and actions.

How participants positioned themselves against social ideals provided another way to view them as confined within normative attitudes. Participants managed and rationalised their chosen paths through comparative statements toward the norms of masculinity they perceived in their lives. I made a point of asking each participant what they felt a 'stereotypical Kiwi bloke' was and what they thought about the 'reality' of the image they created. This overtly placed ideals of masculinity within our discussion, from which they could directly connect to what was or was not masculine, explicitly placing boundaries of normative behaviour as they saw them. While none of the participants constructed a distinctly negative image of normative masculinity, they did seem to construct the normative mode as exterior to themselves. Collectively, their stereotypical masculinity appeared to be a contemporary echo of the *Speights* advertising icon: beer-drinking, stoic, rugby-loving, dryly comic, confident outdoorsy types. Kyle's description was particularly exemplary of this construct:

> **Cameron**: *"as someone from outside of New Zealand what do you think about— do you detect like a stereotypical kiwi man?"*
>
> **Kyle**: *"Oh yeah, there is of course, but I mean... it's seen, it's around it's clearly there, however it's still a stereotype, right? ... There's obviously many many different versions of Kiwi men and if you wanted to you could stereotype all of them, but there's this long living kind of Fred Dagg ... kind of character, right? And you know, [he] loves rugby, like, loves a, ah,* Speights *or a* Double Brown *or whatever the local drop is of the region... bit of a manly man, a farmer kind of thing. Can fix anything, doesn't need to call a professional or a tradie— that kind of thing, you know? Drives a 4x4, has a dog that he calls dog." [laughs]*

As Kyle shows, within each of these associations with their perceived stereotypical masculinity the apparent boundaries of what is or is not normal comes into focus.

One such ideal these boundaries create for men is that of physical action. In the characteristics of typical men, participants articulated that there was a specific connection between masculinity and active use of their bodies for labour. Among the participants, Taylor quite explicitly naturalises the body-labour connection when discussing his hospitality work:

> *Taylor:* "*...it's very very prevalent, like, in all forms of work, because I work [in hospitality] and I move things all the time, I lift heavy things, I do all this stuff and everything, but if a girl has to do something that's a little bit strenuous it's expected that I go and I help. So, it's always kind of expected that we have to look after. And I think it's because it again comes back the biology thing of: we're biologically stronger at a basal point. Obviously if I don't exercise and a woman exercises then obviously you know... but at a basal point, biologically I'm going to be bigger and I'm going to be stronger that's just the way it is. So, I think that there's still this idea of you're the protector you're the person that goes out there and does stuff... and if you mess up other people are going to suffer for it.*"

Taylor presents a very traditional and essentialist construction of what he is 'expected' to do, even in a hospitality job which may not explicitly present itself as physically demanding. Taylor's assertion of this expectation echoes the normative deference and idealising of men capable of fulfilling the physical demands of home maintenance in Aotearoa New Zealand (Cox, 2016). His assessment of this fundamental difference to his women co-workers illustrates the way he is working through, and within, gendered norms which both guide and contain how he *should* act—a 'should' that is guided and suggested by factors beyond the scope of his job role.

Dominant ideals around men's work also place intellectual pursuits as close to a boundary of acceptable behaviour. Like Taylor, Joel also articulated a connection between men's bodies and work. Although in our conversation he doubted that the stereotypes he was drawing on had much substance in the contemporary era, he described Aotearoa New Zealand men as:

> *Joel:* "*...I feel like there is probably more of a male brand recognition of eschewing high academia, in favour of down to earth, practical tradesman-type farming, that sort of thing...*"

This type of description not only parallels existing scholarly understandings of masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand, but specifically illustrates how Joel sees these norms are supporting particular roles for men. Regardless of how frequently men actually can and do work in trades or physical jobs, Joel, in describing what is most normative, helps to construct what is or is not directly constitutive of a specifically masculine mode of employment. Specifically, by recognising a 'brand' of men's behaviour, he indicates toward what work is most acceptable

(trades) versus less acceptable (high academia). This framing does not rule out "high academic" employment options for men but does indicate that there are men pursuing such careers are held as unusual.

The boundaries created by economic and gendered norms were often only visible to participants after they realised they were being contained by them. Participants were either retroactively moving boundaries to illustrate their own histories as within norms or reflecting on moments where their current educational pursuits fell outside of the boundaries of a 'real' career. In this case, 'real' meant normatively masculine and reflective of neoliberalised labour market ideals. Joel also illustrated this in his reflection on his school days:

> **Joel:** "...[it was] a relatively recent epiphany to me when I was thinking about stuff- where I was going to go at the start of this year. I looked back and I was like "I did do history all [throughout high school]", and I asked myself why I did that... because I was very interested in it. And at the time it didn't seem like anything, because yeah, when you're a, I was, just a teenager, so I didn't see a future in that. It was just something. It was just an elective sort of thing..."

Post-secondary school, Joel qualified in IT, a field where men make up the population majority (Dickson, 2010; MYOB, 2019). Within Joel's imagination he was only able to see his potential future in history *after* moving through a field he was pressured into by normative expectation. He was effectively channelled into his previous careers by boundaries which defined what was the best job for him. After realising that his IT career left him feeling unfulfilled, he was able to see how he had been affected by normalising pressures and then made a choice to seek a more fulfilling job.

Tangential frameworks of understanding, like those drawn from biology or traditional 'men's work', reinforce the boundaries created by norms. From the above quotes, Taylor specifically deploys a biological reasoning to support his role in employment and Joel points to never being able to see history as a realistic career due to existing precedence regarding men's bodies and employment. In this way, neoliberal and dominant masculine norms do not contain participants with their ideals alone, they can instead rely on perspectives found in the physical sciences, history, or other frameworks to reify and naturalise the boundaries that are created. For participants, this means that the normalising pressure to follow educations within normative boundaries can appear to have deep ideological underpinnings from a wide base of perspectives that make positioning themselves within dominant ideals the 'best' way to go for

success. Furthermore, attempts to find success outside of the boundaries placed by these norms do not as easily connect to, or even run counter to, the wider ideological rationalisation of why normative goals of stability and success are preferable, making such choices that much more difficult to justify and achieve. Essentially, that which is non-normative lacks the wider ideological baggage to support such a decision, meaning the risk of a career outside of the norm is amplified for its lack of precedence.

As my participants' accounts show, there is a recognition and ability to react to the expectations of neoliberal self-making and hegemonic masculinities. These norms create boundaries of behaviour which contain the participants, which they try to place themselves within when talking about their education and career choice. But this type of positioning, and the reaction to these expectations, is a conscious process that can, at times, present personal strain as they balance the expectations of economy and gender.

Anxiety Within Boundaries

A major anxiety expressed by several of the participants, and as a result a driving force behind their education, was the concern over being "official", "certified", or "qualified". To them, being official meant having a degree or qualification which would secure their position in their employment. It was expressed not only as a desire to get a degree to stave off insecurity, but also as a kind of affirmation of their ability to be in their chosen profession. This section positions this seeking of 'official' qualification within the boundaries presented by hegemonic masculinities and neoliberal self-making and illustrates how this position creates anxiety for participants.

The participants' concerns over being official rested on the idea that their education path was more-or-less mandatory to achieve the life goals they had for themselves. These concerns were seen most clearly in Michael and Kyle who are in their thirties and had no previous tertiary-level education. For Kyle, the concern was about reaching the limits of this career trajectory without having a degree:

> **Kyle:** *"...and there's only so far you can go with that without getting into management and stuff, but I'm not really interested- I fancied a bit of a change. It was getting to the point where I'd probably have to get qualified- or a qualification specialised in this area if I wanted, you know, the security and*

> *all that that comes with a family I guess. So, I decided just to do something*
> *completely different and do something that I always wanted to do…"*

This comment again highlights the need to seek security and manage risk that I explored in chapter four, but it also echoes quite strongly with Michael's outlook on why he was seeking higher education:

> **Michael:** *"although I've always had a pressure within myself to be 'qualified'*
> *in something. I think that, when you talk about pressure, yeah that's the one*
> *thing that I have always felt: pressure. I always felt uneasy in my job, because*
> *I didn't have any qualification. I think I always said I want to go and do some*
> *IT papers so that I've got a qualification. … I always felt even though I was*
> *secure in that, the job that I had, I felt secure because I was getting money. I*
> *felt insecure because if I lost that job, I felt I wouldn't be able to get another*
> *one, because I didn't have the qualification.*

Unlike Kyle's concern of hitting limits, Michael's concern clearly stems more from a feeling of precarity through feeling unqualified in a field where qualification is expected. In both cases though, they are seemingly uncomfortable with occupying a role which might threaten their ability to remain stable and secure, which is important to achieving socially ideal modes of masculinity and self-controlled neoliberalised success. Both participants have a career in mind which places them within masculine boundaries of economic stability, but they have a sense of anxiety over their ability to remain in this position in future, stemming from their lack of a university qualification to immediately justify their expectation of financial stability.

Seeking a qualification is used by participants to secure their social positions and create a kind of comfort within the expectations of masculinity and neoliberal self-making. Considering Kyle's and Michael's accounts in totality along with the concern over 'being qualified' from another direction, the need to seek an official qualification acts as a channel keeping men from crossing or breaking acceptable boundaries—or at least obfuscating paths extraneous to self-fulfilment through a categorisation of 'instability' or unnecessary risk. Fisher (2009) argues that "the lack of any meaningful employment opportunities, together with cynical encouragement from government means that college seems to be the easier safer option" (p. 26). For Kyle and Michael, the nature of 'meaningful' seems to be the critical pivot-point as they both seemed to have 'good' employment, but they felt it did not resonate with their personal desires. When thinking of options of where to go for this meaning, the 'easier and safer' path was one of 'officialization' through university with all the meaning, pressure,

and expectation that comes through that choice. Moreover, 'qualification' acts as a normalising force in participants' lives with the assumption of its achievement allowing them to more easily align themselves with the masculine and neoliberal boundaries they perceive.

The need to seek higher qualifications to resolve anxiety over positions does not only emerge from previous employment history. For Taylor and Adam, both in their early twenties, this pressure to keep oneself within the normal boundaries and to become "official" also emerges from their families. It is not surprising to see this type of concern over future stability expressed by parents, but nonetheless it illustrates a kind of encompassing need to not stray too far from normative pressures. Furthermore, the judgement of family members is also a source of anxiety that motivates participants' behaviour. For Taylor the need to stay within the norm was articulated as "having a base":

> **Taylor:** *"...my long-term goal has always been to- because I've been writing since I was like seven, and I'm [in my early twenties] now so I've always wanted to make money off my writing, and my parents were like "okay, alright, that's fine, but we want you to have a base." So I went around to see what fit me as a base, and science was my first stop because I did well in like chemistry and stuff like that in high school, but when I came to university it just didn't connect so then I went "okay, alright, I've got to change." So, then I picked something else that I enjoy and psychology was [that] thing."*

Taylor's concept of a 'base' appears to come from a desire to reify a core of productivity from which he can live a stable and secure life. Whatever he does at university needs to have a positive return on investment in order for his education to be worthwhile. Despite Taylor's desire to pursue creative writing, something that he emphasised as a passion throughout our conversation, he could not find a way to engage in it in a way that would guarantee the good returns he was expected to find. Resolving this need to create a stable and secure life for himself played a significant role in his degree selection and resulted in him experiencing struggle and academic difficulty from a lack of success in his first choice of degree. Taylor's parents created a need for him to find success within the boundaries defined by neoliberal and masculine considerations of profit and success. However, pursuing the most direct path (as he saw it) in physical sciences resulted in academic difficulties, meaning that he had to find a way to make his higher education work that did not stray beyond normative expectations. In this way he could resolve his parents' expectation of him having a 'base', remain within normative

boundaries for his future career, and find satisfaction in his personal agency over his educational path.

The way masculinity's and neoliberalism's boundaries create normative ideals fundamentally excludes career routes that are outside of, or disconnected from, replicating these ideals. For Adam, the concern of his education was over how his family understood his personality and its relation to his psychology study. Their support came with a noted element of caution over his future, which resulted in a need to manage the image and potential of his study outcomes:

> *Cameron: "…if you don't mind sharing, what did your family or whānau think of your decision to enter university and specifically on this path that you're on?"*

> *Adam: "um, they were quite… mixed. Mixed really, yeah. They were happy that I was going to uni, because at that point I wasn't really sure where I was gonna go or what I was going to do for a career… um, I was basically tossing up between uni or joining the army kind of thing and I wasn't really in a particularly good place at the time so they were happy in the sense that I was committed to something that would be beneficial, but they were also worried in the sense that there's a lot of responsibility. Especially with you know, the amount of loans and stuff that you have to take out to do it and then there's also the fact that me just doing a BA won't guarantee me the kind of career— like I know I'm going to have to do a masters after my BA…"*

> *Cameron: "that's where I am." <laughs>*

> *Adam: "yup, yeah, they—so the response was mixed. The support was there I mean you know, it helped me … my dad was quite supportive he thought I'd be quite good at it. My mum didn't really—still doesn't really have a great concept of what psychology is, or what the outcome of it is in terms of career prospects. I'm quite introverted and she seems to think that you know you have to be very extroverted and very good at communicating with people to be a psychologist."*

As with Kyle and Michael, there is a guiding effect that, from a variety of angles, means participants are being encouraged down a particular path to find a level of norm-defined success. But with Taylor and Adam the question of their economic stability in the future is a

currently open question compared to the older participants. To this extent the options on what is 'realistic' for them going forward may become even more constricted and therefore tied to normative pressures and paths. Michael himself said that he had no real concerns about re-acquiring a job in IT should his current path not conclude well, whereas Adam's concern over both responsibilities and his pessimism about job prospects from a Bachelor of Arts alone indicate a different, more controlled, relationship to the norms containing him. Moreover, Where Michael is more assured in his ability to return to a normatively successful path in IT, Adam and the other participants in their twenties are faced with an anxiety stemming from having no existing qualifications and experience to quickly reach idealised goals of financial stability and success.

Personal educational and employment expectations are revealed to be deeply interconnected. For participants, the question of 'what is my real job?' becomes an inquiry positioned, pulled, and distorted by their experiences, goals, and inspirations that are nonetheless embedded within both masculine and neoliberal realities. Underpinning the explanations participants give of their ideal future careers is a concern over their 'employability'. This employability aspect connects to the 'qualified' concern for participants as an education's employability and resulting 'good job' becomes the ultimate reason for seeking qualification in the first place. As Burke (2011) explained, "[t]he hegemonic discourse of 'employability' places an expectation on individuals to ensure that their skills are up-to-date to meet the needs of increasingly unstable and highly competitive employment markets" (p. 173). Employability is another source of anxiety regarding the possibilities of my participants' education and future. Such concerns over 'responsibility' have already been discussed, reflected in Adam's and Taylor's comments above, but in each of the participants, 'employability' takes a particular form that alters and changes a future potential career from a 'real' one to an 'unreal' one.

The split between 'real' and 'unreal' career paths is more obvious in some educational options than others. For example, Dean rationalises the possibilities around his future employment through the lens of luck. From Dean's perspective, an educational route that does not have a clear connection to wider social or economic utility requires random chance—luck—in order to reveal that utility. Specifically, with regards to anthropology he does not necessarily see a direct path from an anthropology degree into a 'real' career:

> **Dean:** *"...Absolutely, and then some of their other friends are always like "you have to have your lucky break, you're never going to get it." It's a very*

> *pessimistic attitude when it comes to the Arts, because there's this whole idea that you need a 'lucky break', and it's not just in the dramatic arts as well. If you want to be an anthropologist but you want to be successful, you have to get your lucky break. You have to get your break where this community accepts you and lets you come in and study them and then you can write your research. And then you have to get your lucky break where it will be published, and then you're a real anthropologist or something like that. Um, so, I feel there's like a social pessimism around the financial aspect mainly. The career path of an arts degree. Whereas, you know, you do a science degree and everyone's looking for scientists. You know, if you're studying computer engineering you will get a job it is a fact, because every business needs a computer engineer."*

Compare this with his construction of his own psychology-based ideal career trajectory:

> **Dean:** *"So, I want to go into postgrad master's in clinical psychology after this, and then I want to do criminal psychology as my PhD, and I want to work in a prison setting helping people who find themselves getting them into the cycle of, you know, they go to prison, they get out, they go back to prison, they get out, they go back. So, I want to help those people find systems and implement ways of helping them figure out what's going wrong in their lives and fix that. And also deal with those who have mental health issues in prison as well. So that's what I want to do..."*

Granted, Dean's opinion here may reflect an unfamiliarity with the potential options available to anthropology graduates, but nonetheless these two excerpts illustrate the reality/unreality or employable/unemployable paradigm that controls how participants see what is available to them in the future. It is 'easier and safer' to construct a more normatively ideal career path when drawing on both examples and language provided by the norms that they are contained within. Psychology seems to occupy a mental space that is easier to construct a 'safe' through-line of employability and becomes more tangible because of this career-based connection. Finally, psychology also has the familiar link to a type of utility, a characteristic valued by masculinity, where one is using specific skills to 'fix' others, especially in Dean's above remarks. As a result, when faced with choices over careers, the educational path that is most direct to success turns into an effective way to reduce any anxiety over the unknown variables present in choosing a non-normative path.

'Employability' then becomes a form of adjudicator with regards to choosing and guiding oneself through education and mediation of one's goals. Hence employability operates as a barrier which guides participants towards a career position that is aligned with normative expectations on where they *can* go within the passions and interests they've developed throughout their lives. However, there are certain financial realities which also incentivise careful and 'safe' decisions with regards to what could be a 'real' career. There are undoubtably employment paths that may be less financially stable than others, but regardless of these financial considerations, the normative expectations of masculinity and neoliberalism have an impact on what participants understand as possible with regards to where their education-related passions take them.

Anxiety, as participants illustrate, often emerges from a concern over the future. It results in a need to stay within boundaries and be content in the economic and gendered norms they find themselves within. Functionally, it necessitates men balancing and strategizing to keep anxieties around precarity and insecurity at bay, despite their career paths often being a source of concern. However, in this strategizing, opportunities can emerge which allow them to find a more comfortable position in relation to the pressures upon them.

Beyond Boundaries

The boundaries of acceptable and ideal career trajectories are not, however, consistently invisible to participants. Most of them are able to articulate issues they have with the way their education has been going, or the ways that they feel that something is 'not quite right' and grates against their experience of university. Some are more explicit than others in the issues they perceive, but they all detect some systemic feature of society impacting their higher education choices. Participants' expressions which detail the perceived systemic failures around them can be seen, in the context of boundaries, as an active resistance to the normative pressures which contain them.

Participants' issues with norms are typically more explicitly about the pressures of the neoliberal university than the pressures of masculinity. They more directly problematise the over-financialisation of their education environment compared to the more indirect discussion about masculinities. For example, Joel takes issue with the 'gamification' of one of his history courses:

> *Joel*: *"Yeah, so, they've gamified [the course] quite a bit. It's not the same as my other [courses]. … you get these [digital] badges. … The first paper being one that's a media paper— so it's history through media, miniseries, and games and that, and seeing that they've gamified it [in the online course materials] and they are using new technology it speaks to me of… trying to 'sell' history to a younger audience. And so I see a lot of neoliberal pressure in that to become a profitable venture… to like hold on to some space within the university- and that is something that worries me… I think that presenting history as something to be questioned and analysed on its own merits and on its own grounds would serve better to retain historians. Those who are like passionate about what history means in its broader social context, than giving away like, badges and things…"*

Joel's critique of the form of this particular course indicates the kind of resistance participants are able to express with regards to the overt appearance of normalising pressure to remain within neoliberal boundaries. Clearly, his comments about wanting history to stand upon its own merits extend from his belief in the inherent place history can have, without the need to rework the field to make it "attractive" in a neoliberal university marketplace. He can see his field of study as existing beyond the boundaries of a marketized skill set, even if he does not immediately indicate a path regarding how to get history to stand outside of existing financialised notions.

The market-focussed connotations of higher education relate to a set of neoliberal norms that are easily engaged with for participants. As with Joel, Michael and Taylor have also formed critical and pragmatic attitudes about the neoliberalisation of their education environment. Taylor, with his dreams of becoming a writer and goals of helping children become better engaged in learning, wishes that education could adopt a more elegant form:

> *Taylor:* *"like there's this idea that education equals job. Nothing else. I like, obviously I want to get money from my career, obviously I don't want to end up on the side of the street and be like "well I have a degree!" but… I mean… your motivation for going and learning something can't be money. … It's insane because if you want to go and 'invest' in your future, people's immediate thought is "oh money. I want to invest to make sure that I have money." But then you're putting pressure on yourself because then you're like "if I don't get this, I don't have money, therefore I'm going to end up here."*

> *And that's... that's ridiculous ... It's not 'you're going to high school so you can learn.' that flew out the window like thirty years ago. That's no longer what high school's about. High school's about getting to university so that you can get money, so that you can have a better future for yourself. It should be "I'm going to high school so that I can learn. I'm going to university so that once I come out, I know things and I know how the world works, and I know how people work, or I know how this thing works, or whatever. And I think, I think it get summed up in like- the one of the things my dad said to me was like "you need to finish university being worth something to the world." So it was—again this perception of—once you finish university you need to be able to contribute something that will get you money or else it's not going to work. And it's like that... that shouldn't be my motivation... for spending all this time. I should not be sitting here going "well at least in... eight years I'm going to be rich." That should not be the motivation."*

> *Cameron: "yeah."*

> *Taylor: Education and knowledge should be there for this reason of: you have education and knowledge, and therefore— yeah you can better the world, you can better people... but I just think, I just think it's it feels very fake to me to— "I'm going to better people as long as I get money in return."*

Taylor's impassioned desire for an education for education's sake seemed to form a driving element of his goals for and from university. He sees and is reacting to the over-economisation of his environment and hopes for an eventual step away from the flaws that he is articulating. However, within his comments the underlying structure of capitalist realism endures as the threat of "ending up on the side of the street" remains a looming warning for him to plan his moves carefully and ideally within the boundaries imposed upon him for success.

The neoliberal university's obviousness with regard to the financialisation of its educational offerings invites a practical rationalisation of how to engage with the university as an institution. Compared to Taylor, Michael has a more pragmatic understanding of the economisation of his learning environment. He recognises the pressures and uses it as a source of energy for his studies:

> *Michael: I think from a personal point, like I, I use it as a little bit of motivation, that "I am paying for this, I should make the most of it." ... Um,*

and the money thing makes me think about the quality of the learning that I'm getting, so if I'm not enjoying—if I don't yeah—if some of my classes I'm thinking that the lecturer is not giving their all, I'm thinking "hang on, I'm paying for this." I definitely, ah, feel a little bit of that, and I'm also learning that it's more about how much you put in yourself, you know, all the self-learning that is expected of you. Ah yeah, the lecturer is not going to do everything for you.

This comment in particular resonates with the types of consumerist and neoliberalised student approaches to tertiary education commented on by Fisher (2009), Burke (2011), Connell (2019), and others. Michael's attitude illustrates an acceptance of what he believes to be the inherent nature of the system in which he is located. He's conscious of the financial investment expected of him and thus his behaviour, pragmatically, reflects one of a consumer in the act of concurrent purchasing and consumption. While not directly illustrating a reaching beyond boundaries, Michael's approach illustrates how university can be engaged with and compartmentalised in order to reach personal goals, like community-focussed work, in the future.

As part of my interest in broaching the topic of higher education's deep neoliberalisation with participants I asked them about the economisation of their education by posing the following statement and inviting their response: "education is an investment in your future". There was universal agreement with the idea underpinning the phrase, but Dean provided me with some interesting comments:

Dean: "Um... I mean, from my personal perspective I would agree... I'm not sure that everyone else would agree though. For a lot of people, especially for a lot of older people, education is not an economic investment, education is a privilege, um, because they're stuck in this sort of neoliberal mindset where we should all have to pay for it if we really want it and they don't realise, they don't realise the long term benefits of it- a lot of people don't look long term they want to solve the problems that are occurring right now, but they're not willing to look to see how that's going to affect the future. And so, yeah I- a lot of older people, a lot of older people who are politically more right-leaning will probably say that "no, it's more a privilege, it's more of a, um, you choose to do it." Whereas a lot of people on the left see it as more, you know, it's going to benefit society in the in the long term especially if, you know, we get rid of

this neoliberal bullshit and go back to having it better subsidised so that more people go through the education system ... So, yeah I personally would agree with that sentence."

Dean, Taylor, and Michael each illustrate an observation made by Fisher (2009) that "[c]apitalism seamlessly occupies the horizons of the thinkable" (p. 8). But there is nonetheless a deep critical grappling with this occupation from participants, as evident in the hedging and relativistic statements like Dean's here, throughout our conversations. The education environment for participants is so deeply and completely interlinked with a neoliberalised perception of the purpose of university in the contemporary era that it becomes difficult for them to recognise its impact, let alone imagine a way past it, if indeed that is possible.

Moving beyond the normative boundaries set before them seems like a largely idealistic notion to participants. They were unable to provide a connective route to and/or from the place they found themselves in toward end-goals outside of economic and gendered boundaries. The desire for a break from these pressures also appears to largely stem from concern over the way that norms foster behaviours that narrow the expected benefits from pursuits like higher education. Despite being completely embedded within these boundaries however, participants can, and do, hope for some relief from the ways they are compelled to act in their education and imagined futures.

Conclusion

If capitalism is occupying the horizons of the thinkable then, for participants, normative masculinity is helping to make that occupation seem natural. There is a clear interconnection between neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinity with hegemonic masculinity offering a series of narrow practices, traditions, and ideals for men with tangible effects on the ways they are able to conduct and present themselves. In the spaces where masculine and neoliberal ideals intersect, neoliberal self-making gains a connection to tangibility from the ideological space that it exists within. Specifically, neoliberal conceptions of the self and work become connected to masculine ideals of successful labour, allowing a neoliberalised perspective on employment to become embodied by men's seeking of competitive, secure, and successful employment. Neoliberal ideals can become effectively reified through men's achievement and practice of gender normative authority and success.

Neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinities create boundaries of acceptable behaviour, an idea that plays a significant role in the ways participants understand their higher education. Containment by and adaption to the demands of these boundaries create particular types of stresses on men and shapes the ways in which they rationalise both how they have chosen their education and how they imagine their futures. Whether they take their cues about what is normal from their existing work experience or from their parents, they take careful stock of what gendered norms tell them about their education and career trajectories. This can manifest as a pragmatic consumerist stance towards their education or relate to wider narratives of a gendered role they expect to find themselves in. How men interact with gendered and economic norms can overtly or subtly change throughout their lives. The existing norms can work to guide them more quickly into positions that endorse the status quo, like endorsing the profit/productive perception of higher education. Or they can provide the 'evidence' that goals like 'learning for learning's sake' are unrealistic or fantastic aims which are secondary or outright disconnected from the paths that they are on.

Together, if capitalist realism frames the purpose of education as being for personal profit seeking, then hegemonic masculinity helps 'naturalise' the neoliberalised paths that lead to what can be considered 'realistic'. By suggesting what is 'real' or 'unreal' for men to pursue, and centring intersecting ideas like financial stability and security, both of these systems provide a powerful pull to remain bounded within the expected norms. This too might limit what men even perceive as potentially available for them to pursue, as their understanding of what is achievable becomes filtered through a need to maintain and remain connected within the boundaries of what is seen to be 'real'.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

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This thesis emerged from a desire to gain a deeper understanding of myself and my experiences of gender and higher education. This private musing evolved into this research, which brings together the fields of masculinities and neoliberalism to investigate the lives of six self-identified men enrolled in Bachelor of Arts degrees at Massey University, Albany. In particular, it examined the participants' understandings and expressions of masculinity within a neoliberal institution—the university. This concluding chapter describes the key findings of this research, including the nature of masculinity and neoliberalism in the contexts of the university and the overarching tension which emerges between a neoliberalised sense of self and the demands of conforming to masculine ideals. Despite this tension, the interdependent relationship between masculinity and neoliberalism reveals a supportive dynamic for men as they negotiate being masculine in what is ostensibly a feminised space. Neoliberal ideals actively foster a space for men to securely (re)position themselves within the norms of masculinity or, alternatively, masculinise the feminine, when their chosen path lies beyond the bounds of masculine intelligibility.

Moving Masculinities in a Static Sense of 'Real'

My research has shown that masculinities remain organised in a hierarchical structure where an ideal hegemonic mode sets the standard for men's gendered expressions. Men who choose to enter non-normative careers must grapple with the ideals established by the

dominant masculinity in Aotearoa New Zealand in order to make sense of their choices. Participants expressed a desire to pursue their arts degrees because they care about their communities. They wanted to 'fix' society and move beyond employment that left them emotionally unfulfilled. It is well established that the Bachelor of Arts qualification is a feminised qualification in so far as many more women than men are enrolled in the degree (American Academy of Arts and Sciences, 2017; Callister & Newell, 2008). There is also strong evidence to suggest that many arts degrees lead to 'feminised' career paths that involve extensive interpersonal and emotional labour, which is outside normative ideals of men's work. Indeed, the intended career paths of participants (psychology, counselling, and teaching) are normatively understood as 'women's work' due to the central place of such labour.

What became apparent throughout this research, however, was that participants had to manage the gendered connotations of their educational paths and future career; at the very same time as participants sought to locate themselves beyond narrow conceptualisations of masculinity (by enrolling the Bachelor of Arts in the first instance), they reinvoke ideals of masculinity to assure themselves and others of the potential for success in their educational gamble. They did this in a range of ways. For example, when speaking about their future career paths, participants emphasised their concern for fixing society over the necessary interpersonal caring they would have to partake in. This act of emphasising large-scale societal care masculinises their career paths due to the connotations of authority that actioning such care would necessitate. However, in their care-based careers explicit embodiment of hegemonic masculinities would be an impediment to doing their jobs well, so a 'softening' of their gendered expressions allows them to participate in caring labour while nonetheless maintaining a connection to their sense of masculinity. Because of this, participants demonstrated a necessarily mobile and adaptable relationship to the overall ideals of masculinity. These practices effectively hybridised their masculinities in a way that allowed them a secure path into a feminised field while retaining their connection to masculinity. 'Hybridisation' allows men to, consciously or not, understand what gendered performances are appropriate to specific employment contexts and adapt their expressions, discourses, and practices to suit (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014). Through altering their expressions of masculinity, men can balance their personal desire for pursuing their non-normative careers with the expectations to retain a connection to the dominant mode of masculinity. In effect, they successfully straddled the boundaries of the gender order while retaining its hegemony.

It is interesting to note that intersecting social categories, like ethnicity and socioeconomic status, impact the extent to which men are able to alter their expressions of masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Elliott, 2019). Effectively this means that men with more social privilege have more resources to draw on to constitute their identities and adjust their gendered expressions while retaining a connection to idealised expressions of masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe, 2014; Elliott, 2019). Given that only white men took part in this research, the privileges afforded from ethnicity are unknown; ethnicity may directly impact how much men can acceptably change their masculinities and choose non-normative education paths based on existing social ideals. As such, future investigations could explicitly seek a more diverse cohort to investigate to what extent intersecting social factors like ethnicity allow men to alter their expressions of masculinity.

This work extends the scholarship on masculinity and the idea that masculinity has the potential to adapt to new contexts. Existing research on emergent forms of masculinity indicates that novel expressions may be emerging to challenge unequal gendered realities. But this research shows that despite men entering women-majority employment spaces where gender egalitarian attitudes may prevail, there remains overwhelming social pressure to maintain the current gender order. While emergent understandings about masculinities highlight how men can adopt characteristics of femininity to challenge the gendered power structure, this research shows that the traditional purpose of men's employment (to be a provider) emphasises that men position themselves in continuation with the gendered status quo. This emerges as a fundamental desire for economic stability. Masculinised expectations of employment discreetly remind men that they should seek employment that conceptually enables them to fulfil a normative role, even if they are pursuing their careers for 'personal reasons'. This demonstrates how traditional notions of employment are core building blocks in the reasoning men make for selecting their careers. Effectively their personal decisions are mediated by a need to maintain a relationship to normative ideals of masculinity. Even though positive social progress can be made by encouraging men to enter careers associated with women and femininity, men nonetheless enter these career paths with a socially founded expectation of stability related to existing traditional understandings of men's roles in families and wider society. While education and employment choices may in future allow men to pursue a gender egalitarian mode of masculinity, the omnipresent nature of the existing gender order proves difficult to deeply challenge.

Men are socialised into dominant neoliberal and gendered ideas about the purpose education and employment. But they don't always recognise this process. The norms of

masculinity create a sense of 'realism'—they come to be taken as the only example of what is 'real', or what is possible, casting shadows on masculine expressions that do not connect to traditional gendered values. This sense of realism functions as a gendered iteration of the type of 'realism' argued by Fisher (2009), where gender normative constructs of masculinity and men's roles describe choices beyond the existing norms of men's work as 'unrealistic' and unachievable. Effectively, careers that are beyond the boundaries of masculine intelligibility cannot be easily mapped onto a life plan that is conducive with dominant conceptions of masculinity. Thus, men's implicit support of seeking employment for the purpose of supporting a (future or current) family forecloses employment options which do not offer a direct path to this stability. This characteristic combined with residual masculine ideals of 'avoiding femininity' make pursuing a non-normative path something that requires careful planning and management to succeed.

Adapting to the Ever-Present Market

Neoliberal understandings of the self and employment are another powerful factor in how men make sense of being enrolled in an arts degree at university. Participants drew readily on financialised neoliberal discourses that stressed profitability and value when reflecting on and rationalising their education choices. Participants demonstrated a neoliberalised 'sensibility' when choosing and charting their path through higher education toward a 'good job'. Whatever factors influenced participants' decision to come to university, they always felt able to describe their education as on a road to economic returns and financial stability. What became clear throughout this research was the extent to which educational paths were carefully crafted and managed to ensure a revenue stream upon completion. Men's concerns over their education and employment were deeply connected to a sense of individualised success and development and participants stressed, directly or indirectly, that the efforts made in education needed to reap financial dividends to be worthwhile.

Neoliberal expectations regulated the personal desires of participants with regard to educational and career choices. For example, despite the presence of altruistic goals for pursuing human- and care- centric careers, they expressed a need to pass altruistic outcomes through the lens of neoliberal financialisation to justify their potentiality for success. As financial profitability for the individual is a central expectation of employment, profitability becomes integral to establish, and it is only once this is established that they could imagine

fulfilling desires not directly related to financial returns. To this end, neoliberal ideals organise men's approach to education and employment with men prioritising personal economic sustainability and non-individualised benefits expected to emerge once the self is successfully accounted for.

Neoliberal ideology remains a "pervasive atmosphere" (Fisher, 2009, p. 16) constraining men's perception of their educational options now and possible employment directions in future. Decisions on the best path through university are resolved through how 'real' a particular option is. As with norms of masculinity, norms of neoliberal self-making foreclosed options which did not enable men to secure financial success. This understanding was so significant that goals which envisaged large scale social change outside of the current economic system were thoroughly located in the realm of fantasy. As a result, neoliberal conceptualisations underpinned participants' expectations of their future employment and guided them to ensure that their educational path would result in an ability to manipulate labour market opportunities in their favour.

Navigating Tensions and Upholding Realities
Between Masculinity and Neoliberalism

There is a profound tension that exists between neoliberalism and masculinity. Each creates a relationship where the underpinning ideals impose requirements regarding the nature and purpose of education and subsequent work for men. This tension must be recognised and navigated by men, especially when they pursue careers outside of normative gendered employment expectations. As social forces, masculinity and neoliberalism are required to adapt to each other, but they are adaptions that are nonetheless prone to serving one another. Neoliberal values around competitive and active subjects complement masculine ideals of confident competitiveness, positioning men who can meet gendered norms as better able to exploit market opportunities. While the ideals of both have significant areas of overlap, any areas of contradiction between the norms requires active and careful management to not fall outside either set of ideals. In participants, this is illustrated in their active reframing of their arts degrees as capable of providing masculine and financial outcomes for their lives. This necessitated being aware of how their degrees could result in not meeting expected career goals and using discourses which helped reduce the inherent risks and other issues of choosing a degree with an unclear route to profit and stability. This act of

management functions to heighten the tension men feel, especially when neoliberal and masculine norms stand in an obvious opposition, as is the case with men's traditional, stable, life-long breadwinning ideals versus neoliberal hyperflexible and adaptive employee expectation (Connell, 2005). The masculine ideal of being able to support a family, for example, has to be renegotiated with a neoliberal self-making ideal of personal responsibility, control, and investment. To this end, these ideals are in an active and reactive mediation between one another through the lives of men as they are pulled to maintain the expectations of both.

In pursuing a degree like the Bachelor of Arts, men are positioned at a focal point of tension between masculinity and neoliberalism. The norms created by both of these systems place caring and human-focussed labour on the edge of acceptability for men. Even if participants expressed a personal desire for ameliorative social labour, the logics of marketized self-management and profitability alongside gendered expectations of economic stability and/or employment-related authority must be traversed in order to materialise such desires. This reveals that seeking ways to reduce the tensions caused by norms is a primary concern which limits the directions men believe they can take their education. Men have to continuously and carefully justify their position within the logics of both systems— masculinity and neoliberalism—in order to prove to themselves and others that they have a legitimate future beyond the norms. This shows how men are acutely aware of their placement as non-normative and how they are socialised into and ultimately constrained by the ideals of gender and financial success. It is a tension that they cannot effectively escape, as the price of ignoring either pressure is received as an unacceptable failure towards their future goals.

The emergent tension requires men to balance expectations of neoliberalism and masculinity. One of the ways this is achieved is through masculinising the perceived 'feminine' aspects of their education and employment. This can be done via discursively connecting outcomes of their chosen employment to dominant conceptions of masculinity. For example, emphasising how they can achieve future authority in their chosen careers shifts how they frame their future care work. In addition, connecting masculinised concerns over 'caring about' society (to illustrate men's ability to shape their world from positions of power) over 'caring for' individuals (an interpersonal action associated with femininity) helps to relieve the tension that emerges from participating in interpersonal care. Neoliberalised understandings of the employment market can help this process along by providing a logic of financial success and positive returns to men's gender-advised aims to have their employment result in economic stability.

This process of sense-making illuminates Fisher's (2009) argument that neoliberal ideology must be held as a 'natural fact' in order to function in the dominant way it does in society. Expressly, when men use masculine *and* neoliberal justifications to explain their non-normative choices of education and employment, they are effectively using the 'realism' provided by both to support their decisions. Normative neoliberal ideals around individual authority, financial success and stability, and self-driven development allow masculinity, with its own asserted sense of 'real', to naturalise neoliberal ideals through these interlocking values. Using each other's sense of what is best for men to pursue in education and employment provides a vehicle for coping with tensions that arise in the navigation of normative pressures. Moreover, where separate understandings of, for example, care work through only a masculine or neoliberal lens would paint such careers as on the fringe of normativity, using both sets of ideals in combination—both realities—allows non-normative labour to be framed as acceptable for men to pursue. Thus neither masculinity nor neoliberalism's sense of real acts on men in isolation, but an active use of both ideologies allows men to creatively position their choices as contiguous with a wider understanding of normative goals for men. Therefore, together neoliberal and masculine examples of what is 'realistic' can reduce the tension men feel by aiding them in repositioning themselves as within 'real' career paths.

In this way neoliberalism and masculinity, despite their tensions, exist in a mutually supporting relationship for men with regards to imagining and justifying their education and employment prospects. Neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinity can both functionally use each other's ideals to present themselves as 'realistic' in the world of education and employment. In effect, as masculinities are embodied expressions of identity, the areas where neoliberal ideology shares a sense of 'real' gains physical substance through its ideological overlap with masculinity. As men seek to orient their expressions as connected to dominant forms of masculinity, there is a reflection through ideals of neoliberalism in the use of financialised concepts of success. Neoliberal ideology becomes seen and performed in masculinities, which legitimises neoliberal concepts as 'natural' because of the reification provided by embodied gendered practices. Moreover, neoliberal conceptualisations of work and labour gain legitimacy as valuable paths to success through the shared values of masculinity and men's power in society, which further entrenches and moves neoliberal pressures and ideals of the self into an unquestionable 'natural' fact of society.

The interaction between the masculine and neoliberal sense of 'real' aids in hampering the development of gender expressions which disrupt existing gendered inequalities.

Participants' desires to find meaning and make a difference in their communities are tempered against the subtle expectations of job markets and 'good stable careers'. This pressure places a limit on men's ability to connect socially egalitarian desires to meaningful challenges of normative social structures, because men internalise messages that define pursuit of labour outside of what is 'realistically' achievable as having no way to grant the material returns which enable a comfortable life. An example of this is the 'masculinising' of feminine-associated labour via financialised discourses, which allows men to position themselves within non-normative careers while having the effect of recreating and reinforcing existing gendered and economic norms. Specifically, men may enter 'feminine' careers with hopes of performing egalitarian work, but norms of masculinity and neoliberalism place such work outside of what is a 'real' job for men, and in their rationalisation of such work they use discourses which unintentionally recreate the existing inegalitarian sense of what is realistic. This active use of economic and gendered ideologies connects conceptual norms to bodily practices and therefore connects both gender and economy to physical occurrences in the world. Fundamentally, this continues existing gendered relationships of power through securing them to economic understandings of success which disrupts men's abilities to develop novel and egalitarian expressions of masculinity that can challenge the status quo.

Because of the mutually confirming realities between neoliberalism and hegemonic masculinity, competing concepts of gendered or economic organisation become one level more unrealistic by comparison. Through neoliberalism gaining a position of 'naturally occurring' because of its association with ideals of masculinity, it is able to shift the terrain and imply that other economic organisations are more-or-less fantasy. Simultaneously, dominant conceptions of masculinity become more difficult to challenge as they appear to grant material returns through economically valued conceptions of competitiveness and authority which are understood to give men the best ability to thrive in 'the market'. Altogether, the mutuality of this relationship becomes a powerful force that guides men into recreating dominant ideals, as those concepts provide easily accessible discourses for understanding and justifying men's choices through education and beyond. This, in turn, makes challenging the life plans hegemonic masculinity and neoliberalism inform difficult to do for men. This is due to gender, education, and employment options that are outside of what is 'real' having no ability to become grounded in the 'reality' that the current gendered and economic order describe and dominate. Without doubt, contesting the exiting order and crafting a new 'real' is a challenging but vital task, and the participants of this research show

that men can, and do, try to find a better world beyond the boundaries that currently constrain them and their communities.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Initial design and content of flyers calling for participants posted on campus at Massey University Albany and online on Facebook.

Participants Needed

For Research on Contemporary Masculine Identity

Are you a man currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts here at Massey?

If so, I would like to talk to you about your experiences studying a BA!

This research is being undertaken as part of a social anthropology master's thesis project to understand men's experiences at university in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am looking to speak to a handful of guys in any stage of their degree, studying any subjects (within the BA programme), and of any age or background. I would need an hour of your time to sit down and have a discussion about your life as a student, the path you've taken to get to this point, and some of your ideas about your future. Participants are needed throughout semester two, 2018.

Coffee or tea and food will be provided as thanks for your participation.

If you have any questions or would like to sign up, please take one of the tags below or contact:

Cameron Dickie
E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
Mobile: ▮▮▮▮▮▮

Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657	Anthropological Research E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com M: 021 043 8657

Appendix B:

Flyer design after roughly halfway through the semester. The content was slightly changed to highlight that a small financial koha is being offered to make the research more attractive for potential participants.

Participants Needed

For Research on Contemporary Masculine Identity

Are you a man currently enrolled in a Bachelor of Arts here at Massey?

If so, I would like to talk to you about your experiences studying a BA!

This research is being undertaken as part of a social anthropology master's thesis project to understand men's experiences at university in Aotearoa New Zealand.

I am looking to speak to a handful of guys in any stage of their degree, studying any subjects (within the BA programme), and of any age or background. I would need an hour of your time to sit down and have a discussion about your life as a student, the path you've taken to get to this point, and some of your ideas about your future. Participants are needed throughout semester two, 2018.

Coffee or tea, food, and a **Westfield Gift Card** will be provided as thanks for your participation.

If you have any questions or would like to sign up, please take one of the tags below or contact:

Cameron Dickie
E-mail: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
Mobile: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Anthropological Research
E: Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com
M: 021 043 8657

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Appendix C:

Interview questionnaire used during participant fieldwork.

Past

What do your family/whānau think about your decision to study a BA?

If you are happy to share, what do your parents do?

Did you consider NOT going to university?

How did your interest in your chosen topic develop? (what inspired you?)

What type of high schooling did you have, and do you think this experience influenced your choice to study your chosen subjects?

What are some of the stereotypes about your subject of study?

What are stereotypes of NZ men, according to you?

Did any feelings aside from interest guide your choice in studying your chosen areas, did you feel that any subjects were off limits or carried an additional potentially unwanted perspective?

Present

What are you studying here at university? Why?

How do you interact in class, do you like to actively ask questions, lead or contribute to discussions, or 'go with the flow'?

Do you ever feel as though you either cannot or should not speak in specific classes or with specific subjects?

Do you find this work stressful?

Are you involved in any extra-curricular activities either on-campus or off? Clubs, sports teams, etc.

Future

What do you think your BA is giving you? Both now and future?

Where do you see yourself immediately after the qualification and what about some time further down the line?

How do you see yourself changing, if at all, after completing this qualification?

What do you think the public perception is of your qualification? (Are there any positive/negative charged connotations?)

Appendix D:

Participant Information Sheet:

Contemporary Masculine Identity on Campus in Aotearoa New Zealand
Information Sheet

Kia Ora, I'm Cameron Dickie.

Thank you for your interest in participating in my research on contemporary masculinity at university. This document has been provided to you as both a formal invitation and to give you a little more background information about the nature of my research, why I need other people's involvement, and what is expected of you if you choose to volunteer as a participant. If you have any questions regarding the content of this information sheet or the research itself, please do not hesitate to contact me. Finally, I encourage you to speak with family, whanau, or support people before participating as they can aid you in deciding whether to partake in this research.

What is the purpose of this research?

The primary purpose of this research is to provide data for the completion of my social anthropology master's degree thesis. Beyond this, this research is also investigating an aspect of Aotearoa New Zealand society which has not been deeply explored by scholars in Aotearoa New Zealand yet. Namely, this is the experiences of men who pursue qualifications in majority-female fields. My focus will be on understanding how men who are studying toward a Bachelor of Arts (BA) are interacting with the perceived norms of masculinity, and how they may be reforming or renegotiating these norms alongside their own masculine identities within majority-female learning environments found in many BA courses.

Why do I need to speak to people about this?

As this research will be reflecting on a social reality that I am interested in, the best way to get great commentary for my final thesis project is by speaking with people who are currently living within the world I'm focussing on. While I myself recently completed my own Bachelor of Arts and can speak to my own experiences as the lone man in some classes, this hardly works as a well-rounded or deep perspective on what's happening at NZ universities. In total, I would like to speak to between six and eight men from Massey's Albany Campus to begin understanding this part of contemporary gender identity and what a 'bigger picture' might look like when it comes to men's experiences on campus in 2018.

What will participants be expected to do by partaking in this research?

By participating in this research all I will need from you is an hour to discuss your life as a student. I will be asking you a series of open questions about your past, present, and possible futures, and try to develop a small understanding of your worldview. Our discussion will take place at a quiet café or similar location of your preference and your responses will be recorded on a digital voice recorder. I expect our conversation to be no longer than an hour, but if you would like to add more we can speak for longer or otherwise arrange another time to continue our discussion. The questions I have for you are relatively general and interpretative, and if you are uncomfortable with any subject raised we can skip said subject. Finally, I will anonymise your responses (unless you wish to be identified) to protect your privacy. In short, my goal is to create an easy and open conversational atmosphere for our discussion.

Are there any risks regarding participation?

I do not foresee any major risks or problems arising during our interaction, as we are essentially having a conversation about you. However, through our discussion we may speak on areas, such as family relationships, which may be uncomfortable to talk about with a stranger (me). In such cases, as stated above, I am happy for uncomfortable subjects to be skipped.

Information sheet (continued):

How will participants be compensated?

Aside from my sincere gratitude for your participation in the research, I will also provide you with a tea, coffee, or drink of your choice and a snack (a muffin, pie, etc.) from the place where we have our discussion. Additionally, I will provide you with one $15 Westfield gift card at the conclusion of our time together.

My use of your recording and return of transcripts.

The raw recording that is created from our discussion will only be accessible to me and once the thesis is complete I will be deleting the recording. The recordings will be stored on my desktop computer at home and data security measures will be taken to protect participant data.

After our discussion, I will create a full transcript of our recorded conversation. I will give you a copy of the final transcript to review and confirm before any part is added to my thesis. This will allow you to give a final 'go ahead' before the discussion starts being used for research and analysis in the thesis. I am aiming to fully transcribe our conversation and return a copy to you within two weeks, and will be in contact if, in the rare circumstance, I am unable to fulfil this deadline.

Ethics Statement and Participant's Rights.

This project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz

Additionally, you are under no obligation to participate or accept this invitation, if you do decide to participate you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study until Nov 30th. Requests to withdraw beyond this date can be negotiated and potentially approved by Cameron Dickie;
- ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher;
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview;
- be given access to a summary of the project when it is concluded.

If you have additional questions about me or my research, please feel free to contact me or my supervisor using the details below:

- **Cameron Dickie**
  Email: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
  Phone: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

- **Dr Barbara Andersen (Supervisor)**
  Email: B.Andersen1@massey.ac.nz
  Phone: 09 414 0800 ext. 43472

Appendix E:

Informed consent form:

Contemporary Masculine Identity on Campus in Aotearoa New Zealand

Informed Consent Form

Purpose of Study

This research is being completed as part of Cameron Dickie's Master of Arts in Social Anthropology thesis project. The research has been designed to gain an understanding of contemporary masculine identity on campus in Aotearoa New Zealand. The data collected through participant interviews will be used to help gain this understanding through analysis of interview content alongside wider comparative literature research. For more information, please refer to the provided information sheet, or contact Cameron via email at Cameron_Dickie@hotmail.com or mobile on 021 043 8657.

Ethics Statement

Finally, as required by Massey University's "low risk" ethics process, please be aware that: this project has been evaluated by peer review and judged to be low risk. Consequently, it has not been reviewed by one of the University's Human Ethics Committees. The researcher named above is responsible for the ethical conduct of this research.

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research that you wish to raise with someone other than the researcher, please contact Prof Craig Johnson, Director, Research Ethics, telephone 06 356 9099 x 85271, email humanethics@massey.ac.nz.

By being a participant in this research:

- You understand that you are voluntarily participating in this research. You do not have to take part and can stop the discussion at any point.
- You agree to having our conversation digitally recorded, and understand the purpose and eventual deletion of the recording.
- You understand that the transcripts produced from the recording will be used as part of the production of a master's thesis project.
- You agree that you have read the information sheet.
- You understand that you will receive a transcript of the entire conversation before the discussion is used for analysis in the thesis.
- You have had the opportunity to consult with family, whanau, or support people before participating.
- You understand that you have the right to ask questions to the researcher before participating and the right to ask questions throughout and after the research.
- You understand that the compensation you shall receive for our discussion will be in the form of one Westfield Gift Card valued at $15, a single coffee/tea/equivalent drink from the location of our discussion, and a single snack item from the location of our discussion.

Informed consent form (continued):

- You understand that your responses will be made anonymous and the upmost care will be taken to keep your identity confidential throughout the research and in the final thesis version, unless you wish to be specifically identified.
- You agree that you have been provided with the contact information of the researcher and his supervisor.
- You understand that should any part of this document's terms be altered, that you will be notified by the researcher before such alterations are made.

Additionally, as a participant you are aware that you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question
- Withdraw from the study, no questions asked, until Nov 30th (Withdrawal after this date is negotiable).
- Ask for the voice recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- Be given a summary of the completed project once it is concluded.

Declaration by participant:

I hereby consent to take part in this study.

_Participant's name:_____

_Signature:_____Date:_____

Declaration by researcher:

I have given a verbal explanation of the research project to the participant, and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

_Researcher's name: _____

_Signature:_____Date:_____