



GLOBAL MASCULINITIES

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ ВХОД

MASCULINITY, LABOUR, AND NEOLIBERALISM

WORKING-CLASS MEN
IN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY CHARLIE WALKER
AND STEVEN ROBERTS



Global Masculinities

Series Editors

Michael Kimmel

Department of Sociology, Stony Brook University
Stony Brook, New York, USA

Judith Kegan Gardiner

University of Illinois at Chicago
Chicago, Illinois, USA

The dramatic success of Gender Studies has rested on three developments: (1) making women's lives visible, which has also come to mean making all genders more visible; (2) insisting on intersectionality and so complicating the category of gender; (3) analyzing the tensions among global and local iterations of gender. Through textual analyses and humanities-based studies of cultural representations, as well as cultural studies of attitudes and behaviors, we have come to see the centrality of gender in the structure of modern life. This series embraces these advances in scholarship, and applies them to men's lives: gendering men's lives, exploring the rich diversity of men's lives - globally and locally, textually and practically - as well as the differences among men by class, race, sexuality, and age.

More information about this series at
<http://www.springer.com/series/15013>

Charlie Walker • Steven Roberts
Editors

Masculinity, Labour, and Neoliberalism

Working-Class Men in International Perspective

palgrave
macmillan

Editors

Charlie Walker
University of Southampton
Southampton, UK

Steven Roberts
Monash University
Clayton, VIC
Australia

Global Masculinities

ISBN 978-3-319-63171-4

ISBN 978-3-319-63172-1 (eBook)

DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-63172-1

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017953388

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed. The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration © Charlie Walker

Cover Design by Thomas Howey

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by Springer Nature

The registered company is Springer International Publishing AG

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

For Tani
-*Charlie*

For Olivia
-*Steven*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The starting point for this book was a British Sociological Association (BSA) study group seminar entitled ‘Masculinity, Adaptation and Difference’ held in London in July 2014. At that time, masculinities studies on both sides of the Atlantic seemed increasingly dominated by debates about homophobia, whereas Steve and I wanted to bring social class back to the centre of the conversation. The seminar did this, and then acted as a springboard for a call for papers, which significantly broadened the pool of authors involved, and the scope of the topics and geographical areas covered. So, thanks to the BSA Gender and Youth study groups for funding that initial seminar, to Sally Hines and Zowie Davy for helping to organize it, and to the participants, some of whom have chapters in the book.

I should like to thank my former PhD student Joe McEvoy for his enthusiasm for the book when it was still in the planning stages. He started a PhD on working-class young men employed in the retail sector in September 2015, eventually deciding to leave (or postpone?) his fledgling academic career for ‘something more fun’. However, before he left he was very encouraging about my ideas for the book, and even helped me with some early literature reviewing to gauge the state of the field. Thanks Joe—the door is always open for your return.

Thanks are also due to the authors of the chapters, and the editing team at Palgrave, for putting up with the various equivocations about deadlines over the past couple of years. The book has been a fairly long time in the making—just less than three years between the seminar and the release date—but this is largely because I took six months off work after my baby

Tani was born in 2016, during which time work on the book came to a halt. Even after coming back full time, progress was slow, so I am especially grateful to Steve for joining the project when it was already at an advanced stage and helping me to get it over the line.

Haslemere, June 2017

Charlie Walker

CONTENTS

1	Masculinity, Labour and Neoliberalism: Reviewing the Field	1
	Charlie Walker and Steven Roberts	
2	Men, Masculinity and Labour-Force Participation in Kaduna, Nigeria: Are There Positive Alternatives to the Provider Role?	29
	Colette Harris	
3	Yearning to Labour? Working-Class Men in Post-Industrial Britain	53
	Darren Nixon	
4	Formulating the Postindustrial Self: The Role of Petty Crime Among Unemployed, Working-Class Men in Stoke-on-Trent	77
	Ian Mahoney and Tony Kearon	
5	Young Working-Class Men Without Jobs: Reimagining Work and Masculinity in Postindustrial Sweden	101
	Åsa Andersson and Anita Beckman	

- 6** 'I Am Going to Uni!' Working-Class Academic Success, Opportunity and Conflict 125
Michael R.M. Ward
- 7** Becoming a Working-Class Male Adult Learner: Formations of Class and Gender in the Finnish Learning Society 147
Toni Kosonen
- 8** Automobile Masculinities and Neoliberal Production Regimes Among Russian Blue-Collar Men 171
Jeremy Morris
- 9** Masculinities, Bodies and Subjectivities: Working-Class Men Negotiating Russia's Post-Soviet Gender Order 195
Alexandrina Vanke
- 10** The Inertia of Masculinity: Narratives of Creative Aspiration Among Arab-Australian Youth 219
Sherene Idriss and George Morgan
- 11** Gender, Neoliberalism, and Embodiment: A Social Geography of Rural, Working-Class Masculinity in Southeast Kansas 243
Levi Gahman
- 12** Working-Class Masculinities at the Nexus of Work, Family and Intimacy in the Age of Neoliberalism: Or, Are the Times Really A-Changin'? 265
Kirsty Whitman

13	Driving Through Neoliberalism: Finnish Truck Drivers Constructing Respectable Male Worker Subjectivities	289
	Timo Aho	
14	Masculinities and Health Inequalities Within Neoliberal Economies	311
	Steve Robertson, Brendan Gough, and Mark Robinson	
	Index	335

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Timo Aho is working towards a PhD in sociology at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. His research examines how the recent institutional, logistical and technological transformations in the road haulage sector affect Finnish male truck drivers' agency and bodily capabilities. His first article, 'Rekkamiesten työn rytmihäiriöt' ('The rhythmic conflicts of truck drivers' work'), was published in *Janus* (2015).

Åsa Andersson has a PhD in ethnology and is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies at Gothenburg University, Sweden. Her research focus has mainly been on youth culture, gender, ethnicity and racism. She has led research projects on identification processes among young women in multicultural neighbourhoods, and she has been involved in an action research project on empowerment in Roma communities in western Sweden. Her work has been published in *Sociological Studies of Children and Youth*.

Anita Beckman has a PhD in ethnology and is a Senior Lecturer in Cultural Studies at University West, Sweden. The main focus of her research has been on narrativity and methodological issues, while recently she has been working on young men and women living in small, provincial towns located outside the emerging economic regions of Sweden. An ongoing project deals with the question of how young people perceive themselves and their future in relation to their local community.

Levi Gahman is a radical geographer from Kansas (Osage territories) with the University of the West Indies (Trinidad and Tobago). His work draws on feminist, Fanonian, Foucauldian and Zapatista perspectives to interrogate the discursive, material and sociopsychological products of global capitalism, ongoing colonialisms and heteropatriarchal social relations. His efforts also seek to expose how geopolitical and biopolitical assertions of power, control, dominance and privilege arrange and regulate differing people and geographies. Levi's current research investigates how autonomy, anti-capitalist resistance, mutual aid, gender equity, critical pedagogy and participatory democracy create pathways out of institutionalized oppression and structural violence towards social harmony.

Brendan Gough is Professor of Social Psychology at Leeds Beckett University, UK. He has published papers on gender identities and relations, mostly in the context of health, lifestyles and wellbeing. He is co-founder and co-editor of the journal *Qualitative Research in Psychology*; he edits the Critical Psychology section of the journal *Social & Personality Psychology Compass* and he is associate editor for the journal *Psychology of Men and Masculinity*. He has co-authored/edited six books in the areas of critical social psychology, qualitative research, men's health and body image. His latest is the *Palgrave Handbook of Critical Social Psychology* (2017).

Colette Harris is Reader in gender and development at SOAS, University of London. Previously she worked at the University of East Anglia and the Institute of Development Studies, Sussex. She specializes in the study of the effects of gender norms on societies in the global south, with particular emphasis on Central and South Asia, and East and West Africa, and also in using discovery-based pedagogies, including participatory gender analysis, to support local communities to consider transforming their norms. Her publications include *Control and Subversion: Gender Relations in Tajikistan* (2004) and *Muslim Youth: Tensions and Transitions in Tajikistan* (2006).

Sherene Idriss is an Adjunct Fellow at the School of Social Sciences and Psychology, Western Sydney University, Australia. She obtained her PhD from the Institute of Culture and Society at the same university. Her thesis examined the ways in which categories of youth, gender, social class and personal ambition intersect and play out in ethnic-minority communities. She also holds a BA

in anthropology from Macquarie University, in which she explored community politics and cultural brokerage in Muslim minority groups in Sydney. Sherene is the author of *Young Migrant Identities: Creative Aspirations and Arab-Australian Young Men* (2017).

Tony Kearon is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology at Keele University. He is also the co-director of the Keele Policing Academic Collaboration (KPAC). His research focuses on policing, community safety, community resilience, early intervention, prevention and diversion relating to young offenders, public confidence in criminal justice, and political/democratic aspects of criminal justice policy formation. One of the themes that underpins all of his research is the impact of deindustrialisation, globalisation and related structural and existential changes in late modernity on the lives, attitudes and identities of individuals and communities in transition.

Toni Kosonen has a doctorate in social sciences and has recently been working as a postdoctoral researcher in the Department of Social Sciences and in Career Counselling at the University of Eastern Finland. In previous research projects, he has studied teachers' and nurses' professional lives in different European contexts and issues related to low-skilled adults' participation in adult education. His main research interests are related to sociology of education, adult education, guidance and counselling, social class, gender and masculinities.

Ian Mahoney is Lecturer in Criminology at Liverpool Hope University, UK. He took up the position after completing his doctoral thesis, which focused on experiences of unemployment and its influences on criminal activity and identity construction among men in Stoke-on-Trent. He is interested in crime, identity, unemployment, masculinities, social exclusion and abjection. He has also been developing a critique of the effectiveness of research ethics in criminology and the challenges posed by current ethics models.

George Morgan is Associate Professor at the Institute for Culture and Society, School of Humanities and Communication Arts at Western Sydney University, Australia. His current research considers how urban working-class and minority (including Aboriginal and Middle Eastern) youth respond to the challenges of finding work and developing vocational aspirations in the 'creative industries'. His books include (as sole author)

Unsettled Places: Aboriginal People and Urbanisation in New South Wales (2006), with Pariece Nelligan, *The Creativity Hoax* (forthcoming); as editor, both with Scott Poynting, *Outrageous: Moral Panics in Australia* (2007) and *Global Islamophobia* (2012).

Jeremy Morris is Associate Professor in Global Studies at Aarhus University, Denmark. His current research evaluates the transformative power of neoliberalism on the public and private identities of people in Russia and helps theorize this experience in the context of post-socialism and globalization. He has recently published articles in the journals *Ethnography*, *International Labor and Working-Class History* and *European Urban and Regional Studies*. He is the author of *Everyday Postsocialism* (Palgrave 2016) and co-editor of *New Media in New Eurasia* (2015) and *The Informal Postsocialist Economy: Embedded Practices and Livelihoods* (2014).

Darren Nixon is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Leeds Beckett University, UK. His research has sought to explain sociologically how and why the growth of the service economy and the continuation of historical patterns of occupational segregation by sex are creating new forms of inclusion and exclusion in the contemporary economy. He has written articles in journals such as *Work, Gender and Organization*, is co-author of *The Sociology of Work* (2012) and author of *Work, Identity and Economic Change* (2011).

Steven Roberts is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Monash University, Australia. He has published widely on how social class and gender shape young people's experiences of and aspirations for education, employment, housing and the domestic sphere. He is editor of the book *Debating Modern Masculinities*, co-editor of the books *Class Inequality in Austerity Britain* (Palgrave 2012), *Young People and Social Policy in Europe* (Palgrave 2014) and *Digital Methods for Social Science* (Palgrave 2015), and co-author of *Youth and Social Class: Enduring Inequality in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand* (Palgrave 2015), and author of *Young Working Class Men in Transition* (forthcoming).

Steve Robertson is Professor of Men, Gender & Health at Leeds Beckett University, UK. His research interests are around social theories of masculinity and their application to aspects of public health. He wrote what became a seminal text, *Understanding Men and Health* (2007). He works with international colleagues in Canada, Australia and the USA, and he has

acted as a consultant on gender and men's health to the UK Department of Health and to the World Health Organization (Europe). He is Editor of the *International Journal of Men's Health* and Mental Health Section Editor of the *American Journal of Men's Health*.

Mark Robinson is Senior Research Fellow in the Centre for Men's Health at Leeds Beckett University, UK. His main interests concern gender, men and mental health, ageing and gendered identities, men's wellbeing at work, arts and mental health, and black and minority ethnic men's health. Among many peer-reviewed publications he has published, with Robertson, 'Challenging the field: Bourdieu and men's health', *Social Theory & Health*, 2014, 12, 339–360.

Alexandrina Vanke is a Research Fellow at the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences and an Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology of the State Academic University for the Humanities. Her research focuses on gender, class, the body, sexuality and social movements in Russia. She is a co-editor of the journal *INTERaction. INTERview. INTERpretation*. Her recent publications include articles on working-class people in *Laboratorium: Russian Review for Social Research, Sotsiologicheskie Issledovaniya* and *Russian Sociological Review*.

Charlie Walker is Associate Professor of Sociology at the University of Southampton, UK. His research has explored the production of class, gender and spatial inequalities in Russia and the former Soviet Union, particularly through young people's transitions to adulthood. His most recent work addresses sources of and barriers to wellbeing among Russian men employed in blue-collar professions. He is author of *Learning to Labour in Post-Soviet Russia: Vocational Youth in Transition* (2011) and co-editor of *Innovations in Youth Research* (Palgrave 2012) and *Youth and Social Change in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union* (2012).

Michael R. M. Ward is Lecturer in Social Sciences at Swansea University, UK. His work centres on marginalized masculinities in and beyond educational institutions and he has conducted research across the UK and Canada. He is the author of *From Labouring to Learning, Working-Class Masculinities, Education and De-industrialization* (Palgrave 2015) and the editor of *Gender Identity and Research Relationships*, which is volume 14 in the Studies in Qualitative Methods book series (2016). Mike is also an

editorial board member for *Sociological Research Online* and the *Journal of Boyhood Studies*, and co-convenor of the British Sociological Association Education Study Group.

Kirsty Whitman is an Early Career Academic, Researcher and Tutor at the University of Adelaide, Australia, and a member of the Fay Gale Centre for Research on Gender. Her research interests include class, gender—specifically masculinities, intersectionality theory, popular culture and performativity and working-class student experiences of higher education. She is currently teaching the University of Adelaide’s core course for all Faculty of Arts students and has recently completed work on a research project looking at working-class students’ experience of educational transition.

Masculinity, Labour and Neoliberalism: Reviewing the Field

Charlie Walker and Steven Roberts

In baldly economic terms, neoliberalism refers to a model of capitalism that favours open, deregulated markets and a diminution of state involvement in social and economic affairs compared with the norms established by the Keynesian consensus that emerged after 1945. The spirit of competition, so celebrated in and central to this economic-cum-political formulation, extends to individuals, who become simultaneously the repositories and drivers of state goals (Roberts and Evans 2013) through a project of responsabilization. Neoliberal imperatives, then, ensure that inequality is legitimized by making clear that the poor and the socially immobile are to blame for their plight, having failed to work hard enough to achieve the desired material gains. The unchallenged dominance of neoliberal capitalism and its spread across both the industrialized and the ‘developing’ world has been the motor of growing levels of inequality in recent decades. Contrary to the rhetoric of its proponents, the pressure on capitalists to increase profits has led not to a trickle-down of wealth but to fewer jobs, lower pay and less security for most workers (Lindisfarne and Neale 2016). Working-class men—the subject of this book—represent one group within

C. Walker (✉)
University of Southampton, Southampton, UK

S. Roberts
Monash University, Clayton, VIC, Australia

the workforce whose social position has been visibly transformed by neo-liberalism. During the golden age of postwar affluence, the wide availability of skilled manual employment in countries such as the UK underpinned a respectable form of working-class masculinity rooted in a strong work ethic and generations of labour politics (Willis 2003; Collinson 1992; Savage 2000). With the replacement of industrial sector jobs by unemployment, underemployment and hyphenated forms of work in the new service sector, however, working-class men have become more and more peripheral, with even those who have retained a position in skilled manual labour finding themselves worse off than their fathers were relative to the rest of the workforce (Roberts 2013a). In this context, the ability of working-class men to play the role of breadwinner, which had been, and continues to be, a central plank of dominant constructions of masculinity across the world (Cornwall 2016), has been significantly undermined.

In Anglo-Saxon and Western European countries there has been a tendency to interpret such developments as constituting a ‘crisis of masculinity’. Academic work has engaged critically with this discourse, noting it to be cyclical over the centuries, regularly emerging at points of social change and/or economic downturn (Roberts 2014), usually anchored in a mourning of supposedly lost male dominance (Petersen 1998; Griffin 2000), and often lacking in nuance as the language of crisis commonly shifts to be applied to all men regardless of class background (Roberts 2014). Yet the notion of crisis prevails in popular texts and as a common but very powerful trope, which, in the words of *Financial Times* journalist Janan Ganesh (2017), is now apparently an ‘uncontested fact of life’. In popular writing, Faludi (1999), among many others, prominently argues that the working-class male in contemporary USA is the foremost victim of neoliberal economics, while the likes of Farrell (1993), Garcia (2008) and Bidulph (2010) have written on the pressing need to now contend with and understand how men compensate for feelings of increasing powerlessness. As Carroll aptly argues, however, by ignoring the roles played by women and ethnic minorities in underpinning the franchise on opportunity enjoyed by white men through the second half of the twentieth century, such interpretations fall into a pernicious ‘white victimhood’ (2008: 264). Indeed, the sense of injury to newly disenfranchised white working-class men has been mobilized to explosive effect in recent years in a number of right-wing populist political movements across the world (see e.g. Pilkington 2016), as will be discussed further below. Nevertheless, while recognizing the wider gender and racial inequalities that surround these transformations, it is

undeniable that working-class men have been *among* the losers of neoliberalism, and that their experiences of, and responses to, the changes they have faced warrant significant attention, not least because of the ways they have been exploited.

The label of ‘losers’ may not immediately correspond with some of the ways working-class men have been depicted in popular culture in recent years. As Fleras and Dixon (2011) point out, a string of unscripted ‘reality’ television shows such as *Deadliest Catch*, *Ax Men* and *Ice Road Truckers* all appear to celebrate the heroism of blue collar workers by depicting them in a series of formulaic scenarios that emphasize core components of masculinity. The men in all of these shows variously provide important resources for society and provide for their families by overcoming danger, managing risk, taming the wilderness and tackling feats of endurance, while enjoying male camaraderie and condemning those who shirk responsibility. Ironically, then, this apparent remasculinization “valorizes a form of working-class manual labour at precisely the moment when such labour has all but disappeared” (Carroll 2011: 79). However, on closer inspection, this apparent celebration of white, blue-collar masculinities is simply a commodification in which the lives of working-class men are thoroughly depoliticized for the vicarious enjoyment of audiences, with messy issues such as job security, fair wages, and health and safety removed (Fleras and Dixon 2011: 593). The ideological work that blue-collar reality TV characters thus do (here, in concealing their own exploitation) is further explored by Carroll, who points out the ways in which working-class self-made men such as the Teutels in *American Chopper* are co-opted into the wider culture of neoliberal citizenship, with its core messages of self-help, discipline, a distaste for welfare, and the notion that hard work can get you everywhere.

This idealizing and whitewashing of blue-collar masculinity for middle-class consumption could be interpreted as a form of adulation—an attenuation of the putative losses suffered by working-class men under the postindustrial service economy (Carroll 2008: 268). However, it is in relation to the dominance of neoliberal sensibilities valorizing notions of self-authorship that working-class men have more often been positioned not as neoliberalism’s heroes but as its enemies. In the context of an increasingly pervasive rhetoric of responsibility, flexibility and self-improvement that has come to dominate life domains from employment and education to health, consumption and leisure (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2014)—aspects of what Foucault would call neoliberal governmentality—working-class men are often pathologized as backward for being either unable or unwilling to move

with the times. In contrast not only to the hyperreal characters of blue-collar reality TV but also to historic representations valorizing their authenticity and resistance (Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2014), working-class men are frequently positioned within popular and policy discourses as part of the newly abject (Francis 2006; Tyler 2013), as perpetuating the danger, disorder, dysfunction and decay that are associated with more disreputable forms of white working-class identity (Rhodes 2011; Skeggs 2004), and especially masculinity (Haylett 2001; Webster 2008). Indeed, another branch of the class voyeurism of reality TV—the ‘poverty porn’ epitomized by shows such as *Benefits Street* and *Life on Benefits*—revels in ‘underclass’ depictions of men as ‘welfare-dependent’, feckless petty criminals who are usually absent fathers.

This tendency to use working-class identity as a repository for anti-social attitudes and attributes reached its apogee in 2016 when the comfortable status quo of liberally minded voters in the UK and the USA was rocked by populist right-wing political movements—Brexit and Donald Trump’s presidential campaign—whose success was roundly blamed on the racism and xenophobia of a backward white working class, left behind by globalization and resentful of multiculturalism. In reality, of course, it was not only working-class people who voted for Trump and Brexit; as Pilkington argues in her recent ethnography of the English Defence League, ‘racism is not the property of extremist groups or misguided individuals but of us all. That racism remains a defining dimension of social relations is self-evident’ (2016: 5; see also Lawler 2005). Her account of white working-class resentment and anger at becoming ‘second class citizens’ to ethnic minority groups perceived to be favoured by the welfare state thus challenges and deconstructs the tendency to make racism ‘the problem of the ignorant working class’ (Lentin 2008: 500, in Pilkington 2016: 5).

In a similar vein, studies of the ways in which working-class men have responded to the challenges wrought by neoliberal transformation have rejected common tropes about their disaffection, disengagement or essential difference, pointing instead to the cultural, structural and institutional barriers they face when engaging in the forms of ‘self-invention’ the economy now requires of them. In the sociology of education, for example, working-class young men have been seen to respond positively to the shift towards an economy demanding ‘brains’ over ‘brawn’, but continue to be failed by a system in which their aspirations cannot overcome their lack of resources (Reay 2001; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2014; Walker 2010). In the sphere of employment, men have been found to embrace forms of work in the new service sector apparently too feminine for them to contemplate,

but still have no ladders to take them beyond the insecurities of entry-level jobs (Roberts 2013b; Lloyd 1999). In work on ‘street’ masculinities in the UK and elsewhere, young men continue to look for sources of recognition and respect among groups of their peers, but maintain a desire to follow mainstream channels of success (Archer and Yamashita 2003; Barker 2005). Following these studies, this collection aims to draw together and build on perspectives that problematize pathological accounts of working-class men as the enemies of neoliberal transformation, and instead to explore the active ways men have responded to change across a range of spheres, and the barriers they have faced in doing so.

The impact of the transformation of labour on working-class men is central to the book. In many Western industrialized societies, manual labour has acted as a key resource in archetypal constructions of working-class masculinity, underpinning notions of independence, autonomy, collective solidarity, skill, courage, opposition, mastery and dignity (Savage 2000; Tolson 1977; Willis 2003; Collinson 1992). However, these cultural idioms have gradually been undermined by structural and cultural changes that have played out over the course of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, beginning with the impact of deskilling processes (Burawoy 1985), the bureaucratization of traditional forms of apprenticeship (Gospel 1998) and the demands of non-manual service sector employment (MacDowell 2000), and then, more recently, the universalization of the notion of career as an individual project, a development that revalorizes white-collar workers with values previously ascribed to their blue-collar counterparts (Savage 2000). Thus questions arise about men’s ability, in this context, to construct and maintain subjectivities that allow them to manage the ‘hidden injuries of class’ (Sennett and Cobb 1972). To what extent are working-class men able to shore up traditional constructions of masculinity surrounding manual labour? Conversely, how much and in what ways are they able to embrace the new modalities and idioms of the individual career and neoliberalism’s demands for social mobility? Are these subject positions compatible, given the predication of archetypal modes of working-class masculinity on a rejection of class mobility? What are the resources men draw on in constructing these pathways and subjectivities, and how are they played out in formal and informal contexts? Although the book focuses on men’s constructions and performances of masculinity in relation to the changing shape of their working lives, it follows recent calls not to privilege men’s formal employment in exploring this theme (Haywood and Mac an Ghail 2014), and instead addresses men’s broader

cultural practices in spheres such as leisure, domestic labour and consumption, which, some hold, provide alternative spaces in which to construct those aspects of masculinity that cannot be performed at work (see e.g. Nayak 2003).

The book aims to follow the success of the critical study of men and masculinities in insisting on intersectionality and the interplay between different social characteristics in answering these questions. Its intersectionality is crucial because, although the emergence of neoliberal sensibilities valorizing notions of self-authorship has been well documented, the ways this has been experienced by actors with different social characteristics is only now being explored. In particular, work on subjectivities surrounding specific social class and gender positions in the neoliberal context has tended to focus on working-class femininities, with the work of Walkerdine (2010) and Skeggs (1998, 2004) illustrating the problematic nature of the pursuit of respectable ‘selfhood’ for working-class women (see also Francombe-Webb and Silk 2016; Allen 2016; McRobbie 2009). By contrast, we know relatively little about the ways in which working-class men experience and deal with the disappearance, or at least destabilization, of a whole set of class-cultural resources, something that Savage describes as “a profound social change whose full impact is still unraveling” (2000: 132). Are men better or worse positioned to locate the sources of respect necessary either to identify or to disidentify with an increasingly stigmatized class position, and what are the resultant constructions and performances of masculinity? More broadly, what are the wider implications of this, for example, for men’s health and wellbeing, and for processes of class and gender stratification?

One major study from recent scholarship on working-class masculinities is Lamont’s *The Dignity of Working Men* (2000), which explores the subjectivities and boundary-drawing processes undertaken by black and white working-class men in France and the USA. Lamont illustrates how working men construct alternative, mostly moral, definitions of success in order to locate themselves higher than, or at least next to, ‘people above’, thus allowing them to guard their own self-worth and dignity while faring badly on traditional markers of success (2000: 242). These boundary-drawing practices lead Lamont to conclude that there are strong collective identities among her respondents along the lines not only of ethnicity but also of social class (2000: 244). While these social characteristics are clearly important in the ways working-class men evaluate others, however, Lamont does not engage with the argument—made by a number of leading European social theorists such as Ulrich Beck and Zygmunt Bauman—that under conditions

of neoliberalism social class is no longer capable of underpinning a strong sense of collectivity as it once was, with important consequences for how we evaluate *ourselves*. Similarly, European studies of working-class men have sometimes seen the processes of individualization outlined by these theorists as somehow irrelevant to those who are seemingly incapable of ‘writing their own biographies’ (for the debate emerging around this within the sociology of youth, see Woodman 2009 and Roberts 2010). However, as Bauman reiterates in his final book, *Strangers at the Door* (2016), *everyone* is subjected to the ‘imperatives of performance’ in the ‘performance society’, making it increasingly difficult to hide behind old alternatives, collectivities and the narratives they provided.

This dilemma may, as we have seen, find outlets in scapegoating, but it is also resolved inwardly, at the level of the psyche. This is the finding of Silva’s (2012) study of working-class young men and women in the USA, who embrace what she calls a ‘model of therapeutic selfhood’ to deal with the loss of traditional markers of adulthood, such as leaving home and establishing financial independence. Silva argues that the development of an inwardly directed self preoccupied with its own emotional and psychic repair ‘allows working-class men and women to redefine competent adulthood in terms of overcoming a painful family past . . . [a process which] dovetails with neoliberal ideology in such a ways as to make powerless working-class young adults feel responsible for their own fates’ (2012: 505). While Silva’s study is not focused specifically on men and the construction of masculinities, it highlights the value of exploring the psychosocial dimensions of neoliberal transformation as they are experienced by those in subordinate positions, an aim of a number of contributions in this collection.

In exploring the themes outlined above and below, the book aims further to develop the critical study of men and masculinities as a truly global field of enquiry, building on the success of recent collections such as Cornwall, Kariotis and Lindisfarne’s *Masculinities under Neoliberalism* (2016). The range of national contexts covered—including countries representing the global metropole, such as the UK, the USA, Australia, Sweden and Finland, and those situated in more peripheral positions, such as Russia and Nigeria—allows it to address the divergent impacts of, and responses to, the development of global neoliberal capitalism among groups of men across the world. As well as enabling insights into the similarities and differences in the challenges faced by men in different contexts, and of sociocultural transformations at large, the book’s comparative perspective

and the diversity of its individual contributions allow a further understanding of the tensions between global and local iterations of masculinities. As Connell (2005) argues, gender orders are more or less continually exposed to a range of pressures resulting from globalizing processes, which necessitate a multitude of local reconstructions and reconfigurations of power relations both within and outside the global metropole. One dominant claim regarding such reconstructions is Connell and Wood's (2005) argument that we have seen the emergence of a 'transnational business masculinity', a highly individualist and 'meritocratic' version of hegemonic masculinity that has acted as a vehicle for neoliberal capitalism through a variety of locally inflected forms. Thus, one of the book's aims is to gauge how such a shift in dominant versions of masculinity, if it has taken place, has reconfigured power relations between dominant and subordinate groups of men in different local contexts, and how working-class men have responded to their repositioning (see Walker 2016 and 2017, and Roberts forthcoming, for recent explorations of this theme).

A final aim of the book is to highlight and draw a distinction between the forms of adaptation currently being demanded of working-class men in relation to processes of neoliberalization. One of the dominant drivers in the critical study of men and masculinities has been to make gender visible in order to change men's practice—that is, to expose harmful manifestations of masculinity such as violence, homophobia, misogyny and anti-familial forms of behaviour and to encourage more benign attitudes and activities among men (Pease and Pringle 2001; Barker 2005; Ruspini et al. 2011). However, while the adoption of this kind of radical approach is welcome in many spheres of activity, it is clearly problematic in relation to employment change, where men's successful adaptation to changing social demands could take the form of a passive acceptance of marginalization in the labour market, or the embrace of flexibilization. Rather than viewing this as a triumph over masculinity's innate 'toxicity', as will be explored in the book, forms of resistance and rejection among working-class men facing emasculating processes in relation to work may instead be interpreted as an antidote to the toxicity of neoliberalism. Whatever men's responses to change, *Masculinity, Labour and Neoliberalism* will consider the impact of those responses on the wellbeing both of men and of those around them, while also considering their wider political implications.

MARGINALIZED MASCULINITIES

As many of the chapters in this book illustrate, the notion of men as breadwinners, which has been central to the gender binary at the heart of patriarchal societies for such a long time, continues to hold sway in constructions of hegemonic masculinity. Across a diversity of international contexts, a common feature of this binary is what Connell (2005) refers to as the patriarchal dividend, according to which men not only in positions of power but also in a range of subordinate locations benefit from and are ‘complicit’ with the wider subordination of women to men. This subordination is manifested most obviously in men’s greater access to employment and to the public sphere in general, a corollary of which is an expectation on men to enjoy success in their public lives. As the unevenness of economic development characteristic of neoliberal capitalism marginalizes massive numbers of lower-educated men, however, their inability to meet such expectations pulls them away from the complicit group of masculinities towards more traditionally marginalized groups such as homosexuals, ethnic minorities and, ultimately, women. While their marginality is thus relative, in understanding the way it is experienced it is crucial to remember that men occupying subordinate positions continue to be positioned and judged by the standards of more ‘successful’ men. Thus Cornwall (2016), drawing on Connell (2005), points out: ‘for all that men in general derive benefits from the patriarchal dividend, those embodying subordinate masculinities may suffer disproportionately the costs of existing gender regimes’ (2016: 9).

These costs are first explored in Harris’s contribution (Chap. 2), which reports the findings of ethnographic research with young and middle-aged men in Kaduna, northern Nigeria. Harris begins by providing a historical account of the impact of colonialism on dominant constructions of masculinity in Nigeria, which perfectly illustrates two key points about masculinities: first, as social constructs that differ across time and space, masculinities are fundamentally malleable; and second, while masculinities are malleable, it is elite men who have the resources to exploit this and to define new forms of masculinity, while men in subordinate locations are positioned by them. As Harris shows, before the colonial period, women in Nigeria played a prominent role in public life, both economically and politically, but from the late nineteenth century a European notion of gender as a strict binary hierarchy was brought by missionaries and British colonial officials, who automatically assumed their own mores and lifestyles to be superior. ‘Civilizing’ local populations, then, meant removing women from the political and economic

domains, while African men came to be expected to live up to the masculinity embodied by their white European counterparts, with its emphasis on the male provider role. The latter, ‘control over material resources’, now constitutes one of four key pillars of masculinity by which men in Kaduna are judged, alongside control over human resources, particularly wives and children; virility; and the exhibition of bravery or protection, often through forms of violence.

Harris’s main focus is on the consequences of these pillars of masculinity in an economic context that makes it near impossible for men to be perceived as successful. In this she illustrates a third key point about masculinities: that men in subordinate locations are not only positioned by the constructs of ‘those above’ but also that they, and those around them, are often trapped by such constructs. In Kaduna, unemployment is widespread after neoliberal policies have all but removed formal employment opportunities, the textile industry undercut—as in Western contexts—by cheap imports, and government exhorting men to start up small businesses rather than investing in the economy. This leads many young men to be drawn into using the fourth pillar of masculinity to gain some form of recognition within their local community, a process at the root of sectarian violence that plagued Kaduna for more than a decade. The research Harris draws upon stems from a non-governmental organization project she participated in, which aimed to teach unemployed young men that there are other ways of gaining respect, such as acting as local volunteers. Despite the relative success of the project in reducing the incidence and likelihood of violence, however, the male breadwinner norm continues. This places a tremendous burden on older men who are unable to support their families, as well as increasing the likelihood of poverty by keeping women out of the labour force, while younger men are denied the opportunity to marry as long as they remain excluded from opportunities to earn a living.

Following on from Harris, Nixon’s contribution (Chap. 3) offers a careful and detailed discussion of the British context to explore the outcome of fractures in the relationship between working-class work and men’s feelings of dignity. The starting point is to draw the reader’s attention to the longstanding history of the relationship between gender and skill, and how both of these are related to not just work but also a sense of *occupation*. The way that working-class masculinity came to valorize certain types of ‘embodied’ hard and heavy manual labour and highly skilled trade and craft occupations is evidenced as more than a modern, commonly used cliché. Rather, it is something that was embedded in intergenerational transfers of knowledge

from father to son and through the trades apprenticeships system, a process that ensured men's dominance and protection of systems of skills acquisition. Exploring the subtleties of the formation of masculine identities around skill and craft, Nixon also reminds us that many working-class men were not part of the labour aristocracy of skilled workers but still were able to derive a sense of dignity from dealing with the arduous tasks involved in forms of hard and physically demanding labour that entailed risks to and sacrifice of the body. The first argument Nixon presents, then, is that the mastery of machinery and the essential role that working-class men played in providing the backbone of growing economies permitted a sense of superiority over women and educated men, underpinning a sense of respect and ensuring that they were not subject to a stigmatized status.

This historical backdrop sits in sharp contrast to the postindustrialized economy that working-class young men in the UK now face. As Nixon argues, the shedding of typically working-class jobs since the advent of neoliberalism and the attendant restructuring of the economy has led the male labor market inactivity rate to almost double since the 1980s, while there are growing rates of unemployment among already marginalized men. The disproportionately working-class profile of this group evidences the marginalization that working-class men have experienced during the transition from an industrial to a service economy, in which they often find it impossible to recreate a sense of dignity, value and self-respect. This might be presumed to be mainly the case for older, less well-educated men, but Nixon shows that young working-class men have also fared poorly in the transformed economy. Indeed, he explains how the marginalization of working-class young men is now taking on new dimensions. In addition to the deleterious effects of unemployment, jobless working-class young men are also now increasingly subjected to the stigmatizing discourse that has accompanied, and been a necessary component of, the neoliberal imperative to strip away state welfare support. Thus, according to the logic of neoliberalism and its imperatives of individual responsibility and self-governance, young men who are 'yearning to labour' are increasingly demonized as feckless 'shirkers' who avoid the responsibility of work.

In its arguments about the stigma of unemployment, Nixon's chapter seems to confirm that, as Cornwall (2016: 9–10) suggests, the emphasis on self-making and autonomy characteristic of neoliberalism exacerbates the tensions and disjunctures stemming from the failure of working-class men to live up to the injunctions of the male breadwinner role. This theme continues in Ian Mahoney and Tony Kern's contribution (Chap. 4) on the

coping strategies developed by working-class young men in the face of profound economic and social insecurity in the English Midlands. Like many of those covered in Nixon's chapter, the working lives of the young men in this study are far removed from those of their predecessors in what had been a heartland of the UK's industrial economy, moving between unemployment, back-to-work programmes and insecure, low-paid, unskilled labour. These experiences of work were played out against a background of precarious housing careers, moving between hostel accommodation, sofa-surfing and homelessness, as well as routine alcohol, drug and substance misuse, and outbreaks of petty criminality. Despite having almost no control over their lives, some of these young men still felt responsible for their predicament and internalized their failures as the products of poor individual choices, reflecting wider discourses condemning the unemployed for their fecklessness and irresponsibility. At the same time, however, Mahoney and Kearon also find what they call:

subversion, resistance, and the formulation and reaffirmation of a defensible self-identity, which provides a sense of belonging, purpose and order in the face of continual ontological insecurity, individualism and social and economic isolation.

In particular, they point to the processes of symbolic resistance and meaning-making engaged in by the young men—such as attempting to subvert increasingly stringent and demeaning welfare regulations—as well as the forms of 'street capital' that were crucial to their survival in difficult circumstances. Both of these were important in establishing a sense of control, both materially and ontologically, where everything about their lives was precarious. Importantly, as has been stressed in so much work on marginalized people labelled as part of a morally corrupt underclass (see especially Shildrick et al. 2014), Mahoney and Kearon stress that, despite their involvement in petty crime and the display of elements of a 'protest masculinity', the young men maintained 'normal' aspirations to obtain regular paid employment and to be able to fulfill roles as fathers.

Continuing the theme of marginalization among working-class young men, Andersson and Beckman's contribution (Chap. 5) draws on an in-depth, qualitative account of the experiences of unemployed young men in Västervik, a small municipality on the Baltic coast of Sweden. The Nordic states are often held up as exemplars of equality, but Andersson and Beckman keenly point out that Sweden, like most industrialized countries, has disproportionately high

levels of youth unemployment relative to the adult population. Exploring the experiences of young men outside the metropole, they point to the need for closer attention to space and place as part of any intersectional analysis. In the particular locale discussed, they show that the construction of a locally valued masculinity is reliant on employment and consumption, but that these two most central—and interconnected—elements are inaccessible to many young jobless men. The acquisition of a driver's licence, for example, is impossible for some respondents, which 'places [them] in a marginalized or even displaced position in the local culture of masculinity . . . [and] stood out as a signifier of the loss of control over one's own life situation'. As such, there is a need for masculinity to be reimagined by these young men, and the authors explore this reimagining with reference to Archer's (2007) concepts of 'contextual discontinuity' and 'contextual incongruity'. Echoing other recent studies (e.g. Roberts *forthcoming*), Andersson and Beckmann argue that this process of reimagining gives scope for the development of 'an alternative understanding of the meaning of work', alongside a tendency towards the valorization of different types of masculinity, most notably of more ethical or 'caring' masculinities (Hanlon 2012; Elliot 2016). Two important points emerge here. First, the attitudes espoused by the young men in this study show that such transformations do not only occur in typically advantaged social locations (at the level both of the person and of the place), and may even be more likely to emerge among men in subordinate positions (see e.g. Meshcherkina 2002). Second, while such masculinities may emerge in less advantaged social locations, the capacity to *develop* these new forms of masculinity is limited by a lack of access to material resources. This finding supports Lindisfarne and Neale's (2016: 48) argument that, while,

again and again, we see elite men creating new masculinities, and we see other men trapped in new circumstances where they can no longer measure up . . . we also see men, and women, in new and straitened circumstances constructing alternative subordinate masculinities. These are often fragile and lived with ambivalence, but they are much needed.

Beyond—and indeed extending from—this reimagining, while a relatively strong working-class identity emerges among their respondents, Andersson and Beckman illustrate that the young men are cognizant of the possibility of further downward social mobility for their generation, with the lack of employment available to them considered in negative comparison with their parents' youth; a youth they view nostalgically. The function of nostalgia,

however, is not simply to dwell on the past and valorize an older plausibility for constructing a masculine self. Instead, Andersson and Beckman suggest that a more radical potential is presented by their participants where nostalgia acts as a form of critique of the present, with its valorization of the ‘enterprising self’ and concomitant devaluation of other ways of being:

In contrast to the prevalent figure of the working-class man as left behind and without a legitimate place in the present (Nayak 2006), a counter image is being recalled where important and consistent features such as “hard work,” orderliness and respectability—that is, being included among the ones who “keep the country going”—should mean having a legitimate place in society and in the nation as a whole.

Such forms of resistance to neoliberal governmentality will be returned to below.

MASCULINITIES AND EDUCATION

The relationship between neoliberalism, masculinity and labour, and its production of marginalization, is of course not limited to the economic. The book’s next two chapters make this abundantly clear by considering how recent transformations have had a bearing on working-class young men’s experiences of and engagements with education. The first of these is Michael’s Ward’s contribution (Chap. 6) about young working-class men based in the former industrial heartlands of the South Wales valleys. Ward’s account offers another critique of one of the key ingredients of the so-called ‘crisis of masculinity’—namely, boys’ ‘educational underachievement’. While more people than ever participate in education to around 18 years old in most industrialized countries, the relative lack of take-up of university places by young men compared with their female counterparts has been presented as cause for concern. Within this, the apparent disaffection of working-class boys from formal education has been a recurrent concern in academic and policy literature (Francis 2006; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill 2014), reflecting the centrality of educational credentialism to the ethos of neoliberal competitiveness. Such disaffection has been assumed to stem from a continuity with constructions of working-class masculinity among previous generations. Ward, by contrast, questions such assumptions, focusing instead on the positive educational engagements of high-achieving

working-class boys and the ways in which they manage a studious identity in a location imbued with a deep industrial heritage.

Ward details the way that the traditional masculinity associated with the industrial heritage of their locale is rejected by these studious boys, but also shows how the boys suffer rejection and marginalization in the form of bullying and name-calling because of their apparent deviation from the locally sanctioned ideal of being masculine at school—that is, being strong and athletic, rejecting the authority of teachers, and disregarding school rules around conduct and dress. Importantly, though, Ward argues for the need to consider how boys can ‘code shift’ their performance of masculinity depending on the audience they face. This means that rather than seeing educationally engaged boys as performing a masculinity in keeping with the demands of neoliberalism, the legacy of industrial masculinity so imbued in the place they grew up in creeps in to performances of masculinity beyond the school gates. Consequently, contradictory and complex performances emerge, with risky drinking practices, the objectification of women and intergroup mocking and ‘banter’ as forms of mild subordination being common.

The next contribution (Chap. 7) on masculinity and education comes from Toni Kosonen’s study of men in the Finnish vocational adult learning context. This is a group of men who are scarcely considered in social research and, like Ward, Kosonen problematizes the assessment of working-class masculinity as being automatically incompatible with learning environments. A key point made through Kosonen’s interviews with 32 male adult learners, again echoing Ward, is that working-class masculinity in this setting is far from unitary. His analysis illuminates the ways that these men have internalized neoliberal, normative expectations of becoming ‘flexible, loyal, co-operative, learning- and self-improvement- oriented “worker-citizens”’, but that such internalization produces various responses and different modes of engagement or protest, leading Kosonen to consider three categories of masculinity that can be identified in the men’s engagement with learning. These are described as gendered and classed identity positions that are available for men to take up: being a ‘proper man’ who is a worthy citizen in a learning society; an ‘independent man’ who is autonomous and holds a professional job; and an ‘honest man’ who is able to identify moral integrity. Differentiated access to cultural and social resources, however, ensures that these discursive locations are not equally available to all. As such, drawing on Connell’s language, Kosonen points to the way such identity positions form a relational hierarchy, even though this is a hierarchy of masculinities that all

suffer from a degree of marginalization, in that those adopting these positions either seek the authorization of those occupying hegemonic positions or engage in protest against them. Those who are most engaged in the learning society ideal seek to distance themselves from particular types of working-class masculinity, but also reinscribe their own sense of masculinity by using forms of language that valorize and emphasize their investment in the education process and their success in engaging in development processes during their career. Kosonen draws on and echoes the work of Diane Reay in asserting that such investment comes with a risk, and identifying such risks, some men will pursue a ‘legitimated citizenship in the context of a late modern learning society’, while others adopt a respectable working-class manhood that is predicated on pursuing access to the ‘wage labour society’.

ACCEPTING AND RESISTING NEOLIBERAL GOVERNMENTALITY

In the next two contributions we return to the theme of masculinities and economic marginalization, with studies by Jeremy Morris (Chap. 8) and Alexandrina Vanke (Chap. 9) on the subject of working-class men in Russia. As Walker has illustrated in his research on working-class youth (2011, 2016), economic marginality in Russia takes a different form from that experienced in most Western countries—and, as we have seen, in sub-Saharan Africa—with income precarity resulting predominantly from the flexibility of workers’ wages and working hours rather than outright unemployment. It is this flexibility that has allowed near-obsolete Soviet era factories to continue to survive in the new market environment. Thus, in contrast to the postindustrial service economies of the West, traditional forms of blue-collar, manual labour are still widely available in Russia, albeit characterized by low (and flexible) pay and, concomitantly, low prestige. Indeed, it is the impoverishment of these forms of employment—both material and symbolic—that has been responsible for the dispossession of working-class men in Russia just as much as its disappearance has been in the West. At a time when a more traditional ‘breadwinning’ masculinity is being reasserted in Russia as part of its transition to capitalism (see Walker 2016), working-class men’s low earning capacity, alongside their association with what is seen as a ‘backward’ part of the old, Soviet economy, places them in what Morris calls ‘an unparalleled position of subalternity’. At the same time, as both Morris and Vanke show, foreign investment in Russia has led to the emergence of new employment opportunities working for international companies that

involve different kinds of reward—and pressure—from those typical of Russian factories.

Morris's study, based on ethnographic research with young and middle-aged men in a small industrial town in European Russia, focuses on the central role played by car and garage culture for his respondents, and the connections between men's relationships with their cars and their attitudes towards the types of economic engagement seemingly required of them under Russia's version of neoliberal capitalism. Garage culture itself is a crucial, authentic site for the performance of a brand of blue-collar masculinity and homosociality among Morris's respondents, valorizing as it does their technical skills and ability to work together to resolve mechanical problems. However, within the friendship group that Morris studies can be discerned two very different standpoints on the new forms of employment and consumption that working-class men in Russia are now expected to engage in. One respondent, Petr, has transitioned away from work in a Soviet-type labour habitus and is trying to 'make the grade' at a new, German-owned, transnational corporation, and is thus embracing a different, more entrepreneurial masculinity. Hand in hand with his job goes ownership of a Western-style (although still Russian) car, purchased with consumer credit, which symbolizes his becoming a flexible, neoliberal consumer-citizen. Nikita, by contrast, is wary of the demands placed on him by the new economy, seeing them as stripping him of autonomy: a new, 'delicate' foreign car would trap him not only through credit debt but by robbing him of the self-reliance he has as an owner of a mechanically simple Russian car. Taking a job at the German car factory—necessary to obtain credit for a car—would similarly deprive him of the autonomy he has at the old cement works and in informal taxi-driving:

Nikita: Ok, the lad will have . . . a discount or credit on a fancy foreign-style car that will fall apart on our roads. So fucking what? To break his back for the 'new deal' at the plant . . .? Physically that job, despite the shiny foreign plant and showers and clean overalls, is no different from my old one at the Cement. And we have showers too you know.

These divergent responses to the forms of self-work and social mobility demanded by neoliberal governmentality show how working-class men engage in the boundary-drawing processes described by Lamont not only between themselves and other class and ethnic groups but also among

themselves. As such, they indicate the fraught nature of the transformations expected.

Vanke's chapter, based on qualitative research in a number of predominantly industrial regions as well as Moscow and St. Petersburg, similarly finds divergent responses from working-class men to the economic realities of post-Soviet Russia. However, for her, age is a significant factor, with older workers tending to stick most closely both to older enterprises and to a traditional 'breadwinner' narrative. In contrast to some other studies (e.g. Meshcherkina 2002), she finds that these men are able to fulfil expectations of them by bending themselves to the demands of the new economy, either by retraining or by migrating for higher wages. Younger men, by contrast, undergo different and more thoroughgoing forms of 'work on the self' in connection with their preference for higher-paying, but more demanding, foreign-owned companies. In contrast to Soviet-style Russian factories, whose general disorganization forces them to exercise a 'gentler' form of governmentality on workers, foreign-owned enterprises operate much more severe labour regimes in order to maximize the profits they can derive from workers' bodily capital, reducing rest days and extending working hours through overtime:

A 22-year-old man worked 12 hours a day every day. He was dead on his feet at work and taken away by an emergency ambulance. He had something like a micro stroke. (31 years, conveyor operator, Nokian, 18.04.2011, St. Petersburg)

In part, the longer hours worked by the younger men are a function of the fact that they must fund consumer lifestyles which, as Morris also argues, constitute forms of 'work on the self'. Rather than modern cars, Vanke's respondents invest economic and intellectual resources into their appearance and personal development, buying expensive clothing and funding sporting lifestyles, for example. Reflecting the outright dominance of a more businesslike, consumerist, hegemonic masculinity in Russia (Walker 2017), Vanke's respondents feel the need to emulate these forms of masculine performance and the social mobility they symbolize in order to project a more successful masculine subjectivity than that of 'worker'. As she points out, however, a relative lack of material and cultural resources limits their capacity to achieve the normative form of masculinity that the various 'techniques of the self' are supposed to realize, leading them to lack confidence about their chances in the marriage marketplace:

When you get to know a girl, you need to tell her your status. Well, I'm . . . jeez, you work on a three-shift rota, and you're a worker . . . What will I do with you? Why the hell would I need you? (33 years, general mechanic, Nissan, 19.04.2011, St. Petersburg)

This is not to say that Vanke's respondents are entirely powerless against the demands of neoliberal capitalism and the ways they are positioned by it. For some, anger at their overwork and lack of rights in the workplace leads them to resistance through trade union activity, which in turn underpins a 'heroic' and more collectively orientated form of masculinity. On the whole, however, working-class young men in this study appear to be aware of, and self-conscious about, their social position as 'losers' (see also Walker 2016). Indeed, what Vanke sees as more egalitarian attitudes towards women than those she finds among older workers seem to stem from the problems the younger men face in living up to wider notions of masculine success—and, concomitantly, women's expectations of them.

The contextual lens shifts again, but similar themes arise, in Idriss and Morgan's examination of the lives of Arab-Australian young men living on the outskirts of Western Sydney (Chap. 10). Through their attention to work and aspiration, the authors offer a welcome addition to a literature that has most often addressed Muslim men in relation to multiculturalism, belonging and nationhood. This contribution, then, permits a consideration of these young men in ways that usefully dilute dominant popular representations that consider them in relation to criminality, terrorism or sexually predatory behaviours. A point of focus for Idriss and Morgan is how issues of respect and respectability come to feature strongly in young men's lives, much as has been the case for other Arabic working-class men (Noble 2007) and for working-class women more broadly (Skeggs 1998). This is the starting point for their discussion of both continuities and, to some extent, changes in working-class masculinity as performed and negotiated in the lives of four young men, whose stories act as case studies. The complexity of managing the various facets of masculine identity in neoliberal contexts can be observed in the participants' embrace of the need to aspire to work beyond traditional male employment spheres. Indeed, the young men, despite their lack of relevant social capital, hold aspirations for work in the creative industries, which—abundant with short-term contracts, demands for flexibility and the (im)possibility of portfolio careers—are sometimes held up as emblematic of the ideal neoliberal employment model. Nevertheless, their apparent openness to new ways of making a

living and seeming preference for ‘unmanly’ work belies a high degree of inertia in the masculinity on display. As Idriss and Morgan illustrate, an intergenerational transference of norms and values takes place through ‘patriarchal cultural templates that continue to guide the way men frame their ambitions and the enduring forms of masculinity that Arab-Australian young men perform’. One feature of this transmission of norms from grandfathers to fathers, and fathers to sons is the immutable significance given to social mobility, and an emphasis on the relationship between respectability, financial security and independence. Adherence to such a cultural script, though, is not easy in an economic climate in which work is characteristically unstable and precarious. As the young men make their way through this unstable field of employment, their culturally developed masculine sensibilities are at odds with demands for attributes such as versatility and entrepreneurialism, and, notably, the requirement to work for little or no pay in ‘cool’ industries to have a chance of a better paid—but still portfolio—career. Ultimately, the authors show that their participants’ feel the need to fulfill roles as husbands, fathers and providers, which underlies a drift towards the pursuit of steady work, and makes the creative careers of the gig economy both inaccessible and undesirable for these young men.

The subtle reconfiguration of masculinity in response to neoliberalism, and the attendant ways that expectations are challenged as part of this reworking, are of course not confined to urban settings but are also very much in evidence in rural localities. The book’s next contribution, by Levi Gahman (Chap. 11), paints a vivid picture of the centrality of place in producing particular forms of masculinity, and the adaptable nature of a revered hegemonic masculinity, whose malleability sees men succumb to a harmful, market-centric notion of ‘manhood’. Gahman’s chapter is informed by an intensive ethnographic study participant-observing various types of blue-collar worker in a small rural setting in Southeast Kansas, USA—a locale he knows intimately having lived and grown up there. Taking as his starting point that the body ‘is inscribed with socially produced meanings and values’, Gahman shows how ‘the practice of neoliberal self-making is reshaping the assertion of manhood for working-class men in rural Southeast Kansas’. This reshaping is manifested in the adoption among his respondents of neoliberal sensibilities emphasizing entrepreneurialism, self-commodification, fragmentation and responsabilization, which are seen as necessary personal strategies in ‘making it’ economically and making it as a man. Simultaneously, the recognition that hard labour now needs to be

fused with a new competitiveness in order to achieve these goals sits alongside a prevailing social conservatism rooted in colonial/settler nationalism, according to which men—and able-bodied, white men specifically—are positioned as superior. What emerges so powerfully in Gahman’s account is the way that the spirit of competition and parallel demise of collective sensibilities has produced a hyperindividualized version of masculinity, exemplified by disinclinations to support co-workers for fear of disrupting one’s own productivity or position in the eyes of the boss. While there is an awareness among Gahman’s co-workers that they are essentially exploited blue-collar workers, there is a total inability to orient themselves towards solidarities of any kind. There is, of course, an enjoyment of homosociality manifested in camaraderie among the men, but their narratives are characterized by what Gahman sees as

a fragmented sense of being in which ‘pulling your weight’ and embodying competitive self-reliance is given precedence over collective unity, mutual aid and even personal/community wellbeing.

In this context, ‘teamwork’ and ‘collective enterprise’ are merely buzzwords, part of a discursive illusion that clouds the reality of the acid bath of competition. This environment leads to lateral hostility, with workers ‘complaining about, and negatively critiquing, their co-workers more often than their bosses, managers, or even capitalist economic systems as a whole’. Ultimately, the men’s inability to see social conditions as anything but individually made masks the fact that they are being squeezed towards greater productivity in the name of the economy, and produces an entrepreneurial and yet conservative masculinism that worsens social inequalities—stemming from capitalism, patriarchy, colonialism—and diminishes the possibility of collective action: a victory for the neoliberal imperative.

The tensions between continuity and change are explored again as we return to Australia for Kirsty Whitman’s contribution (Chap. 12). Australia’s relatively unique situation sees working-class masculinity celebrated and exalted at a discursive level, such that many would argue that it occupies a hegemonic position. This hegemony permits and facilitates social change, such that, as Whitman contends, working-class masculinity can be absorbed by, and absorb, neoliberal discourse. Part of this absorption has, as in Gahman’s chapter, led to a greater emphasis on the central tenets of neoliberalism, such as individualism, personal responsibility and the logic of meritocracy. Reflecting this, working-class men in Whitman’s interview-based

research blame any perceived failure or lack of success in their public lives—even in the context of the global financial crisis—as resulting from personal shortcomings. However, at the same time that they appear to submit to neoliberal governmentality in the work sphere, they appear to challenge it in the private sphere. Destabilizing the ways Australian working-class masculinities are constructed as being tough and unemotional, Whitman first attends to men’s *desire* to establish themselves as ‘good’ fathers by involvement with their children, and how this is obstructed by the lack of family-friendly workplace policies (see also Roberts 2013b). As noted above in relation to Andersson and Beckmann’s findings, then, the working class, rather than being a repository for backward or unprogressive social views, might be uniquely located to deliver *equality* by *necessity*. However, this necessity does not extend to other domestic work, as Whitman notes that despite her respondents’ openness in terms of fathering and its centrality to their conceptualization of themselves as men, none spoke about their duties around the house, framing ‘work’ as only paid employment. A further important point in Whitman’s account, though, and something that should not be underestimated, is the presence of emotion in interviews with men, even when we might not be looking for it (see also Roberts forthcoming). This very presence suggests that we have to become more attuned to exploring men’s emotionality, rather than assuming that its absence remains a part of hegemonic ideals.

NEOLIBERALISM, EMPLOYMENT AND WELLBEING

A number of the studies presented in the book address economic and policy changes that concern different aspects of the wellbeing of working-class men, a theme that continues in the final two chapters. As noted above, whitewashed versions of blue-collar masculinity have come to be the object of a kind of class voyeurism in recent years through the medium of reality TV programmes about ‘rugged’ professions (Carroll 2011; Fleras and Dixon 2011). Timo Aho (Chap. 13) describes the lived experiences and identity work of men occupying one such profession—truck driving—in contemporary Finland, and he engages in particular with the notion of ‘autonomy’ associated with this type of work. As he points out, it is the autonomy and independence enjoyed by truckers—skilled workers with the freedom of the open road—that leads Ouellet (1994) to argue that in the US context, truckers occupy a heroic working-class masculinity that is admired by other motorists. Aho also finds the autonomy and independence

of truck driving to be central to his respondents' construction of masculinity, although they are more 'respectable' than 'heroic', and emphasize also practical experience, professionalism and hard work. However, with the advent of neoliberal restructuring of work and organizational settings across Finland—despite its reputation as a strong adherent to the Nordic welfare state model—the autonomy traditionally enjoyed by men in this profession has been placed under threat by technological monitoring systems enabling new forms of surveillance in the name of better performance management. In the face of such technological impositions that now adorn their cabins, Aho's truckers recall with fondness the old times when they were entrusted to do their jobs using their skills and experience, and were given instructions in person.

There is thus a frictional relationship between the neoliberal shift in the haulage sector's new operational environment and the truckers' gendered habitus, which, as another example of Taylorist deskilling processes threatening to invalidate their skills and discretion (Burawoy 1985), undermines the self-respect that truckers derive from their work. In this context, Aho finds his respondents defending themselves against what is experienced as a process of occupational degradation, finding ways around the technological straightjackets placed on them, and emphasizing their continued value, particularly in relation to road safety. The loosening of licensing restrictions, for example, which has widened and thus pressurized the labour market of the sector, is regarded by the truckers as having opened the door to dangerous drivers, the only antidote to which is their skills and experience. In this way, Aho's respondents are able to shore up a respectable blue-collar masculinity, albeit one that is under threat.

The impact of employment change on men's relationships with work and, in turn, on their wellbeing is addressed more directly in the final contribution by Steve Robertson, Brendan Gough and Mark Robinson (Chap. 14), which draws on studies and secondary data from a range of neoliberal economies. Robertson et al. begin by pointing out some of the ways that neoliberalism affects the health of working-class men through its impact on the health policy arena, where different groups of men in subordinate locations are often stigmatized as risk-takers, and where a tendency towards a short-termist, results-driven agenda prevents the development of programmes that might be able to reach them. With regard to employment change, as well as indicating the link between forms of inequality and deprivation caused by neoliberal economic reform and male suicide rates, Robertson et al. highlight the connection between in-work poverty and the mental, physical

and social wellbeing of both individuals and communities. However, drawing on both macro- and microlevel secondary data, they stress above all the disproportional impact of the forms of insecure and unsatisfying labour that have proliferated under neoliberalism, as well as unemployment, on working-class men, arguing that ‘neoliberal working practices have the greatest negative health impacts on men from areas of multiple disadvantage’, and that such men ‘may be reluctant to engage with a quasi-privatised health service which reinforces dominant neoliberal messages of self-care, autonomy and (self-)blame.’

They are also critical of the notion that new forms of employment characteristic of service-dominated economies, and the performances they require of men, may bring about or signify any fundamental or far-reaching change in the ways masculinities—working-class or otherwise—are constructed. Noting and accepting that the assimilation of previously marginalized or subordinated masculinity practices that blur social and symbolic boundaries is now widespread, Robertson et al. suggest that this apparent ‘softening’ of masculinity is simply a reflection of the demands of a more feminized economy and the success of neoliberal governmentality in its service, rather than of any significant shift in existing systems of power and inequality. As such, they conclude that if we are to understand men’s health and wellbeing within neoliberal societies,

it is clear that we must retain a relational model which highlights power differentials and intersubjective encounters predicated on material and discursive forces.

Indeed, at a moment in history when social divisions fomented under conditions of neoliberalism are being sharpened, politicized and mobilized so effectively in countries from the USA and the UK to France, the Netherlands and Russia, it is clear that an approach that is cognizant of power differentials between men should remain central to the study of all dimensions of men’s lives. Taking the chapters of this book together, it is difficult not to conclude with the argument, set out by Gahman (this volume), that:

Neoliberal governmentality in general disciplines subjects into consenting to more acute forms of surveillance and control that covertly exacerbate already-existing arrangements of oppression, exclusion, and privilege.

It is for this reason that such covert processes—and pockets of resistance to them—should be made visible, which is the primary aim of this book.

REFERENCES

- Allen, K. (2016). Top girls navigating austere times: Interrogating youth transitions since the “crisis”. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 19(6), 805–820.
- Archer, M. (2007). *Making our way through the world. Human reflexivity and social mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Archer, L., & Yamashita, H. (2003). Theorising inner-city masculinities: “Race”, class, gender and education. *Gender and Education*, 15(2), 115–132.
- Barker, G. (2005). *Dying to be men: Youth masculinity and social exclusion*. London: Routledge.
- Bauman, Z. (2016). *Strangers at the door*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bidulph, S. (2010). *The new manhood*. Sydney: Finch.
- Burawoy, M. (1985). *The politics of production*. London: Verso.
- Carroll, H. (2008). Men’s soaps: Automotive television programming and contemporary working-class masculinities. *Television and New Media*, 9(4), 263–283.
- Carroll, H. (2011). *Affirmative reaction: New formations of white masculinity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Collinson, D. L. (1992). *Managing the shopfloor: Subjectivity, masculinity and workplace culture*. Berlin: de Gruyter.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). Globalization, imperialism, and masculinities. In M. Kimmel, J. Hearn, & R. W. Connell (Eds.), *Handbook of studies on men and masculinities*. London: Sage.
- Connell, R. W., & Wood, J. (2005). Globalization and business masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 7(4), 347–364.
- Cornwall, A. (2016). Introduction: Masculinities under neoliberalism. In A. Cornwall, F. Karioris, & N. Lindisfarne (Eds.), *Masculinities under neoliberalism* (pp. 1–28). London: Zed Books.
- Elliott, K. (2016). Caring masculinities: Theorizing an emerging concept. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(3), 240–259.
- Faludi, S. (1999). *Stiffed: The betrayal of the American man*. New York: Perennial.
- Farrell, W. (1993). *The myth of male power: Why men are the disposable sex*. Berkeley: Berkley Trade.
- Fleras, A., & Dixon, S. M. (2011). Cutting, driving, digging, and harvesting: Re-masculinizing the working-class heroic. *Canadian Journal of Communication*, 36(4), 579–597.
- Francis, B. (2006). Heroes or zeroes? The discursive positioning of “underachieving boys” in English neo-liberal education policy. *Journal of Education Policy*, 21(2), 187–200.
- Francombe-Webb, J., & Silk, M. (2016). Young girls’ embodied experiences of femininity and social class. *Sociology*, 50(4), 652–672.
- Ganesh, J. (2017, February 17). Masculinity crisis? What crisis? *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/6f2355be-f36e-11e6-8758-6876151821a6>

- Garcia, G. (2008). *The decline of men: How the American male is getting axed, giving up and flipping off his future*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Gospel, H. (1998). The revival of apprenticeship training in Britain. *British Journal of Industrial Relations*, 3, 435–498.
- Griffin, C. (2000). Discourses of crisis and loss: Analysing the “boys’ underachievement” debate. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 3(2), 167–188.
- Hanlon, N. (2012). *Masculinities, care and equality: Identity and nurture in men’s lives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Haylett, C. (2001). Illegitimate subjects? Abject Whites, neoliberal modernisation, and middle class multiculturalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 19, 351–370.
- Haywood, C., & Mac an Ghaill, M. (2014). *Education and masculinities: Social, cultural and global transformations*. London: Routledge.
- Lamont, M. (2000). *The dignity of working men: Morality and the boundaries of race, class and immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Lawler, S. (2005). Disgusted subjects: The making of middle-class identities. *The Sociological Review*, 53(3), 429–446.
- Lentin, A. (2008). Europe and the silence about race. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 11(4), 487–503.
- Lindisfarne, N., & Neale, J. (2016). Masculinities and the lived experience of neoliberalism. In A. Cornwall, F. Kariotis, & N. Lindisfarne (Eds.), *Masculinities under neoliberalism* (pp. 29–50). London: Zed Books.
- Lloyd, T. (1999). *Young men’s attitudes to gender and work*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/F559.pdf>
- MacDowell, L. (2000). Learning to serve? Employment aspirations and attitudes of young working-class men in an era of labour market restructuring. *Gender, Place & Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, 7(4), 389–416.
- McRobbie, A. (2009). *The aftermath of feminism: Gender, culture and social change*. London: Sage.
- Meshcherkina, M. (2002). Bytie muzhskogo soznaniia: opyt rekonstruktsii maskulinnoi identichnosti srednego i rabocheho klassa [Being of masculine consciousness: Experience of reconstruction of masculine identity in middle- and working-class], in S. Oushakine (Ed.), *O Muzhe(N)stvennosti* [On (fe) maleness]. Moscow: New Literary Observer.
- Nayak, A. (2003). Last of the ‘Real Geordies’? White masculinities and the subcultural response to deindustrialisation. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 21(1), 7–25.
- Nayak, A. (2006). Displaced masculinities: Chavs, youth and class in the post-industrial city. *Sociology*, 40(5), 813–831.
- Noble, G. (2007). Respect and respectability amongst second-generation Arab and Muslim Australian men. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 28(3), 331–344.

- Ouellet, L. J. (1994). *Pedal to the metal. The work lives of truckers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Pease, B., & Pringle, K. (2001). *A man's world? Changing men's practices in a globalized world*. London: Zed Books.
- Petersen, A. (1998). *Unmasking the masculine: Men and identity in a sceptical age*. London: Sage.
- Pilkington, H. (2016). *Loud and proud: Passion and politics in the English Defence League*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Reay, D. (2001). Finding or losing yourself?: Working-class relationships to education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(4), 333–346.
- Rhodes, J. (2011). Fighting for “respectability”: Media representations of the white, “working-class” male boxing “hero”. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 35(4), 350–376.
- Roberts, S. (forthcoming). *Young working-class men in transition*. London: Routledge.
- Roberts, S. (2010). Misrepresenting “choice biographies”?: A reply to Woodman. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 13(1), 137–149.
- Roberts, K. (2013a). Education to work transitions: How the old middle went missing and why the new middle remains elusive. *Sociological Research Online*, 18(1). <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/18/1/3.html>>10.5153/sro.2650
- Roberts, S. (2013b). “Boys will be boys . . . won't they?": Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities. *Sociology*, 47(4), 671–686.
- Roberts, S. (2014). *Debating modern masculinities: Change, continuity, crisis?* Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Roberts, S., & Evans, S. (2013). Aspirations' and imagined futures: The im/possibilities for Britain's young working class. In W. Atkinson, S. Roberts, & M. Savage (Eds.), *Class inequality in austerity Britain* (pp. 70–89). Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Ruspini, E., Hearn, J., Pease, B., & Pringle, K. (Eds.). (2011). *Men and masculinities around the world: Transforming men's practices*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Savage, M. (2000). *Class analysis and social transformation*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. (1972). *The hidden injuries of class*. New York: Norton.
- Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., & Furlong, A. (2014). ‘Benefit street’ and the myth of workless communities. *Sociological Research Online*, 19(3).
- Silva, J. (2012). Constructing adulthood in an age of uncertainty. *American Sociological Review*, 77(4), 505–522.
- Skeggs, B. (1998). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, self, culture*. London: Routledge.
- Tolson, A. (1977). *The limits of masculinity*. London: Routledge.

- Tyler, I. (2013). *Revolting subjects: Social abjection and resistance in neoliberal Britain*. London: Zed Books.
- Walker, C. (2010). Classed and gendered “learning careers”: Transitions from vocational to higher education in Russia. In D. Johnson (Ed.), *Politics, modernisation and educational reform in Russia: From past to present* (Oxford studies in comparative education, 20, 1) (pp. 99–120). Oxford: GB, Symposium Books.
- Walker, C. (2011). *Learning to labour in post-Soviet Russia: Vocational youth in transition*. London: Routledge.
- Walker, C. (2016). In search of “stability”: Working-class men, masculinity and wellbeing in contemporary Russia. In A. Cornwall, N. Lindisfarne, & F. Corioris (Eds.), *Dislocating masculinity (revisited): Comparative ethnographies* (pp. 51–65). London: Zed Books.
- Walker, C. (2017). ‘I just don’t want to connect my life with this occupation’: Working-class young men, manual labour, and social mobility in contemporary Russia. *The British Journal of Sociology*. doi:[10.1111/1468-4446.12299](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12299).
- Walkerdine, V. (2010). Reclassifying upward mobility: Femininity and the neoliberal subject. *Gender and Education*, 15(3), 237–248.
- Webster, C. (2008). Marginalized white ethnicity, race and crime. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12, 293–312.
- Willis, P. (2003). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Woodman, D. (2009). The mysterious case of the pervasive choice biography: Ulrich Beck, structure/agency, and the middling state of theory in the sociology of youth. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(3), 243–256.

Men, Masculinity and Labour-Force Participation in Kaduna, Nigeria: Are There Positive Alternatives to the Provider Role?

Colette Harris

INTRODUCTION

The contradictions between men's socially assigned position as family breadwinners and the increasing impediments to their achieving this anywhere in today's neoliberal world are exposed in many of this book's chapters. This most severely damages the working classes because their historical sectors of employment, those requiring hard manual labour, have declined significantly since the 1970s. Young men have been particularly badly affected by a lack of access to decent jobs, especially the manual labour considered appropriately manly for their social class (Jimenez and Walkerdine 2011; Willis 1977), resulting in many finding themselves in a precarious situation, with little hope of job security or opportunities to further their career aspirations (Standing 2011).

Historically, sub-Saharan Africa had a distinct social and political organization from the other settings dealt with in this volume, in relation to both class and gender. Prior to the invidious effects of colonialism, women were central to most productive labour, particularly agriculture and trading, so that their status within family and society tended to be high (Falola and

C. Harris (✉)
SOAS University of London, London, UK

Heaton 2008), including among Muslims in the north of Nigeria, the region this chapter deals with (Mack and Boyd 2000).

From the late nineteenth century on, life in Nigeria was unsettled first by contact with Christian missionaries and later by the governing style of colonial officials. These white men worked hard to inculcate Western gender ideology into their subject peoples, including the capitalist-based concept of the male provider. Nevertheless, for the most part, women's productive roles remained strong—they dominated the lucrative palm-oil industry, for instance (Falola and Heaton 2008). However, by the time Nigeria gained its independence in 1960, breadwinning had largely been adopted as essential to masculine identity for all classes, despite the fact that few men could live up to it and that fewer than 10 % were ever formally employed (Lindsay 2003). In the intervening years this has not significantly changed, and today Nigeria's position within the global political economy has made it even harder for men there to support their families financially.

Nigeria's economy has long been dependent on oil from the Niger Delta. Discovered in 1956, oil became significant with the global price rises of the 1970s. As a result the oil price slumps of the 1980s severely affected national finances, forcing the then military government to ask the international financial institutions for a loan. The latter attempted to impose their neo-liberal ideology through a set of conditionalities known as structural adjustment, with the avowed aim of improving economic efficiency. The conditions included liberalizing the currency, removing subsidies on staple foodstuffs and fuel, privatizing state enterprises and cutting back the public sector, thus significantly increasing unemployment and drastically affecting both education and health services. The result has been high levels of impoverishment, increased mortality rates and a major skills decline (Ekanade 2014; Falola and Heaton 2008). Since the return to electoral democracy in 1999, this has been exacerbated by the sale of large numbers of state enterprises at giveaway prices and a reduction in essential infrastructure required for industry to function. Today Nigeria has Africa's lowest formal employment rates (Ekanade 2014), aggravated by the doubling of unemployment between 2007 and 2011 as a result of the Global Financial Crisis (ILO 2017; Muqtada 2012).

The city of Kaduna, the main geopolitical focus of this chapter, lies in the middle-belt northern Nigerian state of that name. Populated by similar numbers of Muslims and Christians, it is best known abroad for periodic episodes of sectarian riots, sufficiently violent to kill thousands of people and

make many more homeless. The last of these followed the presidential election of April 2011. The resulting destruction has negatively affected employment rates, particularly for youths. Thus today, while fathers struggle to meet their families' needs, their sons may have a hard time even gaining the resources to marry (Harris 2016).

The cutbacks mentioned above have deeply affected the Kadunan economy, forcing the closure of most large enterprises. The city had previously been a centre of textile production with multiple large plants employing mainly Christian men from southern ethnicities (Andræ and Beckman 1998). Although the oil refinery and the bottling plant still provide some jobs for the more skilled, most men from local ethnic groups come from a background of farming or petty business and currently survive mainly through casual labour. Their sons are finding even this difficult. The drop in the number of formal workplaces means that many of today's youths are unlikely ever to gain a permanent position despite possessing considerably higher education levels than their fathers.

This situation has been described by Guy Standing as having produced a new class—the precariat. Its members no longer inhabit a stable society or hold realistic expectations of following a life trajectory similar to that of their forefathers. Instead they occupy 'a status that offers no sense of career, no sense of secure occupational identity and few, if any, entitlements to the state and enterprise benefits that several generations of those who saw themselves as belonging to the industrial proletariat or the salariat had come to expect as their due' (Standing 2011: 24). As with the majority of youths I knew in Kaduna, most members of the precariat globally have minimally completed high school, some even holding postgraduate degrees. Few, however, are likely to work solely in the field of their education. Rather, they are condemned to a lifetime of constant retraining for precarious work, generally without benefits.

This chapter addresses the problems associated with the failure of such men adequately to meet the breadwinner role. It shows how Kadunan youths, essentially members of the precariat, seek alternative paths to status even if this may not provide the financial rewards necessary for acquiring those crucial components of adult life—a wife and children. My data come from fieldwork carried out in Kaduna city between 2007 and 2011 while implementing, along with local facilitators, community-based non-formal education projects with women and youths aimed primarily at reducing violence and improving social relationships. Altogether the projects served some 60 young men and 80 women, both Christians

and Muslims, from five different neighbourhoods. Some of the data come from the education sessions themselves, the rest from interactions with other community members and informal discussions. Since my approach draws largely on participant observation, I rarely carry out formal interviews, instead drawing on notes written up at the time of my observations and discussions.¹

The chapter starts by examining the effects of colonialism on Nigeria, focusing mainly on the introduction of Western notions of gender and its impact, with an emphasis on the masculine breadwinner role. It explores the consequences of this in Kaduna today for the lives of the young men concerned. Finally, it focuses on the current high levels of unemployment resulting from the neoliberal-inspired cutbacks outlined above and discusses what this means for young men struggling to find an alternative to becoming socially redundant and thus losing status in their communities.

THE NIGERIAN ECONOMY

The Protectorate of Nigeria was formed in 1914 by amalgamating a southern region ruled directly by the British, supported by a large number of missionary schools, with a north ruled indirectly via local Muslim kings or emirs, where Christian missionaries were sidelined to facilitate the local Hausa population's conversion to Islam. Thus southerners gained skills relevant for employment in the nascent capitalist state, including the civil service, the railways and, after independence, in the burgeoning textile industry, while the north struggled to overcome its considerable disadvantages. The result was a country politically divided and economically underdeveloped.

Since the 1970s, the importance of oil as its major export has made Nigeria vulnerable to global price fluctuations, a situation exacerbated since the mid-1980s by the effects of the neoliberal conditionalities discussed in the previous section and worsened by the corruption of elites competing for the benefits of its sale (Falola and Heaton 2008). The poor educational infrastructure has hampered the development of industry, producing a lack of key professionals, particularly engineers and competent business managers capable of running large enterprises (Ekanade 2014; Lindsay 2003; Teal 2014).

Neither the military regimes that governed Nigeria during most of its postcolonial history, nor the succeeding democratic administrations, have

managed to formulate adequate and realistic economic planning, while the vast majority of state funds continue to come from oil exports. During the oil boom of the 1970s, money was squandered on non-productive construction, such as of monumental buildings, rather than on crucial industrial infrastructure, while the few well-run factories were owned and/or operated by foreigners (Falola and Heaton 2008; Kohli 2004; Rodney 1973; Teal 2014).

The neopatrimonial character of the state at all levels from the federal to the local means that merit has been taken into consideration less than ethno-religious and other client-related links. Oil monies have been diverted into private pockets, funding major excesses of the elites, while the incomes of the masses have fallen in real terms since independence. The reliance on oil rents has diverted government attention away from the now-neglected agricultural sector, which had previously accounted for the majority of exports as well as of national income, and which continues to employ the majority of the population. This has heightened rural poverty, greatly increasing rural–urban migration (Kane 2003: 43ff; Kohli 2004). According to the *Nigeria Poverty Profile Report 2010*, 90.5 % of the inhabitants of Kaduna State considered themselves poor, with 61.8 % living on less than USD1 per day (NBS Press Briefing 2012: 5, 10). While rural poverty levels are likely to be higher than urban ones, this nevertheless suggests that a considerable number of the inhabitants of Kaduna city live in absolute poverty.

GENDER IN NIGERIA

I use gender here as an analytical concept standing for a power relation deriving from a belief in the inferiority of women and the superiority of men. By the late nineteenth century when Nigeria was being colonized, biological and social reproduction as occurring in the English household under conditions of industrial capitalism were viewed as inferior to the activities in the recently established separate economic sphere. This created an ideologically based public/private division whereby women were situated firmly in the household, men in the workforce. Led by the middle classes, by the late nineteenth century its attainment had become an important goal of the working classes too (Hall 1992; Rose 1986).

In many precolonial sub-Saharan African cultures, women played important political as well as economic roles, something the colonial powers

refused to acknowledge (Amadiume 1997; Arnfred 2011; Oyěwùmí 1997; Smedley 2004). Authority was less an effect of biology than of the more fluid categories of age and/or seniority. Under Western influence this has changed significantly. While age/seniority retains importance, this has now been combined with gender to produce what I have termed a gender-age system in which power inhabits both attributes. This gives older women considerable clout, since youths of both sexes are expected to obey them. However, this is rarely publicly acknowledged since, unlike that of men, women's power is tacit, perhaps because it does not fit the biologically based global gender ideology so that even in the gerontocratic societies of Africa (and Asia) where age holds such a strong power connotation, public discourse follows Western ideology in limiting articulation of male–female relations to the simple binary of masculine domination (Harris 2012a). This has become so ingrained that it has totally obscured the fact that as currently constructed, far from originating in local history, masculinity and femininity were in fact forged over the relatively recent colonial and postcolonial periods by combining local practices with alien ideas imported from the West (Oyěwùmí 1997; Tamale 2013).

European notions of gender as a strict binary hierarchy were brought to Nigeria in the late nineteenth century by missionaries and British colonial officials. Rather than starting by carefully assessing the local situation, they assumed that their own mores and lifestyles were automatically superior to those of other peoples, especially those living in such 'primitive' circumstances as the inhabitants of sub-Saharan Africa (Amadiume 1987; Nzegwu 2006; Oyěwùmí 1997). A major goal therefore was to 'civilize' the local populations, a project in which the inculcation of European gender norms was a crucial component (Ayandele 1966; Oyěwùmí 1997: 129; Prevost 2010). On the one hand, the white men bewailed what they saw as the poor treatment of African women, exemplified by polygynous marriage and their significant participation in production (Arnfred 2011), while on the other they tried to remove women from both political and economic domains. Moreover, they endeavoured to replace local rituals relating to the supernatural that lacked prescriptions of gender-normative behaviour with Europeanized Christianity and its emphasis on masculine superiority, claiming this improved women's position (Ayandele 1966; Leith-Ross 1939).

The Four Foundations of Contemporary Nigerian Masculinity²

One of the most insidious and damaging effects of these efforts to inculcate Western-style gender performance into African societies was the legitimization of masculine domination in societies where patriarchy in the Western sense had been absent.³ The result was the institutionalization of female inferiority, whereby women lost their political and much of their personal, social and economic power, and found themselves bound by a new form of marriage that could be dissolved only with great difficulty and in which husbands were placed in positions of authority over them (Amadiume 1997; Nzegwu 2006; Oyěwùmí 1997).

Meanwhile, African men had to endeavour to live up to a supposedly superior masculinity embodied in white men, putting new kinds of pressure on them that they could rarely meet (Ayandele 1966; Lindsay 2003). In Nigeria at least, this has not lessened, as gender has been institutionalized within a strongly Westernized framework, albeit with local accretions, whereby family status has become dependent on men's ability to project appropriate masculinity.

Certain characteristics are particularly vital in this respect, comprising what I have termed the foundational elements of masculinity. Although these occur in some form or other among all the sociocultural groupings with which I have worked over the last 20 years or so, they derive not from some universal norm but rather from exposure to (neo)colonialism, including the gender and development paradigm, globalizing capitalism and Western media, melded with earlier practices and influenced by religion.

The foundational elements are control over material resources/breadwinning; control over human resources, particularly wives/children; virility; and the performance of bravery/protection, very often through forms of violence. In Africa, all this is predicated on the understanding that adults are by definition married with children. Irrespective of age, those failing to meet these criteria may spend their entire lives conceptualized as youths.

Control over Resources: Breadwinning

As stated in the Introduction, the notion of breadwinning was introduced to Nigeria by the colonial state along with wage labour. Ideologically, both were the purview of men alone. This contradicted African family organization where all members were expected to contribute to productive labour and women's role was crucial. Moreover, as we shall see, for the majority of those in lower-level jobs, the structure of state salaries did not permit

Nigerian men to meet the entire costs of sustaining their families, but neither did the earnings of men doing informal work, something that has not changed significantly in the meantime.

The recent increase in rural–urban migration occasioned by the difficulties of living off farming alone, mean wage labour and self-employment have become crucial, with few families existing on the earnings of the male household head alone. Nevertheless, the colonial-period ideal of the male breadwinner as sole provider is now firmly entrenched in Nigeria, despite ongoing labour market retrenchments (see below).

Thus when youths in Kaduna were interviewed about their understanding of men's roles, they characterized them as breadwinners and not for the nuclear family alone, since '[i]f you get a job, you are supposed to support your whole [extended] family' (Barker and Ricardo 2005: 6). A group of Christian youths in my own projects stated that 'a man that cannot provide for his family is term[ed] as useless in the society'. This forces men both to assume sole responsibility for breadwinning and to link any failure to do so with an overall deficiency in masculinity. No allowance is made for the inherent structural bias of neoliberal capitalism that severely limits the earning capacity of the most deprived. Rather, individuals are blamed for their personal shortcomings as if everyone started out on a level playing field, placing the majority of men in a particularly invidious situation.

As a result, poor men in Kaduna complained that their wives expected them to be 'heroes' in meeting their families' basic needs.⁴ The secluded Hausa Muslim women I worked with confessed that when their husbands could not do this, they would openly reproach them in front of children and neighbours, something also noted in northern Nigeria's Hausaland (Salamone 2007). The women had met their feminine obligations, taking care of the children and carrying out household tasks as best they could within the limited means their husbands provided. The men, however, had not done their part, so the women felt justified in complaining. The Christian women, meanwhile, were somewhat more understanding since their greater participation in public life gave them a better grasp of economic realities.

Gender-Age Positionality and Control

Men who are unable to meet the provider role not only find their masculinity under threat if they permit their wives to become economically active but also find it difficult to project the second element of masculinity whereby they are expected to exert control over their wives and offspring.

Despite the fact that, ideologically, adult male superiority is inherent in their dispositional positionality (Harris 2012a)—that is, in their position as senior men—in practice this depends on their ability to satisfy their families' material needs. This means that men's capacity to comply with this second element is dependent on their ability to fulfil the first one. As the statement in the previous section by the Kadunan youths I worked with suggests, a man unable at least to appear to live up to this ideal may well find himself lacking in the authority his positionality should entitle him to within the family, as well as the lineage and the community at large. Moreover, while placing breadwinning and familial control in the hands of men produces an image of male domination, it is also a means of pressuring them to spend their time and energies for the benefit of their families rather than in the pursuit of their own short-term desires, something that could explain the Muslim women's public reprimands of their husbands (see also Vera-Sanso 2000).

Discursively, adult women hold a secondary position—higher than that of youths of both sexes but lower than that of their husbands. Young men are not yet expected to display full masculinity, although they should show themselves to be on the way to it, while the lowest position is held by young women. The age of legal majority might be 18 but, culturally, young people are not considered adults until they are married with children. The costs of this for men are high because they must pay bride price and other wedding expenses, as well as showing that they can provide for their families, making youths reliant on their fathers to help them marry, and thus emphasizing the generational aspect of gendered power relations.

As long as a father can fulfil this role, his authority is likely to be respected. The trouble starts when he is visibly unable to do this. Financially independent youths may not feel bound to honour their fathers' authority. A wife who makes a significant contribution to the family budget may also refuse even to show herself as submissive, in accordance with the norms, thus further damaging this second element of masculinity. To counteract this, the Hausa Muslim men verbally attacked by their wives often retaliated with physical violence.

Virility

The third element of the norms is the exhibition of appropriate sexuality. Men must show themselves to be sexually active, penetrating and thereby impregnating a wife or wives, with at least some of the resultant children being sons. The ability to marry multiple wives is important not only for

Muslims since, as the Christian youths I worked with insisted, a ‘man that has [only] one wife they call him a fool and he cannot help the community’. The importance of polygyny ultimately derives from historical processes whereby families needed to maximize their numbers for labour power, which formed the main limitation for wealth production in precolonial Africa. Unfortunately, today, especially in urban areas, it tends to have the opposite effect by increasing the number of dependents per worker.

The capacity to marry is again dependent on the possession of material resources, particularly among Christians, where women are likely to choose their own partners, often judging them on their ability to provide. Thus a man with insufficient resources may be unable to marry even one wife, let alone several (Barker and Ricardo 2005).

Bravery/Protection

This element essentially concerns the physical protection of family and other ascriptive-identity groups, such as state, nation, ethnicity and religion. It is often therefore interpreted as facilitating men’s participation in violence. In Kaduna, the episodes of rioting discussed in the Introduction have assumed an ethnoreligious form (Kazah-Toure 2002), the obligation of protection thus adhering to the religious group. At such times, men are especially commanded to look after women and children, conceptualized as inherently vulnerable and thus unable to protect themselves (Enloe 2000).

Before colonialism, African women could become warriors. Thus in the mid-nineteenth century in the large and well-trained fighting force of the West African Kingdom of Dahomey (now Benin), a third of the soldiers were women (Tucker 1855). In some parts of Nigeria, too, women acted as warriors, demonstrating bravery and protecting their cultural group. However, for the most part, it was younger men who took on such roles (Achebe 2005). To be a brave warrior was in many places an important aspiration for youths who were formally allotted the protector role for their household, clan, lineage or state.

It is no longer considered appropriate for women to be actively involved in fighting, although Christians in Kaduna said that during sectarian clashes their womenfolk helped them defend their homes and communities, for instance by bringing them refreshments or amassing stones for the men to throw. For the latter, however, the performance of violence, whether public, as in participation in rebel armies, gangs or riots, or private, as within the household, remains one of the few ways whereby those unable to comply with the previous three elements can claim masculinity. Many are pressured

into engaging in violence through accusations of cowardice and threats of ostracism or worse for those refusing to comply (Harris 2012b, 2013). As James Gilligan, an American psychiatrist working in prisons with male perpetrators of violent crimes, suggests, the norms of masculinity push many men into situations in which the only way of ‘ward[ing] off . . . feelings of shame, disgrace and dishonour [is] by means of violence . . . Masculinity . . . is literally defined as involving the expectation, even the requirement, of violence, under many well-specified conditions: in times of war; in response to personal insult . . . etc.’ (Gilligan 2001: 56). This facilitates the use of taunts and mockery focusing on the loss of masculinity to push men and even quite young boys into violent behaviour.

The Gender Framework

These four foundational elements form the basis of what today are often referred to as ‘traditional’ gender systems, suggesting a long history. However, they turn out to be largely invented traditions that have developed into useful tools that individual men and governments can call on to preserve notions of male superiority against the demands of their own women for equality, as well as against pressures from the international community (Tamale 2013).

MEN, MASCULINITIES AND BREADWINNING IN NIGERIA

Employment in Nigeria

The colonial institutionalization of wage labour in Nigeria made it clear not only that this concerned men alone but also that it underpinned the superiority of European gender orders in which men were the sole economic providers, their womenfolk correspondingly domesticated. When Nigerian state employees tried to emulate this by demanding a family wage and the other benefits received by white employees, they were refused on the grounds of their wives’ earnings⁵ (Lindsay 2003).

During colonialism only a small percentage of Nigerian men, mainly from the south, ever gained formal employment, and independence brought little change. In 1975, formal employment rates were estimated at 7.8 % (Lindsay 2003: 132, n. 93) and they have barely grown since. In 2006, less than 10 % of the adult population was formally employed. Today an additional almost 25 % of the urban adult population is self-employed,

with a quarter of adults and a far larger percentage of youths claiming to have no earnings. The vast majority of the self-employed work informally, mostly in low-skilled casual labour (Teal 2014), rather than running the small but profitable enterprises visualized by the World Bank as the future of the neoliberal economic order (2012). Incomes are generally low, to the point that some of the least skilled apparently see little point in working at all, given its minimal contribution to status and income. Moreover, since agricultural employment is the only category to have registered a significant rise since the 1990s, the implication is that secondary and tertiary education contribute little to employment/income opportunities, reducing parental interest in sending their sons to school (Teal 2014).

Kaduna, the Breadwinning Role and Men's Employment

The city of Kaduna was constructed by the British in 1912 to serve as the capital of northern Nigeria (see Harris 2013). For many decades a major political and economic centre, it lost much of its importance after 1991 when Abuja became the national capital.

In the city's early years, southerners educated in missionary schools formed the bulk of formal employees, working as low-grade civil servants and later on the railways. The local population, meanwhile, was mainly engaged in informal activities. After independence and enhanced by the oil boom of the mid-1970s, Kaduna prospered as the centre of northern Nigerian economic and political power, and a number of major textile factories was established there. Owing to the local population's lack of relevant skills, most employees were southern immigrants. The fall in the global oil price of the early 1980s greatly reduced government funding, aggravated from 1986 by the structural adjustment programme discussed in the [Introduction](#). Together with the opening up of Nigeria to cheap foreign textile imports, the government's inability to provide the necessary infrastructure, including power, water and roads, hit Kaduna hard, forcing most of its textile plants first to cut their workforce and reduce the wages of those remaining, and then to close. This significantly decreased formal employment opportunities, leaving those laid off struggling to survive (Andr  and Beckman 1998; Ekanade 2014; Meagher 2013).

The last factory battled on until 2007, managing to retain some 7000 employees, but lack of demand has caused a large percentage of these to be laid off. Although President Muhammadu Buhari has promised to revive the textile industry—once Nigeria's largest employer after the government,

with hundreds of thousands of workers nationally—it is not clear that he will be any more successful than his predecessors (Akhaine 2015).

Meanwhile, although some highly skilled workers have shifted to informal labour such as tailoring (Meagher 2013), many have died due either to the stress of unemployment or the resulting poverty. One widow said that her husband had been forced to go from a well-paid industrial position to daily labouring in farming and bricklaying. The low remuneration rates meant that when he became ill they could not afford medical attention, leading to his death. Many of those still alive have become desperate, struggling to get by on so little that almost all their income goes on feeding their families, while their wives do their best to supplement this with their own earnings. During their last few years as industrial employees, the men worked for partial pay, agreeing to this because of promises of compensation once the factories recovered. However, as of 2014, this had not yet occurred (Adama 2014).

In the meantime, many became motorbike taxi drivers, forming a large percentage of those plying this trade in Kaduna, along with former civil servants and unemployed university graduates. However, the large numbers involved have reduced profitability. Moreover, while those with their own bikes can earn quite well, those forced to rent them make significantly less (Meagher 2013).

The situation has been exacerbated by the episodes of sectarian violence that have not only created tensions between Muslims and Christians but also increased impoverishment, reducing the demand for goods and services, and so producing a vicious circle that negatively impacts employment opportunities.

Since the 1990s, Nigeria's unemployment rate has been rising even in times of high gross domestic product (GDP) growth. In 2011 it was estimated at 23.9 % (ILO 2017), with youth unemployment around 43.3 % in 2016 (ILO 2016). These figures derive from national surveys, and employment here refers to both formal and informal labour, the latter comprising full-time, part-time and sporadic work, and even unpaid labour on family enterprises, including farms (Teal 2014).

In Kaduna, few youths have meaningful employability skills, making it impossible for them to enter trades such as tailoring, or the fine embroidery work that older Muslim men are known for (Meagher 2013). Like the young men I worked with, youths in Barker and Ricardo's study of Kaduna struggled to make a living. Halim 'was an apprentice (unpaid)... [He] found work fast, but it [was] very difficult and offer[ed] meager

pay.’ Ali used to help his housepainter father and later some of the latter’s friends, but for some years he had been unable to find more than odd jobs. When he could get it he did ‘bricklaying, building, and digging’, but this was very sporadic. Khaled did casual labour and occasionally helped his welder brother (Barker and Ricardo 2005: 8).

These youths had little formal schooling. However, while higher education is much coveted for its prestige, it does little to increase employability, providing limited skills with minimal relevance to the job market (Teal 2014). Moreover, formal positions are usually available only to those with appropriate contacts or who can pay large bribes, especially those desirous of entering state employment, which although offering relatively small wages provides some stability and is thus worthwhile despite recent reductions in pension rights (Ekanake 2014). As a result, many youths struggle to earn anything at all.

The last few governments have attempted to rectify this through the neoliberal doctrine that attaining formal employment should no longer be the goal of education, even for university graduates, but rather that individuals should be encouraged to start their own small enterprises. National-level attempts at publicizing and financing this approach have so far failed to change the population’s thinking, so that families continue desperately to hope that a university degree will be a sure path for their sons to decent employment. Regrettably, for most beyond the well connected, this turns out to be an illusion. However, few Nigerians have either the appropriate mindset or skills to become profitable entrepreneurs. From the perspective of neoliberalist doctrine, this brands them as risk averse and thus feminized, inferior, ‘sensitive, dominated types’ as opposed to ‘courageous, dominant’ and thus masculinized risk lovers (Dardot and Laval 2013: 181 n. 72). In this worldview, the truly masculine is not the warrior of realist international relations but rather the successful businessman of liberal political thought (Ashworth and Swatuk 1998), now increasing national GDP by running ‘his’ own business. This is far from the preference of most Nigerians for the more respectable and less hazardous route of formal employment (Okorie 2016).

In Kaduna the lack of options for productive work is visible in the number of young men idling on street corners. Both the participants in our projects and local community leaders reported that many young men had taken to alcohol and drug abuse, abandoning homes and families in favour of hanging about in cemeteries where they can engage in their preferred activities with little hindrance. It was they whom society termed

‘redundant’ and whose example thus made the young men with whom I worked so determined to avoid attracting this label to themselves.

Although most of them also had limited economic opportunities, they tried hard to find alternative paths, such as by joining youth groups. In our projects, considerable emphasis was placed on analysing issues related to masculinity, especially the fourth norm of bravery and protection. This turned out to be key to the mechanisms described by Gilligan (2001) that encouraged young men to engage in violence, whether in the shape of a bout of fisticuffs following a traffic accident or the far more lethal riots (Harris 2012b).

Most people with whom I discussed such issues were convinced that unemployment was to blame; those with jobs or in education would not risk involving themselves in such behaviour (see also Barker and Ricardo 2005). The so-called redundant on the other hand could only gain by it, hoping to attain status and achieve masculinity via the fourth normative element after failing to do so via the first. Men’s deployment of violence to protect against emasculation for such failure can be found in other contexts in Africa (Izugbara 2011) and elsewhere (Gilligan 2001). In Kaduna the breadwinner norm was particularly strong among Muslims, who saw it as a religious obligation, but Christians were also raised with this doctrine. This is corroborated by research carried out in another middle-belt state that found both teachers and pupils in a mixed-sex, mixed-religion high school subscribing overwhelmingly to the importance for masculinity of the male provider role, despite acknowledging the difficulty of achieving it.⁶ Thus an ideology originating in the protocapitalist environment of colonial Nigeria has been largely stymied by the neoliberal ideology forced upon Nigeria since the mid-1980s that has produced the cutbacks which have so significantly reduced labour market opportunities.

The young men involved in our project insisted that today the only road to formal employment was via a ‘godfather’ or sponsor, but a figure powerful enough was rare in their social groups. The few who managed to attend university and to move into formal employment had fathers in a position to back them. Christians could study to become priests or ministers in the hope of gaining a living that way. This path was not open to Muslims since mosques rarely pay imams, so they have to fund themselves, such as by taking pupils for religious education.

Popular opinion suggested that those involved in the riots were mostly the abovementioned idlers (Barker and Ricardo 2005). This was also the perspective of a panel of civil-society agents working on youth affairs, who

claimed that unlike those with jobs and money, unemployed youths were easy targets for crooked politicians willing to ply them with drugs to get them to fight. It was the government's responsibility to remedy this situation, and they should do this first by revitalizing the education system so that schools and universities would deliver skill sets relevant to the workplace, and then by helping unemployed youngsters to establish their own small businesses, in line with the strong emphasis on individual responsibility characteristic of neoliberal ideology. However, it was pointed out that endemic corruption meant that monies set aside for national-level programmes had been 'eaten' by politicians, so that unoccupied young men remained easy prey for involvement in violence (Bobbyi and Yakubu 2005).

The first step proposed to remedy the situation was the establishment of programmes to teach trades such as carpentry, mechanics and plumbing to provide the means for young men to earn a living. A few such programmes had been established, mainly by non-governmental organizations or private philanthropists. Unfortunately, no market research had been carried out either to discover the extent of the demand for these skills or to ascertain what would be needed to help graduates to establish themselves.

In 2007 I was involved with a small trade school providing precisely this kind of training. The women learned tailoring, jewellery-making and basketry, while the men studied plumbing, welding and carpentry—identical skills to those taught by other similar schools in the city. Most of the women were married with children and functionally illiterate. The men were under 30, unmarried and had minimally completed primary school.

While the women focused on skills they could use at home to make items for sale so they could make a small contribution to the family purse, the men were looking for a trade that would allow them to earn enough to marry and start a family. On graduation they received a small sum of money to help them start their own businesses but little if any other aid. In other words, this was an example of following neoliberal principles—encouraging the poor to become independent small entrepreneurs, while oversupplying workers for a few relatively low-skilled trades and ignoring those requiring more complex skills, as well as failing to provide sufficient capital for the acquisition of the necessary tools and business premises.

As far as I could tell, the crafts training for the women had some positive impact in that they learned enough to produce some basic craft items and one group even studied dressmaking. Here, little start-up capital was needed other than for sewing machines. The women thus emerged

equipped to make small items for sale or to sew dresses for family members and neighbours. The young men, on the other hand, were in a less favourable position since on graduation they were neither sufficiently skilled nor experienced enough to work independently. Much more effective would have been a programme of apprenticeship whereby the government would provide small grants to both parties to encourage participation and the master would agree to offer assistantships to apprentices reaching a high enough standard. The neoliberal ideal whereby these young men would somehow automatically be ready on graduating from a trade school to start individual enterprises that would be sufficiently profitable to allow them to marry and support a family was without foundation. Thus the trade schools in Kaduna appeared to be no more likely to help youths out of penury than the national-level programmes discussed earlier in this section, which the government planned to start to support the development of small-scale enterprises among youths.

Since many Hausa Muslims seclude their women, few of the latter even today work in the public sphere. However, they have long run often quite lucrative small businesses from their homes (Coles 1991), hence the desire of the women in the trade school to improve their skill sets to facilitate this, and their families' decision to permit them to attend classes. While Christian women in Kaduna are not usually kept out of public life, many of the husbands of the women in our projects were apparently influenced by their Hausa neighbours to consider men who secluded their wives as superiorly masculine. This may account for the fact that almost none of our female participants of either religion went out to work, and, despite learning in our projects to produce a few commodities such as lotions and soaps, few were able to earn more than a few hundred naira (USD1–2) a day.

From the perspective of the men, since the first element of masculinity places the onus for breadwinning on males, those unable to comply are not seen as real men, irrespective of whether the fault lies with the system or the individual. Part of the problem is that working for a living is the only masculine characteristic relating to daily activities. While even unmarried women are expected to help in the house, unemployed men have nothing with which to occupy themselves. They are expected to spend minimal waking time at home, so most unemployed youths have nowhere to go and nothing to do except to hang around the streets, looking for ways to relieve the monotony. Such large numbers of unemployed youths suggest that almost anyone could be drawn into violence.

The projects I was involved with could not increase the youths' earning power but they did help them to learn to recognize how masculinity could trap them into involvement with violence. Through role-playing exercises the young men demonstrated how a refusal to participate in street-level violence could result in taunting and ostracism by their peers. It further became apparent that during sectarian riots, men might even be killed for declining to support and thus protect their own side since this was viewed as a rejection of adherence to the fourth foundational norm, at least in its common interpretation as an obligation on men to protect their own via participation in violence. No such expectations were placed on women.

Once the youths started to think through the notion that the norms were being used as a highly effective way to secure their support for what they realized were essentially projects of political elites, they became interested in how to stop this. They pointed out that a critical mass was required in order to be able to withstand such pressures, requiring the incorporation of much larger numbers. The first approach to gaining this was through street theatre, which the youths improvised and then performed in their own communities, thus spreading the project's impact far beyond the direct participants. Towards the end of each youth group's participation in the projects, they started to plan how to pass on what they had learned to other young people in local schools and youth clubs, placing considerable emphasis on violence prevention through teaching them how to resist having the fourth norm of masculinity used against them. In this divided and violence-torn city, these were very practical and relevant skills (Harris 2012b).

While this did little to earn them a living, it did provide them with the tools and credibility to gain positions as community-based volunteers, giving them a certain status and respect that helped to compensate for their lack of progress towards meeting the norms. It demonstrated more potentially effective approaches to keeping young men off the streets and out of violence than the simple provision of basic income-generating skills. The explicit addressing of issues pertaining to masculinity was crucial to this. The youths might be no nearer to becoming breadwinners so as to be able to marry and thus comply with the first three elements of the norms, but being treated with respect was nevertheless of considerable importance to them. They felt they were on their way to becoming leaders in their communities and thus no longer in danger of being relegated to 'redundant' status. In the one group that had already started to do this by the time of my last visit to Kaduna in the summer of 2011, it had produced a visible improvement in their self-esteem.

The commitment to non-violence was tested by the post-election riots of April 2011 that once again assumed a sectarian form. Project participants, both youths and women, worked hard to prevent the involvement of family members and neighbours in the rioting, with considerable success, thus producing feelings of real accomplishment (Harris 2012b). This suggests that through explicit engagement with the norms of masculinity it is possible to rethink certain facets of them as well as to discover other ways to gain respect besides via material wealth. However, this does not of course answer the question of how these youths are to become culturally accepted adults. To accomplish this they will still need to find a way to earn sufficient money to maintain themselves and a future family.

CONCLUSION

While Kaduna has its own specificities, the struggles of its young men are reminiscent of those in other places where neoliberalism has significantly reduced employment opportunities, leaving masculinity—often, as in Kaduna, in the shape of violence, particularly riots, facilitated by the fourth foundational norm—as one of their few remaining resources. These youths are effectively members of the precariat, most probably condemned to a lifetime of unstable short-term jobs, often in several different trades or professions rather than in the one they originally trained for. It may take them some time to realize that they are unlikely ever to be able to live up to their ideal and that of their families and communities in the shape of full-time, permanent employment with decent benefits, something only a select and diminishing few will ever achieve. Meanwhile, placing the blame on their shoulders is in part an indication that they are viewed less as individuals than as social locations (Connell 2005: 188) who must perform appropriately according to their gender/lifecycle position. The norms function as a means of enforcing this, hence their obduracy, which becomes more crucial the more changes in material circumstances hinder the vast majority of men from complying with them.

The projects I was involved with in Kaduna used participatory gender analysis to encourage young participants to seek other ways of gaining respect and status than through the foundational norms discussed here. This allowed these youths to find alternatives to being labelled redundant. However, in today's poor employment situation, exacerbated by the lack of state provision of social safety nets, paid work is essential for survival. A better understanding of masculinity may help young men to avoid

participating in riots (Harris 2012b), but it can neither provide an income to enable them to marry nor serve as an alternative to the foundational norms in the eyes of their families and other community members. This is as true for the poorest and least educated as for university graduates. The breadwinner norm continues to place tremendous burdens on those unable to support their families decently, as demonstrated by the stresses that the older men in Kaduna experienced after losing their factory jobs and failing to replace them at a similar level of status and earning capacity. In keeping women either completely out of the labour force, like the majority of Hausa Muslims, or relegating them to a minor role in income-generation on the grounds that women are not breadwinners both increases men's obligations and raises overall poverty levels. An additional negative side to normative masculinity emerges from the alternative approach to gaining status through complying with the norms that has significantly encouraged male participation in the sectarian violence that has plagued Kaduna off and on since the late 1980s.

While pressures to conform to the breadwinning norm weigh most heavily on lower-class and unskilled men who have the least capacity to comply, the global lack of decent employment resulting from neoliberal processes has also affected university-educated men. The unsuccessful attempt in Nigeria to put into practice the neoliberal doctrine of individual entrepreneurship discussed in this chapter is symptomatic of the employment situation (Cornwall 2016) that has produced a global precariat.

Deconstructing the gender norms in our projects helped the youths deal with issues they had not previously understood and to find ways round complying with the most pernicious of them. This provided them with a level of respect irrespective of their economic capacity. In this way, they found alternative paths that enabled them to avoid the worst eventualities of the trap posed by scarce employment opportunities, despite being unable to gain decent jobs themselves. This does not mean that the youths have faced up in more than a minor way to the problems posed by the norms, or embraced gender equality. They continue to believe in their rights as men implied by the first three foundational norms and thus to wish to keep for themselves, as far as possible in their circumstances, Connell's 'patriarchal dividend' (2005: 79), thereby exacerbating the marginalization and lower power positions of women and children. This nullifies any positive effects of the fact that the economic situation has forced more women to enter the workforce, albeit for the most part in even more highly precarious jobs than their menfolk.

Increases in poverty and unemployment since structural adjustment in the mid 1980s suggest that the impact on Nigerians of the neoliberal practices described here, especially insofar as they have contributed to a lack of access to decent education and training as well as to formal employment opportunities, has been to push lower-class men, as well as many of the more educated, more deeply into the precariat, making it progressively more difficult for them to offer long-term provision to their families and thus increasing the importance of shifting away from the norm of sole male responsibility for breadwinning.

NOTES

1. For more details, see Harris (2012b, 2013, 2016).
2. For more details, see Harris (2016).
3. By patriarchy I mean a structure based on the European political ideology of masculinism. This is the 'ideology that justifies and naturalizes male domination ... Masculinism takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in the public and private spheres. Moreover ... it tends to be relatively resistant to change' (Brittan 1989: 4).
4. Personal communication from Maji Peterx of the non-governmental organisation Carefronting.
5. This situation was doubly contradictory. Nigerian men claimed to be proud of their wives' earning capacity but shamed into wanting to destroy it by the white men's notions of superior masculinity, while the white men wished to maintain their supremacy by refusing Nigerian men the same status (Lindsay 2003).
6. Personal communication by the researcher Noelle Oputa.

REFERENCES

- Achebe, N. (2005). *Farmers, traders, warriors, and kings: Female power and authority in Northern Igboland, 1900–1960*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Adama, D. S. (2014). *How textiles closure cost over 2,700 lives in Kaduna*. <http://www.dailytrust.com.ng/news/feature/how-textiles-closure-costover-2-700-lives-in-kaduna/17972.html>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Akhaine, S. (2015). *Collapse of textile factories robs Kaduna of commercial status*. <http://www.ngrguardiannews.com/2015/07/collapse-of-textilefactories-robs-kaduna-of-commercial-status/>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.

- Amadiume, I. (1987). *Male daughters and female husbands: Gender and sex in an African society*. London: Zed.
- Amadiume, I. (1997). *Re-inventing Africa: Matriarchy, religion and culture*. London: Zed.
- Andr , G., & Beckman, B. (1998). *Union power in the Nigerian textile industry: Labour regime and adjustment*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.
- Arnfred, S. (2011). *Sexuality and gender politics in Mozambique: Rethinking gender in Africa*. Woodbridge: James Currey.
- Ashworth, L. M., & Swatuk, L. A. (1998). Masculinity and the fear of emasculation in international relations theory. In M. Zalewski & J. Parpart (Eds.), *The "man" question in international relations* (pp. 73–92). Boulder: Westview Press.
- Ayande, E. A. (1966). *The missionary impact on modern Nigeria 1842–1914: A political and social analysis*. London: Longmans, Green, and Co.
- Barker, G., & Ricardo, C. (2005). *Young men and the construction of masculinity in sub-Saharan Africa: Implications for HIV/AIDS, conflict, and violence*. World Bank Social Development papers, Conflict prevention and reconstruction, no. 26. http://www.worldbank.org/external/default/WDSContentServer/WDSP/IB/2005/06/23/000012009_20050623134235/Rendered/PDF/327120rev0PAPER0AFR0young0men0WP26.pdf. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Bobboyi, H., & Yakubu, A. M. (2005). *Peacebuilding and conflict resolution in northern Nigeria*. Kaduna: Arewa House.
- Brittan, A. (1989). *Masculinity and power*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Coles, C. (1991). Hausa women's work in a declining urban economy: Kaduna, Nigeria, 1980–1985. In C. Coles & B. Mack (Eds.), *Hausa women in the twentieth century* (pp. 163–191). Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cornwall, A. (2016). Introduction: Masculinities under neoliberalism. In A. Cornwall, F. G. Karioris, & N. Lindisfarne (Eds.), *Masculinities under neoliberalism*. London: Zed.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2013). *The new way of the world: On neoliberal society* (trans: Elliott, G.). London: Verso.
- Ekanade, O. V. (2014). The dynamics of forced neoliberalism in Nigeria since the 1980s. *Journal of Retracing Africa*, 1(1), 1–24. <http://encompass.eku.edu/jora/voll/iss1/1>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Enloe, C. (2000). *Maneuvers: The international politics of militarizing women's lives*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Falola, T., & Heaton, M. (2008). *A history of Nigeria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gilligan, J. (2001). *Preventing violence*. London: Thames and Hudson.
- Hall, C. (1992). *White, male and middle class: Explorations in feminism and history*. Cambridge: Polity.

- Harris, C. (2012a). Gender-age systems and social change: A Haugaardian power analysis based on research from northern Uganda. *Journal of Political Power*, 5 (3), 475–492.
- Harris, C. (2012b). Community-based pedagogies, religion and conflict resolution in Kaduna, Nigeria. In M. Lee (Ed.), *Ashgate research companion on religion and conflict resolution* (pp. 319–334). Farnham: Ashgate.
- Harris, C. (2013). Violence in a religiously divided city: Kaduna, Nigeria—From the Shari’a Riots of 2000 to the post-election clashes of 2011. *Space and Polity*, 17 (3), 284–299.
- Harris, C. (2016). Masculinities, new forms of religion and the production of social order in Kaduna city, Nigeria. *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 46(3/4), 251–287.
- ILO. (2016). *The ILO in Nigeria*. http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countries-covered/nigeria/WCMS_461891/lang-en/index.htm. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- ILO. (2017). *Nigeria*. http://www.ilo.org/gateway/faces/home/ctryHome?locale=EN&countryCode=NGA&_adf.ctrl-state=1b479w3sel_4. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Izugbara, C. (2011). Poverty, masculine violence, and the transformation of men: Ethnographic notes from Kenyan slums. In E. Ruspini, J. Hearn, B. Pease, & K. Pringle (Eds.), *Men and masculinities around the world: Transforming men’s practices* (pp. 235–246). New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jimenez, L., & Walkerdine, V. (2011). A psychosocial approach to shame, embarrassment and melancholia amongst unemployed young men and their fathers. *Gender and Education*, 23(2), 185–199.
- Kane, O. (2003). *Muslim modernity in postcolonial Nigeria: A study of the society for the removal of innovation and reinstatement of tradition*. Leiden: Brill.
- Kazah-Toure, T. (2002). *Ethno-religious conflicts in Kaduna state*. Kaduna: Human Rights Monitor.
- Kohli, A. (2004). *State-directed development, political power and industrialization in the global periphery*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leith-Ross, S. (1939). *African women: A study of the Ibo of Nigeria*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Lindsay, L. A. (2003). *Working with gender: Wage labor and social change in southwestern Nigeria*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.
- Mack, B. B., & Boyd, J. (2000). *One woman’s Jibad: Nan Asma’u, scholar and scribe*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Meagher, K. (2013). Informality, religious conflict, and governance in northern Nigeria: Economic inclusion in divided societies. *African Studies Review*, 56(3), 209–234.
- Muqtada, M. (2012). *Global jobs pact country scan: Nigeria, revised version*. http://www.ilo.org/addisababa/countriescovered/nigeria/WCMS_303666/lang-en/index.htm. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.

- NBS Press Briefing. (2012). *The Nigeria poverty profile 2010 report: Press briefing by the statistician-general of the federation/chief executive officer, National Bureau of Statistics, Dr. Yemi Kale*. <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/b410c26c2921c18a6839baebc9b1428fa98fa36a.pdf>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Nzegwu, N. U. (2006). *Family matters: Feminist concepts in African philosophy of culture*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Okorie, M. (2016). Nigeria: Why a university degree is no longer enough. *The Guardian*, Lagos. <http://allafrica.com/stories/201602030670.html>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Oyèwùní, O. (1997). *The invention of women: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Prevost, E. E. (2010). *The communion of women: Missions and gender in colonial Africa and the British metropole*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rodney, W. (1973). *How Europe underdeveloped Africa*. London: Bogle-L'Ouverture Publications.
- Rose, S. O. (1986). "Gender at work": Sex, class and industrial capitalism. *History Workshop*, 21(1), 113–131.
- Salamone, F. (2007). Hausa concepts of masculinity and the "Yan Daudu". *Journal of Men, Masculinities and Spirituality*, 1(1), 45–54.
- Smedley, A. (2004). *Women creating patriarchy*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Tamale, S. (2013). Confronting the politics of nonconforming sexualities in Africa. *African Studies Review*, 56, 31–45.
- Teal, F. (2014). *Employment creation, poverty and the structure of the job market in Nigeria* (CSAE working paper WPS/2014–18). University of Oxford. <https://www.csae.ox.ac.uk/workingpapers/pdfs/csae-wps-2014-18.pdf>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.
- Tucker, M. (1855). *Abeokuta or sunrise within the tropics* (4th ed.). London: James Nisbett and Co.
- Vera-Sanso, P. (2000). Risk-talk: The Politics of risk and its representation. In P. Caplan (Ed.), *Risk revisited* (pp. 108–132). London: Pluto Press.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- World Bank. (2012). *World development report 2012: Gender equality and development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <http://econ.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/EXTDEC/EXTRESEARCH/EXTWDRS/EXTWDR2012/0,,contentMDK:22999750~menuPK:8154981~pagePK:64167689~piPK:64167673~theSitePK:7778063,00.html>. Accessed 1 Aug 2017.

Yearning to Labour? Working-Class Men in Post-Industrial Britain

Darren Nixon

INTRODUCTION

Economic restructuring since the late 1970s has had a profound impact on the employment structure in Britain. Deindustrialization (particularly during the 1980s and 1990s) and the continued globalization of production have resulted in large-scale male job losses in the manufacturing and extractive industries, and a falling demand for skilled, and particularly semiskilled and unskilled, male manual labour (Alcock et al. 2003; Nixon 2009). Conversely, the development of what has been variously termed the ‘post-industrial’ (Bell 1973), ‘knowledge-driven’ (OECD 2000), ‘informational’ (Castells 2000) or ‘service’ economy (Gershuny and Miles 1983) has impacted both the type of work being generated and the kinds of skill required to enter employment.

Thus, in contrast to the technical, practical and physical skills previously utilized by the predominately male industrial workforce, today’s increasingly service-dominated economy places much more emphasis on workers’ formal educational credentials and their ‘social’, ‘people’, ‘interactive’, ‘emotional’ and ‘aesthetic’ skills (Felstead et al. 2007). In the contemporary economy it is communication, presentation, team-working and customer-handling skills that are increasingly demanded. The growing importance of these key skills,

D. Nixon (✉)

Sociology, School of Social Sciences, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

along with the increased implementation of computers and information and communication technology in the workplace, has precipitated an upward shift in the level of education held by those in employment (see Felstead et al. 2007; UKCES 2011). However, labour demand for highly skilled workers has *not* matched the increasing supply of graduates in Britain, leading to increases in graduate unemployment and underemployment (skills and hours), ‘bumping down’ within the occupational structure and ultimately greater competition at the bottom end of the labour market (MacDonald 2011).

As a result of longstanding patterns of occupational segregation by sex, these economic shifts have had a major impact on the composition of the workforce. One of the most striking features of employment trends since the 1970s has been its ‘feminization’ (McDowell 2014) caused by the rapid growth of female service sector employment combined with dramatic declines in male manual employment in manufacturing and the heavy and extractive industries. The male employment rate in Britain fell from 92 % in 1971 to 76 % in 2011, while the female employment rate rose from 53 % to 67 % during the same period (ONS 2013a). Future employment growth is predicted to continue on this path with women (albeit working part time) expected to occupy the majority (57 %) of new jobs created in Britain by 2020. Full-time male employment will constitute around 30 % of new jobs created (UKCES 2011).

These trends have served to at least partly disturb one of the most pervasive and longstanding social ‘norms’ of industrial society—the male breadwinner/female homemaker/caregiver ideology (Crompton et al. 2007). The breadwinner role has been central to the construction of masculinity in industrial society, and a wealth of sociological literature has documented how men experience the loss of paid work and unemployment (Jahoda et al. 1933; Jahoda 1982; for a review, see Cole 2008). Historically, entry into paid work served as a ‘rite of passage’ for young men—a key waypoint in the transition into adulthood. Through carrying out particular types of work, men have ‘performed’ and articulated different constructions of masculinity, and through working and earning money they have carried out their historically constructed role as fathers and providers (Honeyman 2000; Bradley 1999).

Economic change has dislocated these relationships, particularly for working-class men (McDowell 2014). The 1980s and 1990s saw ‘the rise of the detached male workforce’ (Alcock et al. 2003), marked by mass male redundancy and unemployment, and increasingly problematic transitions into employment among poorly educated, low-skilled younger men (Gangl

2002). In this postindustrial labour market context, unemployed working-class men found that their work orientations and previous work-related skills and experiences were increasingly ‘redundant’ (McDowell 2014) as the jobs that dominate the vacancy boards in job centres are mainly low-level, flexible, ‘servicing’ occupations that are often female-dominated and require very different kinds of skills, dispositions and attributes to the men’s ‘usual’ or desired occupations (Nixon 2006, 2009). Increasingly, such men find themselves under scrutiny from tightened neoliberal welfare regulations to broaden their occupational horizons and develop their skills in line with the kinds of attributes now demanded at the lower end of the contemporary service economy.

Such transformation may be easier said than done because occupational identities are built on and reflect longstanding historical associations between skill, gender and class. The relationship between men, certain forms of manual labour and the skilled trades is perhaps one of the most pervasive and enduring. Indeed, Thiel (2007) argues that the working-class masculine cultural practices still evident in the construction industry pre-date industrialization. ‘Skilled trades’ *remain* the most male-dominated area of the economy, closely followed by ‘plant and machine operatives’ (ONS 2013a). Yet women dominate key growth areas of low-level service sector employment, such as ‘caring, leisure and other services’ and ‘sales and customer service’ (ONS 2013a). Previous research suggests that low-level service work may be particularly unattractive to unemployed men (Lindsay and McQuaid 2004), especially very low-skilled men who may struggle to perform the required skills and dispositions, particularly emotional labour (Nixon 2009). In this context it seems unlikely that predicted future employment growth will provide suitable opportunities to alleviate the labour market problems experienced by working-class men.

This chapter documents and explains working-class men’s labour market difficulties in contemporary postindustrial, service-dominated labour markets in Britain. After first discussing longstanding historical associations between gender, skill and work with a particular focus on constructions of working-class masculinity, I explore in more detail why and how economic restructuring has problematized labour market participation for this group and discuss how working-class men have responded to these changing labour market conditions. The chapter then moves on to discuss the experiences of particularly disadvantaged low-skilled and poorly qualified unemployed men struggling to find work in contemporary Britain. It is suggested that recent economic restructuring, ‘austerity’ and welfare reform have

served to exacerbate the long-term labour market marginalization of the most disadvantaged working-class men. In concluding, the chapter reflects on the consequences of these shifts for different groups of working-class men and constructions of working-class masculinity.

MASCULINITY AND WORK IN INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY

Engagement in waged employment outside the home, as the primary ‘breadwinner’, was central to the male role and the construction of masculinity in industrial society (Honeyman 2000: 107; Bradley 1989). Indeed, a number of writers have argued that the key characteristics of ‘traditional’ masculinity are analogous to the skills and characteristics required of the industrial worker. Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1987: 148) ask:

What does it mean to be masculine? It means, obviously, holding male values and following male behavioural norms . . . male norms stress values such as courage, inner direction, certain forms of aggression, autonomy, mastery, technological skill, group solidarity, adventure and a considerable amount of toughness in mind and body.

The literature on men and masculinity has highlighted the importance of recognizing that there are multiple forms of masculinity and therefore that we should speak of masculinities rather than masculinity (Mac an Ghail 1996; Connell 1995). Significant differences exist in men’s practices, and different definitions and understandings of masculinity cut across multiple lines—for example, of class, ethnicity, age, region and sexuality. Work has been central to hegemonic constructions of masculinity because it has provided men with independence, economic and symbolic power, and status. Yet, although their dominant role in waged employment provided all working men with some degree of power over their partners and families within the industrial economy, the *type* of work that men have carried out has been a key source of differentiation between competing forms of masculinity (Willis 1977; Gray 1987). The meaning of particular types of work is very different for men from different class backgrounds, and in this section my focus is on constructions of working-class masculinity, as it is this form of masculinity that is particularly threatened by economic restructuring and the growth of ‘feminized’ service sector employment discussed in the next section (Bradley 1999; McDowell 2014). As Bradley notes (1999: 212),

Masculine identities are bound with dominance at work, but take different forms for men of different classes . . . Working-class men are the chief sufferers from feminization as they see their jobs vanishing . . . but they have not so far, shown a disposition to compromise their masculinity by seeking to enter 'women's jobs' in great numbers.

Historically, occupational segregation by sex has clearly separated 'men's work' from 'women's work' (Bradley 1989). Because 'men's work' has been constructed as superior to 'women's work' and has been more highly remunerated, men have shown little interest in carrying out 'women's jobs'. Thus, through carrying out particular *types* of work, working-class men have gained a 'patriarchal dividend' (Connell 1995) or 'masculine compensation' (Cockburn 1988) that has served to actively reaffirm and reinforce their masculine identity. In his classic study of working-class youth and their orientations to work, Willis (1977: 148) argues that what we see in working-class 'lads' is the: 'cross-valorization of manual labour with the social superiority of masculinity'. He goes on to suggest:

Manual labour is associated with the social superiority of masculinity and mental labour with the social inferiority of femininity. In particular manual labour is imbued with a masculine tone and nature which rends it positively expressive of more than its intrinsic focus in work.

Thus, working-class masculinity is a form of masculinity that valorizes certain types of 'embodied' hard and heavy manual labour, and highly skilled trade and craft occupations. Working-class men see such work as appropriate because the type of skills required mean that the work has strong masculine connotations and has been constructed as 'men's work' (see Willis 1977; Bradley 1989). The masculine character of such work was established in the industrial period through the designation of heavy manual labour as more suited to men than women, and gendered constructions of skill, which have associated men and masculinity with skilled trades and craft occupations, and mechanical, technical and industrial expertise (Honeyman 2000).

The gendered construction of skill, particularly the association of technical and mechanical expertise and skilled trades with working-class men, has been a key source of the divisions that differentiated working-class men from women and middle-class men in the industrial economy. While middle-class men gained access to high-level occupations and professions through academic success, working-class men often developed their skills through the apprenticeship system. Sons followed in the footsteps of their

fathers as skills, knowledge, experience, expertise, tradition and custom were passed down from generation to generation from man to boy (McClelland 1987; Alimahomed-Wilson 2011). Daughters and women were often excluded from this process and were barred from guilds and unions that sought to protect the prestige and high wages associated with the male-dominated skilled trades (Honeyman 2000: 62; Cockburn 1985: 8). Thus since men have historically dominated (and protected) the process of acquiring skill, they have dominated skilled trades and craft occupations, and skill has come to be seen as a male property conveying honour, prestige and masculine dominance (Rule 1987). Skill thus became a key source of power for men, which differentiated them from other workers in the labour force. Skilled tradesman and craft workers were the 'labour aristocracy', distinguished from unskilled workers and women by virtue of their possession of valuable and prestigious skills. The possession of skill gave men power and status over women and other men, both symbolically and materially, and was therefore a key source of masculine power, identity and authority, both in the workplace and in wider society. The possession of skill also gave men a personal investment in their work and a degree of power over employers. Skilled tradesman could argue that only they had the necessary skills and experience to carry out certain tasks, and therefore that they were highly valuable workers.

Yet within the industrial economy, many working-class men were neither highly skilled nor carried out work that required high levels of skill or expertise. The vast majority of work in manufacturing, construction and the extractive industries was, though, still constructed as masculine and was male dominated. Central to the construction of such work as masculine was that much of it was very hard, heavy, dangerous and physically demanding. Although women have historically carried out such work, their participation in particular types of heavy manual work was gradually curtailed throughout the nineteenth century as it was increasingly seen as inappropriate for women within dominant constructions of femininity (Honeyman 2000). Hence the construction of physically demanding work as masculine and better suited to men's bodies was a key factor, along with the gendered construction of skill, which differentiated 'men's work' from 'women's work' in the industrial economy.

For unskilled men during industrialization, their bodies were often the 'tools of their trade'. The harder these men worked, the more they contorted, twisted, marked, scarred and sacrificed their bodies in the labour

process, the more they demonstrated, proved and performed their embodied working-class masculinity, as Moorhouse argues (1987: 242):

Danger and bravery, drawing on notions of masculinity, become important in the meanings surrounding work. Men can gain pride, respect, confirm identity, by pitting themselves against fear or furnace.

The use of the body as a tool within the labour process has been a defining aspect of low-skilled working-class men's work and has served to reinforce the masculine nature of manual work, and the masculine nature of the workers who performed it (McDowell 2003; Cockburn 1988). The masculine and 'heroic' character of hard and heavy manual work and the masculine prestige associated with high-skill trade and craft occupations is valorized and celebrated. It is contrasted with and constructed in opposition to 'women's work' and middle-class non-manual work, both of which offer few of the 'masculine compensations' provided by heavy or highly skilled manual work (see also Slutskaya et al. 2016). Hence McDowell (2003: 11) suggests:

The idealized embodied masculinity of working-class men, for example, both differentiates them from the rational cerebral masculinity of middle class men, but also constructs them as inferior.

Stan Gray (1987: 225), a former union leader in a factory, vividly describes how the use of the body within the labour process is central to this construction of working-class masculinity, and can provide such men with a sense of masculine superiority over women and middle-class men:

Working men are treated like dirt everywhere: at work they are at the bottom of the heap and *under* the thumb of the boss; outside they are scorned by polite society. But, the men can say, we are better than them all in certain ways; we're doing men's work; it's physically tough; women can't do it; neither can the bankers and politicians. Tough work gives a sense of masculine superiority that compensates for being stepped on and ridiculed.

As working-class men are below middle-class men in terms of class and status, they may feel threatened by more powerful, educated and 'civilized' men of the middle classes whose 'cerebral masculinity' is rooted in the possession of high levels of cultural and economic, rather than physical, capital (see Connell 1987; McDowell 2003). They may also feel threatened by women who enter 'their' work and thereby question its masculine construction (Alimahomed-Wilson 2011). But, as Gray (1987) suggests,

through carrying out hard, dirty and often dangerous labour in unenviable conditions, working-class men can regain some power and authority because they are engaged in ‘real men’s work’ that only they are capable of doing. Hence large amounts of masculine pride, self-respect and superiority could be earned from being involved in such work, as Gray (1987: 226) suggests:

We control the nuts and bolts of production, have our hands on the machines and gears and valves, the wires and lathes and pumps, the furnaces and spindles and batteries. We’re the masters of the real and concrete; we manipulate the steel and the lead, the wood, oil and aluminium. What we know is genuine, the real and the specific world of daily life. Workers are the wheels that make society go round, the creators of social value and worth. There would be no fancy society, no civilized work conditions if it were not for our labour.

Gray’s (1987) comments evocatively depict the relationship between working-class masculinity, technical and mechanical competence, and the mastery of machinery and production. For working-class men this is ‘real’, useful and productive work that has an obvious value. This ‘concrete, real and genuine’ work reinforces working-class men’s masculinity, provides them with masculine status and is often contrasted with ‘women’s work’ or middle-class ‘pen-pushing’ (Mac an Ghail 1996). Hence implicit in working-class notions of masculinity is the idea that working-class men are more masculine than middle-class men, and this is evidenced by the different *types* of work that the two groups do (Willis 1977; Carrigan et al. 1987) and informs negative constructions of non-manual work (Nixon 2006, 2009).

Yet, as we shall explore in the next section, such work is providing an ever-shrinking share of employment in contemporary Britain. Indeed, in an era characterized by the globalization of production and industrial decline in the country, accounts of the heroicness of hard and heavy manual labour seem increasingly nostalgic (Strangleman 2007); out of sync with the skills, attributes and dispositions required in the contemporary postindustrial, service-dominated economy.

POSTINDUSTRIAL RESTRUCTURING

While the classed and gendered orientations to, and understandings of, work outlined above have been long in the making, economic restructuring associated with deindustrialization and the rise of the ‘postindustrial’ (Bell 1973) or ‘service’ economy has served to severely challenge them. With more than 3 million male manufacturing jobs lost between 1978 and 2004, by 2009, manufacturing accounted for only 10 % of British employment compared with 29 % in the late 1970s (Grint and Nixon 2015). Mass shedding of male manual labour in manufacturing was accompanied by historically unprecedented increases in male unemployment, with ‘official’ rates peaking at more than 12 % in the early 1980s and 1990s (ONS 2016a). ‘Official’ male employment rates have since recovered, although they remain much higher for the poorly qualified and low skilled (Dunn 2014).

Declines in male economic activity have been particularly enduring. Male economic inactivity doubled over the 1980s and 1990s rising from 8.6 % to 15.5 % of all men of working age in Britain. The growth of the ‘economically inactive’ category reflected a significant rise in ‘hidden unemployment’, particularly among older male manual workers displaced by redundancy, recession and industrial decline. Up to a third of the inactive (1 million workers) actually wanted to work. The characteristics of the male economically inactive confirm the legacy of what Beattie (1998) calls ‘negative deindustrialization’. Economic inactivity rates are upwards of 35 % for men with no qualifications, compared with 8 % for men with a degree. The male economically inactive are disproportionately unskilled and semiskilled workers—younger poorly qualified men experiencing elongated school-to-work transitions and older manual workers displaced by industrial decline—although skilled manual workers are also over-represented (Leaker 2009). Male economic inactivity is also geographically concentrated in the old industrial heartlands where male economic inactivity rates reach above 50 % (Nixon 2005). In these areas in particular, lack of demand for male manual labour is the key explanation for increasing male economic inactivity and unemployment (Shildrick et al. 2012). The male economic inactivity rate now sits above 16 %, highlighting that the ‘problem’ of male economic inactivity was *not* confined to the 1980s and 1990s and continues to be a problem in contemporary Britain.

Working-class men have been falling out of the labour market during periods of sustained service sector employment growth (see Nixon 2006, 2009). In this context, explanations have turned to the nature of new

employment growth as a key problem facing low-skilled men. Early knowledge economy theorists such as Bell (1973; see also Castells 2000) predicted that future productivity and competitiveness of developed nations would depend less on workers' 'brawn' and increasingly their possessing formal educational credentials. This reflected the rising importance of 'codified theoretical knowledge' (Bell 1973) and the increased interpretation and management of information needed to maximize the utility of data generated by the increased diffusion of advanced information technologies throughout the labour process (Castells 2000). In Britain the influential Leitch report (HMSO 2006) reviewed the country's skill base and noted that, compared with European competitor nations, Britain displayed a relatively 'long tail' of poor qualifications and a significantly smaller percentage of workers holding level 3 vocational qualifications. Leitch declared that skills were the 'key lever' to economic competitiveness and prosperity. However, currently more than 10 million people (aged 16–64) in Britain hold *less* than NVQ level 2 qualifications—the equivalent of less than five 'good' (A–C) passes at GCSE (secondary school) (ONS 2016b).

Thus the labour market problems facing low-skilled men reflect technological change and the general shift in labour demand towards highly educated highly skilled workers (Nickell 2004). 'Finance and business services' has been the fastest-growing industrial sector since the mid-1980s, followed by 'public administration, education and health' and then 'distribution, hotels and restaurants' (Grint and Nixon 2015). Education requirements are very demanding in finance and business, and the sector employs significantly more men than women, especially in the highest-paid occupations. Conversely, the public administration, education and health sector is an employer of large numbers of women, but generally has significant educational requirements, despite the range of occupations covered by the category. However, jobs in distribution, hotels and restaurants generally have much lower entry requirements; indeed 'distribution' has been a key sector generating male-dominated working-class jobs, such as in transportation and delivery services. Thus, unlike the universal upskilling associated with knowledge economy predictions, as employment decline has been heavily concentrated in 'manufacturing' and to a much lesser extent 'energy and water' and 'construction', these trends have been interpreted by some as contributing to the bifurcation or polarization of the occupational structure as we witness simultaneous growth in highly skilled managerial and professional occupations *and* low-level 'servicing' occupations, but declining opportunities in manufacturing, manual work and

‘middling’ jobs vulnerable to offshoring and automation (Grint and Nixon 2015).

Low-level servicing jobs increasingly, then, dominate employment opportunities at the lower end of the labour market. Yet various studies suggest that this may also be a significant barrier to employment for unemployed or economically inactive working-class men (Nixon 2009; McDowell 2014). Nixon (2009) argues that there is a clear mismatch between the ‘technical’ and ‘practical’ skills possessed by unemployed men and those demanded in growth areas of employment (‘communication’ and ‘customer handling’). As noted above, skills are gendered and classed, and historically women have dominated many forms of low-level service work. Importantly, women continue to significantly outnumber men in key areas of low-level employment growth, such as ‘caring, leisure and other services’ and ‘sales and customer service’ (Grint and Nixon 2015). Bradley (1999: 96) has suggested:

Now there seems to be a new phase of capitalist accumulation as women are seen to possess qualities apt for consumerised customer service employment: skills in customer care and ‘emotion work’, communication skills and the ability to manage other women.

Indeed, a range of literature has documented how many forms of low-level service work have been coded feminine through their association with women’s ‘naturalized’ skills, particularly in relation to care, emotional and sexualized forms of labour (Nixon 2009). ‘Social’, ‘people’, ‘interactive’, ‘emotional’ and ‘aesthetic’ skills have all become more important in the contemporary service economy (Felstead et al. 2007), and they are all skills historically associated with ‘women’s work’ rather than ‘men’s work’. Historically, men have shown little interest in entering ‘women’s jobs’ owing to the lower status and wage. Yet as such jobs are providing an increasing share of employment, a growing literature has explored men’s experiences entering ‘non-traditional’ gender atypical service occupations. Findings suggest that doing ‘women’s work’ and working in female-dominated environments can challenge men’s masculine identity in a variety of ways. Lupton (2000) argues that men’s ability to reinforce and regenerate their masculinity within the workplace is reduced because, being surrounded by women, they are unable to establish the homosocial relations characteristic of masculine work cultures. They may also fear being stigmatized by other men as effeminate or gay. Other studies find men suffering from ‘role-strain’ (Simpson 2005), ‘compromising their masculinity’ and opening themselves

up to ridicule from peers (Cross and Bagilhole 2002). Men have difficulty articulating hegemonic constructions of masculinity within such spaces. Yet, as McDowell (2015) discusses, previous research also suggests that men utilize a variety of strategies to reconcile potential conflicts. These include reconstructing, regendering and reperforming the occupational role in more masculine ways, and a range of other ‘distancing’ strategies whereby men separate themselves from the more feminine attributes of the role (see McDowell 2015; Anderson 2008). Much less frequently observed is men reconstructing their identities and practices in line with more feminine workplace cultures and practices (see McDowell 2015; Lupton 2000).

Given the characteristics of working-class masculinity discussed in the previous section, it seems that entry into female-dominated areas of service work may be particularly challenging for such men, whose embodied masculinity seems particularly at odds with the kinds of skills, attributes and dispositions required in entry-level service work (McDowell 2014; Nixon 2009). Lindsay and McQuaid (2004) report a general rejection of low-level service work as a route into work among unemployed men, with the pay and skills being key issues. Nixon (2006, 2009) explored very low-skilled unemployed working-class men’s orientations and attitudes towards a range of jobs currently available in the local labour market and found that they remained strongly oriented to male-dominated manual occupations and a small range of male-dominated masculine occupational niches in services (e.g. security and driving jobs, or ‘backshop’ environments in retail). The men tended to discuss difficulties in performing ‘emotional labour’, particularly when confronted with angry customers, when discussing the merits of various services jobs.

Interestingly, Roberts’ (2013) study of young working-class men in retail found precisely the opposite—young men embracing service work in retail, albeit while retaining some of the distancing strategies discussed by McDowell (2015). Yet all of Roberts’ (2013) respondents’ possessed at *least* some NVQ level 2 qualifications, while the majority of Nixon’s (2009) sample had no education qualifications. Thus within these different findings we see the significance of the possession of different forms of capital for different labour market orientations and outcomes (Atkinson 2008). Nixon’s (2009) poorly educated ‘lads’ have few resources or capital to fall back on aside from their physical bodies, experience a limited range of labour market possibilities and show little sign of reflexive reconstruction of their masculine occupational identities. Roberts’ (2013) ‘ordinary’ young working-class men did better in school, developed better non-manual

verbal communication and written skills, and are thus better able to perform and present a wider variety of ‘selves’, including the enactment of a more ‘inclusive’ and ‘effeminate’, less oppositional and homophobic masculinity, which is more in tune with prevailing cultural attitudes and changing skill demands in the work place (see also Anderson 2008).

This is interesting because, as we have seen, constructions of working-class masculinity rooted in the experience of hard, heavy and skilled manual labour have historically been positioned directly in opposition to ‘softer’ or more inclusive forms of masculinity. While some contemporary in-depth studies of both highly and low-skilled male-dominated manual workplaces, and unemployed male manual workers, suggest continued adherence to some of the key cultural values of working-class masculinity described earlier (see e.g. Simpson et al. 2014; Slutskaya et al. 2016; Thiel 2007), it also the case that, as McDowell (2014: 34) suggests,

In increasing numbers working-class men are becoming ‘women workers’, in the sense that they are now employed in growing numbers in feminized jobs at the bottom end of the labour market, in sectors such as retail, hospitality and care

A raft of sociological literature has documented working-class men’s negative experiences of economic restructuring and deindustrialization in Britain since the 1980s. Early studies of those experiencing unemployment and redundancy as a result of deindustrialization highlighted the devastating impact of the loss of economic independence and the breadwinning role on men’s identity (Fineman 1987; Gallie et al. 1994). Findings also often implicitly reinforced the importance of Jahoda’s (1982) five latent functions of work that are missing during unemployment: activity, time structure, social contact, exterior goals, status and identity (Fineman 1987). Thus the importance of pay for economic independence and work as meaningful activity was expressed in the universal finding across the literature that unemployed men strongly disliked unemployment and still expressed a very strong desire to work, indeed stronger than the employed (Rose 1994: 291; Gallie and Vogler 1994: 124), but were severely challenged by changing labour market conditions and a lack of local labour demand. Nonetheless, there is no universal experience of ‘life on the dole’ (McRae 1987) and, as Parry’s (2003) research on Welsh coal-mining communities demonstrates, households adopt a range of strategies in response to men’s redundancy and unemployment. Yet, notably, most of Parry’s (2003) male respondents were unable to ‘effect occupational flexibility’ and adopted an

increasingly instrumental ‘survivalist strategy’ based on ‘getting by’ and finding meaning outside the paid labour market. Parry (2003: 242–243) notes:

Most informants were unable to acquire paid work which provided the security and fulfilment associated with their former experiences . . . the labour market opportunities created by restructuring have met these needs only for more privileged individuals.

It is clear that the labour market difficulties experienced by working-class men reflect the continuing effects of deindustrialization, economic restructuring and the collapse of demand for low-skilled male manual workers. Yet recent neoliberal welfare reform and the widespread implementation of ‘austerity measures’ in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis have served to further exacerbate the labour market (and social) marginalization of working-class men, particularly the very low skilled, poorly educated and multiply disadvantaged (McDowell 2014; Russell 2016; Reeve 2017). Thus the final section turns to a discussion of the experiences of unemployed working-class men seeking work in a period characterized by austerity and increasingly punitive neoliberal welfare reform.

UNEMPLOYMENT, AUSTERITY AND WELFARE REFORM

In the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and in the context of the Great Recession, governments across Europe implemented ‘austerity measures’ in order to reduce state spending during a period of spiralling public debt. In Britain, austerity was accompanied by historically unprecedented cuts in welfare spending and the development of the

harshest regime of conditionality and benefit sanctions in the history of the UK benefits system, significantly increasing the level of conditionality placed on some benefit claimants and the severity of sanctions for failing to comply (Reeve 2017: 65)

As Dunn (2014: 3) notes, recent welfare reform in Britain is rooted in the belief that there is ‘a lack of employment commitment amongst unemployed benefit claimants’. Policy-related speeches and reports have frequently invoked concepts such as ‘welfare dependency’, ‘workless class’, ‘culture of poverty’ and ‘poverty of aspirations’ in an attempt to explain persistent poverty and unemployment, and to justify increasingly punitive

welfare reform (Shildrick et al. 2012). Thus the unemployed are said to be trapped in a ‘dependency culture’, over-reliant on hand-outs from the state, lacking motivation to work, not trying hard enough to find work or too ‘choosy’ about what jobs they’ll take. These ideas are highly significant because they locate both the problem of, and the solution to, unemployment firmly within the characteristics and/or supposed behavioural traits of the unemployed. As such they can be seen as part of a broader neoliberal shift in social policy towards a rolling back of the state’s role and responsibility in ensuring the welfare of its citizens through the promotion of discourses that individualize the causes of poverty and unemployment by suggesting that they reflect individual deficiencies (Wright 2012; Russell 2016; Reeve 2017).

Welfare reform underpinned by such behavioural explanations of poverty and unemployment has had important consequences for working-class men whose labour market participation has been hit particularly hard in the aftermath of the Great Recession. Warren (2015) notes that semi- and unskilled manual workers report the greatest increases in underemployment in post-crisis labour markets, while skilled manual workers report experiencing the greatest increase in financial insecurity. Furthermore, young, low-skilled men have borne the brunt of increases in unemployment and long-term unemployment. For example, in 2013 some 21.7 % of men aged 18–24 were classified as unemployed (compared with 16.5 % of young women). Furthermore, over a third of those young men had been unemployed for a year or more and were therefore classed as long-term unemployed, and 44 % of that category had been unemployed for more than two years (ONS 2013b). Such increases in long-term unemployment are suggestive of the growing labour market exclusion of young low-skilled working-class men and reflect the prevalence of ‘repaired’, ‘stagnant’ and ‘downward’ school-to-work transitions among this group (Walther and Plug 2006). The most disadvantaged young men end up among the 180,000 currently categorized as ‘economically inactive’, not in education, employment or training, or among the 230,000 young men currently classified as unemployed (Mirza-Davies 2016).

In-depth research on young disadvantaged unemployed men suggests, however, that their labour market status may be better understood as being defined by increasing ‘marginalization’ or ‘precariousness’ rather than complete exclusion (Simmons et al. 2014; Hardgrove et al. 2015). This is because their labour market experiences are characterized by what Shildrick et al. (2012) call the ‘low-pay/no-pay cycle’, whereby they repeatedly churn

between spells of short-term ‘poor-work’, unemployment and government-mandated training schemes. The key problem, then, is not labour market exclusion but underemployment and increasing precariousness caused by the prevalence of flexible jobs at the bottom of the occupational structure that are insecure in terms of hours and pay. Crucially, such jobs do not move young men out of poverty or provide economic independence. Indeed, as Hardgrove et al. (2015) show in their study of young unemployed men in the south of England, the prevalence of short-term, flexible hours contracts at the bottom of the labour market has created an extended adolescence for young working-class men whereby they are increasingly dependent on family support in order to navigate increasingly unstable working hours, pay and employment statuses, or to avoid such work altogether.

Disadvantaged young unemployed working-class men lacking family support are much less able to avoid ‘poor-work’ and the low-pay/no-pay cycle. Indeed, the cycle is exacerbated by increasing unemployment benefit conditionality that compels them, under threat of benefit withdrawal, to take any job offered and/or repeatedly attend a variety of employment ‘training’ schemes of dubious value (Russell 2016). In this context it is interesting to note that young unemployed people are significantly more likely to receive benefit sanctions than other groups of benefit claimants (Crisp and Powell 2016), which may suggest their resistance to welfare reform and increased conditionality. However, increasing benefit conditionality combined with the growing use of more punitive sanctions for non-compliance has had severe effects for the most disadvantaged unemployed men. For example, Reeve’s (2017) study of homeless, predominantly male, jobseekers showed that they were four times as likely to be sanctioned as benefit claimants as a whole. Reeve (2017) argues that vulnerable and disadvantaged homeless unemployed men are ‘set up to fail’ by a benefits system that sets them conditions that they are unable to meet and then sanctions them for non-compliance. The effects of benefit sanctions are severe (Garthwaite 2016). Some 1.1 million people accessed emergency food supplies from Trussell Trust food banks (Britain’s main provider) in 2015/2016, which represents a tripling of the figure since welfare reform was introduced in 2012/2013 (Butler 2016). Perhaps even more pertinently, the most frequently cited reason for referral to Trussell Trust food banks was ‘delays to benefits and sanctions’, which accounted for nearly half of all referrals in 2015/2016 (Butler 2016).

There is little doubt that the revival of behavioural explanations of poverty and unemployment has contributed to the increased stigmatization

of the poor and unemployed in a contemporary era characterized by both rising inequality *and* the hardening of social attitudes towards poverty (Taylor-Gooby 2013; Patrick 2016). Studies demonstrate a variety of consequences of increasing stigmatization. Patrick (2016) suggests that although benefits claimants may internalize stigma—with negative repercussions for self-esteem and self-worth—they also engage in othering practices whereby they attempt to distance themselves from stigmatizing discourses by stigmatizing other, supposedly less deserving, individuals in the community. Pemberton et al. (2016: 31) thus suggest that

Political rhetoric has served to pit neighbours and communities in opposition to one another, creating an environment of intolerance, misunderstanding and hostility.

Similarly, McDowell (2014) suggests that in ‘austerity Britain’, media portrayals of young working-class men have shifted from a discourse of ‘masculine disadvantage’ that constructed them as victims of structural economic change to a more insidious construction that presents them as ‘feral’, dangerous or a threat to broader social values and cohesion. In this context of increased labelling and weakening labour market opportunities, McDowell (2014: 35) wonders whether ‘proletarianized’ young working-class men on the margins of work may increasingly seek to construct their identities outside work, through their consumptive or leisure activities, or whether, indeed, they may inhabit a position of ‘aggressive outsiders’. Yet, a multitude of contemporary studies continue to suggest that, despite their repeated experiences of ‘churning’, ‘poor-work’, underemployment and unemployment, the identities of working-class men (of all ages) remain strongly oriented around paid work because of the continued value placed on economic independence and ‘breadwinning’ (McDowell 2014; Jimenez 2014). Jimenez’s (2014) research on the consequences of the closure of a local steelworks on a town in South Wales provides a compelling example. He (2014) documents young unemployed working-class men being ‘bullied and shamed’ by peers, family and the wider community for *accepting* low-paying ‘gender-inappropriate’ forms of service work. Key here then is not that such shaming reflects continued adherence to forms of the ‘hard and heavy’ working-class masculinity discussed earlier but that in their commitment to obtain economic independence and provide for their families, young working-class men are taking such jobs *despite* their experiences of shame and stigma.

It is perhaps telling that two recent cinematic portrayals of unemployed working-class men have focused heavily on how welfare reform and economic restructuring have combined to generate profound feelings of shame and embarrassment among working-class men. Both films depict the indignities experienced by unemployed men while being processed by welfare systems that are built on the premise that unemployment reflects individual deficiencies. The award-winning British film *I, Daniel Blake* (2016) tells the story of a carpenter, in the heavily deindustrialized north of England, who, having been told to give up work by his doctor because of his ill health, is denied sickness benefit and forced to engage in a range of humiliating activities in order to 'prove' he is doing enough to look for work and is therefore eligible for unemployment benefit. The film is unflinching in its depiction of the brutal effects of benefit sanctions in generating absolute poverty and incredibly moving in its depiction of the shame experienced by those relying on food banks for survival. Interestingly, it depicts Blake taking great meaning from supporting and providing for a young single mother whom he meets in a job centre while she is having her benefits sanctioned for missing an employment service interview. The French film *The Measure of a Man* (2015) also focuses on humiliating experiences with welfare agencies in depicting the experience of an unemployed male factory worker struggling to find work in a postindustrial French town. It vividly portrays the often patronizing and demotivating nature of the employability classes that the unemployed are compelled to attend. Yet it also provides an interesting slant on the difficulties that working-class men may face in low-level service jobs. Thus we see the film's main protagonist confronted with what appears to be an overwhelming moral dilemma as he finally takes up a new job as a security guard in a supermarket. In order to earn money to provide for his family, he is required to apprehend other poor men who claim that they are only stealing to provide for their families, which they can no longer do because of widespread male unemployment.

CONCLUSIONS

The continuing legacy of economic restructuring and deindustrialization is still clearly apparent in the labour market difficulties experienced by working-class men in contemporary labour markets. Working-class men have been hit hardest by restructuring and recession but have benefited least from service sector employment growth, which has done little to ameliorate the problem of high levels of unemployment and economic

inactivity among working-class male manual workers and low-skilled and poorly educated younger men. These problems developed during the 1980s and 1990s but continue to mark the experiences of such men in contemporary labour markets. Indeed, it appears that the growing prevalence of 'poor-work' at the bottom of the labour market, plus recent welfare reform, have served to further exacerbate the economic and social marginalization of working-class men in Britain, particularly the most disadvantaged, such as those possessing low-level skills and educational qualifications, those suffering from poor physical and mental health, or those lacking family support networks.

It is important to recognize differences between working-class men, and there is evidence to suggest that the less disadvantaged among this group, such as those with better educational qualifications, may be more able to take advantage of contemporary service sector employment growth. It also appears that while adherence to the cultural values of older forms of 'hard and heavy' working-class masculinity are still apparent, identification with particular forms of 'masculine' manual work may be dwindling, as economic restructuring, welfare reform and the generalized importance of work for economic independence increasingly compel working-class men to enter gender atypical forms of service work.

REFERENCES

- Alcock, P., Beatty, C., Fothergill, S., MacMillan, R., & Yeandle, S. (2003). *Work to welfare: How men become detached from the labour market*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Alimahomed-Wilson, J. (2011). Men along the shore: Working-class masculinities in crises. *Nordic Journal for Masculinity Studies*, 6(1), 22–44.
- Anderson, E. (2008). Inclusive masculinity in a fraternal setting. *Men and Masculinities*, 10(5), 604–620.
- Atkinson, W. (2008). The myth of the reflexive worker: Class and work histories in neo-liberal times. *Work, Employment & Society*, 24(3), 413–429.
- Beattie, G. (1998). *Hard lines: Voices from deep within a recession*. Manchester: Mandolin.
- Bell, D. (1973). *The coming of post-industrial society*. New York: Basic Books.
- Bradley, H. (1989). *Men's work, women's work: A sociological history of the sexual division of labour in employment*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Bradley, H. (1999). *Gender and power in the workplace: Analysing the impact of economic change*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.

- Butler, P. (2016, April 15). Reliance on food bank must not become the norm, says charity. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/apr/15/reliance-food-banks-new-normal-trussell-trust-charity>
- Carrigan, T., Connell, R., & Lee, J. (1987). Hard and heavy: Toward a new sociology of masculinity. In M. Kaufman (Ed.), *Beyond patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power and change*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Castells, M. (2000). *The rise of the network society*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Cockburn, C. (1985). *Machinery of dominance: Women, men and technical know-how*. London: Pluto Press.
- Cockburn, C. (1988). The gendering of jobs: Workplace relations and the reproduction of sex segregation. In S. Walby (Ed.), *Gender segregation at work*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- Cole, M. (2008). Sociology contra government? The contest for the meaning of unemployment in UK policy debates. *Work, Employment & Society*, 22(1), 27–43.
- Connell, R. (1987). *Gender and power: Society, the person and sexual politics*. Cambridge: Polity in association with Blackwell.
- Connell, R. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Crisp, R., & Powell, R. (2016). Young people and UK labour market policy: A critique of ‘employability’ as a tool for understanding youth unemployment. *Urban Studies (online)*, 1–24. doi:10.1177/0042098016637567.
- Crompton, R., Lewis, S., & Lyonette, C. (Eds.). (2007). *Women, men, work and family in Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cross, S., & Bagilhole, B. (2002). ‘Girls’ jobs for the boys? Men, masculinity and non-traditional occupations. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 9(2), 204–226.
- Dunn, A. (2014). *Rethinking unemployment and the work ethic: Beyond the ‘quasi-Titmuss’ paradigm*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Felstead, A., Gallie, D., Green, F., & Zhou, Y. (2007). *Skills at work 1986 to 2006*. SKOPE, Oxford: University of Oxford.
- Fineman, S. (1987). *Unemployment: Personal and social consequences*. London: Tavistock.
- Gallie, D., & Vogler, C. (1994). Unemployment and attitudes to work. In D. Gallie, C. Marsh, & C. Vogler (Eds.), *Social change and the experience of unemployment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gallie, D., Marsh, C., & Vogler, C. (1994). *Social change and the experience of unemployment*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gangl, M. (2002). Changing labour markets and early Career outcomes: Labour market entry in Europe over the past decade. *Work, Employment & Society*, 16(1), 67–90.
- Garthwaite, K. (2016, April 20). Life on the breadline: Benefit cuts are making food banks a permanent fixture. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/apr/20/benefit-cuts-food-banks-permanent-fixture-sanctions>

- Gershuny, J. I., & Miles, A. I. (1983). *The new service economy: The transformation of employment in industrial societies*. London: Pinter.
- Gray, S. (1987). Sharing the shop floor. In M. Kauffman (Ed.), *Beyond patriarchy: Essays by men on pleasure, power and change*. Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Grint, K., & Nixon, D. (2015). *The sociology of work*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Hardgrove, A., McDowell, L., & Rootham, E. (2015). Precarious lives, precarious labour: Family support and young men's transitions to work in the UK. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(8), 1057–1076.
- HMSO. (2006). *The Leitch review of skill: Prosperity for all in the global economy—World class skills*. London: TSO.
- Honeyman, K. (2000). *Women, gender and industrialisation in England 1700–1870*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Jahoda, M. (1982). *Employment and unemployment: A social-psychological analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Jahoda, M., Lazarsfeld, P. F., & Zeisel, H. (1933). *Marcinthal: The sociology of an unemployed community*, English translation, 1971. New York: Aldine Atherton.
- Jimenez, L. (2014). Intergenerational traumatic transmission of aspects of masculinities through shame and embarrassment among unemployed young men and their fathers. *International Forum of Psychoanalysis*, 23(3), 151–160.
- Leaker, D. (2009). Economic inactivity. *Economic and Labour Market Review*, 3(2), 42–46.
- Lindsay, C., & McQuaid, R. (2004). Avoiding the McJobs: Unemployed Jobseeker's and attitudes to service work. *Work, Employment & Society*, 18, 297–319.
- Lupton, B. (2000). Maintaining masculinity: Men who do 'women's work'. *British Journal of Management*, 11(Special issue), 33–48.
- Mac an Ghail, M. (1996). *The making of men: Masculinities, sexualities and schooling*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- MacDonald, R. (2011). Youth transitions, unemployment and underemployment. *Journal of Sociology*, 47(4), 427–444.
- McClelland, K. (1987). Time to work, time to live: Some aspects of work and the reformation of class in Britain, 1850–180. In P. Joyce (Ed.), *The historical meanings of work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McDowell, L. (2014). The sexual contract, youth, masculinity and the uncertain promise of waged work in austerity Britain. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 29(79), 31–49.
- McDowell, J. (2015). Masculinity and non-traditional occupations: Men's talk in women's work. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 22(3), 273–291.
- McRae, S. (1987). *Young and jobless: The social and personal consequences of long-term youth unemployment*. Shaftesbury: The Blackmore Press.
- Mirza-Davies, J. (2016). *NEET: Young people not in education, employment or training*. Commons Briefing Paper SN06705, House of Commons Library.

- Moorhouse, H. F. (1987). The 'work ethic' and 'leisure' activity: The hot rod in post-war America. In P. Joyce (Ed.), *The historical meanings of work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nickell, S. (2004). Poverty and worklessness in Britain. *The Economic Journal*, 114 (494), 1–25.
- Nixon, D. (2005). *Economic restructuring, unemployment and male identity in post-industrial society*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Manchester.
- Nixon, D. (2006). "I just like working with my hands": Employment aspirations and the meaning of work for low- skilled unemployed men in Britain's service economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(2), 201–217.
- Nixon, D. (2009). "I can't put a smiley face on": Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the "new economy". *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), 300–322.
- OECD. (2000). *Employment outlook*. Paris: OECD.
- ONS. (2013a). *Women in the labour market*. London: Office for National Statistics.
- ONS. (2013b). *Regional labour market statistics, June*. London: Office for National Statistics.
- ONS. (2016a). *Statistical bulletin: UK labour market October 2016*. London: Office for National Statistics.
- ONS. (2016b). *Labour market profile: Great Britain*. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/gor/2092957698/report.aspx>
- Parry, J. (2003). The changing meaning of work: Restructuring in the former coalmining communities of the South Wales Valleys. *Work, Employment & Society*, 17(2), 227–246.
- Patrick, R. (2016). Living and responding to the 'scrounger' narrative in the UK: Exploring everyday strategies of acceptance, resistance and deflection. *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 24(3), 245–259.
- Pemberton, S., Fahmy, E., Sutton, E., & Bell, K. (2016). Navigating the stigmatised identities of poverty in austere times: Resisting and responding to narratives of personal failure. *Critical Social Policy*, 36(1), 21–37.
- Reeve, K. (2017). Welfare conditionality, benefit sanctions and homelessness in the UK: Ending the 'something for nothing culture' or punishing the poor? *Journal of Poverty and Social Justice*, 25(1), 65–78.
- Roberts, S. (2013). Boys will be boys...won't they? Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities. *Sociology*, 47(4), 671–686.
- Rose, M. (1994). Skill and Samuel Smiles: Changing the British work ethic. In R. Penn, M. Rose, & J. Rubery (Eds.), *Skill and occupational change*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rule, J. (1987). The property of skill in the period of manufacture. In P. Joyce (Ed.), *The historical meanings of work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Russell, L. (2016). The realities of being young, unemployed and poor in post-industrial Britain. *Power and Education*, 8(2), 160–175.

- Shildrick, T., MacDonald, R., Webster, C., & Garthwaite, K. (2012). *Poverty and insecurity: Life in low-pay, no-pay Britain*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Simmons, R., Russell, L., & Thompson, R. (2014). Young people and labour market marginality: Findings from a longitudinal ethnographic study. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(5), 577–591.
- Simpson, R. (2005). Men in non-traditional occupations: Career entry, Career orientation and experience of role strain. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(4), 363–380.
- Simpson, R., Hughes, J., Slutskaya, N., & Balta, M. (2014). Sacrifice and distinction in dirty work: Men's construction of meaning in the butcher trade. *Work, Employment & Society*, 28(5), 754–771.
- Slutskaya, N., Simpson, R., Hughes, J., Simpson, A., & Uygur, S. (2016). Masculinity and class in the context of dirty work. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 23(2), 754–770.
- Strangleman, T. (2007). The nostalgia for permanence at work? The end of work and its commentators. *The Sociological Review*, 55(1), 81–102.
- Taylor-Gooby, P. (2013). Why do people stigmatise the poor at a time of rapidly increasing inequality, and what can be done about it? *Political Quarterly*, 84(1), 31–42.
- Thiel, D. (2007). Class in construction: London building workers, dirty work and physical cultures. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 58(2), 227–251.
- UKCES. (2011). *Working futures 2001–2020*, Institute for Employment Research and Cambridge Econometrics. London: UK Commission for Employment and Skills.
- Walther, A., & Plug, W. (2006). Transitions from school to work in Europe: De-standardization and policy trends. *New Directions For Child & Adolescent Development*, 113. doi:10.1002/cad.170.
- Warren, T. (2015). Work-time underemployment and financial hardship: Class inequalities and recession in the UK. *Work, Employment & Society*, 29(2), 191–212.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon House.
- Wright, S. (2012). Welfare-to-work, agency and personal responsibility. *Journal of Social Policy*, 41(2), 309–328.

Formulating the Postindustrial Self: The Role of Petty Crime Among Unemployed, Working-Class Men in Stoke-on-Trent

Ian Mahoney and Tony Kearon

INTRODUCTION

It has been widely argued (not least elsewhere in this edited collection) that ‘work’ has been a fundamental aspect of the identity, routines, collective cultural practices, ‘ontological security’ (Giddens 1991) and general ‘structures of feeling’ (Williams 2003) of working-class men (see e.g. Charlesworth 2000; Collinson and Hearn 2001; Jefferson 2002; Leidner 1991; McDowell 2004; Pyke 1996; Sennett 1998, 2012; Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012; Winlow 2001), and that deindustrialization and globalization have had a profound existential impact on this group (see Standing 2011, 2014; Winlow and Hall 2013). It is not the intention of this chapter to restate these arguments. Rather, it focuses on examples of the responses, coping strategies and alternative narratives of self that were produced and mobilized by a specific set of young working-class men faced with profound and systemic economic and social insecurity in a former working-class industrial heartland in the English Midlands.

I. Mahoney (✉)

Criminology, Liverpool Hope University, Hope Park, Liverpool, UK

T. Kearon

Criminology, Keele University, Keele, Newcastle, UK

The arguments developed in this chapter draw heavily on a series of longitudinal interviews conducted with 18, predominantly young, unemployed and insecurely housed working-class men in Stoke-on-Trent by one of the authors (Mahoney) over a two-year period between 2010 and 2012. Two of the men (Pickles, aged 38, and Craig, 45) were older, but their testimonies show that these experiences are shared not just spatially but also across age ranges, highlighting the challenges to understandings of self across generations. These men were scattered across Stoke-on-Trent in a patchwork of formerly close-knit industrial working-class communities traditionally associated with coal-mining, pottery production, steel manufacturing, tyre and related rubber production and a range of other large-scale employers that profoundly shaped the locality but have now almost entirely disappeared from the region. They lived in a range of accommodation, including council and social housing, private rented, supported housing, and several in one of two hostels that agreed to help facilitate access and participation. These men, many of whose families were rooted in these localities over several generations, found themselves in an ambiguous and ambivalent situation. On the one hand, they were all too conscious of the local collective memories and mythologies of close-knit working-class communities and the employment that delivered social and economic security as well as a sense of status and place to those communities. On the other hand, they lived a far more fragile and precarious existence marked by homelessness, sofa-surfing and short-term accommodation, long periods of unemployment interspersed with insecure, low-paid, low-status, unskilled work, and underpinned by routine alcohol, drug and substance misuse and outbreaks of petty criminality.

THE ONTOLOGICAL CHALLENGE

Like many English postindustrial cities, Stoke-on-Trent has endured significant decline in the face of deindustrialization and a reconfiguring of the economy away from traditional forms of manufacturing and production towards knowledge and service industries. The city was historically dominated by the pottery, steel and coal industries, which had largely gone by the early 1990s (Rosenthal and Lawrence 1993: 133). Now only a handful of potteries remain. In their place, the jobs that have been created are comparatively low-skilled service industry roles as the city continues to struggle to reinvent itself. More recently, large employers such as NPower and

Phones4U have closed down operations in the city, indicating that even contemporary service sector roles are unsafe and insecure.

Echoing (among, others) Sennett (1998, 2012) and Sennett and Cobb (1972), the traditional working-class occupations that shaped communities in Stoke on Trent fulfilled an ambivalent role—being both dangerous and physically demanding as well as injurious to workers' health and wellbeing, yet at the same time offering workers a feeling of place, belonging and community, shared experiences, pride in their work, routine in their day-to-day activities and thus a sense of purpose in their lives. Braverman (1998) and Standing (2011, 2014) have argued that the rise of neoliberal economics is responsible for increased labour market flexibility and a coinciding transference of risk and insecurity onto workers and families. Similarly, for Connell (2005: 93), the decline of stable and secure work has, on a global level, seen many young men 'growing up without any expectation of the stable employment around which familiar models of working-class masculinity were organized. Instead they face intermittent employment and economic marginality in the long term, and often deprivation in the short term.' These groups have been further socially and economically excluded and marginalized as they struggle, and frequently fail, to adapt to new employment expectations (Standing 2011; Winlow and Hall 2013; Slater 2014).

Simultaneously, in North Staffordshire as elsewhere, consecutive governments have targeted the unemployed, underemployed, sick, disabled and allegedly disengaged, who have increasingly been the subjects of derogatory portrayals as a homogenous, mythical bogeyman and branded as abject, feckless and dysfunctional (Elizabeth Finn Trust 2012a, b). This has occurred alongside a reintroduction of Victorian notions surrounding the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, ideas which the populist and right-wing press and politicians have willingly propagated. Increasingly coercive strategies, purportedly aimed at alleviating poverty and improving engagement with the labour market (particularly among deprived and marginalized communities), have been deployed in the hope that those out of work will be forced to comply. Such measures include the use of sanctions to force people into compliance or face financial penalties, despite questions over the efficacy and ethicality of such approaches (Griggs and Evans 2010; Rolfe 2012; Watts et al. 2014), and have coincided with a hardening of social attitudes towards welfare recipients (Park et al. 2012). As will be seen, this has seen a rise in animosity among those affected, and attempted resistance as people seek to exercise some form of control over the direction of their

lives in an increasingly fragmented and isolated existence. This process of alienation and abjection, discussed in detail by Tyler (2013), was first outlined by Bataille (1934), who argued that

the basic element of subversion, the wretched population, exploited for production and cut off from life by a prohibition on contact, is represented from the outside with disgust as the dregs of the people, populace and *gutter*. (6, original emphasis)

The construction of people as dysfunctional, feckless and lazy carries significant ramifications. This collective bogeyman and the criminality, deviance and marginality it represents ‘disturbs identity, system, order. [It] does not respect borders, positions, rules’ (Kristeva 1982: 4). Such entrenched representations explain the manner in which depictions of marginal groups resonate effectively with wider society as a result of the precariousness of their own existence, particularly among the low-paid working poor (Young 1999: 165), reminding people of the apparent chaos and disintegration which could descend on their own lives. As Julia Kristeva argues, where people are ‘affected by what does not yet appear to [them] as a thing [i.e. they are not unemployed], it is because laws, connections, and even structures of meaning govern and condition [us]’ (1982: 8). Experiences combine with mediated and politicized discourses to influence and condition understandings and beliefs on a subject. ‘Normal society’ is neither stable nor secure, for society does not exist as a simple binary (Young 2007). These abject late-modern folk devils are ‘vomited out’ (Young 1999: 56) and left stranded on the liminal margins of society, in sink estates on the literal and metaphorical periphery of the urban experience (Young 2007: 17). ‘Disgust is political’ (Tyler 2013: 24), and this ‘[d]emonization allows the problems of society to be blamed upon [these] “others” on the edge of society . . . instead of acknowledging that we have problems in society because of basic core contradictions in the social order’ (Young 1999: 110); a useful strategy for proponents of the status quo.

The apparent counterpoint to abjection—encouraging people to pull themselves up by the proverbial bootlaces, take any job and everything else will fall into place—is a misguided fallacy (Foster and Spencer 2012: 5) dependent on *laissez-faire* assumptions surrounding social mobility and ignorance of wider contemporary and historical social and structural influences on their lives. As Foster and Spencer argue, such approaches assume that middle-class norms are universal; that, with a little help and access to

the same facilities and means, the less fortunate can share in the benefits of society. Such views fail to understand the different lenses through which the different classes see the world. These ideas pose considerable threats to the security and understanding of self of someone who is, or perceives themselves to be, among the abject and who lacks the traditional resources relied on by working-class men to construct their identity and project their masculinity.

There are signs of internalization of these messages. For Beck (1992), the individualization of failure can lead to the internalization of feelings of shame and inadequacy, something explored further by Miller (1997) and, more recently, Walker (2009). For some, senses of self-worth are weakened through internalization of such discourses and seeing themselves as abject (Young 1990 in Tyler 2013: 202). Michael, despite his middle-class formation, private schooling and master's level education, blamed himself for his failure to secure work:

I don't like taking money off of people if at all possible . . . I never did like the idea of taking money off people . . . I suspect I'm falling prey slightly to our, erm, beloved government's, erm, plans for demonizing people on Job Seeker's which is, erm, fair enough I guess . . . *I just, call it an admission of defeat as well I guess.* (Michael, 23, added emphasis)

Laziness was a regular theme throughout his narrative. Michael spoke of activities that he had undertaken: handing out hundreds of CVs; internships; temporary contracts; even attending back-to-work programmes. However, because others around him had found work where he had not, he identified his own personal failings as the source of his struggles. He appeared as a reflexive actor, identifying his internalization of rhetoric surrounding being lazy, feckless and undeserving of support and believing that this applied to him. We see the contradictory nature of the understandings developed based on his experiences—working hard to secure work, while always assuming he could do more—and this assimilation of wider discourses into his thought processes. Moreover, he reflects on his experiences, something Giddens (1991: 52) has stressed is essential to identity creation and sustenance. Michael was not alone in internalizing his experiences of failure. Pickles stated:

I grew up with no parents and went into the army, and yeah, I did have a period when I was on drugs and shoplifted and being unemployed as well.

That was my doing. That was my fuck up. Unnerstand? No one's to blame for that. (Pickles, 38, original emphasis)

Despite acknowledging the disadvantages that he had faced, Pickles, who grew up in a children's home and had to cope with continual challenges and abuse from staff and other children, internalized the idea that he was to blame for his actions. The process of individualization identified by Beck (1992) and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim (2002) had a particularly profound effect. As the security of class-based solidarities and identifiers has fragmented and been replaced by individual reflexivity (Beck 1992), 'each person's biography is removed from given determinations and placed in his or her own hands' (135). Such feelings are internalized as personal failures where events are reflexively identified as resulting from bad choices rather than wider societal and structural changes and inequalities.

Not everyone is as accepting of such portrayals, however:

They tell everyone to take a pay cut but I don't see none of these fuckin' MP's willing fuckin' to slash a couple of grand a year, do you? Then I'd be willing to take a pay cut, but no, they aren't willing to take a pay cut but they fuckin' hike up all the fuel tax n' everything. Everyone's gotta pay more money, they aren't gonna pay more money are they? It's just wrong. Just a vicious cycle and they're in power and that's just wrong to be honest. (Mohammed, 23)

There is an underlying resentment of the prime minister of the time and the policies and practices implemented by the former coalition government as it was. Such statements were expressed throughout the study, and with many living in various forms of social or supported housing, these men had a shared understanding of the divide between rhetoric surrounding cultures of unemployment, fecklessness and irresponsibility, and the lived reality of unemployment, deprivation and marginalization. Their responses varied. On the one hand, we see the impact of wider societal condemnation manifesting itself as forms of acceptance and internalization. On the other, we see subversion, resistance, and the formulation and reaffirmation of a defensible self-identity which provides a sense of belonging, purpose and order in the face of continual ontological insecurity, individualism, and social and economic isolation. Their responses pose significant questions for society and the manner in which it seeks to engage with people finding themselves in vulnerable and precarious positions.

REAFFIRMING THE DEFENSIBLE SELF

When investigating unemployment and new masculinities among men in Sunderland, Winlow (2001) found that some men identified alternative roles in the illegitimate markets, and the use of violence and intimidation, as ‘marketable assets’ (103). To illustrate this he draws on the testimony of ‘Jimmy’ and his experiences of door work and bouncing, which subsequently provided access to additional income through drug-dealing on the side (103–112). Such skills and activities are identifiable within the narratives of the men who form the foundations of this current study and occur frequently within the communities of Stoke-on-Trent. They provide resources on which these men can begin to formulate part of a defensible self-identity, and, as will be explored in more detail in the discussions around street capital, reciprocity and solidarity later in the chapter, also provide alternative forms of capital with which these men further their own status in the community. Darren, for example, left the city on an apprenticeship to work in a southern coastal town and became involved in drug-dealing. He never completed his training so, when later returning to Stoke-on-Trent after the operation he was involved in was closed down by the police, he had little legitimate experience to fall back on. Meanwhile, Mohammed was kicked out of his mother’s home after she found crack cocaine in his room, and Jay regularly burgled pharmacies, making large sums of money from the proceeds, which in turn fed his own habit but also made him a target for others:

I actually went to rob a chemist to get medication . . . to get me off the drugs I was on, but that didn’t happen. I ended up selling the medication that I’d stolen and because I got so much money for it, I ended up robbing more chemists. For the money. Erm, I had me own place, but because all the people in the area new that I was stealing medication from the chemists, me place kept getting burgled to see if they could find medication in me, in me home. (Jay, 26)

Not all engaged in criminality, nor did they enthusiastically embrace formal employment. Taking on available work—often low paid, temporary and precarious, with little if any chance of advancement—means surrendering any remaining sense of self-purpose and control. It means jeopardizing the networks that have been developed in the face of adversity for minimal gain and potentially compounding ongoing insecurity and subordination. They are trapped by their precarity (Standing 2011), something illustrated

by Hatman, in searching for work through the job centre, and the recognition that much of the work available is likely to leave him worse off:

It's like you can put in ... 'Stoke' and it'll come up with like a warehouse job in London and it's like "Eh? How is that local to Stoke?" ... Or like most of the jobs are like eight hours a week cleaning or you know, things like that and it's just pointless, especially if it's not nearby, you're gonna have to use travel costs or things like that just for the sake of an hour a day or couple of hours a day. (Hatman, 24)

To counter this, the young men deployed the means available to them to provide a sense of self-control and security. They established support networks and practices that enabled them to make sense of the world in what, *to them*, was a meaningful way. Many were already working, albeit employed in some form of illegal activity or other. Phil and Darren were fencing (the handling and selling of stolen property) and locating new sources to supply them with goods that they could sell. Spanish had been involved in growing and supplying drugs, and orchestrating gangland activities (including muggings, burglaries, robberies, vehicle theft, and intergang and drug-related violence). Jay, too, had been involved in the illicit drugs trade, engaging in street dealing and burgling chemists; Pickles had dabbled in drug-dealing and hire purchase fraud. Gandi, Hatman and Shaun had been heavily involved in theft, stealing fuel from logistics hubs and lorries parked along local trunk roads, and stripping valuable wiring from empty industrial and residential properties. Michael, Shaun and Mohammed regularly engaged in informal work for friends and anyone who would employ them. Indeed, Mohammed was 'tattin' (collecting and selling on scrap metal) with friends, themselves unregistered, for £25 a day. Since this is well below any sort of minimum wage, he too was arguably complicit in his own subordination, particularly given that his friend was earning up to £200 per load. He, alongside Michael and Shaun, fulfilled the ideal image of a flexible worker in the gig economy able to perform a variety of tasks drawing on a diversity of skills, yet they did so in deviant and socially unacceptable ways.

Moreover, they were engaged in a complex and intensive process of meaning-making as they sought to make sense of their existence given the precarious position in which they found themselves. Reputations and trust were crucial, providing recognition and meaning which they were unable to find in the formal employment available to them. However, as Bowring argues, their actions may in turn compound their marginality:

The adverse consequences for the individual of small-scale illegal activities, such as petty fraud when poor people subsidize their low wages or taxes, the criminalization of their industriousness means they frequently find themselves barred from a whole host of other services and rights . . . these entitlements are for many impossible to claim without exposing self-incriminating personal details. (Bowring 2000: 313)

Indeed, future opportunities to engage legitimately and meaningfully with the labour market and wider society were constrained—for example, the need for a Disclosure and Barring Service check automatically closed off options ranging from teaching careers to forms of security work, the latter an area which Darren and Simon in particular were keen to explore but for their previous records. Engaging in informal employment of various kinds, then, provided an essential source of income, alongside borrowing from peers and relatives, and drawing on wider contacts in their attempts to develop further earning opportunities and become financially independent while developing a sense of respect from those around them (although, as will be seen, this was frequently challenged by the exploitative and low-paid nature of the informal work in which some became engaged). This meant that they did not have to be entirely dependent on state support, which could not be relied on anyway.

The low-paid nature of informal labour in deprived communities has been discussed elsewhere (see e.g. Williams and Windebank 2000, 2002), with attention being drawn to the fact that, while informal work occurs throughout society, the returns for it are generally much greater for those from more affluent communities taking on second jobs than for workers from deprived and often unemployed households (*ibid.*). Crucially, though, such work provided some ‘semblance of control . . . in the face of the changes and upheavals associated with late modernity’ (Hayward 2004: 162). For Hayward it is possible to feel simultaneously insecure and overcontrolled, and as a result people increasingly engage in risky behaviour despite their awareness of potential repercussions (Hayward 2004: 158–164). A significant degree of risk was associated with many of the activities, particularly metal theft, undertaken by these men—breaking into abandoned industrial sites carries with it safety risks in addition to capture and identification, but this can provide a sense of excitement for some:

I’ve done it [metal theft] like three times. That’s it really. I’ve never been caught. I’ve been in the situation and the police have come and I’m hiding

behind the door. They walked straight past me sort of thing. My mate's been caught though a couple of times, they spotted his shoes [laughs]. He was hiding under a desk and they spotted his trainer [laughs], they just pulled a leg out and he was like 'oh no!' I was pissing meself laughing I was. (Simon, 25)

Simon, then, was motivated by material reward, breaking into properties to seek valuable scrap metal, but was also getting a 'kick' out of it, laughing at his friend's inability to evade capture while he got away with it, and thereby underlining the seductive nature of crime (Katz 1988).

Alongside the attractive temptations of crime, the young men's undirected anger required a new outlet. This can manifest itself in attempted subversion of and resistance to attempts at enforced conformity. Stan, for instance, rather than proactively engaging with the job centre advisors, in his own words 'doesn't try as hard' as he might:

Like on Job Seekers', I'd do what they tell me but err like the whole rebellious side like pops into play then and I don't do well with people telling me I have to do stuff and, yeah, I do it because I want a job but when I'm being forced to do something it's a lot harder so I don't . . . I don't try as hard. (Stan, 21)

However, for those in precarious positions, attempts to exercise some form of control over the trajectory that one's life is taking are difficult. The increasingly stringent measures deployed by the Department of Work and Pensions have seen greater use of sanctions, placing many in financial hardship, so people have to 'play the game' with care as the practicalities of surviving with limited income and support means that they are frequently forced into narrow conformity:

They've changed the sanction part so it's a lot harder to be on Job Seekers', or actually get paid Job Seekers' . . . they've given me a piece of paper now and it says everything you can possibly do wrong and there's very little you can do right basically. (Stan, 21)

This experience is not isolated: Darren was sanctioned for failing to attend an interview he stated he had never received notification of in the first place, and Hatman was sanctioned for not attending a meeting over Christmas.

Like Paul Willis's (1977) 'lads', these men were engaged in a process of symbolic resistance and meaning-making. The personal, symbolic role of this perceived resistance is vital for providing a sense that they are not simply

passengers subject to external forces—such acts have intrinsic value in the maintenance of a defensible self, which becomes increasingly important when one has nothing left to lose:

I woke up one morning, I'm in that place, my life's so down and low, I thought "What have I got to lose?" because that's the point, I've just answered the question, *what have I got to lose anyway?* (Pickles, 38, original emphasis)

These signs of subversion are unsurprising, something Simon Charlesworth identified when analysing working-class experience in Rotherham:

A person devoid of respect will tend towards transgression of the accepted forms of valuation, because—since they cannot be invested with the value of forms they cannot embody—their own strategy has to be that of subversion: of embracing and even celebrating their alienation as an emblem of what it is: their humanity, a human form that is degraded and stigmatized. (Charlesworth 2000: 94)

Signs of attempted resistance against the systems and programmes in place, and animosity shown towards the current political elite, should be unsurprising. However, this shared outlook did not translate into some form of collective engagement. As a number of commentators have argued, the atomizing and isolating nature of existence within the contemporary neoliberal state has led to a fragmentation of estates, communities and identities (Foster and Spencer 2012; Hall and Winlow 2005; Standing 2011; Winlow and Hall 2013). There is a lack of unity of purpose, owing in part to the success of the complex 'labour of division' (Hetherington and Munro 1997). Rather than uniting to present a more positive picture, neighbours and communities emphasize each others' flaws to distance themselves from derogatory, abject portrayals. Bourdieu summarized this fragmentation and isolation, arguing that ongoing processes of economic marginalization have meant that 'the unemployed and casualized workers, having suffered a blow to their capacity to project themselves into the future . . . are scarcely capable of being mobilized' (1998: 82–83).

Unemployed, particularly young, men are bereft of wider links provided through close-knit industrial communities and the socialization opportunities afforded them by traditional forms of manual labour, which provided a

sense of identity and the ability to fulfil conventional norms of supporting a family and oneself. Many are unable to fulfil even the role of being a marriageable man or father figure capable of providing financial support or security (see e.g. McDowell 2014; Young 1999; Wallace 1987). While a woman in a community may be able to derive a sense of pride, purpose and identity by raising a family (see Measor 2012; Wallace 1987; Young 1999), men must seek alternative ways in which to provide themselves with a sense of purpose, belonging and identity. Pyke has argued that ‘class-based masculinities provide men with different mechanisms of interpersonal power that, when practiced, (re)constitute and validate dominant and subordinate masculinities’ (1996: 528). As we shall see, alternative forms of capital, reliance on social networks to secure an income, and a refusal to engage in demeaning back-to-work programmes or jobs offering little short- or long-term benefit become important in establishing a sense of control.

STREET CAPITAL, RECIPROCITY AND SOLIDARITY

Ordinarily a lack of unity is common when confronted by the atomizing nature of neoliberalism, particularly among deprived communities frequently characterized as having low levels of social cohesion and social support (Neutens et al. 2013). Paradoxically, however, we see a forced reliance on others to reinforce senses of self and ontological security among these men. This cohesion is not premised on organizational capacity, however, but rather on survival; they are a group in themselves, not for themselves. Networks play key roles in reaffirming a defensible self-identity in the face of ongoing derogatory and abject portrayals. We use the concept of ‘street capital’ (see Sandberg 2008a, b; Sandberg and Pederson 2011) to understand this. This draws on subcultural theories developed by the Chicago School (see e.g. Anderson 1990, 1999; Bourgois 2003; Whyte 1981) and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (see e.g. Cohen 1955; Willis 1977), as well as Bourdieusian field theory (see Shamma and Sandberg 2016). According to Sandberg (2008b: 156), street capital ‘can capture the cultural capital of street culture: it is a form of legitimate power, it is relational and it has capacity to generate profit’. It provides a tool to understand responses to processes of marginalization in mainstream society, allowing us to focus on the practical rationalities of negotiating the codes and cultures of the streets and communities in which these groups and individuals live. Furthermore, the concept facilitates

comprehension of the decision to engage in illicit activities, such as is exemplified by these young men, and highlights their ‘ability to navigate the assistive agencies of the welfare state, including the narrative invocation of victimhood and social marginalization [which are] . . . integral to “street” survival’ (Shammas and Sandberg 2016: 198). For Ilan (2013: 4), ‘street culture [i.e. the local cultures of the street and subcultural communities] becomes a resource utilized by a group of socio-economically disadvantaged young men to navigate their lives, exclusion and experiences of the post-industrial city’. The possession of appropriate forms of street capital thus facilitates a sense of control over their own lives (Sandberg 2008a: 616), something fundamental to the maintenance of a sense of identity and purpose among these men.

As argued elsewhere in relation to protest masculinities (Connell 2005; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005: 847–848), some draw on aggressive, anti-social and often violent displays to achieve such aims (see also Bourgois 2003; Sandberg 2008a, b; Ilan 2011, 2013; McDowell et al. 2014). A reputation for being able to look after oneself and avoid being viewed as ‘soft’ means avoiding being ‘subject to the will of other males’ (Winlow 2001: 19). Where others seek to dominate, signs of weakness can be debilitating (MacLeod 1995; Charlesworth 2000), limiting their ability to get by in the community. Physicality becomes ingrained within the psyche and was a common theme in the narratives explored here. It was vital for maintaining one’s standing in the community, as well as a—literally and figuratively—defensible self. Mohammed, formerly an amateur boxer, actively sought confrontation, including with local workmen who had recently laid a new section of pavement and were annoyed at his deliberately walking over it; Phil, Spanish and Pickles worked out regularly; and Jay was an accomplished kickboxer. Their physicality afforded protection and respect yet posed a risk as others sought to knock them off their perch. Spanish experienced the risks of appearing weak first hand while incarcerated, matter-of-factly drawing attention to the scars he had gained in the process:

I’ll admit at first I was scared. ‘Oh no! Everyone wants to batter me!’ Because it was like that in the young offenders’ institution, like with the boys. Like, obviously they all think that they’re hard and they’re trying to prove a point so every day you’re fighting. Someone’s got a problem with you for something. Even if you don’t want to you can’t avoid it . . . it’s horrible! I was lucky in prison, I can handle meself, you know? Yeah, you know? Yeah. They’re all

trying to prove a point in prison: ‘I’m, I’m fucking Bruce Lee!’ You know what I mean? ‘I’m harder than you’, sort of thing. Like, I’ve got missing teeth, and a broken nose [points to broken nose]. That’s from someone’s shoe, it’s mental. (Spanish, 25)

Some, however, seeking protection, turned to Spanish because of his physical size and reputation for violence, further elevating his standing in the community:

because I’m an older person and they come up to me: ‘oh this guy’s bullying me, what should I do?’ And I normally end up having a word with them, like you know, ‘fuckin’ leave him alone or you’ll have me to deal with. I’ll fuckin’ throw you out that window, and they wouldn’t know about it mate, and I’d make it look like an accident. Now leave him alone’. Because there are a lot of people in here try and bully innocent, like vulnerable people. I don’t like bullies. I was bullied myself at one point and I did not like it. Erm, yeah, I sort everyone else’s problems out. (Spanish, 25)

His presence and reputation for violence provided a form of capital with which both to protect himself and to advance his own position within the community. However, it had limited effect outside those communities, exhibiting a fundamental problem with street capital: that its long-term ‘effectiveness’ is limited (Sandberg 2008b: 157). This echoes the findings of MacDonald et al. (2005) in their research on young people in deprived communities in Teesside. They noted high levels of bonding capital, which facilitates engagement with the localized norms, groups and communities within which individuals are immersed, enabling people to ‘get by’, while also identifying that these resources rarely if ever assisted young people in ‘getting on’ in wider society.

In line with previously discussed findings, and Ilan’s (2011, 2013) examination of life in inner-city Dublin, there are a range of ways that the young men depended on each other which similarly embedded them in place. This was exemplified in the narratives of many of these young men where they lived in homeless hostels. The hostel environment—often a concentration of unemployment, social exclusion and deprivation—in which a number of the men who took part in this study lived, provides a unique example of the importance of street and bonding capital, and reciprocity. In many respects it shares key characteristics with a total institution (Foucault 1991; Goffman 1961); curfews, timetabled meals, room

inspections and strictly enforced rules regarding acceptable behaviour are the norm. As Karabanow found in research on street children in Canada and Guatemala, this environment ‘fosters a sense of symbolic space in which participants feel as if they belong’ (2003: 379). Sharing and borrowing was commonplace, with frequent reliance on others to support them when they are short:

When I’ve got money, I’ve got tobacco. I will share with other people in here, and it is a few people in here that share alike. It works out pretty well if you help people out ’cos some people get paid on the second week. So one week they haven’t got any money and I’m helping them out, the other week I haven’t got any money and they’ll help me out and stuff. (Hatman, 24)

‘Helping each other out’, then, is vital in maintaining relationships. Sharing cigarettes and tobacco, for instance, offered a degree of comfort in the face of continual upheaval and uncertainty. Its use in reciprocal arrangements, as discussed below, belies conformity to the consumerist expectations of wider society in which they are unable to meet wider conceptions of success regardless of what they do—either as failed consumers or as failed citizens who are irresponsible for consuming ‘luxury’ goods they can ill afford (Winlow and Hall 2013). This small modicum of consumption, however, appeared essential to the maintenance of relationships based on trust and reciprocity (Gouldner 1960; Whyte 1981: 257; Panchanathan and Boyd 2004).

Reciprocity can play a significant role when faced with the atomizing nature of neoliberal society. Gouldner (1960: 161) suggested that reciprocity ‘is a key intervening variable through which shared social rules are enabled to yield social stability’ (Gouldner 1960: 161). More recently, Panchanathan and Boyd (2004: 499) have suggested that ‘“indirect reciprocity” occurs when individuals help others in order to uphold a reputation and so be included in future cooperation’, and that punishing free riders and hangers-on can be used to maintain cooperation. This was exemplified in testimonies suggesting that more ‘selfish’ individuals who would take without giving found themselves untrusted and ostracized. Below we see two examples of the abuse of trust and reciprocity, and the ramifications for those who do not repay favours:

some people in there that haven’t got no money you’ll help them out and when they get their money they’ll disappear off to relatives or whatever and

come back and be like ‘Oh sorry, I’ve got nothing left.’ And it’s like ‘Yeah, thanks.’ (Hatman, 24)

I’ve just been asking people, borrowing, lending but I can’t even lend anymore because I was lent that much. (Simon, 23)

This was a regular theme among those who had experienced hostel life. Craig actively stopped lending to others because his generosity was frequently taken advantage of, with little return for himself:

Last year I was in this hostel yeah . . . and then I left on me own accord, I just upped and left . . . Because I were sick of people asking me time and time again, every day, have you got a fiver, have you got two quid, have you got one pound fifty, have you got some tobacco, have you got some smokes . . . every day and I was lending people money and not getting none back . . . I made it clear when I come [back] . . . I said ‘Listen, before we start, I’ve been here before, I’ve got the t-shirt. I know what goes on borrowing, lending, asking.’ I said ‘I’ve lent money out when I was ‘ere last time, I’ve never got it back, I’ve lent tobacco out last time, all sorts and never got it back so don’t bother ask me.’ Truthfully though I was straight with ’em mate. (Craig, 45)

We see a combination of self-preservation and avoidance of being seen as a pushover, alongside the permeation of a natural form of expectation and politics among such groups. Trust is vital in maintaining informal disciplinary structures in street cultures, and repayment of favours when the means are available is crucial, with the loss of trust as people ‘take advantage’ widening the scope for isolation of such individuals.

This is important where economic capital is scarce and, underpinned by shared expectations surrounding acceptable practice, can maintain positive social relations. The social history shared by these men in communities that no longer offer the opportunities for the formulation of legitimate masculinities is a foundation for this reciprocity (MacDonald et al. 2005). In line with the findings of MacDonald et al. (2005) and Sonn and Fisher (1998: 45), localized norms and support networks help to reduce the insecurity of those discarded on the margins of society, reinforcing new senses of belonging and community in the face of adversity:

Moving ’ere, it was just great because I had all me mates, I started getting close to people and that and started getting really good friends and that ‘cos there are some really, really good people in there. (Hatman, 24)

It's kind of really brought me out of my shell a lot since I've been here. I'm a lot happier. Erm, I've kinda, I'm a lot more jokey than I used to be, I used to be really reserved erm but err, having friends for the first time in like six years and my relationship, it's nice to have friends. (Tim, 23)

Among the poorest, marginalized and most vulnerable in society, these men are forming new links to ensure that they are able to survive the processes of social exclusion (Forrest and Kearns 2001; MacDonald et al. 2005). They provide the desired sense of belonging and kinship in the search for a defensible self-identity. Moreover, these statements draw attention to the multifaceted nature of self-worth and identity, and, as further elaborated by Darren, the notion that work in and of itself will not provide the security or sense of purpose and belonging desired (consciously or otherwise) by men in such a position:

The only thing I can go for is like training in a job or like, I dunno, just doing easy jobs, you know what I mean. Just retail and stuff like that but I don't wanna get into it, *just doing dead end jobs like that*. (Darren, 23, emphasis added)

Developing this, despite their precarity, these young men have quite conventional aspirations including wanting to be remembered for having 'done something useful', something best exemplified by Storm, who, when asked what is important in life, replied:

Family and friends, and feeling proud and doing something make a difference around the place. I wanna leave a mark when I go, I don't wanna be forgotten for nothing and people think "what did he actually do?"

When asked about how he wanted to achieve this, he went on to say:

Finding a job and being able to provide for myself and my girlfriend . . . my mum is still young so to look after her when she gets older' . . . I would like to run my own company. (Storm, 23)

The desire to be remembered for positive rather than negative aspects of one's life was further elaborated by Spanish, who wanted to be seen as a 'good father':

I don't want my kids growing up thinking 'my dad was a right knobhead selling drugs and was a bad person'. I want them to go, 'yeah he might have been bad in his past but he sorted his life out'. (Spanish, 25)

However, they are aware that their ability to achieve these aims is constrained by the options available under the neoliberal, marketized society in which their decisions are to be made. There is a wider awareness that, to achieve the desired security, more foundations are required. This is precisely why social, cultural and street capital are important among men without work, particularly in areas with a high concentration of poverty and social exclusion, and a sense of abandonment by the state.

CONCLUSION

There is a deep-rooted crisis born of a social and economic system that plagues many of the most vulnerable. The neoliberal leviathan (Wacquant 2009) continues to evolve and to challenge the understandings of many men on society's margins. The status quo fails to serve everyone equally, and these men are acutely aware of this. The nature of deindustrialization and the subsequent lack of status now afforded to many sees people struggling to come to terms with their experiences (Charlesworth 2000; Wallace 1987; Winlow 2001; Young 1999). In line with Ilan's (2011) findings, the men described in this study share the same fundamental normative desires and expectations as many others, but their experiences have shaped their views and understandings of the world in such a way as to breed scepticism and resentment towards the political establishment. Despite these shared experiences, they are not organized but rather are focused on individual identity work, drawing on those around them as and when they need to. They are not a homogenous, two-dimensional, faceless mass but, rather, complex, reflexive and creative social actors formulating and maintaining a defensible self with a sparse and unconventional set of building blocks. Their defensible yet socially problematic narratives enable these men to understand and articulate their experiences in a manner that provides a small degree of meaning, while the activities they engage in provide them with at least a modicum of control over the direction in which their lives are headed.

Continual tensions arise under globalized neoliberalism because of the hyperpluralization of society. Groups falling outside the bounds of respectability, and which do not conform to normative behavioural expectations, are refused entry and branded anomic, requiring banishment (in the case of

refugees and migrants) or reconstruction (of those already within society) (see Ilan 2011; Tyler 2013; Winlow and Hall 2013). This failure of tolerance and understanding must be challenged if all are to be afforded opportunities to succeed, particularly now when faced with ‘post-truth’ politics and a rising tide of anger among abandoned and disenfranchised postindustrial communities, which has manifested itself in Brexit in the UK and the election of Donald Trump in the USA. Despite shared goals and conventional aspirations, not all can, or wish to, conform to (neo)liberal understandings of the routes and means to achieve success, and this is to be expected in a diverse society. It is essential that this is respected rather than forcing conformity (Young 2007: 202). The working classes and dispossessed are not homogenous but, rather, are diverse groups whose experiences are heavily informed by their localities. These localized subjectivities are crucial to being able to respond to the challenges of life in their communities. Their narratives indicate a deep desire to be able to fulfil traditional roles as well as inherent contradictions as they seek to make sense of their experiences and forge a defensible self-identity. There is a real and pressing need to find ways of engaging people existing on the edge of society in a progressive, positive and meaningful manner so that they feel that they are of society and not its margins. Only by engaging in the bottom-up enfranchisement of people and the coconstruction of new identities, rather than the demonization of difference, will we see the effective incorporation of the marginalized back into society. Currently, the precarious nature of the forms of employment available to men such as those discussed in this chapter would threaten the perceived stability afforded them by the marginal lifestyles that they have evolved and adapted in the face of ongoing adversity.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, E. (1990). *Streetwise: Race, class and change in an urban community*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Anderson, E. (1999). *The code of the street: Decency, violence and the moral life of the inner city*. London: W. W. Norton.
- Bataille, G. (1993 [1934]). Abjection and miserable forms. In S. Lotringer (Ed.), *More & less 2* (trans: Shafir, Y.). Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).
- Beck, U. (1992). *Risk society*. London: Sage.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization*. London: Sage.

- Bourdieu, P. (1998). *Acts of resistance against the new myths of our time* (trans: Nice, R.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bourgois, P. (2003). *In search of respect* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bowring, F. (2000). Social exclusion: Limitations of the debate. *Critical Social Policy*, 20(3), 307–330.
- Braverman, H. (1998 [1974]). *Labour monopoly and capital: 25th anniversary edition*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Charlesworth, S. (2000). *A phenomenology of working-class experience*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Cohen, A. (1955). *Delinquent boys: The culture of the gang*. New York: Free Press of Glencoe.
- Collinson, D., & Hearn, J. (2001). Naming men as men: Implications for work, organization and management. In S. M. Whitehead & F. J. Barratt (Eds.), *The masculinities reader*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
- Elizabeth Finn Trust. (2012a). *Benefits stigma in Britain*, Turn2Us. Available at <https://www.turn2us-2938.cdn.hybridcloudspan.com/T2UWebsite/media/Documents/Benefits-Stigma-in-Britain.pdf>. Accessed 17 Mar 2017.
- Elizabeth Finn Trust. (2012b). *Reading between the lines: Confronting the myths about the benefits system*, Turn2Us. Available at <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/T2UWebsite/media/Documents/Mythbusting-Final-amended-16-September-2014.pdf>. Accessed 17 Mar 2017.
- Forrest, R., & Kearns, A. (2001). Social cohesion, social capital and the neighbourhood. *Urban Studies*, 38(12), 2125–2143.
- Foster, K., & Spencer, D. (2012). *Reimagining intervention in young lives*. Vancouver: UBC Press.
- Foucault, M. (1991). *Discipline and punish* (trans: Sheridan, A.). Middlesex: Penguin.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Goffman, E. (1961). *Asylums*. New York: Doubleday.
- Gouldner, A. (1960). The norm of reciprocity: A preliminary statement. *American Sociological Review*, 25, 161–178.
- Griggs, J., & Evans, M. (2010). *Sanctions within conditional benefit systems: A review of evidence*. York: JRF.
- Hall, S., & Winlow, S. (2005). Anti-Nirvana: Crime, culture and instrumentalism in the age of insecurity. *Crime Media Culture*, 1(1), 31–48.
- Hayward, K. (2004). *City limits: Crime, consumer culture and the urban experience*. London: Glasshouse Press.

- Hetherington, K., & Munro, R. (Eds.). (1997). *Ideas of difference: Social spaces and the division of labour*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Ilan, J. (2011). Reclaiming respectability? The class-cultural dynamics of crime, community and governance in inner-city Dublin. *Urban Studies*, 48(6), 1137–1155.
- Ilan, J. (2013). Street social capital in the liquid city. *Ethnography*, 14(1), 3–24.
- Jefferson, T. (2002). Subordinating hegemonic masculinity. *Theoretical Criminology*, 6(1), 63–88.
- Karabanow, J. (2003). Creating a culture of hope: Lessons from street children agencies in Canada and Guatemala. *International Social Work*, 46(3), 369–386.
- Katz, J. (1988). *The seductions of crime*. New York: Basic Books.
- Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of horror – An essay on abjection* (trans: Roudiez, L. S.). New York: Columbia University Press.
- Leidner, R. (1991). Serving hamburgers and selling insurance: Gender, work and identity in interactive service jobs. *Gender and Society*, 5(2), 154–177.
- MacDonald, R., Shildrick, T., Webster, C., & Simpson, D. (2005). Growing up in poor neighbourhoods: The significant of class and place in the extended transitions of ‘socially excluded’ young adults. *Sociology*, 39(5), 873–891.
- MacLeod, J. (1995). *Ain't no makin' it: Aspirations and attainment in a low-income neighbourhood*. Boulder: Westview.
- McDowell, L. (2004). Masculinity, identity and labour market change: Reflections on the implications of thinking relationally about difference and the politics of inclusion. *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography*, 86(1), 45–56.
- McDowell, L. (2014). The sexual contract, youth, masculinity and the uncertain promise of waged work in austerity Britain. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 29(79), 31–49.
- McDowell, L., Rootham, E., & Hardgrove, A. (2014). Precarious work, protest masculinity and communal regulation: South Asian young men in Luton, UK. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(6), 847–863.
- Measor, L. (2012). Loic Wacquant, gender and cultures of resistance. In P. Squires & J. Lea (Eds.), *Criminalization and advanced marginality*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Miller, W. (1997). *The anatomy of disgust*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Neutens, T., Vyncke, V., De Winter, D., & Willems, S. (2013). Neighbourhood differences in social capital in Ghent (Belgium): A multilevel approach. *International Journal of Health Geographics*, 12, 52–78.
- Panchanathan, K., & Boyd, R. (2004). Indirect reciprocity can stabilize cooperation without the second-order free rider problem. *Nature*, 432, 499–502.
- Park, A., Clery, E., Curtice, J., Phillips, M., & Utting, D. (2012). British social attitudes 29. Available at http://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/38852/bsa29_full_report.pdf. Accessed 17 Mar 2017.

- Pyke, K. D. (1996). Class based masculinities – The interdependence of gender, class and interpersonal power. *Gender and Society*, 10, 527–549.
- Rolfé, H. (2012). Requiring the long-term unemployed to train: Is benefit conditionality effective? *National Institute Economic Review*, 219, 65–76.
- Rosenthal, L., & Lawrence, P. (1993). Economic structure: Employment patterns and prospects. In A. D. Philips (Ed.), *Continuity and change in a Staffordshire conurbation*. Stroud: Sutton.
- Sandberg, S. (2008a). Black drug dealers in a white welfare state: Cannabis dealing and street capital in Norway. *British Journal of Criminology*, 48(5), 604–619.
- Sandberg, S. (2008b). Street capital: Ethnicity and violence on the streets of Oslo. *Theoretical Criminology*, 12(2), 153–171.
- Sandberg, S., & Pederson, W. (2011). *Street capital: Black cannabis dealers in a white welfare state*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Sennett, R. (1998). *The corrosion of character*. London: W. W. Norton.
- Sennett, R. (2012). *Together: The rituals, pleasures and politics of cooperation*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Sennett, R., & Cobb, J. (1972). *The hidden injuries of class*. London: Cambridge University Press.
- Shammas, V., & Sandberg, S. (2016). Habitus, capital, and conflict: Bringing Bourdieusian field theory to criminology. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 16(2), 195–213.
- Slater, T. (2014). The myth of “Broken Britain”: Welfare reform and the production of ignorance. *Antipode*, 46(4), 948–969.
- Sonn, C., & Fisher, A. (1998). Sense of community: Community resilient responses to oppression and change. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 26(5), 457–472.
- Standing, G. (2011). *The precariat: The new dangerous class*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Standing, G. (2014). *A precariat charter*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Tyler, I. (2013). *Revolting subjects: Social abjection and resistance in neoliberal Britain*. London: Zed Books.
- Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor – The neoliberal governance of social insecurity*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Walker, C. (2009). From ‘inheritance’ to individualization: Disembedding working-class youth transitions in post-Soviet Russia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(5), 531–545.
- Walkerdine, V., & Jimenez, L. (2012). *Gender, work and community after deindustrialisation: A psychosocial approach to affect*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Wallace, C. (1987). *For richer, for poorer: Growing up in and out of work*. London: Tavistock.
- Watts, B., Fitzpatrick, S., Bramley, G., & Watkins, D. (2014). *Welfare sanctions and conditionality in the UK*. York: JRF.

- Whyte, W. (1981 [1943]). *Street corner society* (3rd ed.). Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Williams, R. (2003). *Television: Technology and cultural form*. London: Routledge.
- Williams, C. C., & Windebank, J. (2000). Paid informal work in deprived neighborhoods. *Cities*, 17(4), 285–291.
- Williams, C. C., & Windebank, J. (2002). Why do people engage in paid informal work? A comparison of higher- and lower-income urban neighbourhoods in Britain. *Community, Work & Family*, 5(1), 67–83.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour; how working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Winlow, S. (2001). *Badfellas: Crime, traditional and new masculinities*. Oxford: Berg.
- Winlow, S., & Hall, S. (2013). *Rethinking social exclusion*. London: Sage.
- Young, J. (1999). *The exclusive society*. London: Sage.
- Young, J. (2007). *The vertigo of late modernity*. London: Sage.

Young Working-Class Men Without Jobs: Reimagining Work and Masculinity in Postindustrial Sweden

Åsa Andersson and Anita Beckman

I finished school in 2008. Then I worked for a couple of months in the autumn. But then the company gave me notice and then those of us who were the last to be employed were the ones who had to go. I had an industrial job then, in a small factory, installing ploughs. That's when the years of financial crisis began so they got rid of half the staff.

Isak, 24

This chapter discusses the narratives of young working-class men, living in a small town in Sweden that is located outside the regions with economic growth. As in many other European countries, the rate of unemployment among Swedish youth is disproportionately high. Since working-class masculinity has traditionally been closely connected to wage labor and to the ability to provide for oneself, as well as being the breadwinner of the family, the lack of resources associated with unemployment implies a need to

Å. Andersson (✉)

Cultural Studies, University of Gothenburg, Gothenburg, Sweden

A. Beckman

Cultural Studies, University West, Trollhättan, Sweden

redefine one's own self-understanding. Masculinity and its relational implications must be re-evaluated and, hence, reimagined. The young men's narratives presented in here reflect social and cultural changes that have taken place on a structural level related to the labor market, the educational system and the changed conditions for the formation of social identities in a postindustrial society.

First this chapter describes the character and prevalence of youth unemployment in a Swedish context. It then discusses the implications for a marginalized masculinity, based on an empirical interview-study with young unemployed men.

YOUNG SWEDISH WORKING-CLASS MEN IN CONTEXTUAL DISCONTINUITY

With the Global Financial Crisis of the 1990s, Sweden's longstanding economic success came to a critical point. The industrial sector diminished considerably and the public sector began to be radically downsized (Jonsson 2010). Considerable structural changes have since taken place, with competition on the labor market continuously increasing as a result of employers' demands for employees with academic degrees, work experience and advanced skills—circumstances that undermine young people striving to establish themselves in the labor market.

High youth unemployment rates are common in many European countries, but the discrepancy between youth and adult unemployment rates in Sweden is conspicuous.¹ One contributory factor is the high frequency of temporary jobs on the labor market (Nordström Skans 2009).² According to official estimates, seven in ten new jobs will, in the coming years, be temporary, low-income private service sector jobs. Paralleling this, the influence of trade unions has diminished sharply. A radical increase in trade union membership fees introduced by the new center-right government in 2007 resulted in a significant reduction in trade union members in a short period of time (Kjellberg 2009).³ The Swedish labor market has thus undergone a radical process of flexibilization—sometimes also referred to as a process of feminization (Standing 1999). Working conditions resemble those that women, historically speaking, were, and often still are, subjected to: low wages, irregular and insecure jobs, and a lack of strong unions.

As a group, young Swedish men are more vulnerable than young women in several respects: they experience higher unemployment rates and lower

education levels, and they more seldom migrate, from smaller hometowns and municipalities for regions with economic growth. Literally as well as figuratively speaking, young men, to a greater extent than young women, seem to be left behind. As industries close down and the expansion of the private service sector continues, the number of jobs that resemble women's traditional work is increasing considerably, somewhat benefiting young women's employment possibilities. Moreover, today almost 70 % of graduates from Swedish universities are women, and women dominate almost every area of higher education, even subjects traditionally dominated by male students.⁴ As a result, young men in general and young working-class men in particular have been labeled the socioeconomic losers of the postindustrial era (Bolin and Lövgren 1995; Bunar and Trondman 2001; Berggren 2006).

In discussing the changing conditions for the formation of social identities, and how this is reflected at the biographical level, "contextual discontinuity" and "contextual incongruity" are suitable concepts (Archer 2007). Archer describes postindustrial society as being characterized by contextual discontinuity as a result of its rapid structural changes of different kinds, and the way these changes are taking place parallel to, but at a different pace, in various places and contexts. This means that the speed of the structural change causes uneven effects in different places and in different social groups, thus complicating intergenerational socialization. The conditions for the emergence of stable collective communities have thus changed, particularly those that are linked to work and social position in society. Concomitantly, there is an increasing contextual incongruity—that is, there is a discrepancy between the younger generation's dreams, expectations and needs in relation to the opportunities and resources that the contextual conditions offer (Archer 2007: 155). Owing to the rapid structural changes in the labor market and the fact that fewer young men than women apply for, and complete, higher education, young working-class men are, because of their lack of suitable qualifications, even more liable to experience this kind of contextual incongruity.

To live in, and experience, contextual incongruity implicates the absence of obvious and predictable life scripts. This can lead to discomfort and instability, but can also open up possibilities for changes and redefinitions of one's own self-understanding as well as of the social formations to which one is related, which will be exemplified and discussed in the rest of this chapter.

THE STUDY CONTEXT

The municipality of Västervik, on the southeast coast of Sweden, is one among many small towns and communities whose main industries have closed down or drastically decreased their workforce during recent decades. A resettling of young people is at stake on a national level. In many Swedish municipalities the population of young men and women is declining as young people tend to abandon their hometowns and move to bigger cities, where job opportunities are more plentiful and where large universities are located. The number of people in Västervik between 18 and 30 has decreased by a third since only 2000. This pattern is typical of small Swedish towns.

This town is also a typical small Swedish community, formerly the industrial center for a rural region that is now experiencing various closures of its industrial enterprises. Today the biggest employers are a regional hospital and the municipality of Västervik, both clearly gender-segregated working sectors. More young women migrate from Västervik than young men, and more young men than young women are registered as jobseekers. Young men and women who have not finished high school are over-represented in the statistics of youth unemployment, and the average educational level of the Västervik population is relatively low. In all, youth unemployment rates in this municipality are higher than the national average, with lower education levels.⁵

Our discussion derives from in-depth interviews with 12 men aged 21–25, conducted during 2014. Informants were recruited through student counselors and professionals working on community projects for the unemployed. Criteria for selection were that informants were formally registered as unemployed in the municipality of Västervik, identified themselves as being involuntarily unemployed, and aged between 19 and 25 years. Interviews used a semistructured approach, focusing on life history with particular emphasis on unemployment, and they lasted between one and two-and-a-half hours. They were transcribed verbatim and interviewees were given pseudonyms.

Informants' unemployment varied from six months to seven years, so their worklessness can be referred to as long-term unemployment. Only a few of them had had any work experience at all and then only for short periods. This meant that they did not have access to unemployment insurance funds since these require regular employment for at least six months. The young men were instead dependent on economic support from social

services and thereby lived under significant economic constraints. With few exceptions, the informants can be categorized as working class, based on their family background and self-descriptions, but also by their employment aspirations, which were mostly oriented towards semiskilled or unskilled manual work. Concerning their families, the majority of the parents had at the most upper secondary education and held blue-collar jobs; most of the fathers did manual labor and the mothers worked in similar sectors, or in caring professions or the service sector.⁶

LOSS AND NOSTALGIA

A common denotation of young Swedish people today is that they are the first generation that will live under worse conditions than their parents. This statement was repeated by some interviewees and although it is a generalization in referring to a whole generation, it seems quite appropriate in depicting the experiences narrated by young, small-town working-class men. During the 1970s and 1980s, the decades when the young men's parents started working, one could do reasonably well if one was in good health and fit to work. A completed two-year vocationally oriented program meant good chances for a steady job and pretty decent circumstances in terms of stable employment and a respected position in the local community (Bunar and Trondman 2001). Since then the conditions for the working class in Sweden, as in many other similar countries, have been in a state of disruption and decline (Bihagen 2007). As an effect of deindustrialization, employment prospects for poorly educated young people are scarce, especially for young men (Berggren 2006).

Robin, 21 years old, characterized the social transformation in terms of a decline taking place in his generation:

There are many kids who live in their parents' illusion, or their illusion of class. So there are also many who will experience class mobility, but downwards instead, or into kind of working-class. Or working-class but unemployed.

Jonathan, 25, would be categorized as working class if defined by his parents' education and professions, and also when taking into account his own aspirations for work. However, when asked to identify himself with regard to class, he was reluctant to use the term.

Interviewer: What would you call yourself in terms of class, or background?

Jonathan: I don't really know, below the middle.

Interviewer: Below the middle, what would you call that—working class?

Jonathan: I am unemployed.

Since being working-class alludes to being employed, the label contradicts the experience of being unemployed for the seven years that Jonathan describes. This differentiates him from his parents' generation and the circumstances surrounding their experiences. As shown in studies about the effects of class and subjective social placement, Sweden is considered to be a society within which the effects of class are exerted primarily through a work-experience-centered view rather than by a consumption-centered view (Karlsson 2016), which means that class identification may seem difficult or irrelevant for the long-term unemployed.

Clearly, though, the young men's narratives indicate experiences of a recent socialization into labor-oriented culture with certain understandings and values connected to the meaning of work. The prevalent foregrounded figure here is that of the "modern industrial worker," defined as a white male breadwinner, working full time (du Gay 1996), a notion that seems to have survived into the era of postindustrialism. This figure represents the ideal and the normality in accordance with which both the young men and their parents, especially the fathers, have learnt about the way a decent and normal adult male life should be structured (Roberts 2013). Several of our interviewees also expressed a wish to follow this path in relation to what kind of job and social position they wanted. A link between generations was referred to as a continuity that one is at home with and where foundational

elements are defined by work and a belonging to the local community. This is also expressed by an acknowledgement of one's own talents, what position and function one identifies with, and what other places and tasks one does not see oneself as being suitable for. Unlike Jonathan, Hannes, 22, described his aspirations by referring to himself in terms of class:

I'm not the studying kind of person. I've always known that higher education is not for me. My talents are more about hard work. I think that it has influenced me that you want to do something *for real*, like my parents and their friends and my grandparents did. Like . . . you carry on in these rather well-trodden tracks. I'm working-class, my job is to keep the wheels turning and the country going. I see myself like . . . one should be part of the labor force. (original emphasis)

Hannes further emphasized how he wanted “a real job,” working with something physical, ensuring that his efforts made a difference that he could see and grasp; a core quality defining him as working class. As has been discussed by Connell and others in terms of multiple masculinities, being socially constructed and hierarchal in relation to each other, the idealized masculinity of working-class men has traditionally been characterized by social embodiment and “hard work” as opposed to the cerebral rational masculinity of middle-class men that privileges intellect and academic success (Connell 1995; Nixon 2006; Roberts 2013). As Nixon (2006) notes in his study of low-skilled unemployed men, they, much like the 1970's “lads” in Willis's classical study (1977), constructed manual work as “real” and superior to non-manual work. By stressing physicality as opposed to intellectual resources, masculine respectability became classified and secured by the young men in their construction of masculinity. The valuation of manual labor occurring in narratives should, however, be related to other contexts before concluding whether these statements, as suggested by previous research, make up part of a masculinist discourse (Nixon 2006, 2009). The young men expressed great awareness that by not aspiring to further studies—or finishing upper secondary school, which for some of them would be the first step in that direction—they were going against the uniform advice directed at them from institutional contexts, such as employment officers and training programs. It was rather the opposition between being the studying type or not which seemed to sort out the positioning of sticking to a wish to be “learning to labour” (Willis 1977), but without underestimating or feminizing studies per se. The attachment

to manual labor in some narratives was, however, expressed in strong emotional and physical terms as a sense of belonging and simultaneously naming what capabilities one knew how to master, like Elias, 22:

People are telling me: “Well, start studying then!” But you can’t learn anything practical by reading about it. And I had problems in school, I got tired of it and then it just got worse. I’m good at doing practical things. To work, that feels more like home, to be able to *touch* things and use them rather than just to sit and watch a picture of something and read about it. I want to feel the stuff and work *with* it.

Where the meaning of becoming a man is related to becoming a worker (Willis 1977; McDowell 2003), production and practicality have traditionally been, and are still, given strong emotional and social value, even outside the sphere of regular employment. This is particularly evident in small towns surrounded by countryside and agriculture. One central aspect of this is the tight connectedness to vehicles, where the car is of central, practical and symbolic importance. Owing to their economic constraints the young men had limited opportunities to participate in consumption and recreational activities and spheres. One of the more severe consequences of this that the young men talked about was that few of them had been able to acquire a driver’s license, which is quite expensive in Sweden (the average cost in 2015 was about SEK18,000/GBP1700/USD2150). This was something that concretely and symbolically affected the young men since it became an additional limitation for their jobseeking, but also in forming an adult masculine identity in line with what is expected and seen as normal, especially in the community of a small town. This places those young men in a marginalized or even displaced position in the local culture of masculinity. Being unable to get a driver’s license stood out as a signifier of the loss of control over one’s own life situation, and thereby also of the overall vulnerability that several of the young men described. Kalle, 24, pointed out the belittling experience of being left out and behind:

I think it’s important for everyone to feel that one is contributing to society . . . to be able to feel like an adult, to work . . . and things like that. Because when you see your friends who can take that step while you are still stuck . . . then it feels a bit like still being left at the children’s table.

The dislocated and insecure situation that the young men were experiencing formed an obvious contrast to the narratives about the preceding generations and their life. In these narratives, nostalgic images abound, depicting a recently lost way of life, where employment meant hard labor but also a durable and respected position in the local community where (especially male) status was determined by a worker identity. This also meant a functional position in society and the nation as a whole—where one was needed as a part of a collective whose task it was to “keep the wheels turning and the country going”—that is necessary and valuable as opposed to the redundant masculinity which McDowell (2003) characterizes as the position of today’s young, white, working-class men. Since nostalgia is an emerging feature here, it could serve as a sign of cultural conservatism or even reactionary tendencies, something often attributed to the working class. Nostalgia may, however, carry a double-edged potential as both a reactionary and a radical reworking of the past, as discussed in the writings of Lawler (2014). Where traditional ways of gaining status as a man are less accessible, backward-looking tendencies may function as a defense mechanism by rejecting change on both the personal and the cultural level. Yet in another sense nostalgia may serve as a point of mobilization in a critique of the present. We will return to this aspect in the last section of this chapter. By first focusing on the emotional qualities of nostalgia, though, the narratives give indications of feelings of loss, sorrow and sometimes also shame about being unable to continue the life script of earlier generations, or even reaching a ‘proper’ adult status. When comparing himself with his parents and their work ethics, Isak said:

My mom has worked in a supermarket, and my dad, for as long as I recall, he has been working in industry. I have always had role models for how it should be, with orderliness and respectability. You should have a job to make ends meet for yourself and for your family. That’s the kind of view you’ve had of how it should be. But then my generation came and kind of destroyed this.

Isak showed a tendency to feel guilty and blame himself for the situation that he and many others in his generation find themselves in. The tendency of self-blaming evident here may be seen as an effect of the contextual discontinuity where structural changes are interpreted on a biographical level in line with dominant cultural discourses about individual responsibility. As Beck and Beck-Gernsheim suggest, in late modernity, collective communities and experiences become severely weakened, making the

individual responsible for forming their own life by strategic choice-making (2002). In this logic of individualization, even social differences and inequalities are seen as being caused by wrong choices made by an individual responsible for his own miscalculations. While orderliness and respectability are values stemming from a more collectivistic working-class culture transferred between generations, the possibilities for achieving them have changed drastically. Not being able to gain respectability and economic independence was, however, depicted not only as an individual failure but also as a generational one. This kind of reflection can be related not only to idealization and nostalgia when dwelling on the past but also, as we show in the section on reflecting on the meaning of work and masculinity, in formulating some critical notions about the given masculine role models.

The familiar working-class culture was narratively placed back in time. Conditions and demands more prevalent in the labor market of today were, however, more pressing for the young men when reflecting on what they defined as their abilities, or rather their lack of abilities.

UNMARKETABLE SELVES

I have to find out what makes me attractive for the future job market.
(Hannes, 22)

In Sweden, as well as in other national contexts, there has been a clear shift in responsibilities concerning the matching of the workforce to the needs of the labor market. Where it once was the government's responsibility to maintain a relative balance, today the responsibility for acquiring the right education and competencies that the market requires is more fragmented, but also a highly individualized matter (Berghlund 2009; Garsten and Jacobsson 2004; Ulfsdotter Eriksson and Hedenus 2014). This has also severely impacted the education system.

Some of our interviewees had not finished upper secondary school, while some had graduated with poor grades. Few could, in their current situation, see further studies as a reasonable way to improve their life situation. When dwelling on the subject, many of them saw further studies as risky since they would force them to take a student loan, which could make a vulnerable situation even more insecure.⁷ Some of the young men had, however, taken part, or were currently taking part, in training programs for craftsmanship, which were arranged as a collaboration between the local unemployment

office and a temporary work agency. Attending such programs means retaining unemployed status, and to continue receiving unemployment benefits one must continuously search for other jobs and immediately drop out when another job turns up. That kind of vocational training program was, however, appreciated by several of the young men since this would result in licenses for specialized crafts in manual labor. This was something which they hoped, as per Hannes's comments, would be a way to make them "attractive for the future job market." Such a phrase is explicitly part of the language stemming from the contexts of training and coaching programs that the majority of the young men had taken part in—some of them for several periods—and where "learning to be employable" is the core issue encapsulating a certain set of strategic attributes (Garsten and Jacobsson 2004; Mäkinen 2015). The ruling term here, "employability," marks a shift of focus between the worker and the labor market where employability security (the presumption of finding a job with a given, although preferably flexible, set of skills) is replacing employment security (Kelan 2008).

Skeggs notes that, in the realm of the global economy, particular forms of self are deemed to be necessary according to neoliberal understandings of governance: "New workers have to create themselves into marketable products, to be sold and resold on a rapidly changing market" (Skeggs 2004: 73). To succeed in this one needs abilities and competencies, both formal and informal. The right education and marketable skills are, of course, the formal foundation, but besides those there are the more informal qualities, such as the right way of presenting oneself as attractive and valuable. This is well captured in du Gay's concept of "the enterprising self" (1996), which stands for the ability to present an energetic self that is keen to act strategically and build useful networks. It is an ideal that requires workers to become entrepreneurs, not only in their approach to their professional activities but also for their own sense of self, in relation to the labor market (Kelan 2008). Consistent with neoliberal ideas, this formation of the self is promoted in institutional and public contexts, such as the school system, and in professional as well as more informal career guidance, such as training programs for the unemployed. Retold experiences from coaching programs were the most obvious examples of how these ideas were acted out in relation to the participants in our study. Several training sessions in self-presenting, formulating and constantly updating resumés and personal letters (even when there was nothing to update) for jobseeking were practices they were familiar with though saw little meaning in.

Work-related coaching is a sphere brought about by the anticipatory economy where value is produced more in terms of future expectations and potentialities than of formalized abilities and skills already achieved (Mäkinen 2015). Crucial in stressing potentialities is the ability to present and market them, which merges into the project of presenting and marketing the individual self as valuable. This means strong pressure and high expectations on the individual to be able to act strategically, and to identify and name one's prime virtues and find the most effective and striking way to make oneself desirable to potential employers, something that requires material and social resources that are not equally available to everyone (Mäkinen 2015). The kind of resources most successful in this matter have much in common with the kind of masculinities conceptualized by Connell and Wood (2005) as "business masculinities," where life is treated as an enterprise and thereby bodies and emotions are managed entrepreneurially. This kind of masculinity, reflected in life-history interviews of managers, Connell and Wood claim to be hegemonic, since it is in line with the dominant globalized, cultural, political and economic discourses of neoliberalism (Connell and Wood 2005). Even if this is a kind of elite masculinity, and thereby only attainable by the few, it bears qualities which in more moderate form are prevalent in contexts of more general relevance, structuring a gender order that sets apart different groups of men in accordance with how they are related to this hegemonic norm (Aboim 2010).

Several interviewees expressed an awareness of the virtues one should embody but saw great difficulties in living up to them. Some talked about the alienation and uneasiness they felt in situations of self-marketing and when pressed to formulate their potentials. Sebastian, 22, explained that he has always had difficulty in specifying his goals and ambitions. Similar to several others, he saw himself as learning easily as long as the learning was about hands-on activities. What he saw as most problematic was promoting himself in the process of jobseeking:

I *do* want a job. I don't feel so good when I don't have one. I have major problems applying for jobs and can easily get nervous. It's the actual act of applying that is the problem and even more so if I have to call someone. I'm not very good at writing resumés or personal letters and things like that, hardly anything ever comes of that. . .

The precariousness in relation to the alternatives supposedly offered on the contemporary labor market becomes an effect of the structural

disadvantage for young men with a low-skilled working-class background, while the alternatives may seem unreachable from their present horizon (Gillberg 2010). Capacities such as strong confidence in one's own abilities and the capability to strategically navigate between different choices and possibilities tend to work as a selection mechanism within the educational system and the labor market. There is also an irony here where several of the men, as per the earlier quotations, certainly did know their talent and potentials, and could clearly name them. A few of them even had a license from completed training in craftsmanship, but they were not, since they remained unemployed, acknowledged in terms of having the right kind of marketable value. These young men were not able to perform the kind of masculinity preferred by the culture brought about by the anticipatory economy, within which their skills seem outdated and the masculinity related to it redundant (McDowell 2003). Hannes describes the effect of this:

It's easy to accept the idea that you have nothing to offer, you're good for nothing. I think it's easy to get stuck in that. Especially if you haven't had the opportunity to even *try* to work and haven't got any references either. Like . . . no, it seems as if I haven't done anything right. It would have been easier if one had been at a workplace, been able to work and get . . . some credits to strengthen your self-confidence a bit.

Johan, 22, also describes himself as not living up to what he knows is required for succeeding in a competitive labor market—that is, being able to market himself:

It's probably people like me . . . it's hard to explain but for some people it comes easier. If you have a strong drive and are in the forefront then you make it most of the time. Then it comes easier to you, even to make contacts. I think I could have come further in life if I had been more forward, more of an extrovert. I'm thinking why didn't I do it that way, why didn't I try, why wasn't I more forward? Then these things get stuck into your head. [. . .] It's obvious . . . let's say there's me and there's someone else and there's a job available. If he is positive and vivacious and all of that you know, then he will be chosen instead of me who is more introverted.

The young men often positioned themselves as deficient in relation to the dominant cultural forms of what the ideal employable (male) worker should be like: enterprising and competitive (Hanlon 2012). They spoke about experiences of failure, often blaming themselves and their lack of desirable

abilities in relation to the contemporary labor market. This can also be seen as an example of contextual discontinuity (Archer 2007) since intergenerational socialization loses its earlier function; the working-class gendered intergenerational experience of working life is of little help to the young men where they are right now. Neither being industrious and loyal nor mastering a crafts is enough if the qualities cannot be integrated in the self as a marketable product.

REFLECTING ON THE MEANING OF WORK AND MASCULINITY

In terms of masculinity, both contexts that have been considered here—the local intergenerational working-class culture on the one hand and neoliberal ideas permeating activities for the unemployed, such as training and coaching programs, on the other—serve as reference points for the young men’s experience of subordination. Certainly, these contexts differ in several ways; in discursive impact they are most uneven and one central dimension of this unevenness is time. The felt deficiency in affiliating with a desirable working-class continuity is defined by its rupture in relation to the former generation and a local history. The experiences of falling short in fulfilling the marketable self are connected to the cultural and economic projects of neoliberal globalization and the forms of subjectivity and masculinity emerging there (Connell and Wood 2005), and are thereby more related to the situation of today and future prospects. The displacement in the latter context is, however, partly related to the former and can be seen as an effect of it in terms of contextual discontinuity and incongruity experienced by the young men. The transition from “learning to labor” to “learning to enterprize the self” is not easily mastered. The aforementioned nostalgia about working-class continuity may here serve as a critique of the present. In contrast to the prevalent figure of the working-class man as left behind and without a legitimate place in the present (Nayak 2006), a counter-image is being recalled where important and consistent features such as “hard work,” orderliness and respectability—that is, being included among the ones who “keep the country going”—should mean having a legitimate place in society and in the nation as a whole.

In many ways the situation that the young men described was marked by deficiency and vulnerability, which is unsurprising since being professionally successful is a central component of the hegemonic form of masculinity (Aboim 2010). Being categorized as long-term unemployed means often being depicted as “abject others,” by the media and in public debate, and

even more so if placed in subordinated categories such as (non-)working-class males (Nayak and Kehily 2014) living in rural areas of the country. Materially as well as symbolically, this becomes a form of highly marginalized masculinity. From this unfavorable position, besides narratives of decline, some critical reflections and possible alternative ways of forming social identities and masculinities were recounted. This was furthermore related to different kinds of work ethics than the familiar one that the young men had been socialized into when growing up and the other one that they had encountered as jobseekers. The critical indications were then directed both at some of the attitudes and behaviors of their parents' generation, especially the fathers, and at the neoliberal approaches that the young men have encountered in other settings.

Beginning with the former, even if feelings of loss, sorrow and shame were, as we saw, expressed by some of the young men as a consequence of not having succeeded in following in the footsteps of earlier generations, there was in some narratives also a mild form of critique articulated against what was perceived to be a kind of self-righteousness regarding the masculine culture of their fathers' generation. Such men, it was remarked, had never needed to reflect on their selves, their position and role in relation to the labor market. Given that they had been able to start working right after school, they were described as lacking empathy and understanding for the circumstances of others affected by radically shifting employment opportunities. Isak described this as being a contentious issue between him and his father:

We've had discussions and we're *always* at odds with each other about why one is unemployed nowadays and why one can't find a job. He claimed that I was being lazy and didn't want to find a job, while I claimed that I've realized how things are done at the unemployment office nowadays and what the situation is like on the labor market now. And he hasn't seen that since he's been working his whole life, he's never really known what it is like to be unemployed. We've had discussions and I've gotten really irritated with him so many times.

Comments were also made about a perceived narrowminded way of defining oneself solely in relation to work—that is to say, the centrality and dominance of work as the exclusive source of worth in (male) life. Robin described that kind of logic:

You're thinking that if you don't have a job you have no value. As if the job is the central thing in life and you can't build anything to be engaged with outside of work, then it means that you measure success in having a job or not

Being the breadwinner—being the head of the family (Lewis 2001; Kelan 2008)—had been a rather unquestioned role and position of the fathers' generation, but was criticized by some of the young men. They suggested that this had resulted in an authoritarian and narrowminded way of fathering which was seen as an undesirable form of role modeling. "He wanted to show me who was in charge, he almost became like a dictator," was Isak's description of his father's behavior towards him when growing up, asserting that this was somehow sanctioned by the other family members because they knew the father to be hard-working and thereby showing his responsibility and care. But what it means to be responsible and caring towards others, and what it means to practice care, were being re-evaluated by some interviewees. The traditional way of connecting breadwinning with care was rejected, and so was the authoritarian, dominant way of fathering, a behavior described as an emotional defect, characteristic of older generations of men and stemming from an avoidance of showing any kind of weakness. Here the instability of masculinity and its relation to work and class become sites of more open-ended redefinitions, revealing how masculinity is always formed by tension and conflict (Aboim 2010).

The rejection of dominance and the integration of values such as interdependence, relationality and caring have been central features in recent discussions in critical studies on men and masculinities (Aboim 2010; Hanlon 2012; Elliot 2015). We would tentatively stress that this may also occur in a position marked by marginalization, and that this position partly brings about the re-evaluation and reimagining of masculinity, but also partly limits the possibilities of practicing a caring form of masculinity since this demands material and social resources. As some of the young men noted, being unemployed, with all the economic and social restraints this amounts to, had meant that they had learnt a lot in terms of perspective. In contrast to the kind of restricted masculinity that they attributed to their fathers' generation, they narratively constructed their own masculine identity in terms of being more open-minded and reflective. This kind of critical re-evaluation opens up an alternative masculinity related to another kind of work ethic concerning both one's role in the family and the meaning of work. Hannes, who was earlier quoted as explicitly calling himself working class and wanting "to keep the country going," was a

young father, living with his girlfriend and their daughter. He described how he wanted to see himself and his position in his own family:

It's not about me providing for my family but I want to be able to do *my share*. I wouldn't have a problem with being the one without a fulltime job and my girlfriend having a fulltime job. I wouldn't have a problem with that, it doesn't de-masculinize me at all. But I still feel a bit traditional, at least I want *some kind* of income, to be able to provide, to show my child that Daddy is doing this for us. I'm not stuck in any particular way of providing or that I should have the *main* burden of providing or anything, but still, I want to be a contributing partner.

This is one example of several where close relations are of central concern when defining what is valued most in one's current life situation and what motivates the actions one would be ready to take. The outspoken worth and importance attributed to the close relations with family and longtime friends become a central concern to engage and invest in, and to identify with in a way that has traditionally been more connected to the responsibilities and identity of women. Here the ethics of care and relation-orientation stand out as important features. However, Hannes's quote also expresses that the possibility of being a contributing partner and practicing care is *limited* by his state of unemployment. With severely restricted economic and social resources, he is deprived of the possibility to do his share of providing and, as he explains, he is very limited in terms of taking part in social activities—such as going to children's birthday parties, going swimming or visiting relatives—since they cannot afford it.

A dislocation in terms of gender and class was also evident when participants explicitly reflected on possible future careers, with some identifying that spheres usually gender-labeled as feminine presented a possible future. Isak had, as per the quote at the outset of this chapter, a short experience from working in industry. What he wanted for his future, though, was service sector employment, something he had learnt from a temporary position in a chain store—that service professions corresponded well with what he saw as capacities he had and wanted to develop further. His foremost strategy was to try to get as much temporary work there as possible in the hope of gaining steady future employment.

Another example is Ibrahim, 21, who was one of the few preparing for further studies. When explaining his future plans, he stressed that he wanted an education that would give him good chances for employment, but he

also articulated that his professional interest was directed at working with people:

I have talked with many who said that there's a great need for nurses and that it's a profession for the future. That's why I have chosen that profession because there is a future in it.

Both Isak's and Ibrahim's aspirations serve as examples given in relation to a labor market being in a state of restructuring and how this affects gendered class identities. The young men's wishes and strategies were explained by a combination of assessments of employment prospects, the possibility of staying close to one's family and friends, and an interest in professions dealing with care and relations. Relating this to previous research on gender, class and working life, both similarities and differences are found. McDowell's (2000, 2003) and Nixon's (2009) studies on largely unemployed young working-class men show an unwillingness to change when it comes to aspirations for work, with socialization and educational background being seen to situate service sector work for unskilled working-class men as too connected with femininity and a kind of emotional labor that traditional masculinity rejects. McDowell further writes about a gender stereotyping taking place in the way that men and women often talk about their work within the service sector in different ways, women tending "to emphasize personal interrelations, empathy and the emotional exchange between sales assistant and customer" (McDowell 2002: 51). These qualities were, though, very similar to the ways some of the young men in our study described what they saw as valuable for gaining employment in the service sector. They did not connect such qualities with any specific gendered attributes but, rather, saw them as aspects of their personalities that they could make use of if given the opportunity to enter the job market. There was thus some resonance with Roberts's (2013) findings that note changes in attitudes among young working-class men employed in the service sector who value the work they have become accustomed to. Importantly for our participants, whether they saw these sectors as possible and desirable for future employment had most to do with whether they perceived the professions in question as necessitating further studies, which, as discussed before, could be an obstacle.

As Skeggs showed in her seminal work on class and gender, the development of a caring self has for a long time been a feminine working-class task, serving as a way of gaining respectability in a severely restricted

situation. Investments in responsibility and care for others are not given a strong or durable value, neither in economic nor in cultural terms, but they serve as a reproduction of social division and a continuing subordination of working-class women (Skeggs 1997). It remains to be seen whether approaches to emotional labor and to the ethics of care—in relation to both work and the private sphere—observed in the narratives of the young men will be part of a similar pattern. That is, even if gender identities are in a state of redefinition both concerning masculinity versus femininity and different masculinities relating to each other, economic and social subordination may, and often does, still persist (Roberts 2013), drawing on other dividing principles such as the division of labor imbued in the era of neoliberalism. However, what we would stress by highlighting these examples and tendencies is that a form of working-class masculinity, through its relation to the ethics of care, is in a state of redefinition, and that this can be observed among men in the most marginalized positions.

The ethics of care was also one of the alternative values formulated in the critical reflections directed at individualism and market-oriented definitions of work, self and career-building that the young men had met as jobseekers. As discussed above, the young men had unpleasant experiences of feeling exposed and inadequate in contexts where the enterprising self was meant to be developed and demonstrated. Even if these experiences could result in self-blame, several of the young men also expressed strong disapproval of the training programs, especially the mandatory periods of job-coaching. These were labeled as a waste of time, repetitive and misguided in relation to their needs and wishes. The programs tended rather to work as a confirmation of the increasing distance between the young men and the regular labor market; between what one had to offer and what seemed to be in demand. Robin clearly formulated a critique of the individualization of the problem of unemployment. He pointed out how this tends to result in defining deficiencies at the personal level:

Many tend to think it's about *them* or that the problem is their own, that one is not socially competent, maybe can't speak up for themselves ... being shy, nervous, not knowing what to do. But *no one* knows what to do on the job before you are at the job. You know, this nervousness, as if: 'I don't know, maybe I don't have anything to offer'.

Robin meant that the sought-after, socially competent individual who is articulate, self-confident and can market himself in every situation because

he knows he always has something to offer which is attractive to others is nothing but a fiction. As such this fiction works as an instrument of control within the anticipatory economy, to keep the unemployed as well as employed workers on their toes. In his well-developed social critique, Robin clearly stood out, yet hints were present in other participant narratives of similar ways of reflecting on the effects of being trained to present the self, while constantly being rejected by employers. Alternative designations and meanings of work, its content and function, and thereby alternative designations of the masculinity related to it were here indicated. Ibrahim, for example, spoke about the voluntary work he did in training children in sports activities, and how this gave him a sense of value in knowing that he contributed to the wellbeing of others. These experiences can be seen to form a different ground for outlining alternative work ethics, where caring and collectivistic definitions emerge, partly situationally adapted, partly nostalgic. If the radical potential for nostalgia is being stressed, it may harbor utopian strains. As expressed by Robin in his vision of the meaning of work,

The way it's defined today, then work is, well it's paid labor, that you get money for something. But that's not the way it's always been when it comes to defining work and I hope that's not the way it will always be. Work is something that's useful for society or for the community, for the whole lot, for you and me to be able to live side by side. Then you have to work together . . . no matter if there is any money or nor, or what you gain from it.

CONCLUSION

The reimagining of work and masculinity that we have identified in the narratives of the young unemployed working-class men should be seen in relation to two important contexts, the first of them being the local intergenerational working-class culture, and the other the market-oriented definitions of work and self, characterizing not only institutionalized activities directed at the unemployed but strongly permeating the labor market and education system of today. Being unemployed and with little or no working life experience, for these young men, work becomes the ever-present absence. Employment and consumption are held to be two of the most central elements in the social construction of the young masculine identity (McDowell 2003), and since the young jobless men have no or very little access to these realms, other sources of meaning are being used. From a situation much characterized by deficiency and marginalization, we saw an alternative understanding of the meaning of work developing, intertwined

with alternative conceptions of masculinity, similar to what has been described as “caring masculinities” (Hanlon 2012; Elliot 2015). We see these tendencies partly as being related to the state of unemployment and the marginalized position stemming from it, indicating that important and critical changes to masculinity are taking place there too, far from the more privileged locations.

NOTES

1. In 2013 the rate of youth unemployment was as high as 4.4 times the rate for adults, which put Sweden in a leading position among comparable countries (http://www.scb.se/statistik/_publikationer/AM0401_2013A01_BR_AM76BR1301.pdf).
2. Other possible explanations exist. For example, the lack of an official apprenticeship system counted as paid work, as in Germany and Austria; the fact that neither upper secondary school students nor university students receive grants and/or student loans for all 12 months of the year, as is the case in, say, Denmark (http://www.scb.se/sv_/Hitta-statistik/Artiklar/Statistiken-ove-r-ungdomsarbetsloshet-ar-jamforbar/ – downloaded 2016–12–27).
3. During 2007 and 2008, Swedish trade unions lost 235,000 members in total, which is a remarkable number for a small nation (Kjellberg 2009).
4. In lower levels of education, girls achieve better grades in all areas except sports—even in mathematics, which was formally an area where boys used to perform at a higher level (SOU 2009: 64).
5. In 2014, 17 % of young men and 13 % of young women were looking for jobs in Västervik. A larger percentage of young women had academic degrees: 35 %, compared with 22 % of young men (<https://www.vastervik.se/Global/kommun-och-politik/kommunfakta/scb/scb-kommunfakta-vastervik-2013.pdf>).
6. After nine years of compulsory school, youth in Sweden are entitled to a three-year upper secondary school education. It is voluntarily, free of charge and provides a choice of 18 different national education programs. The vast majority choose to attend upper secondary school.
7. This avoidance of economic and timely investment in higher education among working-class families, and even more so among individuals living in harsh economic circumstances, has been discussed in terms of a rational strategy of risk-reducing (Beach and Sernhede 2011; Gillberg 2010).

REFERENCES

- Aboim, S. (2010). *Plural masculinities. The remaking of the self in private life*. London: Routledge.
- Archer, M. (2007). *Making our way through the world. Human reflexivity and social mobility*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beach, D., & Sernhede, O. (2011). From learning to labour to learning for marginality: School segregation and marginalization in Swedish suburbs. *British Journal of Sociology and Education*, 32(2), 257–274.
- Beck, U., & Beck-Gernsheim, E. (2002). *Individualization*. London: Sage.
- Berggren, C. (2006). *Entering higher education. Gender and class perspectives*. Gothenburg: Department of Education, University of Gothenburg.
- Berglund, G. (2009). Anställningsbarhet: Ett tecken i tiden. I. In G. Berglund & A. Fejes (Eds.), *Anställningsbarhet: Perspektiv från utbildning och arbetsliv*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Bihagen, E. (2007). Class origin effects on downward career mobility in Sweden 1982–2001. *Acta Sociologica*, 50(4), 415–430.
- Bolin, G., & Lövgren, K. (1995). *Om unga män—identitet, kultur och livsvillkor*. Lund: Studentlitteratur.
- Bunar, N., & Trondman, M. (2001). *Varken ung eller vuxen. "Sambället idag är ju helt rubbat"*. Stockholm: Atlas.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Wood, J. (2005). Globalization and business masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 7(4), 347–364.
- Du Gay, P. (1996). *Consumption and identity at work*. London: Sage.
- Elliot, K. (2015). Caring masculinities: Theorizing an emerging concept. *Men and Masculinities*, 19(3), 1–20.
- Garsten, C., & Jacobsson, K. (2004). *Learning to be employable: New agendas on work, responsibility and learning in a globalizing world*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gillberg, G. (2010). *Individualiseringens villkor. Unga vuxnas föreställningar om arbete och självförverkligande*. Göteborg: Skrifter från institutionen för arbetsvetenskap nr 7, Göteborgs universitet.
- Hanlon, N. (2012). *Masculinities, care and equality: Identity and nurture in men's lives*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jonsson, C. (2010). *I fäderns och mödrarns spår—landsortsungdomars vuxenblivande och identitetsutveckling i ett livsformsperspektiv*. Göteborg: Studies in Sociology No. 44, Department of Sociology, University of Gothenburg.
- Karlsson, L. (2016). Self-placement in the social structure of Sweden: The relationship between class identification and subjective social placement. In *Critical Sociology* (pp. 1–17).

- Kelan, E. (2008). Gender, risk and employment insecurity: The masculine breadwinner subtext. *Human Relations*, 61(9), 1171–1202.
- Kjellberg, A. (2009). Det fackliga medlemsraset i Sverige under 2007–2008. *Arbetsmarknad & Arbetsliv, årgång*, 15(2), 11–28.
- Lawler, S. (2014). Heroic workers and angry young men: Nostalgic stories of class in England. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 17(6), 701–720.
- Lewis, J. (2001). The decline of the male breadwinner model: Implications for work and care. *Social Politics*, 8(2), 152–169.
- Mäkinen, K. (2015). Valuable selves: Potentiality and temporality in work-related coaching. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 19(1), 1–16.
- McDowell, L. (2000). Learning to serve? Employment aspirations and attitudes of young working-class men in an era of labour market restructuring. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 7(4), 389–416.
- McDowell, L. (2002). Transition to work; masculine identities, youth inequality and labour market change. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 9(1), 39–59.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Nayak, A. (2006). Displaced masculinities: Chavs, youth and class in the post-industrial city. *Sociology*, 40(5), 813–831.
- Nayak, A., & Kehily, M. J. (2014). ‘Chavs, chavettes and pramface girls’: Teenage mothers, marginalised young men and the management of stigma. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 17(10), 1330–1345.
- Nixon, D. (2006). “I just like working with my hands”: Employment aspirations and the meaning of work for low-skilled unemployed men in Britain’s service economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(2), 201–217.
- Nixon, D. (2009). ‘I can’t put a smiley face on’: Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the ‘new economy’. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), 300–322.
- Nordström Skans, O. (2009). Varför är den svenska ungdomsarbetslösheten så hög? *Rapport till Finanspolitiska rådet 2009/6 Kulturgeografi 2001:2*. Umeå: Solfjäder.
- Roberts, S. (2013). Boys will be boys... won’t they? Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities. *Sociology*, 47(4), 671–686.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, self, culture*. London: Routledge.
- SOU. (2009: 64). *Flickor och pojkar i skolan: hur jämställt är det? Delegationen för jämställdhet i skolan*. <http://www.regeringen.se>
- Standing, G. (1999). Global feminization through flexible labour: A theme revisited. *World Development*, 27(3), 583–602.
- Ulfsdotter Eriksson, Y., & Hedenus, A. (2014). Unga människor och (o)möjliga yrkesidentiteter. In E. Sorbring, Å. Andersson, & M. Molin (Eds.), *Att förstå ungdomars identitetskapande. En inspirations- och metodbok*. Stockholm: Liber.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon House.

‘I Am Going to Uni!’ Working-Class Academic Success, Opportunity and Conflict

Michael R. M. Ward

INTRODUCTION

Since the 1970s observable anxieties have been developing in popular discourse about the position of boys and young men (MacInnes 1998; Morgan 2006; Kimmel 2006; Roberts 2014; Ward 2015a). In the UK, these concerns have centred on a range of issues including boys’ supposed educational ‘underachievement’ (when compared with the achievement of girls), high rates of suicide and poor mental health among young men, and boys’ involvement in offending and anti-social behaviour. Similar concerns about these issues are emerging in a range of other countries around the world (e.g. Edström et al. 2015).

These problems are often framed as outcomes of a ‘war’ on boys (Hoff Sommers 2013) or a ‘crisis’ of masculinity (Morgan 2006; Syal 2013). However, as others have pointed out, this discourse is far from novel and has a much longer history than the current ‘crisis’ suggests (Connell 1995; Roberts 2014; Tarrant et al. 2015). Nonetheless, some studies have shown that some men are more disadvantaged by these economic shifts than others (Nayak 2006; McDowell 2012; Ward 2014, 2015b; Robb et al. 2015). Therefore, although the generic categories of ‘men’ and ‘boys’ are

M.R.M. Ward (✉)
Department of Public Health, Policy and Social Science, Swansea University,
Swansea, UK

often used in policy and cultural commentaries, in reality it is young, working-class men living in postindustrial places who most embody this anxiety (Morris 2012; Ward et al. 2015).

Therefore, while there has been a significant debate in recent years around boys' and young men's educational engagement at primary and secondary level across the global north (Epstein et al. 1998; Martino 2008), concerns have also grown about young men's 'underachievement' in the higher education sector (Hillman and Robinson 2016) and their non-continuation (dropout) rates when compared with young women (Quinn et al. 2006). Yet further studies specifically show that in a similar way to the 'crisis' of masculinity discourse, not all men experience higher education in the same way. Just as in the primary and secondary sector, difficulties and challenges are more likely to be experienced by white, and black and minority ethnic, young men from working-class backgrounds (Lehmann 2009; Reay et al. 2009; Cobbett and Younger 2012) than their middle-class counterparts (Ingram and Waller 2014; Waller et al. 2017).

Drawing on ethnographic fieldwork with young men (aged 16–18) in a deindustrialized community in South Wales (UK), in this chapter I add to the literature on white working-class men by focusing on how academically successful men transition to higher education. I address how the performance of an alternative form of working-class masculinity linked to academic success, often coded as studious and compliant (see Connell 1989; Mac an Ghaill 1994; Frosh et al. 2002), proved problematic in a former industrial community. However, contradictions within these young men's in-school studious performances become apparent when their out-of-school activities are considered.

I begin this chapter by looking at the literature on white working-class boys' educational achievement. I focus especially on the role of place, and I address how this impacts on the development of a studious performance of working-class masculinity. After outlining the study and research methods, I look at what academic success means in this context. I then analyse in detail the displays of this more studious form of working-class masculinity, before moving on to outline some contradictions to this performance.

WORKING-CLASS EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT AND THE PERFORMANCE OF STUDIOUS MASCULINITIES

Sociological work that has centred on working-class young people in the UK has often focused on their difficult relationships with educational engagement. In particular, this work has addressed three main themes.

First, studies have concentrated on the role of education as a route to social mobility and as a way out of working-class origins. For a small minority, this pathway occurs through the grammar school system (Jackson and Marsden 1962; Douglas 1964; Lacey 1970; Halsey et al. 1980). Second, a prominent focus has been on anti-school or rebellious behaviour, poor performance and educational underachievement (Hargreaves 1967; Willis 1977; Corrigan 1979; Jenkins 1983; Epstein et al. 1998; McDowell 2003). Third, this work has begun to look at the costs associated with educational achievement for working-class identity, once one has progressed to university or reached adulthood (Skeggs 1997; Weis 2004; Reay et al. 2009; Wakeling 2010).

However, this early work has been criticized by some feminists for lionizing working-class men and has accused male authors of glorifying oppressive forms of masculinity (Skeggs 1992; Delamont 2000; Ingram 2009). Alongside these criticisms, some studies have offered a more nuanced critique of the problems and practices associated with being a working-class young man, and have explored male dominance and power inequalities between men and between boys (Mac an Ghaill 1994; Reay 2002; Francis et al. 2010). Alongside these issues, what also seems to be important is the role that the locality or geography plays in the social and cultural construction of masculinity (Massey 1995; Berg and Longhurst 2003; Kenway et al. 2006; Gorman-Murray and Hopkins 2015), and what it means to be a young working-class man in certain communities (Ward 2015b, Ward et al. forthcoming). This chapter adds to the literature by exploring the difficulties of academically successful working-class boys displaying a studious form of masculinity (see Francis 2009; Ingram 2009, 2011) when older traditions of masculinity, shaped by a locale's industrial heritage and culture, are the default reference point in the community they inhabit.

CONTEXT AND METHODS

The South Wales Valleys were once a leading area of coal production. For nearly two centuries they were one of the largest industrial centres in the UK, employing up to quarter of a million men (Rees and Stroud 2004). A strong division of labour accompanied these communities where distance from anything seen as 'feminine' was essential for a strong masculine identity. Men earned respect for working arduously, and these roles were often seen as heroic, with punishing physical labour that involved different degrees of manual skill and bodily toughness, creating a hard, stoic masculinity (Walkerline 2010). Male camaraderie, which was established through

physicality and close working conditions underground, was also developed through jokes, story-telling, sexist language and banter at the work site. This was further supported through social institutions such as miners' institutes, chapels, pubs, working men's clubs and sports. 'Real' masculinity was not formed through academic labour and book-based knowledge.

During the 1980s, owing to economic restructuring, the region underwent rapid deindustrialization (Smith 1999; Day 2002). This acute collapse coupled with the decline of the manufacturing industry led to a drastic increase in economic inactivity. The area suffers with high levels of social and economic deprivation and low levels of educational attainment. These industrial losses were accompanied by the erosion of traditional apprenticeships and youth training schemes, which would have supported these industries and provided a platform into adulthood and other forms of skilled-manual employment (Adamson 2008).

Given this context, this chapter draws on findings from an Economic and Social Research Council-funded ethnographic study which looked at the diversity of gender performances of a group of white, working-class men aged 16–18 ($n = 35$) within the former industrial town of Cwm Dyffryn¹ situated in the South Wales Valleys (see Ward 2015a). The overall aim was to investigate how masculinities were formed, articulated and negotiated by one school year group at the end of their compulsory schooling, and then to follow them through their different post-16 educational pathways. Access was granted by the headteacher of the high school where much of the research was conducted. The fieldwork included participant observation supported by extensive fieldnotes, focus group interviews, ethnographic conversations, and more formally recorded one-on-one interviews over the two-and-a-half year research period. The interviews were fully transcribed and, along with the detailed fieldnotes, coded using a CAQDAS software package for key themes. At the school, fieldwork included observing and actively participating in different lessons; 'hanging around' in the sixth-form common room and various canteens during break times; playing football and scrabble; and attending school events, such as prize nights, parents' evenings, school trips and sporting occasions. As 'young people's gender identities cannot be adequately comprehended within the microcosm of the school institution alone' (Nayak 2003: 148), this research was also undertaken across multiple other arenas of their lives. This was carried out to further understand the numerous ways that these young men performed their masculinities to different audiences and in different contexts.

Several themes emerged from the ethnographic study. First, the multiple, nuanced ways young men's lives were lived in a specific deindustrialized place emphasized that a degree of code-shifting occurred, where respondents adjusted and altered their performances of masculinity for different audiences. Second, different academic and vocational educational pathways framed the definition of the situation for these young men. Through these pathways, young men learnt what roles were expected of them when studying a certain subject or course and what was also expected of people around them. Third, outside their education institutions, the legacy of the region's industrial past and the working-class cultural milieu of the locale were re-embodied and retraditionalized in different ways across other local sites and spaces.

Using Goffman's framework for interpreting social interaction (Goffman 1959, 1974), I drew together the data based on friendship ties that became apparent as the fieldwork progressed.² Goffman (1959: 85) argues that within social interaction it is the front stage or front region of the actor's performance that is on display, and which functions 'to define the situation for those who observe the performance'. He also uses the term 'team' to refer to sets of individuals who come together to perform specific acts through different interactional 'frames'. These cooperations then help to express meaning within different social relations. The overall 'team' impression can be seen as a performance alongside the individual acts, through forms of impression management. The back stage or back region, which occurs behind the front and the 'team' performances, is further defined by Goffman (1959: 114) as 'a place, related to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course'. Away from the front display, things can be adjusted and changed. However, other actions, which might spoil or ruin the performance and the overall impression, are suppressed. In the remainder of this chapter I shall explore the performances of a studious form of masculinity displayed by one of these 'teams' or friendship groups within the study, the academically successful working-class 'geeks'.

INTRODUCING 'THE GEEKS': EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT, SUBJECT CHOICE AND FAMILY BIOGRAPHIES

Those young men who transgress a locality's social norms by being academically successful and having different cultural interests are often bullied and receive labels by their peers such as 'nerd', 'dweeb', 'dork', 'freak',

‘brainiac’, ‘boffin’ ‘swot’ and ‘geek’ (see Connell 1989; Martino 1999; Pascoe 2007; Mendick and Francis 2012). While the word ‘geek’ is a relatively simple term, it is full of ambiguity and has multiple meanings that change from place to place. Nonetheless, what these labels all tend to have in common is that those who receive them are deemed to be stigmatized (Goffman 1963) in some way or other as overtly intelligent, shy, unattractive social outcasts who often shun other people who do not share their stigmatized status. Accompanying these labels are particular attributes of personal front (Goffman 1959) that are deemed socially abnormal, such as unfashionable hair and dress styles, glasses and reputations for bad personal hygiene. The word ‘geek’ is likely to be used as a pejorative marker, and to be labelled as such is to be defined as a social misfit (Kendall 2000; Pascoe 2007). However, as will become clear, for some, this label was embraced and used to describe oneself and one’s friendship group.

The Geeks’ friendship group consisted primarily of Leon, Gavin, Ruben, Scott, Nibbles, Alan, Sean, Ieuan, Sam, Sin and Nixon.³ Apart from Sin, who was of Chinese heritage, all were white and had been born in the town, and when I met them in year 11 they had the highest grades in their year group. In the extracts below, a ‘geek’ is described by the young men themselves as someone who does not participate in sports and is more interested in video games, films and comics:

Sam: Get a sporting accolade and you’re already like the greatest person ever.

Alan: If you don’t do sport in school you’re like. . .

Sam: . . .a geek. . .

Sean: . . .yeah, a geek basically.
(group interview year 11)

MW: So do you play a lot of video games then?

Sean: Yeah, I’m a geek I am, I love games!

MW: So are you really a geek like when you say you are?

Sean: Yeah, I love all the geeky things, like um games, films um. . .

MW: . . .you’re well into your films are you?

Sean: Ah yeah! Graphic novels, comics, things like that.
(individual interview year 12)

As Sean indicates here, being defined as a geek was also evident in other ways rather than just being positioned as academically successful. In year 11 some of The Geeks were smaller in stature and less physically developed than many others in that year group, making them easy targets for bullying. They turned up for lessons on time with their own pens and pencil cases, did their homework, and carried their books and other equipment in bags. The majority of their year group, which amounted to 134 pupils, tended not to be so studious. Along with this compliance to rules, they correctly adhered to the school dress code of white shirts with red ties, black V-neck jumpers, black trousers and black shoes. This uniform was accompanied by neat haircuts and, for some, horn-rimmed glasses or braces on their teeth that completed the stereotypical geek persona. These artefacts operate as forms of what Goffman (1959: 32) refers to as 'expressive equipment' of personal front and marked The Geeks with their own recognizable identity.

While The Geeks adhered to school rules and policy, the majority of the year group sought to disrupt uniform policy and replace compulsory items with their own. It was common practice to replace the standard black, V-neck jumper with a round-neck one, because this then meant that the school tie could be removed and it would go unseen by teachers. Other attempts by those in the year group to disrupt school rules included replacing shoes with trainers, wearing hooded jackets and baseball caps, and for some, adorning their bodies with flashy rings, chains and single earrings or studs. The Geeks' display of a more studious, compliant masculinity really did mark them out as a minority when compared with their peers. Besides these uniform alterations, a large group of pupils who were registered on sports educational programmes were also allowed to wear a tracksuit instead of the regular uniform. This not only validated a specific form of masculinity based on sporting prowess by the educational institution (Mac and Ghail 1994), but also acted as a symbolic marker of status which The Geeks did not have access to, thereby 'othering' them as a group for not belonging to the sporting elite.

After achieving good General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at age 16, all The Geeks returned to the school's sixth form (years 12 and 13). By the end of year 13 approximately 32 young men from the year group had completed their courses, with 15 progressing to institutes of higher education. The subjects of study chosen by The Geeks were predominantly in the arts (English, history, fine art), natural sciences (biology, chemistry, physics), maths and IT. 'The Geeks' had been in the highest sets for all their core subjects at GCSE level and, even though they

were a close group of friends, they were fiercely competitive over their grades.⁴ They all harboured aspirations to go to university. This is not to say that others in their year group did not aspire to go to university or gain well-paid and meaningful employment, but for The Geeks this seemed to be of paramount importance in their projected futures. As Sam illustrates here, he had thought of a course he wanted to study at university and planned on spending a year in the USA as part of this:

Sam: Journalism is what I'd like to get into at the moment.

MW: Alright.

Sam: And I'd like to go to America as well for my university course.

MW: So you've thought a little bit down the line where you want to go?

Sam: Yeah, I have done a bit of research into it and they do offer it in some of the English universities and the exchanges into American universities, so I'll aim for that first ... If I get rejected I'll just go lower down the ladder.

MW: So you've thought about going to uni then?

Sam: Yeah! [shouts] I am going to uni!
(individual interview year 11)

Sam's final statement here shows not only a powerful sense of agency but also a commitment that he is not constrained by place, and his ambitions clearly illustrate a rejection of the locality and a willingness to move on. This marked him out as unusual, as remaining local was the norm. His determination to find a way to his goals by attending different universities if his first choice was unavailable is also clear. Attending a university for Sam is therefore a way to gain a specific form of hegemonic masculinity (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) based on middle-class cultural norms, so often denied him and other boys like him who have invested in academic capital in the community.

The Geeks' parents' occupational backgrounds give some indication of their positive outlook on academic qualifications and they shared similar, although not identical, family biographies. A few of the boys had fathers and mothers who had some experience of higher education (Ruben, Nixon, Ieuan and Leon) and were employed in professional occupations as surveyors, teachers, secretaries or midwives. Other parents owned their own businesses in the form of motor repairs (Sean) and a takeaway food shop (Sin). However, there were also some parents who worked in more traditional working-class occupations, such as a lorry driver (Scott), a caretaker

(Sam), or in supermarkets or were unemployed (Gavin, Alan). Three of the boys (Scott, Ieuan and Gavin) said that their mothers stayed at home and described them as housewives, emphasizing traditional working-class gender divisions of labour within the family. Sadly, Nibbles' mother had died when he was 14 and his stepdad (his biological father had left the family years before) was on long-term incapacity benefit after being injured in an accident while driving a lorry.

Although some of these young men's parents could be seen as employed in middle-class occupations, my justification for using the term 'working-class' to refer to the young men as a group is that it is important to recognize the inequalities that they experienced by coming from a deprived locale and the levels of social, economic and cultural capital they had access to. I suggest that even having a professional parent in a deindustrialized area (with high levels of unemployment, and low levels of health and educational attainment and employment opportunities) is very different from having a parent who is a professional in a more affluent area (see Weis 1990). It is also important that the geodemographics of place are considered when defining class and how successful boys from poorer communities experience education (Burrows and Gane 2006).

THE PERFORMANCE OF A GEEKY FRONT: CLASSROOM PRACTICES AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

For Goffman (1959) the front stage is the part of the performance that functions to define what is occurring in a particular setting or before a particular audience. In Cwm Dyffryn High School the focus on sport was strong and for many young men this was a clear way of projecting a successful heterosexual masculine image. This focus on sporting success infuriated The Geeks and their front performances of a studious masculinity continued to be at odds with the school's emphasis on sport.

Sam: Get a sporting accolade and you're already like the greatest person ever!

Sean: Do you know where the old gym is by there?

MW: Umm.

Sean: Well on the wall outside it, there are photos on the wall of sports men from the school, but you won't find any photos of people who done well and that ...it's just all sports.

Ruben: Yeah, that's a point, yeah. . .

Nibbles: . . .yeah. . .

Ruben: Like with all the past students they got this one played football for, or amateur football, for Wales turns out he's now just a bin man now, but he did play amateur football for Wales once . . . so have his picture up. Then you've got other people then, who've gone, like Mark Bowen, who recent left he's gone to Oxford to study in Oxford [University] and they haven't got, you know, no recognition of him around the school.

(group interview year 11)

The Geeks occupied a difficult position in their deindustrialized community and, as I have shown, were often seen as socially deficient as a result of their lack of interest in sports. In the extract from a group interview above, they position their own performance of masculinity as superior to that of the school environment, as they felt the institution itself was complicit in producing a form of masculinity based on sporting prowess and physical attributes. Their studious form of masculinity based on academic interests is not seen as an essence of 'real' masculinity, forged through industrial labour or associated with specific cultural or sporting practices. It therefore illustrates a more feminized and socially marginalized form of masculinity in the community (Phillips 2005). Ruben is also aware that some occupations, such as being a 'bin man', have distinct markers of status and class, and that by achieving academically he hopes to be able to distance himself from these lower-class occupations.

The front performance of this studious, geekier masculine brought with it certain disadvantages. Bullying and intimidation was often a problem in year 11 for The Geeks. Some of this bullying had been physical further down the school years, but it was still present through verbal altercations, subtle gestures and smirking. Sam in particular found solace in feeling intellectually superior to others and as a way of combating this bullying.

Nixon: They do try and bully us, or try.

MW: Obviously they're not stealing your dinner money. . . [group laughter]

MW: So what type of bullying would it take?

Sean: Verbal abuse like.

MW: Alright.

- Ruben: I wouldn't say I get bullied by them really, but they do always do their little in-jokes, like 'Nixon, Nixon high five' and then they expect Nixon to turn around and they all find it funny that Nixon doesn't turn around.
- Sam: It's like little smiley little faces. . .
- Ieuan: [talks over the top of Ruben]. . . it's so retarded that it's funny but it's easy to beat them just by speaking.
- Sam: We're more intelligent than them, as you probably all know, so you can just speak, you know just talk really fancy to them and they get annoyed and they just walk off, and you insult them without them realizing it, which makes us feel big.
(group interview year 11)

Here Sam and his friends here are illustrating a form of what Redman and Mac an Ghaill (1997: 169) call 'muscular intellectualness'. This was a way for them to combat the verbal abuse that was targeted at them and to seem superior by using their intellectual capital. This front performance helped to articulate a form of masculinity that differed from that which traditionally defined being a 'proper' man in their community. It also contradicted much of what the school culture tended to validate through its focus on sports. The development of 'muscular intellectualness' was also evident between lessons when it was common for The Geeks to play scrabble. Scores were kept and a record of who had won each game was collected. A dictionary was used to check words and cheating was frowned on. During one game in the school's library, Ieuan had tried to use the internet on his mobile phone to look for a specific word, and, when discovered, this was met with disdain by the others. The value of words in the scrabble game was a way to symbolize capital and power within the friendship group, but outside it the capital provided less protection and it was not equal to the power held by the more sporty boys in terms of popularity (for a similar process, see Mac an Ghaill 1994).

While the bullying had decreased as The Geeks had grown older and the year group had grown smaller (at the start of year 13 only 35 pupils remained out of 134 who finished the end of compulsory schooling in year 11), Sean still found that Sam wasn't really able to deal well with confrontation, and even with the reduced pupil numbers, being academically successful was still seen as abnormal:

- Sean:* Sometimes he (Sam) doesn't really think about other people like.
- MW:* I remember in year 11 sometimes boys used to take the piss out of you but most of them have left now, so he used a bit of humour to deflect it?
- Sean:* Yeah, but sometimes when he does that, it doesn't really help the situation! Like say they're like, you know, casually taking the piss. . .
- MW:* . . .yeah. . .
- Sean:* . . .and he'll get really bitchy and snipe at them or something and they'll just get worse and you're thinking by doing that you're making yourself look weirder! Just take it like!
(individual interview year 13)

The 'piss take' described here is a practice with a direct link back to a working-class occupational culture where male chauvinism, together with racist and sexist humour, were part of the industrial workplace and were accompanied by practical jokes, coarse language, banter and messing around. In Sean's eyes, Sam needed to 'take it' (the piss taking or the banter) to stop being seen as 'weird' in front of some of his peers. In an individual interview with Sam, I enquired more about the banter that went on between his close friends and he said:

We (do) take the mick out of each other, take the piss out of each other, if you fall over or spell something wrong, we laugh at each other. (individual interview year 13)

For The Geeks this banter was just another extension of their academic abilities, where 'having a laugh' came through picking out errors in others' academic work or commenting on their personal faults. The industrial legacy behind the 'piss take' was expressed in a different way by The Geeks, but it still illustrated the importance and power of it in determining one's ability to perform an acceptable version of manhood within the friendship group.

Whereas Sam struggled with other forms of banter, Sean was good at this. Being really quick witted and in the context of the reduced student numbers in the sixth form, he could answer back with a joke and almost always get a laugh from others around him, even those who were trying to 'take the piss' out of his friends. Alongside his 'geekier' interests (computer games and reading comics) he supported Liverpool Football Club and would regularly talk to others in the sixth-form common room about

whose team had beaten who, and whose team was better. However, because of his ability to take part in a football discourse and to make others laugh (he could also laugh at himself), I never witnessed any 'piss taking' experienced by others.⁵ Scott, who was a lot shorter and slighter in stature than Sean and who did not have the quickness of wit, often attracted negative attention for his long hair, and beard which grew longer and longer as year 13 progressed. He was often referred to by others outside The Geeks group as 'Jesus' because of his supposed similarities to the religious figure. Only when his closest friends, Sam, Ruben and Ieuan, stressed how scruffy he looked and threatened to physically force him to shave and cut off his straggly beard and hair did he decide to get them cut. This then prompted much hilarity and questioning when he walked into the sixth-form common room the next day. It would seem that Sean's ability to perform a traditional version of working-class masculinity by investing in football banter, alongside his geekier masculinity, allowed him to code-shift and get something that Sam or Scott were unable to do.

Boyishness: The Geeks Doing 'Mature' Heterosexuality

Through their position as academic achievers in the year group, The Geeks were able to validate a form of masculinity through their high grades and by performing a studious presentation of self (Goffman 1959). However, others in their year group tended to reproduce and perform a version of masculinity based on traditional forms of white working-class credibility. These included non-academic work, sports, rejecting schoolteachers' authority, sexism, homophobia, misogynistic language and going out on 'the pull' (see Grazian 2007). In the school, and in the community more generally, there seemed to be official and unofficial ways of being male, with The Geeks occupying a difficult position as academic achievers, not just in terms of their studiousness but also in the way they treated the young women in their lives:

Sam: Some boys you know are very boyish!

MW: So between the boys (friends), do you talk like that about your... .

Sam: ...no, no I keep my private life private, I've only had one girlfriend and everything I know and everything I have done has been with her, that's it, she is the only person.

MW: Well in some ways I think that it's really nice 'cos some of the boys the way they talk about it you know 'I was with her last night and cor!'

Sam: Yeah I know, it's callous, something to do a bit of fun ... I know it's as if they treat them, not to sound clichéd, as an object. You know like I've got the latest mobile phone, I've got the latest girlfriend, that sort of thing.

(individual interview)

In this interview, Sam criticizes others in the year group for being what he terms 'boyish'. He portrays himself as against the objectification of women, a practice he perceives some of his peers are involved in.

While The Geeks' performances of a more studious masculinity are to a certain extent self-fashioned, Goffman (1959, 1974) argues that agency is mediated through the social context and interaction order where the individual is positioned. Selves cannot be totally created outside the social milieu that one is situated within, which can constrain one's actions and shape interactions with others. So despite their front performances outlined so far, The Geeks were far from the one-dimensional stereotype depicted by popular culture. The desire to distance one's self from the locale and from an archetype of masculinity was clearly evident, but at other times their masculinities seemed to be performed in often contradictory ways. In the final section of this chapter I want to move on to look at some of the contradictions to this studious front that I have outlined so far.

CONTRADICTIONS AND SOCIAL PRESSURES

As The Geeks reached the legal drinking age of 18, they started to frequent the pubs and clubs of Cwm Dyffryn and consume large amounts of alcohol. For Scott's birthday, Ruben had arranged for a game of 'pub snooker' to be played. Everyone invited had to attend dressed as if to play snooker in ties and waistcoats. A chart, which Ruben was carrying, had been drawn up with the names of all the players (Ruben, Scott, Alan, Sean, Sam, Ieuan, Sin and my name) on one side with the points scored or 'balls potted' on the other. However, alcohol was to be substituted for 'balls potted'. Pints of lager or cider were the 'red balls' and worth a point each, shots of various coloured spirits were the 'coloured balls', and the more sprits that were drunk, the more points could be earned. In theory one had to drink a pint or pot a 'red

ball' and follow it up with a shot of spirits or a 'coloured ball', progressing through the colours in sequence, just like in the traditional game of snooker. However, as my fieldnotes illustrate, it soon got a bit messy:

When we got to the rugby club the game of 'snooker' was really beginning to get out of control. I had deliberately shied away from drinking spirits so as to last the night, but Ruben who was in the lead and still keeping score, kept downing shots one after the other. Scott, the smallest guy in the year group, was beginning to slur his words and I couldn't quite understand what he was saying . . . as the night wore on Ruben got in a bigger and bigger mess and at one point spilt a pint of lager all over the table, himself and the seats. (fieldnotes)

Even though a few years previously they had mocked their peers for indulging in underage drinking, and acting out of character when drunk, playing pub snooker provided a way for The Geeks to perform the more traditional working-class masculinities they missed out on by being academic achievers. But remnants of their front display of a studious geeky masculinity are also evident and not totally discarded. Here the young men are drinking with an aim not just to get drunk, but also to score points and record their achievement on a chart as they went along, in keeping with their geekier masculinities and to gain a form of accreditation for the act. By embracing social practices (e.g. dressing up in costumes) and drinking games of many undergraduates in higher education institutions, they could also be seen as preparing themselves for university life, highlighting how masculine pursuits such as binge-drinking cut across social class groups (see Thurnell-Read 2012).

Away from the town and within their own close friendship group, The Geeks were able to further participate in some of the practices that they criticized their peers for engaging in. On one occasion when The Geeks went out to celebrate Sean's 18th birthday in the capital city, Cardiff, they went into a lap-dancing club and paid for private dances with the women who worked there. The Geeks, who normally distanced themselves from many of the attitudes that their peers expressed towards women, when away from their home town felt much freer to indulge in many of the same practices they chastised others for doing. Without the risk of being judged by anyone they knew, or having their usual studious front performance of self challenged, the outing to a lap-dancing club was a chance for them to live the heterosexual fantasy and act like the 'real' men that their marginalized geeky position did not often allow.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has highlighted how a ‘team’ of academically successful young, working-class men, who I have termed *The Geeks*, progressed through postcompulsory education in a deindustrialized community.⁶ I have explored the challenges involved in presenting a studious form of working-class masculinity, which differs from more credible performances of manhood in the region. I argue that this studious or ‘geeky’ performance rather than being a straightforward practice for these young men illustrates that a high degree of complexity exists in young working-class men’s lives, and this must be understood when trying to understand the performance of young working-class masculinities and its relation to schooling, achievement and the wider ‘crisis of masculinity’ discourse (see also Jenkins 1983; McDowell 2003; Nayak 2006; Ingram 2011). While there are undoubtedly instances of studious practices of masculinity performed by *The Geeks*, and the adoption of middle-class academic aspiration, these are loaded with risks. The drinking and birthday trip to the lap-dancing club show that older versions of traditional working-class male culture (speech, practices and social activities) appear within these narratives. These young men were trying to be successful and embrace a neoliberal agenda within a globalized workplace. However, their agendas came into conflict with the heritage of their locale and the associated expectations of manhood. These working-class ‘achieving boys’ offer a hybridized form of masculinity, trying to escape but also falling back and feeling the pressure to perform traditional classed masculinities. The implication of this on their ability to achieve their goals is important and illustrates how much harder working-class boys must work than those from more privileged backgrounds in order to be successful in different aspects of their lives.

NOTES

1. A pseudonym which translates from Welsh into English as simply ‘valley, valley’.
2. See Ward (2015a) for a full description of these friendship groups.
3. The young men chose their own pseudonyms
4. All school subjects were streamed into ability groups or sets.
5. In the UK, football or soccer (along with other contact sports such as rugby and boxing) has traditionally been thought of as a male working-class leisure activity and was a particular way to perform working-class masculinity away from industrial workplaces.

6. With the exception of Sin and Gavin (neither of whom did as well as expected and returned to the sixth form to resit their final year), all of The Geeks progressed to university. Sam, Ieuan, Scott and Leon left Wales to study and made the largest moves out of their community. While the rest stayed in South Wales, Ruben and Sean did move to the capital Cardiff to study, so they did make a break from Cwm Dyffryn.

REFERENCES

- Adamson, D. (2008). Still living on the edge? *Contemporary Wales*, 21, 47–66.
- Berg, L. D., & Longhurst, R. (2003). Placing masculinities and geography. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 10(4), 351–360.
- Burrows, R., & Gane, N. (2006). Geodemographics, software and class. *Sociology*, 40(5), 793–812.
- Cobbett, M., & Younger, M. (2012). Boys' educational 'underachievement' in the Caribbean: Interpreting the 'problem'. *Gender and Education*, 24(6), 611–625.
- Connell, R. W. (1989). Cool guys, swots and wimps: The interplay of masculinity and education. *Oxford Review of Education*, 15, 291–303.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
- Corrigan, P. (1979). *Schooling the smash street kids*. London: Macmillan Press.
- Day, G. (2002). *Making sense of Wales*. Cardiff: University of Wales Press.
- Delamont, S. (2000). The anomalous beasts: Hooligans and the sociology of education. *Sociology*, 34(1), 95–111.
- Douglas, J. W. B. (1964). *The home and the school. A study of ability and attainment in the primary school*. London: MacGibbon & Kee.
- Edström, J., Hassink, A., Shahrokhi, T., & Stern, E. (Eds.). (2015). *Engendering men: A collaborative review of evidence on men and boys in social change and gender equality*. EMERGE evidence review. Promundo-US and Sonke Gender Justice and the Institute of Development Studies (IDS). <http://promundoglobal.org/resource/s/engendering-men-evidence-review/>. Accessed 30 Mar 2017.
- Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (Eds.). (1998). *Failing boys?: Issues in gender and achievement*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Francis, B. (2009). The role of The Boffin as abject Other in gendered performances of school achievement. *The Sociological Review*, 57(4), 645–669.
- Francis, B., Skelton, C., & Read, B. (2010). The simultaneous production of educational achievement and popularity: How do some pupils accomplish it? *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(2), 317–334.
- Frosh, S., Phoenix, A., & Pattman, R. (2002). *Young masculinities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.

- Goffman, E. ([1956] 1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Doubleday, Anchor Books.
- Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of a spoiled identity*. New York: Simon and Shuster.
- Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame analysis an essay on the organization of experience*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Gorman-Murray, A., & Hopkins, P. (Eds.). (2015). *Masculinities and place*. London: Ashgate.
- Grazian, D. (2007). The girl hunt: Urban nightlife and the performance of masculinity as collective activity. *Symbolic Interaction*, 30(2), 221–243.
- Halsey, A. H., Heath, A. F., & Ridge, J. M. (1980). *Origins and destinations. Family, class, and education in modern Britain*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (1967). *Social relations in a secondary school*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Hillman, N., & Robinson, N. (2016). *Boys to men: The underachievement of young men in higher education—And how to start tackling it*. Oxford: Higher Education Policy Institute.
- Hoff Summers, C. (2013). *The war against boys: How misguided policies are harming our young men* (2nd ed.). New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Ingram, N. (2009). Working-class boys, educational success and the misrecognition of working-class culture. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 30(4), 421–434.
- Ingram, N. (2011). Within school and beyond the gate: The complexities of being educationally successful and working-class. *Sociology*, 45(2), 287–302.
- Ingram, N., & Waller, R. (2014). Degrees of masculinity: Working and middle-class undergraduate students' constructions of masculine identities. In S. Roberts (Ed.), *Debating modern masculinities: Change, continuity, crisis?* (pp. 35–51). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jackson, B., & Marsden, D. (1962). *Education and the working class*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Jenkins, R. (1983). *Lads, citizens, and ordinary kids: Working-class youth life-styles in Belfast*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Kendall, L. (2000). 'Oh no! I'm a nerd!' hegemonic masculinity on an online forum. *Gender and Society*, 14(2), 256–274.
- Kenway, J., Kraak, A., & Hickey-Moody, A. (2006). *Masculinity beyond the metropolis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Kimmel, M. (2006). *Manhood in America* (2nd ed.). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lacey, C. (1970). *High town grammar, the school as a social system*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- Lehmann, W. (2009). Class encounters: Working-class students at university. In C. Levine-Rasky (Ed.), *Perspectives on the sociology of education* (pp. 197–212). Don Mills: Oxford University Press.
- Mac an Ghaill, M. (1994). *The making of men*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- MacInnes, J. (1998). *The end of masculinity*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Martino, W. (1999). 'Cool boys', 'party animals', 'squids' and 'poofers': Interrogating the dynamics and politics of adolescent masculinities in school. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 20(2), 239–263.
- Martino, W. J. (2008). Male teachers as role models: Addressing issues of masculinity, pedagogy and the re-masculinization of schooling. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 38(2), 189–223.
- Massey, D. (1995). *Spatial divisions of labour: Social structures and the geography of production* (2nd ed.). Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McDowell, L. (2012). Post-crisis, post-ford and post-gender? Youth identities in an era of austerity. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 15(5), 573–590.
- Mendick, H., & Francis, B. (2012). Boffin and geek identities: Abject or privileged? *Gender and Education*, 24(1), 15–24.
- Morgan, D. (2006). The crisis in masculinity. In K. Davis, M. Evans, & J. Lorber (Eds.), *The handbook of gender and women's studies* (pp. 109–124). London: Sage.
- Morris, E. (2012). *Learning the hard way: Masculinity, place, and the gender gap in education*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
- Nayak, A. (2003). 'Boyz to men': Masculinities, schooling and labour transitions in de-industrial times. *Educational Review*, 55(2), 147–159.
- Nayak, A. (2006). Displaced masculinities: Chavs, youth and class in the post-industrial city. *Sociology*, 40(5), 813–831.
- Pascoe, C. J. (2007). *Dude you're a fag: Masculinity and sexuality in high school*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Phillips, D. (2005). Reproducing normative and marginalized masculinities: Adolescent male popularity and the outcast. *Nursing Inquiry*, 12(3), 219–230.
- Quinn, J., Thomas, L., Slack, K., Casey, L., Thexton, W., & Noble, J. (2006). Lifting the hood: Lifelong learning and young, white, provincial working-class masculinities. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(5), 735–750.
- Reay, D. (2002). Shaun's story: Troubling discourses of white working-class masculinities. *Gender and Education*, 14(3), 221–234.
- Reay, D., Crozier, G., & Clayton, J. (2009). Strangers in paradise: Working-class students in elite universities. *Sociology*, 43(6), 1103–1121.
- Redman, P., & Mac an Ghaill, M. (1997). Educating Peter: The making of a history man. In D. Steinberg, D. Epstein, & R. Johnson (Eds.), *Border patrols: Policing the boundaries of heterosexuality* (pp. 162–182). London: Cassell.

- Rees, G., & Stroud, D. (2004). *Regenerating the coalfields, the South Wales experience*. Tredegar: The Bevan Foundation.
- Robb, M., Featherstone, B., Ruxton, S., & Ward, M. R. M. (2015). *Beyond male role models: Gender identities and work with young men*. Milton Keynes: The Open University.
- Roberts, S. (Ed.). (2014). *Debating modern masculinities, change, continuity, crisis?* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Skeggs, B. (1992). Paul Willis, learning to labour. In M. Barker & A. Beezer (Eds.), *Reading into cultural studies* (pp. 181–196). London: Routledge.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formation of class and gender, becoming respectable*. London: Sage.
- Smith, D. (1999). *Wales, a question for history*. Bridgend: Poetry Wales Press Ltd.
- Syal, R. (2013). British male identity crisis ‘spurring machismo and heartlessness’. *The Guardian*, May 14. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/may/14/male-identity-crisis-machismo-abbott>. Accessed 30 Mar 2017.
- Tarrant, A., Terry, G., Ward, M. R. M., Ruxton, S., Robb, M., & Featherstone, B. (2015). Are male role models really the solution? Interrogating the ‘war on boys’ through the lens of the ‘male role model’ discourse. *Boyhood Studies*, 8(1), 60–83.
- Thurnell-Read, T. (2012). What happens on tour: The premarital stag tour, homo-social bonding and male friendship. *Men and Masculinities*, 15(3), 249–270.
- Wakeling, P. (2010). Is there such a thing as a working-class academic? In Y. Taylor (Ed.), *Class intersections -spaces, selves, knowledges* (pp. 36–52). Surrey: Ashgate.
- Walkerline, V. (2010). Communal beingness and affect: An exploration of trauma in an ex-industrial community. *Body & Society*, 16(1), 91–116.
- Waller, R., Ingram, N., & Ward, M. R. M. (Eds.). (2017). *Higher education and social inequality: University admissions, experiences and outcomes*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Ward, M. R. M. (2014). ‘We’re different to everyone else’: Contradictory working-class masculinities in contemporary Britain. In S. Roberts (Ed.), *Debating modern masculinities, change, continuity crisis?* (pp. 52–69). Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ward, M. R. M. (2015a). *From labouring to learning: Working-class masculinities, education and de-industrialization*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ward, M. R. M. (2015b). The chameleonisation of masculinity: Jimmy’s multiple performances of a working-class self. *Masculinities and Social Change*, 4(3), 215–240.
- Ward, M. R. M., Featherstone, B., Robb, M., & Ruxton, S. (2015). Beyond male role models? Gender identity in young men. *Discover Society* 24, September 1. <http://discoversociety.org/2015/09/01/beyond-male-role-models-gender-identity-in-young-men>. Accessed 30 Mar 2017.

- Ward, M. R. M., Tarrant, A., Terry, G., Robb, M., Featherstone, B., & Ruxton, S. (forthcoming). Doing gender locally: The importance of 'place' in understanding young men's masculinities in the male role model debate. *Sociological Review*.
- Weis, L. (1990). *Working-class without work: High school students in a de-industrializing economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Weis, L. (2004). Revisiting a 1980s "moment of critique" class, gender and the new economy. In N. Dolby, G. Dimitriadis, & P. Willis (Eds.), *Learning to labor in new times* (pp. 111–132). New York: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour, how working-class kids get working-class job*. Farnborough: Saxon House.

Becoming a Working-Class Male Adult Learner: Formations of Class and Gender in the Finnish Learning Society

Toni Kosonen

INTRODUCTION: CONCERN ABOUT MEN IN ADULT EDUCATION

This chapter draws on my doctoral research study (Kosonen 2016), which focuses on Finnish working-class men's relationships with qualification-oriented vocational adult education and learning, and in particular on how class and gender inform these relationships. This group of men has become an increasingly important focus of attention in Finnish education policy since the turn of the millennium. Among other things, men with low educational levels and relatively low educational participation levels (in comparison to women and to men with higher level of education) have been identified as 'perhaps [...] the most challenging adult group' to recruit in training in the context of a nationwide policy programme to increase educational participation among low-skilled adults (Ministry of Education and Culture 2010: 26; see also Kilpi-Jakonen et al. 2014). A clear gender pattern favouring women with regard to participation in both vocational and liberal postcompulsory training in Finland has contributed to a concern about men, and in particular about less-educated men, among policy-makers and practitioners of adult education (see Official Statistics of Finland 2009, 2013).

T. Kosonen (✉)

Department of Social Sciences, University of Eastern Finland, Joensuu, Finland

The discussion concerning men's 'underrepresentation' in adult education has expanded in Finland since the end of 1990s, as it has in many other Western countries (see Bowl et al. 2012). This relatively recent discussion can be seen as parallel to a longer-standing concern about school boys' 'underachievement' and relative disadvantage to girls, which are often attributed to the supposed 'feminization' of schooling (Epstein et al. 1998). Similarly, the discussion concerning men often addresses a need to 'remasculinize' education by changing the provision and practices to better reflect men's 'innate' needs, usually conceived in a rather gender stereotypical fashion as 'practical' or 'instrumental'. While there are calls to changing education to fit men, those to change men to fit education are also prominent. Here it is necessary to set men free from outdated ways of being a man that prevent them from engaging in 'lifelong learning', which in the currently hegemonic transnational policy discourse signifies each citizen's moral obligation to engage in learning activities throughout one's life (see Bowl 2012; Koski and Filander 2013).

A concern about men is usually put forward as a concern about *all* men. A persistent discourse concerning the 'crisis' of men and masculinity (see e.g. Roberts 2014) is drawn on especially by the advocates of 'men's rights and equality', who often generalize their case from the predicaments of only some men, usually from the lower strata of the society. What remains unsaid is that they themselves usually have a middle-class background, and that problems may not concern all men (see Messner 2000; Julkunen 2012). Consequently, gender is often valorized over other dimensions of inequality, such as social class, and the problem with men's participation is rendered as a problem related first and foremost to male gender and masculinity. Social class, for its part, remains a 'silenced' category in the Finnish context, even though it is usually men with a working-class background who are specifically targeted, problematized and even stigmatized by various policy measures. As in other Nordic countries, a strong ethos of egalitarianism prevails in Finland, which works to undermine the significance of class. Indeed, popular, moralizing discourses as well as explicit policy debates concerning working classes and working-class men, found in the UK and other traditional class societies, are absent. Still, class arguably prevails in Finland too (e.g. Tolonen 2008), and the current education policy with its neoliberal, individualizing tendencies is producing new kinds of class-based division, in particular between those who are willing and able to engage in lifelong learning and those who are not (Koski and Filander 2013: 595).

The study at hand endeavours to engage with current discourses in adult education that are often based on an unproblematized, 'categorical' notion of gender in which manhood forms a unitary category (Connell 2012:

1675–6), and that tend to ignore class differences in general and between men. Against this backdrop the work focuses precisely on how class and gender inform the ways that men from working-class backgrounds engage with adult education and vocational learning. It considers how they respond to various normative expectations prevailing in the contemporary Finnish society, which could be described as a late modern ‘learning society’, where a notion of continuous engagement in learning activities pervades all areas of life (Koski and Filander 2013). In this chapter I analyse specifically what kinds of gendered and classed identity categories, which will be referred to as ‘categories of being a working-class man’, are available for these men as they position themselves as ‘adult learners’ and as ‘citizens of a learning society’, or alternatively refuse such positionings. The analysis of these categories finally draws attention to divisions and dimensions of inequality that emerge between men with different kinds of resource. Before entering into the empirical discussion, I shall examine the emergence of the current policies of widening educational participation related to politics of lifelong learning that set the context for the study. I shall also introduce a relational approach to gender and class that informs my analysis and the empirical material consisting of thematic interviews with 32 men who have recently participated in vocational adult education.

CLASS AND MASCULINITIES IN A NORDIC LEARNING SOCIETY

In Finland, vast structural and demographic changes (i.e. urbanization) from the 1960s onwards have led to calls to make vocational and adult education available to larger groups of people. In the postwar reforms, education was turned from a privilege into a universal right with principal aims of securing equal opportunities and social inclusion in the context of building up a Nordic welfare state. From the 1980s onwards, a gradual dismantling of welfare state structures has taken place with the accentuation of economic objectives. Currently, while old ideals of the welfare state remain a weighty part of the Finnish education system, evidenced by features such as national core curricula and extensive public funding, many commentators have pointed out how ‘neoliberal reasoning’ is fundamentally restructuring in particular how relations between citizens and the state are conceived (Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2014; Koski and Filander 2013). Most notably, a rights-based model of citizenship, emphasizing everyone’s right to education, has been superseded by a responsibility-based model, emphasizing everyone’s responsibility to engage in education and lifelong learning (O’Rourke 2012).

This turn, which has taken place in most of the industrialized world, has also been characterized as a cultural shift from a modern era to a late modern one in which lifelong learning has indeed turned into a prerequisite for full adulthood and ‘proper citizenship’ (Koski and Filander 2013: 595).

An effectively ideological shift in terminology from ‘education’ to ‘learning’ and from ‘a student’ to ‘a (lifelong) learner’ has meant a detachment of educational activities from institutional boundaries to encompass virtually all areas of life, including what each individual chooses (or chooses not) to do. Drawing on Michel Foucault, a recent body of work in critical sociology of education has highlighted how the choices of each citizen, their ‘self-governance’ and ‘conduct of their conduct’ are central to the new forms of governance in adult education policy (e.g. Nicoll and Fejes 2008). The policies of widening educational participation, in this context, target specific groups whose members fail to choose as expected in failing to participate, and who allegedly lack ‘aspirations’, ‘motivation’ or ‘will’ to engage in ‘lifelong learning’ (e.g. Burke 2006; Simons and Masschelein 2008). In a neoliberal framing, social exclusion and other social problems become attributed to individuals’ shortcomings, while structural, social and economic factors are overlooked. Individuals are ultimately held accountable for the fate of national economies. Through these processes, new kinds of moral and class-based divisions emerge, not on the level of collective relations between groups but rather on the level of ‘individualities’ of isolated individuals (Brunila et al. 2013; Koski and Filander 2013).

To investigate how working-class men become affected by these processes and by the new kinds of societal expectation, my analysis draws on cultural and feminist analyses of class that emphasize an understanding of class as well as gender as experienced and ‘lived’ categories (e.g. Skeggs 1997, 2004; McNay 2004). This kind of approach to class differs from ‘traditional’ class analysis, which has focused on objective, predefined class categories, and on how people position themselves in these categories and define their class identities (see Devine and Savage 2005: 14–5). Instead of class identities, a ‘new’ understanding of class emphasizes subjective processes of ‘class identification’ and ‘disidentification’ through which class categories become defined in the first place and turn into effective structures. In these processes, class is centrally about a struggle for recognition and value, about who are seen as ‘subjects of value’ and who are not (see Skeggs 1997, 2004). In the context of a contemporary learning society, tendencies to devalue masculine working-class identities arguably prevail (e.g. Archer 2001; Burke 2006). The various kinds of responses to this context are central to my analysis.

A relational approach to both gender and class informs this study. In addition to the mentioned cultural and feminist approaches, I draw on the work of Raewyn Connell (2002: 9; also 2012) who has called for a shift from differences to relations in theorizing gender. According to her view, gender categories, multiple masculinities and femininities, are first and foremost relational categories that become defined in ongoing gendered practices and processes, which include specific processes of ‘hegemony’, ‘complicity’, ‘subordination’ and ‘marginalization’ (Connell 1995: 76–81). The notion of ‘hegemonic masculinity’ is central in Connell’s analysis of how gender orders are established. It refers to a culturally ‘exalted’ form or configuration of masculine practices in relation to which other forms of masculinity and also femininity become organized (see Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). ‘Marginalization’, for its part, is related to a process that concerns subordinated groups of men, such as working-class and coloured men. My analysis here is informed by Connell’s (1995) view that a marginal position in relation to middle-class men does not define the category of a ‘working-class man’ in a straightforward and fixed manner. Rather, what is of interest are ongoing and multiple processes in which these categories become defined in the first place and ordered in societal gender and class orders.

Thus my investigation focuses on how men occupy, and simultaneously reproduce, various (identity) positions available to them in gender and class orders, and respond to various societal expectations from these positions. I also draw on notions of resources and ‘capitals’ to address how access to these positions is circumscribed (see Skeggs 1997; Bourdieu 1986). In analysing the divisions that emerge between men, I highlight what kinds of resource are crucial for working-class men to attain respectability, legitimation and worth in the context of a late modern learning society.

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

The data of the study come from thematic interviews with 32 Finnish men (aged between 30 and 64) who have recently participated, or were participating at the time of the interview, in vocational adult education. These men’s educational experiences have been little explored to date in Finland and also internationally. I used databases provided by adult education institutions located in Eastern Finland to contact men who had enrolled on vocational degree programmes in the fields of construction, manufacturing, technology, mining and transport. I chose to focus on these male-dominated sectors in order to reach ‘ordinary’ working-class men who have made conventional

gender-segregated and classed career choices, and who occupy traditionally masculine spaces in working life and in this sense represent masculine working-class culture.

I sought those over 30 years old in order to secure interviewees who could reflect on their experiences of adult education and learning in relation to their experiences of working life. A relatively wide age range enabled a comparison of experiences and insights across generations. However, in my analysis, age did not emerge as a constitutive category *per se*. Rather, similarities in responses from younger and older participants were notable. The majority of interviewees shared a similar social background as being raised in working-class or rural families by parents with relatively low educational levels. Most of them were working, or had worked, as wage earners and had a secondary-level vocational education. A few exceptions had some experiences in managerial positions or as entrepreneurs, or some prior tertiary-level education. However, these men had also returned to secondary-level vocational training via a variety of career paths and were studying to become workers. While these men, of course, represent a select group—first, as participants of adult education and, second, as ones willing to share their experiences of it—their insights enable an analysis of more general patterns of masculinity prevailing in working-class social milieus.

During interviews I invited the men to discuss their experiences of vocational education and learning across their lives and both in institutional and working life settings. A thematic interview schedule, including themes of career history and choices, experiences of initial and further training, working life experiences and learning at work, was followed quite freely. A mental guideline followed in the process of interviewing was to encourage narratives, telling stories under thematic areas. In total, the data comprise around 38 hours of transcribed recorded material. Individual interviews lasted from 30 minutes to two hours, with the average length being 72 minutes. The interview excerpts are translated from Finnish by me, and marked with the interviewee's pseudonym, most recent occupation or training, and their age group (in parentheses).

The methodological approach to the data was informed by discussions in the fields of gender studies and especially critical studies on men and masculinities (Pini and Pease 2013; Schwalbe and Volkomir 2001). Reading of the data focused on performative aspects of interview interaction. I have paid special attention to how men, as they narrate their experiences of education and learning, simultaneously assert what kind of men they are as working-class men—that is, how they 'do' gender and class and adopt various

identity categories culturally available for them (see West and Zimmerman 1987). The situational context of the interview interaction added an important dimension to my analysis, which focused in this regard on how gendered and classed social relations were brought to life in the interview interaction. This meant paying attention to situational positionings and position-takings between the interviewer (a young male researcher representing the middle class, though coming from a rural, working-class background) and the interviewee (usually an older working-class man) (see e.g. Pini 2005).

WORKING-CLASS ADULT LEARNER MASCULINITIES

The analysis of men's accounts of their experiences of education and learning resulted in identification of three categories of being a working-class man, or forms of working-class masculinity. These categories include what I call 'being a proper man, being an independent man, and being an honest man'. With these terms, I refer specifically to what in each case is central to men's constructions of masculinity—namely, to be acknowledged as a 'proper' (here in the sense of being a 'worthy' or 'right kind of') citizen of a learning society, as an 'independent' (i.e. self-reliant and autonomous) professional worker or as an 'honest' working man with moral integrity. The categories in question do not refer to individual men or groups of men but rather to gendered and classed identity positions that are situationally available for men to take up in the context of positioning themselves as 'adult learners', or refusing such a positioning altogether. Depending on the context, men sometimes adopt more than one of these positions and oscillate between them. More often, though, one position comes to dominate their narratives and their idea of what kind of men they are as working-class men. However, all categories or identity positions are not readily available for all men. Instead, access to them requires specific kinds of resource that are unevenly distributed among men as well as (identity) work to mobilize various resources.

In the following I shall demonstrate how the mentioned categories reflect classed and gendered processes of how men, occupying a working-class social standing, relate to education and learning in various settings. Central to my analysis is to illuminate how the categories of being a working-class man emerge in relation to, and inform men's ways of responding to, various normative expectations prevailing in the contemporary learning society. The data show that the studied working-class men are in fact quite aware of, and have internalized the novel expectations concerning, what could be described as flexible, loyal, cooperative, learning- and self-improvement-oriented

‘worker-citizens’ (Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2014). This internalization in turn evokes a variety of responses to these expectations, spanning from aspiring to meet them to protest against them.

Proper Men Aspiring to be Worthy Citizens

Being a proper man is characterized by attempts to meet the prevailing societal expectations. In the data, men adopting this particular category form the majority, partly reflecting the fact that participating in the study meant for a number of men engaging, from the start, positively with the idea of reflecting on their own educational and learning experiences. In contrast, some men, who are discussed in the following two sections, seem to have participated rather in order to challenge various expectations related to being interviewed about educational issues. In the interviews, a proper man places great emphasis on showing how he appreciates education and learning, and understands their significance. One aspect of this is how he gives legitimacy to vocational training and qualifications as accurate measures of a worker’s skills and competencies:

[Having completed a qualification] shows on what level you are as a builder. I guess I’m at least on the further vocational qualification level then. (Tero, construction worker, 30–4)

It sure does measure your skill level, depending on whether you can pass it [the qualification test] or not. There is also that advantage that you’re able to internalize that you can do your job, when you’ve passed it. (Leo, construction worker, 60–4)

These excerpts also illustrate how being a proper man involves willingness to discuss rather openly one’s skill level and learning needs. This emphasis differs drastically from men adopting the other two categories, discussed in the following sections, who commonly claim not to have any learning needs and portray themselves as fully qualified workers. A proper man, in contrast, asserts that he sees education as a suitable means to meet his needs and often expresses, as it were, ‘faith’ in education as a guarantee for success in the labour market (see Jauhiainen and Alho-Malmelin 2004). For instance, Arto, an unemployed metal worker (55–9), states that, having completed a degree in labour market training, his ‘skills are updated’ and he ‘should be able to work for a few more years’. With regard to education paying off as

employment, his view is rather optimistic in relation to the more pessimistic outlook of some other (unemployed) men approaching retirement age. Indeed, this kind of optimistic view of education characterizes being a proper man in comparison to other categories.

In fact, there is a particular strategic sense in how a proper man portrays himself as a ‘believer’ in education and lifelong learning. He endeavours to come across as a ‘proper’ or ‘worthy’ citizen of the contemporary ‘learning society’ as he profiles himself as a man who, being able and willing to learn and open to changes, meets the contemporary societal expectations. However, what simultaneously characterizes being a proper man in my data is that such a ‘worthy citizenship’, a legitimated societal status, is not easily and readily available to the studied men. Instead, a certain amount of (identity) work seems to be required to assert one’s ‘worthiness’—namely, being a proper man means for the studied working-class men being constantly faced with a question of whether or not one actually is ‘worthy’. Addressing this question, a key pattern appearing repeatedly in the data is how a proper man distances himself from his ‘improper’ peers, who are described as failing to meet the assumed normative criteria in failing to appreciate education and learning ‘in a right way’, as well as in failing to accept changes at work and to break from outmoded attitudes and routines. For instance, Jaakko, a senior construction worker (60–4), shows great appreciation for learning by asserting:

You’re never too wise. There are always things to learn, even if it might feel sometimes that you master it [your work]. You can always find new working methods. So, you have to be humble.

Later, Jaakko reinforces his position by differentiating himself from men whom he describes as ‘old-fashioned thinkers, who think that “this is how it’s been done, so this is how it’s going to be done”, [who] don’t approve of new working styles to try out’. By keeping a distance from his peers who possess rather outmoded attitudes, he profiles himself as a man who is open to changes and continuous learning. A similar motif appears in the data in relation to learning as well as in relation to a general attitude towards new things. Mikko, a concrete industry worker (30–4), talks proudly about a new work method he introduced at work, which was, however, opposed by the senior workers ‘who are set in their ways and cannot see things a little differently’. In comparison to these workers, he profiles himself as an innovative individual who is able to take initiative and wants to contribute

to the company's success. Veikko, a senior concrete industry worker (55–9), wonders why the introduction of a task circulation system at his workplace was opposed by many of his colleagues. He distinguishes himself as a person who, in contrast, welcomed change and saw it as a significant, positive step forward.

These examples highlight how being a proper man, in the sense of claiming a 'worthy' citizenship, is marked by keeping a distance, in particular, from one's working-class peers. Following Beverley Skeggs' (1997) seminal argument, the category of being a proper man entails a need to 'disidentify' with particular problematic forms of working-class masculinity (see also Burke 2006). A proper man adopts, in a sense, a middle-class perspective from which he perceives himself as belonging to a potentially problematic category of men in line with the stigmatizing undercurrents of education and labour market policy discourses concerning working-class men (cf. Käyhkö 2015: 449). There indeed are direct references to an awareness of being potentially positioned as problematic in the data. For instance, Jouko, a machinist (55–9), refers to a song by a Finnish folk singer, Jaakko Teppo, which tells a humorous story about an unemployed adult male metalwork student and deals quite explicitly with class-based stereotypes. Jouko wonders whether 'that place [the adult education centre] is seen like that [as it is described in the song]'. He displays awareness of culturally present, stigmatizing stereotypes that are connected to adult education centres and their students, and simultaneously distances himself from them.

With regard to masculinity, being a proper man involves claiming to possess what could be defined as 'masculine control' (Schwalbe and Volkmir 2001), in particular of the arenas of education and learning and, notably, of discourses and terminology related to these arenas. Portrayals of mastery of the educational realm distinguish being a proper man from two other categories that are predominantly focused on demonstrating prowess in the field of work and in the labour market. A proper man seeks to demonstrate his mastery of educational discourses as he describes, for instance, what kind of learner he is by using pedagogical notions such as 'learning styles' and 'self-directedness'. Simultaneously, he legitimates these discourses as a proper modality for self-presentation:

I learn most effectively when someone shows me how to do it [...] I've noticed that I learn best by seeing. Then it's a bit slower if you have to learn by reading. (Kimmo, machinist, 40–4)

According to tests I'm a self-directed [learner], or what's the term. I guess I read a lot, not only about this field but in general, and use a lot of web. They say that it's good for your studies, and studying is not unfamiliar to me [...]. So, I don't disagree with [the test results]. (Olli, building maintenance worker, 30–4)

On the whole, a proper man places great emphasis on profiling himself as a rational and knowledgeable man (cf. Pini 2005), who is willing to discuss openly issues related to vocational learning, and who is able to discuss them with the interviewer in a correct way with a correct vocabulary. He wants to come across as a man who is able to reflect on and take responsibility for his learning, as a man who possesses, in a sense, mastery of himself—who is 'self-directed'. Consequently, men adopting this category align themselves with the prevailing normative ideas concerning 'self-reflective' and 'self-directed learners' and 'active citizens' (see Isopahkala-Bouret et al. 2014).

Independent Men's Disregard for Societal Expectations

An independent man, in contrast, shows no interest in trying to meet the normative societal expectations. The data hint that men in this category are well aware of the prevailing expectations and of the discourses that may render them as 'rough' working-class men, not up to the standard. They nevertheless disregard these expectations by portraying themselves in a particular way as indifferent to them. One way this is exemplified in the data is how such men talk very little about their engagement in learning activities. A significant motif running through their responses is how they claim not to have learned anything useful in training and not to have any real learning or training needs. An independent man may appreciate education and learning in general terms, but concerning himself in particular he often asserts that he is a fully qualified worker—an autonomous, sovereign professional in his own fields (cf. Illeris 2006). Indeed, claiming to be autonomous and self-reliant, especially in relation to one's middle-class superiors, is central to being an independent working-class man.

The following example illustrates central emphases related to being an independent man. Jorma, a road worker (50–4), acknowledges that qualifications are required in the current labour market, and he states that he has participated in training in order to secure his position in the labour market and to gain a rise in wages. He instrumentalizes education, which is typical of being an independent man. However, in the extract he also grants training

symbolic value; it is something that distinguishes ‘dedicated’ workmen from ‘drifters’, uncommitted temporary workers, echoing how a proper man distinguishes himself from his ‘improper’ peers. However, when asked about his own training needs, he is very strict in claiming not to have any:

Jorma: Those who participated [in training], they are dedicated to this line of work, they are no drifters. That’s why they took it.

TK: Did you think that you yourself had a need for training?

Jorma: No. No need at all. I know what I can do, so, it didn’t have any significance in that regard.

TK: So, it was only the diploma. . .?

Jorma: The diploma and the raise.

TK: Did you gain anything new or useful out of that then?

Jorma: No, I didn’t gain any, like, new knowledge. The guy who was teaching there, I used to work with him. He had to quit. And now he has been a teacher at the adult education centre, teaching this field. He had to quit this work because of his back, and he moved into training.

Jorma’s assertion of ‘knowing himself best what he can do’ exemplifies lucidly how an independent man positions himself as a sole authority concerning his own professional competence. Unlike a proper man, an independent man gives no legitimacy to the views of educational authorities. He refuses strongly a possibility that someone else, especially someone from a middle-class position, could evaluate his skills and competence. Jorma solidifies his position in this regard by bringing up how his teacher used to be his co-worker, an equally competent workman. The next excerpt illustrates also how an independent man instrumentalizes education and refuses to adopt a position of an adult learner:

Well, I thought that it won’t make much difference to sit there [in the training] for a few hours, if there’s that raise in hourly pay. [...] It took place during working hours and the wages kept running as well. There we sat by with a wage and watched what the teachers did. (Erkki, construction worker, 45–9)

Here the interviewee describes how he and his colleagues did not actually participate in learning activities but merely ‘sat by and watched what the teachers did’. Erkki emphasizes how he took advantage of the situation of being indirectly obliged by his employer to participate. He proudly describes how he used paid training time for his own leisure entirely on his own terms. These kinds of informal strategy applied by male workers to claim autonomy

at the workplace and to turn things over to their advantage, by ‘pissing their superiors about’, have also been identified by previous research (see Turtiainen and Väänänen 2012). In this sense, being an independent man is marked by class antagonism, by portrayals of working men as superior to their middle-class counterparts. In contrast, being a proper man entails a tendency to avoid such class antagonisms. As a proper man emphasizes being able to take responsibility also for the success of his company, he needs to portray himself as cooperative in relation to his superiors. In contrast, an independent man invests in winning the respect of his working-class peers by ‘screwing his bosses over’.

Consequently, the class processes related to being an independent man differ drastically from those related to being a proper man. While a proper man distances himself from stigmatized forms of working-class masculinity, an independent man, in a sense, celebrates working-class masculinity and distances himself from forms of masculinity represented by the middle-class men. Practical, physical and moral (masculine) capabilities of working men are often underlined by portraying middle-class men as impractical, weak willed and physically effeminate (cf. Willis 1977). With regard to the teachers, men adopting this category may, for instance, bring up how those, who have a degree in engineering but ‘who haven’t worked for a day, really worked out there’, may know how things are in theory but, in practice, ‘when you go out there, it won’t follow that formula’ (Jouko, welder, 55–9). Consequently, an independent man affords value only to learning by doing and learning at work from other more experienced workmen, from his working-class peers (see Roberts 2013). From middle-class men he has nothing to learn.

Disregard for the societal expectations related to being an independent man is based on a belief that one is capable of succeeding without education. An independent man often emphasizes how his success and value in the labour market are based predominantly on his solid experience acquired through hard work, not on education. Juhani, a construction worker (55–9), for instance, explains in a proud tone how he left his previous job without another job in sight because he felt that he was not paid enough: ‘The others doing the same job were paid more, so I told them what my price is.’ He portrays himself as a sovereign player in the labour market, who has confidence and power to negotiate what he is worth—namely, because he is a skilled worker with extensive experience. In this vein, a longstanding working-class ideal of an autonomous, self-reliant workman characterizes being an independent man (see Turtiainen and Väänänen 2012). Consequently, an independent man

disregards the societal expectation because he can *afford* to do so in a particular sense. His labour market success provides him with social value and respect, especially among his working-class peers. Since he can claim a valuable identity in this sense, he can afford not to engage in a discussion concerning his learning experiences. Instead, he places emphasis on constructing a masculine identity based on his prowess in working life and in the labour market.

Honest Men's Protest Against Societal Expectations

Being an honest man is characterized by protesting against societal expectations. In the data, this category is adopted mainly by some of the men who are struggling at the margins of the labour market. Even though only a few of the studied men consistently take up this position, it still has cultural presence and is referred to by many of the interviewees. An honest man engages in heavy criticism with regard to education and learning. Men who take up this category often feel obliged or forced to participate, and afford virtually no value to adult education. An emphasis on the moral integrity of working men and on virtues such as straightforwardness in contrast to moral weaknesses of middle-class men is central to being an honest man (see Lamont 2000). From marginalized and precarious positions, these men commonly emphasize being 'at least honest'.

As an honest man describes his engagement in educational and labour market interventions directed at him, he often adopts a rather passive position. Anssi, an electrician (45–9), for instance, describes how the labour bureau officials started 'tricking him into training' after he faced a need to retrain himself for a new job as a result of health problems. Jorma, a road worker (50–4), already quoted in the previous section, may be facing a similar situation. In the context of describing a need to retrain himself once more, he also adopts an emphatically passive position:

You can't tell, what the insurance company will say, you have to attend to that. It'll come out [soon], what they are planning there [...] They will definitely ply you with something. Say, if I was two years older, they wouldn't put me in training anymore [...] You have to see what they prescribe, is it schooling or what. But then they have to teach me the alphabet from scratch and the arithmetic as well, if they sit me down on a school bench. And they have to pay a full wage during the training.

In this way, an honest man often talks about himself in a passive voice in order to position himself, as it were, as an object of the undertakings directed at him. He emphasizes his detachment from these processes and refuses to afford any legitimacy to them. The next statement by Anssi (electrician, 45–9) further illuminates how an honest man may detach himself also from the official goals of training which he finds imposed on him, and emphasize how he was able to use education for his own purposes on his own terms instead:

I joked a little, that the purpose of the studies was to run electricity to my summer cottage. And so, I did the installations there as a competence demonstration. Got that done. I would have done more, but they didn't agree with that. I would have done an automatic control system [...] proper heating controls and more. Teachers [disapproved of doing] only one's own projects, but would it make much difference.

Like an independent man, an honest man often instrumentalizes education. However, for him it is not a means to portray his prowess in using education strategically to achieve his self-defined goals, but rather a way to retain some worth in a context where he feels disqualified and even humiliated. For instance, Anssi tells how he sometimes felt that the teachers thought he was stupid because he couldn't draw on a computer.

In a sense, an honest man *cannot afford* to take such an indifferent stance towards the prevailing expectations that characterizes independent manhood. He cannot claim to be autonomous like an independent man who is able to rely on his 'proven' labour market success. Because an honest man cannot claim to have in this sense 'succeeded', he finds himself in a precarious position, under a constant threat of being positioned without worth and honour. Against this threat, an honest man resorts to what could be called 'masculine protest' (see Connell 1995: 109–19). For instance, Anssi rebels above in this sense against the goals of training set by middle-class teachers. While engaging in protest, an honest man is well aware of the possibility of being looked down on from a middle-class perspective—that is, also from the interviewer's perspective. For instance, Tapani, a machinist (55–9) who criticizes heavily both adult education and employment administration, suggests that what he says could be understood as 'rather rough text' by the interviewer. Still, he wants to challenge the 'official perspective' by speaking his mind:

The adult education centre was just in it for making profit. You know, it's based on that they show the government that we have this many [students]. It's like it used to be in Russia [...] Nothing matters but that the figures match up. Rather rough text, or what?

Tapani insists that the employment officials and also the adult educators are 'high-salaried guys' who just sit on their tenures and fail to do what they're supposed to. He states how he hasn't got any help with finding a job from the employment office. With regard to adult education, he explains how he expected it to be more 'school-like'. Instead, he found out that everything had to be done by oneself 'because it's *adult education*':

In a way, they don't teach anything [...] [I hoped] that they would have taught something [...] No. You have to do everything by yourself. It is like the employment office, it's a fucking useless institution'.

Challenging the normative expectations is a key practice through which an honest man constructs himself as masculine. In the abovementioned way, responses related to being an honest man are marked by attempts to retain worth by protesting and challenging those above, the authorities who are not afforded much value. The emphasis on working men's moral integrity in relation to corrupted middle-class men is central to being an honest man. Connell's (1995: 109–19) analysis of 'protest masculinity'—a form of 'marginalized' masculinity usually adopted by men at the bottom of societal hierarchies, which is based on making claims to power in a context where there are no real resources to do so—illuminates well what I have identified as being an honest man. Men adopting this category operate with scarce resources, not being able to portray themselves as 'worthy citizens' who meet the societal expectations, or as self-reliant, independent men who can claim to have succeeded in the labour market. Consequently, they need constantly to prove that they are not entirely without worth, honour and integrity.

EMERGING HIERARCHIES AND DIVISIONS

The analysis above has illustrated how the specific categories of being a working-class man simultaneously emerge in relation to, and inform a variety of, responses to the normative expectations prevailing in the contemporary learning society. It has also shed light on how class and gender inform these

processes in various ways. Now I shall draw attention to how the categories are hierarchically organized in relation to each other and in relation to middle-class masculinity that becomes positioned as 'hegemonic'. Even though the interviewed men do not identify with middle-class masculinity but consistently assert being first and foremost 'practical working men', a normative middle-class ideal still organizes their ways of being a man.

All the categories identified in the analysis are marked by what Connell (1995: 78–9) has described as 'marginalization', though in a variety of ways. Connell describes how 'marginalization' may involve on the one hand seeking 'authorization' from those occupying hegemonic positions, or on the other hand challenging and protesting against those in power. Being a proper man is, in this sense, characterized by seeking authorization as described in the previous section. From a working-class position, men who take up this position need constantly to prove their 'worthiness'. Whether one is worthy or not is presented to them as a question they need to address. To do this they tend to distance themselves from and disidentify with particular, problematic forms of working-class masculinity. Being an independent man and being an honest man, in contrast, are marginalized because they refuse to seek authorization. They are well aware of the possibility of being disapproved of and even stigmatized by those holding positions of power. Consequently, they resort to class antagonism and invest in more 'traditional' forms of working-class masculinity.

While all the categories can be described as marginalized, the class and gender processes involved take a variety of forms. In addition, two specific kinds of division emerge between these categories that consequently divide men with different kinds of resource. The first division emerges between those who engage in attempts to claim a 'worthy citizenship' (i.e. the proper men) and those who refuse such an endeavour (i.e. the other two categories). As illustrated in the previous section, being proper men requires them to engage in educational discourse. Men adopting this category make considerable investments in portraying themselves as competent in this domain. In addition to displaying competence in educational terminology, these men often draw on their successes in education and in working life by bringing up, for instance, how they have successfully participated in development processes at work during their careers. For instance, Arto (55–9) tells how he has often taken the initiative in developing work and working methods. He emphasizes his role by stating how 'there has never been a boss [he hasn't] been able to win over'.

Consequently, a certain amount of specifically *cultural resources* are required since men adopting a category of a proper man also risk being seen as ‘not to have got it right’ from a middle-class perspective. They need to be confident enough to prove themselves. Those without such resources and confidence, on their part, exclude themselves from an endeavour to claim a legitimated societal status and invest in other ways of being a working-class man. This division is rather similar to what Diane Reay (2002) has identified as a division between individualist and collectivist factions of the working class—between those who take a risk in attempting to change themselves and ‘escape the fetters of working-class existence’ (404) to become what they think they really (authentically) are, and those who refuse such risks and hold on to a working-class identity and to a working-class definition of authenticity.

The second division emerges between those who can claim to have ‘succeeded’ and are able to take an indifferent stance towards the societal expectations (i.e. the independent men) and those who cannot claim to have ‘succeeded’ in this sense and who need constantly to defend themselves against being rendered worthless (i.e. the honest men). This division is marked by centrality of work as a working-class ideal—and by what could be defined as *material resources* that circumscribe access to independent manhood. These men draw on their successes in the labour market to demonstrate their autonomy and self-reliance. While independent men invest in their relatively stable labour market positions, those without such positions are excluded and are likely to resort to the ‘masculine protest’ described in the previous section.

Consequently, particular kinds of resource bear significance in circumscribing working-class men’s access to a legitimated citizenship in the context of a late modern learning society, on the one hand, and to a respectable working-class manhood, on the other, which is constructed on being successful in what could be called a ‘wage labour society’. On the whole, being a working-class man or working-class masculinity is thus not a unitary category but a multiple one, including various gendered and classed processes as well as specific kinds of hierarchy and division.

CONCLUSIONS

The study reported in this chapter focused on a group of men that has not been to date researched in Finland in the context of adult education and from a perspective addressing issues of gender and class. Also, international

research, published in English, on men in this context, is still relatively scarce (see e.g. Archer 2001; Burke 2006; Bowl et al. 2012). Even though research on men and masculinities has expanded in Finland, especially after the turn of the millennium, the studies in the field of adult education, including vocational, liberal and higher education, addressing gender and class dimensions, have focused predominantly on women (e.g. Käyhkö 2015). Recently, though, a scholarly discussion concerning Finnish school-boys' (multiple) masculinities has been initiated (see e.g. Manninen et al. 2011). Indeed, in the context of schooling, gender issues and also issues concerning boys have been debated for a relatively long time in comparison with adult education, where a 'concern over men' is quite a recent phenomenon. Consequently, while a gender perspective has been 'mainstreamed' to an extent in the context of schooling, the discussion in the context of adult education, in Finland as well as internationally, lags behind and, as argued in the introduction, often resorts to rather stereotypical and essentializing notions of gender, manhood and masculinity.

This study hopes to contribute to these debates by providing empirical evidence on various forms of being a working-class man, which are available for men occupying working-class positions in a late modern Nordic learning society. The results challenge in particular a notion of working-class men as a unitary category of men who are culturally prone to opposing and resisting education, who fail to appreciate it and understand its significance, and who thus need to be either changed or responded to by altering the provision of training. An idea of 'traditional Finnish manhood', often referred to in the debate, has also been challenged in recent historical research on men and masculinities in Finland (see Markkola et al. 2014). This research highlights the fact that manhood has always taken multiple forms and that these are in a process of constant change.

With regard to historical dynamics, the men of my study find themselves between what could be described as two, overlapping societal orders: the 'receding' modern wage labour society and the 'predominant' late modern learning society (see Koski and Filander 2013). Independent and honest men are the ones who (still) subscribe to the 'promise' of the wage labour society, in which *employment* afforded men a legitimated social status and was a central building block for their masculine identities. Simultaneously, these men are aware of the fact that in the contemporary learning society, 'full citizenship' is granted only to those who are able to prove their *employability* by displaying readiness and willingness to engage in constant learning and self-improvement. However, they refuse to take up these new

challenges and keep investing in forms of working-class masculinity that still carry some value, at least in local circles and among their working-class peers. Men taking up a ‘new proper manhood’, on their part, subscribe to a new order and engage in efforts to claim a ‘worthy citizenship’, even though it is not easily and readily available to them as working-class men and requires them to constantly seek authorization from their middle-class counterparts.

A longstanding emphasis on equal opportunities along with more recent neoliberal, individualizing tendencies in Finnish education policy have turned attention away from social class and in general from structural and material dimensions of inequality (e.g. Käyhkö 2015). Instead of addressing these issues, for instance, attempts to widen educational participation have focused solely on individuals belonging to various ‘identity groups’, such as gender or ethnic groups, or on individualized shortcomings, such as having not acquired enough training. Against this backdrop, the results of the study highlight the centrality of class in the lives of men occupying a working-class social standing in a Nordic context where class is a less visible category than in traditional class societies with longer industrial histories. The results attract attention to a variety of class processes and (intra)class divisions (cf. Reay 2002) that develop in a late modern learning society. The working-class men remain a marginalized category, even though recent attempts have been made to raise the social status of vocational training and working-class occupations, as well as to place an emphasis on validating informal forms of learning and skills, and competences acquired at work. However, the agenda and priorities of education remain to be set by men and women occupying middle-class social positions. Since class differences are not recognized, made visible and discussed, working-class men and women continue to be marginalized from education, as they are excluded from discussions concerning what it should be about.

REFERENCES

- Archer, L. (2001). Working-class men’s constructions of masculinity and negotiations of (non)participation in higher education. *Gender and Education*, 13(4), 431–449.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986). The forms of capital. In J. Richardson (Ed.), *Handbook of theory and research for the sociology of education* (pp. 241–258). New York: Greenwood.

- Bowl, M. (2012). Implication for practice, research and policy. In M. Bowl, R. Tobias, J. Leahy, G. Ferguson, & J. Gage (Eds.), *Gender, masculinities and lifelong learning* (pp. 161–174). London/New York: Routledge.
- Bowl, M., Tobias, R., Leahy, J., Ferguson, G., & Gage, J. (Eds.). (2012). *Gender, masculinities and lifelong learning*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Brunila, K., Hakala, K., Lahelma, E., & Teittinen, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Ammatillinen koulutus ja yhteiskunnalliset eronteot* [Vocational education and social distinctions]. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.
- Burke, P. J. (2006). Men accessing education: Gendered aspirations. *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(5), 719–733.
- Connell, R. (2012). Gender, health and theory: Conceptualizing the issue, in local and world perspective. *Social Science & Medicine*, 74(11), 1675–1683.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2002). *Gender*. Cambridge: Polity Press; Malden: Blackwell Publishers.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
- Devine, F., & Savage, M. (2005). The cultural turn, sociology and class analysis. In F. Devine, M. Savage, J. Scott, & R. Crompton (Eds.), *Rethinking class. Culture, identities and lifestyles* (pp. 1–23). Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Epstein, D., Elwood, J., Hey, V., & Maw, J. (1998). *Failing boys? Issues in gender and achievement*. Buckingham/Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Illeris, K. (2006). Lifelong learning and the low-skilled. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 25(1), 15–28.
- Isopahkala-Bouret, U., Lappalainen, S., & Lahelma, E. (2014). Educating worker-citizens: Visions and divisions in curriculum texts. *Journal of Education and Work*, 27(1), 92–109.
- Jauhiainen, A., & Alho-Malmelin, M. (2004). Education as a religion in the learning society. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 23(5), 459–474.
- Julkunen, R. (2012). Mieskysymys suomalaisen tasa-arvopoliittikan asialistalla [The man question on the gender equality policy agenda]. In A. Jokinen (Ed.), *Mieskysymys. Miesliike, -työ, -tutkimus ja tasa-arvopoliittikka* (pp. 30–43). Tampere: Tampere University Press.
- Käyhkö, M. (2015). Working-class girls in a foreign land. Social class and settling into university in a cross-current between two cultures. *Gender and Education*, 27(4), 445–460.
- Kilpi-Jakonen, E., Sirviö, O., & Martikainen, P. (2014). Adult learners in Finland: Formal adult education as an opportunity for reducing inequality? In H.-P. Blossfeld, E. Kilpi-Jakonen, D. Vono de Vilhena, & S. Buchholz (Eds.), *Adult learning in modern societies: Patterns and consequences of participation from a life-course perspective* (pp. 204–222). Cheltenham/Northampton: Edward Elgar.

- Koski, L., & Filander, K. (2013). Transforming causal logics in Finnish adult education: Historical and moral transitions rewritten. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 32(5), 583–599.
- Kosonen, T. (2016). *Opiskeleva ammattimies, yhteiskuntaluokka ja sukupuoli. Tutkimus ammatilliseen aikuiskoulutukseen osallistuvista työläismiehistä*. [The studying working man, social class and gender. A study of working-class men participating in vocational adult training]. Joensuu: Itä-Suomen yliopisto.
- Lamont, M. (2000). *The dignity of working men. Morality and the boundaries of race, class, and immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Manninen, S., Huuki, T., & Sunnari, V. (2011). ‘Earn yo’ respect!’ Respect in the status struggle of Finnish school boys. *Men and Masculinities*, 14(3), 335–357.
- Markkola, P., Östman, A.-C., & Lamberg, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Näkymättömän sukupuoli. Mieheyden pitkä historia*. [Invisible gender. The long history of manhood]. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- McNay, L. (2004). Agency and experience: Gender as a lived relation. In L. Adkins & B. Skeggs (Eds.), *Feminism after Bourdieu* (pp. 175–190). Oxford/Malden: Blackwell Publishing.
- Messner, M. (2000). *Politics of masculinities. Men in movements*. Lanham/Oxford: AltaMira Press.
- Ministry of Education and Culture. (2010). *Noste Programme 2003–2009. Final report* (Reports of the Ministry of Education and Culture, Finland 2010:8). Helsinki: Helsinki University Print.
- Nicoll, K., & Fejes, A. (2008). Mobilizing Foucault in studies of lifelong learning. In A. Fejes & K. Nicoll (Eds.), *Foucault and lifelong learning: Governing the subject* (pp. 1–18). London/New York: Routledge.
- O’Rourke, R. (2012). Men in United Kingdom adult and community education: The politics of practice and pedagogy. In M. Bowl, R. Tobias, J. Leahy, G. Ferguson, & J. Gage (Eds.), *Gender, masculinities and lifelong learning* (pp. 82–94). London/New York: Routledge.
- Official Statistics of Finland. (2009). Adult education survey [e-publication]: European comparison 2006. Statistics Finland, Helsinki. http://www.stat.fi/til/aku/2006/04/aku_2006_04_2009-04-24_tie_001_en.html. Accessed 25 Oct 2015.
- Official Statistics of Finland. (2013). Aikuiskoulutustutkimus [Participation in adult education, e-publication]. Aikuiskoulutukseen osallistuminen 2012, 1. Aikuisopiskelijoiden määrä yli 1,7 miljoonaa. Tilastokeskus, Helsinki. http://www.stat.fi/til/aku/2012/01/aku_2012_01_2013-06-13_kat_001_fi.html. Accessed 25 Oct 2015.
- Pini, B. (2005). Interviewing men. Gender and the collection and interpretation of qualitative data. *Journal of Sociology*, 41(2), 201–216.
- Pini, B., & Pease, B. (Eds.). (2013). *Men, masculinities and methodologies*. Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Reay, D. (2002). Class, authenticity and the transition to higher education for mature students. *The Sociological Review*, 50(3), 398–418.
- Roberts, S. (2013). Gaining skills or just paying the bills? Workplace learning in low-level retail employment. *Journal of Education and Work*, 26(3), 267–290.
- Roberts, S. (2014). Introduction: Masculinities in crisis? Opening the debate. In S. Roberts (Ed.), *Debating modern masculinities. Change, continuity, crisis?* (pp. 1–16). Basingstoke/New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schwalbe, M., & Volkow, M. (2001). The masculine self as problem and resource in interview studies of men. *Men and Masculinities*, 4(1), 90–103.
- Simons, M., & Masschelein, J. (2008). Our ‘will to learn’ and the assemblage of a learning apparatus. In A. Fejes & K. Nicoll (Eds.), *Foucault and lifelong learning. Governing the subject* (pp. 48–60). London/New York: Routledge.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender. Becoming respectable*. London/Thousand Oaks/New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, self, culture*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Tolonen, T. (Ed.). (2008). *Yhteiskuntaluokka ja sukupuoli* [Social class and gender]. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- Turtiainen, J., & Väänänen, A. (2012). Men of steel? The masculinity of metal industry workers in Finland after World War II. *Journal of Social History*, 46(2), 449–472.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender & Society*, 1(2), 125–151.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labor: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. New York: University Press.

Automobile Masculinities and Neoliberal Production Regimes Among Russian Blue-Collar Men

Jeremy Morris

INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on a social group of young blue-collar men in Russia in a small industrial town. They see each other as ‘confrères’, to use Michael Burawoy’s (1992) classic conceptualization of working-class communist-era sociality. This notion of classed masculine sociality at the nexus of workplace, domestic space and leisure space is relevant in the postsocialist era (Morris 2012). Using long-term ethnographic immersion in the lives of informants, the chapter investigates how seemingly enduring socialist-era working-class masculinity is increasingly inflected by global changes in production and labour: the challenge to traditional Russian factory work by the informal economy and transnational corporations (TNCs). In parallel, it shows how performative masculinity through cultural norms of consumption and do-it-yourself (DIY) (car ownership, mechanical repair and tinkering) is subject to change. At the core of this chapter are portraits of ‘Petr’ and ‘Nikita’—ethnographic composites. It follows them as they move from local factory jobs—via detours in the informal economy—to a

J. Morris (✉)
Aarhus University, Aarhus, Denmark

production line in a TNC automotive factory, and in parallel it traces debates about automobility in this circle of friends.

Car ownership and the DIY skills involved in repairing mechanically simple old Russian cars speak to issues around the display of working-class masculinities. In addition, the chapter explores automobility as emblematic of uneasy social mobility and fraught engagement with new neoliberal regimes of work on the self and flexibility. Choices about what kind of car to own, whether to use credit, whether to buy Russian-built or ‘foreign’, whether to learn from others how to maintain it or pay a stranger—all these forks in the path of becoming automobile are statements of what kind of man a person wants to be. They are similarly subject to interpretation by others in a working-class setting. Conversations and conflicts about automobility come to dramatize aspects of social class mobility, immobility and contrasting performances of masculinity. Automobility marks how particular forms of masculinity intersect with both aspirational fantasies (that largely remain inaccessible) and stubborn retrenchments of more traditional classed identities. These ‘debates’ bespeak an uneasy relationship with the ‘desired’ automobile as status symbol and object of labour in the ‘Western’ factories in which these men work.

WORKING-CLASS MASCULINITY AND THE POSTSOCIALIST NEOLIBERAL ORDER

This section is necessarily only a short summary of a wide-ranging debate. For more extensive treatments, see Ashwin (2000), Vanke (2014) and Walker (2017). After 1989/1991, postsocialism gave rise to a dominant narrative of marketized relations and challenged traditional working-class masculinity across Eastern Europe. ‘Shock’ economic reforms led to long-term and massive declines in the purchasing power of the male blue-collar wage, and a steady deterioration in conditions and social benefits. The latter was significant in underpinning traditional notions of value associated with manual work and masculinity. While female employment was much more the norm in socialist societies than in the West, a single *male* bread-winning wage often provided accelerated access to social housing (also the norm), and subsidized or preferential access to goods and services essential to household reproduction.

It is therefore no surprise that the unprecedented deterioration in the economic positioning of working-class men after communism was

accompanied by an equally unprecedented peacetime demographic crisis as millions of men died early or were debilitated by psychosocial stress (Stuckler et al. 2009). This was not only the result of economic dislocation and dispossession but also due to the social ‘crisis’ in masculinity that pre-dated the end of communism. Authoritarian and ‘patriarchal’ state–citizen relations saw men’s *social* roles severely truncated during and after communism (Ashwin 2000). Men’s ‘coping’ responses to rapid social change post-1991 reinforced a longstanding pathologized view of men as infantile and feminized as a result of the coercion and violence of communist rule. Working-class men’s responses to economic, social and political marginalization led to masculinity becoming associated with deviant behaviour (Ries 1997), and working-class masculinity in particular as subject to association with criminality and extreme lumpenization (Stenning 2005; Walker 2014). Socialist-era worries about masculinity have evolved since to relate to men’s perceived inability to cope with neoliberal roll-back of the state and new labour relations. They continue to be seen as ‘weak: inappropriately feminine, drunk, irresponsible, shiftless’ (Ashwin 2000: 17). The ‘crisis in masculinity’ also concerns the rate of highly self-destructive behaviours (Zdravomyslova and Temkina 2002)—almost a collective form of self-harm that can be interpreted as a response to a real and symbolic loss of roles and status—particularly for working-class men, who Walker (2009) sees as fundamentally ‘devalued’ by the process of socioeconomic transformation.

At the same time, the loss of the ‘patriarchal’ socialist-era state has seen a resurgence in retraditionalizing narratives of gender roles after generations of at least nominally legal equality and a degree of real social and economic mobility for women. This was most notable in the media, but reflected a concerted effort, a compensatory mechanism, of the particular form of neoliberal reform in post-communist societies, which stressed the rediscovery of men’s biologically essentialized masculinity (Zdravomyslova and Temkina 2002) at the same time as asserting familiar traditional masculinity through breadwinning as, if not an achievable norm, an idealized type. This led to Kay (2006), in a landmark study of the crisis of Russian masculinity, to ask whether men could resist the urge to reassert patriarchy.

For working-class men in the present, all these factors remain pertinent, but increasingly dominant is their growing awareness of the socioeconomic and symbolic subaltern positioning of workers since the end of communism (if not before; cf. Burawoy 1992). The transition from communism to a form of neocapitalism (Kideckel 2008) can be read as a multigenerational experience of trauma, albeit in a different form to deindustrializing

working-class communities in the global north (e.g. Walkerdine 2010; Morris 2016). In Russia, working-class male dispossession was not so much characterized by ‘widespread unemployment [. . . as] impoverishment of prospects for those employed in the industrial and agricultural sectors, in which poverty wages, unsafe working conditions and extended periods of unpaid leave continue to be the norm for many’ (Walker 2009: 532; see also Yaroshenko et al. 2006).

Working-class men have found themselves in an unparalleled position of subalternity in such societies (Kideckel 2002). They are faced with an ‘illusory corporatism’ (Ost 2000): state and employer relations are exclusionary and seek to impose a strong form of neoliberal labour disciplining and dispossession. Elites and the emergent middle classes alike see workers as little more than politically quiescent, ‘Mechanical Turk’ operators of moribund Soviet plant in dying factories of industrial hinterlands far from Moscow. Workers experience the sharp end of welfare-state residualization. They are victims of widespread patronizing attitudes (particularly in the media): they should gratefully remake their socialist-era selves into more productive and pliant postsocialist workers. Biographical analysis of workers (including those featured in this chapter) and their interpretations of bodily practices, risk and wellbeing, underline their awareness of their replaceability and marginality (Vanke 2014; Morris 2016). At the same time they display a clear articulation of how both traditional factory work and more neoliberal production regimes of monitoring and (self)-disciplining offer ‘poor work’ and bad jobs (see Walker 2009; Morris 2012, respectively).

AUTOMOBILE WORKING-CLASS MASCULINITIES

Private car ownership and use as representing differentiated performances of masculinity has long been a staple of youth studies. However, the majority of research has focused on the automotive articulations of gender in terms of subcultures; cars express a form of refracted hegemonic masculinity, particularly among the dominated faction of working-class male youth in the West (e.g. Bengry-Howell and Griffin 2007; Lumsden 2010). Often examining street-racing, cruising and car modification, research on automobility is associated with delinquency and deviance, which is less representative of a non-Western experience. In addition, there are few intersecting treatments

of automobility and masculinity in non-Western contexts (e.g. van Eeden 2012; Grace 2013). With a few exceptions (e.g. Notar 2012; Trumper and Tomic 2009), class does not feature as a unit of analysis. Moreover, the sociocultural significance of automobilities retains a similarly Western-centric perspective that does not do justice to the plural experience of private car use (let alone ownership) under globalization. By contrast, in two recent treatments of automobility in Russia, globally universal aspects of the performance of masculinity through automobility are highlighted (symbolizing individualized, masculine sexual dominance), but so too are locally contrastive meanings—collective affordances extending to the realms of shared car ownership and homosocial tinkering in garages (Kononenko 2011). Similarly, a classed perspective finds car ownership less to do with conspicuous consumption, but as a store of value (*ibid.*), and, in the creation of ‘carholds’, automobility, and mobility itself, as a household rather than individual achievement (Broz and Habeck 2015). This paints a very different picture of automobilities’ implications for masculinity.

As well as acknowledging alternative understandings of automobilities outside the core global north, the meaning of cars for men in Russia requires a historical contextualization in the light of the socialist experience of consumption and ownership. Car ownership in socialist societies became increasingly important for defining self and class. Even as cars increased in quality and accessibility, they remained objects of ‘relative scarcity’ and were invested with particular symbolic value ‘because of the lengths to which aspirant and real owners would go to obtain and maintain them’ (Siegelbaum 2011: 2). More than any other consumer object, the car came to represent the particular forms of socialist consumption (Siegelbaum 2008). Scarce yet desirable, practical and useful yet difficult to maintain, cars retain the aura of objects of desire that require reserves of patience and the cunning use of networks to obtain and keep them. There is a long history of unspoken and guilty desire associated with foreign cars in Russia (Siegelbaum 2011: 4), which continues in the present. In addition, there is the continuing association of high-status vehicles with the ‘ruling’ class and those that have seemingly undeservedly gained access to material riches (*ibid.*, 5). Car ownership of any kind remains a political and class-ridden issue as much as a gendered one.

AUTOMOBILITY AS THE NEXUS OF THE NEOLIBERAL HAILING OF RUSSIAN SUBALTERN MASCULINITY

This ethnographic section is divided into three parts. First, I contextualize working-class masculine sociality as embedded in automobility by examining its placeness—the garage spaces as male refuges from both ‘feminized’ domestic space and the increasingly harsh neoliberalized workspace. Second, the discussion of garage space serves as a way to introduce ‘Nikita’, an ethnographic composite representing one model of Russian working-class masculinity. Reluctant to remake his working personhood in the image of the flexible neoliberal subject, he remains in the town’s moribund Soviet-style factories, eking out a living—in the cement factory and in informal (underground) labour making plastic window frames, and, later, in unregistered gypsy-cab driving. For him, cars are not just a practical necessity and desired in and of themselves; they are emblematic of his rejection of new production regimes (often found in foreign transnational contexts). He buys a ‘banger’ and spends much time maintaining it with support from others who share his self-positioning: the car comes first, work, second. In addition, his automobility is grounded in non-utility, exuberance even. In contrast, ‘Petr’, as owner and car user, is supremely practical, instrumentalist and more individualistic. Not only does he carefully mould himself to the rigorous demands of the German car plant where he works on the assembly conveyor, his embodiment of neoliberal flexibility and economic calculation extends to car ownership—it cocreates or ‘assembles’ a new form of working-class personhood as machinically subjectivated (Lazzarato 2014: 9–10).

FIELDSITE DESCRIPTION AND METHODS

This chapter comprises materials collected during long-term ethnographic fieldwork with blue-collar workers in Izluchino, a small industrial town near the city of Kaluga, to the south west of Moscow, which is the site of a new TNC’s car plant. About 15,000 people live in Izluchino, an urban space that developed as the result of a ‘town-forming enterprise’ in the postwar era.¹ Local manufacturing includes aggregate extraction and processing (into bricks, lime and powders, and other construction materials), and steel and plastic fabrication (including tubing and cables for the domestic plumbing market and extractive gas industry), all of which date from the Soviet period. Many of those laid off in the 1990s post-communist economic crises never

returned to blue-collar work—they either died off in the massive demographic collapse, survived on meagre pensions or disappeared into the informal economy—typically driving unregistered cabs, working on construction sites in Moscow or engaging in petty trades. Nonetheless, since 2010, some younger workers (aged 25–35) have started to commute from this town to the automotive plant and two other TNCs based in Kaluga.

Materials (recorded and unrecorded interviews, participant and non-participant observations) for this research were gathered in 2009–2014 in over a year’s worth of intermittent fieldwork. Both participant observation and semistructured interviews were conducted in a variety of settings. Long-term interactions with 50 informants form the bulk of materials, with a group of eight men being the focus here: key informants include union activists, ‘ordinary’ assembly workers and ex-workers from the car plants. In addition to anonymizing workers’ names and jobs, various minor details pertaining to the identity of the settlement have been obscured or changed.

The Freedom, Not of the Road, but of the Garage: Spaces of Masculine Working-Class Sociality

Despite the specifically postsocialist meanings of mobility detailed above, automobility and masculinity are no doubt as closely linked symbolically in Russia as in any other postindustrial society. And this is perhaps even more the case for working-class men as for others as a result of the historical scarcity and unfulfillable desire associated with ownership. Now most blue-collar workers can realistically aim for ownership of a basic Soviet-era AvtoVAZ Lada model (a low-tech vehicle based on the 1960s Fiat 124 and produced in large numbers until the early 2010s), or buy a ‘Western-style’ car on rather crippling credit terms. Technical skills in DIY maintenance have long been desiderata for long-term ownership for three reasons: (1) very poor road maintenance and severe climatic conditions; (2) poor automobile network infrastructure generally—a preponderance of low-grade roads and poor distribution of vehicle maintenance businesses; and (3) the simple construction of most Russian cars. ‘Tinkering’ in garage blocks with acquaintances also has a long history and is a significant part of working-class homosociality, among young and old alike (Morris 2016).

Whether for commuting to better blue-collar jobs in the regional capital Kaluga (an hour away by car, served by only one slow public bus per hour), or more locally allowing informal work as an unregistered taxi driver,

transport for moonlighting jobs in trades and construction, or just a marker of appropriate adult and breadwinning masculinity, the car is seen as a symbolic and practical necessity for most men in the aggregate-extracting, cement-mixing town of Izluchino.² As most people own Ladas, with ownership comes the necessity of skills and a sufficient social network of other workers to make repairs without resorting to paying a workshop. While in the summer men group together and repair cars in the open squares surrounded by crumbling block housing, most have access through relatives, friends or confrères to a brick garage space on the edge of town.

The garage in Izluchino is built by its owner (also requiring ‘membership’ of a mutual aid network) side by side with similar constructions forming long rows of often spacious workshops-cum-garages. There are two 5 hectare garage territories in the town at either end. Like the use of ‘sheds’ in anglophone culture, the garage is a masculine reserve devoted to practical activity, often for its own sake; the car may never get completely ‘fixed’, but a lot of talk and drinking ensure that homosocial ties are cemented and broadened. While anglophone culture promotes the individualistic notion of the lone tinkerer (Cavanagh et al. 2014), in Russia, garage use is predicated on men coming together to reinforce bonds of competent masculinity, and the garage can be a cosy shared space, whether used as a bar or a mechanic’s shop. Some have glass-brick windows and heating; all have electricity and ventilation pipes sticking out of their roofs. Opposite Petr’s garage another owner has added not only a summer ‘terrace’ of sorts (a room made from steel sheeting and polycarbide glass) but also a pigeon coop to the roof.

What is a garage for? Ironically, even in the winter, it is rare to find them occupied by a car. The garage context serves as a perfect private society in microcosm for men to debate differences in attitudes towards cars, which themselves have increasingly become linked to changing ideas about time value and adaptability to ‘new’ production contexts requiring ‘self’ discipline (e.g. conveyor work at the TNCs). In addition, there is the ever-present symbolization in car ownership of more and less worthy forms of masculinity, and the dilemma of foregoing consumption in the present for the sake of ownership of ‘better’ forms of vehicle transport in the future. This is best illustrated by two positions in the social circle of informants. The first position is represented by Nikita: men who avoid having to ‘adapt’ to neoliberal production regimes. Nikita purchases an unreliable, rusty, if racy, Moskvitch ‘banger’, necessitating long periods of maintenance and mutual aid, and which cannot reliably be used for commuting, but which is ‘fun’

and a source of socialization. The second group is represented by Petr. This group sees Nikita's frequent change of car ownership as part of his inability to remain in permanent employment. For Petr's group, the physical mobility of ownership links to 'mobility' more widely, valued positively (e.g. willingness to adapt to the Western demands of the TNC production lines). In contrast, Nikita's mobility is seen as negative: he is called a 'flyer'—a person who can't knuckle down and be a 'new' working-class man.

One day, when Petr has gone to Kaluga to work his conveyor shift, his mother, Masha, talks about the garage spaces of her children and husband. Kideckel (2004) characterizes the use of space in the yards outside housing blocks in Romania as 'bench work', where sociality, drinking and 'tinkering' coalesce in space. Masha describes the 'garage work' of the men in the family in a similar way:

For some wives it is a problem—if the blokes leave for the garage that's it. You don't know when you'll see them again. But on the other hand it is a blessing and you can get some peace. When Lyova [her husband] goes on a bender (*zapoi*), he doesn't go to his own garage as it is too far away. It's good that he can go to the garage nearby as I know he'll be safe and even in the winter he won't freeze to death there.

Narratives about garage 'work' continue a couple of weeks later in a far more salubrious garage space owned by Zhenya, a young lathe operator in an informal metal and plastic fabricating shop. Nikita, then a 24-year-old cement kiln operative, had been asked by Zhenya to help him change the beam axle on a car he was working on. Nikita used to work with Zhenya in the cement works, but the latter had quit about six months earlier and gone to work 'underground', in the informal economy. The car doesn't belong to Zhenya but to a 'client', an old school friend. The vehicular object of envy in question is a 1980s Moskvitch Sviatogor, a copy of a 1970s Chrysler with a powerful Renault-made injection engine, more comfortable to drive than most Russian cars, and with sporty looks and performance. Later Nikita will buy this car. There isn't a monetary agreement involved in this work: Zhenya has the skills and space to work on the car, as well as a wide enough social network to be able to call on Nikita and others for help at short notice. Nikita is keen to work on the car. Not only will he get to learn a new skill but he will be introduced to Sergei, Zhenya's 'boss' and the foreman. It is through participation in 'tinkering' that Nikita is able to leave the cement works and get informal employment, working for Sergei with Zhenya, thus

‘avoiding’ having to go to the TNC conveyor plant in Kaluga with his friend Petr.

This garage is clean and spacious, it has two old sofas and a plastic table, as well as an old computer and a speaker system through which the latest pop hits blare out, accompanied by music videos. Zhenya has even salvaged a metal shop display rack for flavoured powdered milk that now serves as storage for CDs. They hold forth about ‘garage work’, picking up the theme where Masha left off:

It’s only for some wives that the garage is a problem—the guys don’t have to make an excuse; they just say ‘I’m in the garage’, that’s all. [...] Also it’s a place where you can find your ‘theme’, not just about cars, but motorbikes, pigeons even. And the guys can discuss it for hours. (Zhenya, 25-years old)

It’s not about getting away from women, from the flat. No, why do you say that? How many hours have we spent hanging around here? Here in our company we’ve spent so much time here that we call the garage not just a garage but a café-club garage. ‘Cos you can have a beer here. Or some vodka [...] You can watch a film, have a tinker with the car and everything else. So it is a café-club garage. We phone up Zhenya and say—come on, open up the café-club . . . There’s only one table for the clientele though—a ‘night café-club’ . . . so this is where we live. (Sergei, 31)

While for Kideckel, benches and bars comprise the gendered separation of space in Romania, they also indicate the semipublic affirmation of places of subaltern solidarity (2004). These are almost entirely absent in Izluchino. If men drink in public they are harassed by residents and police alike. Women at least are able to continue ‘bench work’ in the beautifully kept front gardens of the town, amply provided with wooden benches. But masculine sociality—always closely linked with drinking alcohol—remains pathologized. Thus the garage looms large, occupying an important real and symbolic space in the lives of men. At the same time it bears witness to the relative subalternization of blue-collar masculine sociality as such, or what Walker (2017) sees as its real and ‘symbolic’ impoverishment.

However, the very marginality of the garage space makes for a vibrant sense of the possibilities of masculine sociality. The police rarely if ever patrol such places. Similarly, the kind of modifications to buildings outlined above would not be tolerated in the housing blocks. This gives the practices and activities of the garage spaces a feeling of lacking inhibition, if not

‘freedom’. Often, even late at night, Zhenya would crank up the volume of the CD player and light a barbeque. On the other side of town in a different garage, Nikita and a group of younger workers he barely knows would make repairs to his Moskvitch until the small hours, making a racket as they attended to a faulty clutch. Certainly the very relegation to the garage of so many practices related to the performance of masculinity-in-common by blue-collar men inflects such activities with an intensity of feeling, of belonging and of delight among the participants. Even mundane everyday activities take on a festive, cheery character. Symbolically it is a masculine domain where working-class ‘authenticity’ can be performed and even experimented with.

The second time I visit Zhenya he is working, again, ‘informally’ with some friends on another car. This time he is drinking alcohol-free beer. In response to my visible shock he says: ‘I don’t feel like drinking at the moment ... What are you looking at? It’s my garage; I can do what I want!’ With the private and marginalized nature of these male spaces comes a meagre sense of freedom from conventionality, even while strong markers of normative blue-collar masculinity are continually replayed and performed, such as the necessity of displaying ‘practical’ and resourceful skill in mechanics or DIY work. The garage provides an example of the fraught search for ‘propertizing’ of marginal spaces in a way that allows the maintenance and expansion of the horizontal social network of workers (Morris 2016).³ They can encounter others here and build weak and strong ties of confraternity. This was particularly true of the younger Nikita: once he had bought the Moskvitch he would strike up conversations with other owners and he obtained a particular form of local class-related ‘prestige’ (ibid.).

Workhorse Cars Reflecting Their Owners’ Calculating Values

‘She’s my friend, but she’s a workhorse; she’s no beauty, unlike the Skodas we assemble! But that’s the way I like her.’ Petr, a slim, careful man in his late 20s strokes the bonnet of his Lada Samara sedan as he says these words. The car is the new model—one of the first Russian cars built to Western standards of design, safety and reliability. Petr has taken out a bank loan to buy it—bigger than the average local mortgage and crippling to his disposable income for the next two years. We have just inspected some road damage to the chassis and front wing that occurred while Petr had been driving home from his new job at the TNC car factory, an hour away along

treacherous roads. There he works on the conveyor, assembling shiny German cars he is unlikely to ever be able to afford to buy himself. Nikita had shaken his head in disbelief when he'd learned that his childhood friend Petr had 'taken the bait'. In Nikita's view, the back-breaking conditions and harsh labour discipline in the plant were hardly worth the marginally better pay—better off to stay in the cement works; better the devil you know, or do a bit of lucrative work in the informal underground economy, with no tax, no commitment and no permanent boss. And, after all, now Petr would have to commute in his Lada and driving would no longer be for pleasure.

Petr had organized a recovery truck to get towed home. He remarks:

Only 2000 roubles for the recovery [\$30 at the time]. Really that's quite cheap. The first one I phoned wanted five thousand. That's when I realized I was out of my depth and needed help so I called Nikita [...] But now I get a decent wage I can afford little misfortunes like that. Not like Nikita and his rust bucket Moskvitch. His 'Qashqai' breaks down all the time. It's a real lemon that he was tricked over. But because of that he knows all the recovery truckers around here.

Petr's talk reveals his interpretation of his 'new life' since joining the car plant in 2011, two years after I first met him. Now he is 'earning', as he puts it, as opposed to drawing a 'survival' wage in the cement works. But this is a matter of debate. Nonetheless, he has been able to build a small buffer of savings for life's 'misfortunes'. Petr is money-minded in a responsible way. He worked hard to pay off a small mortgage on his one-room flat and always tries to buy 'the best' for his young child, born in 2012. Recently he bought the Lada Samara to commute by car instead of taking the (free) works bus—a careful calculation discussed below.

Petr's critical attitude towards friends like Nikita, who maintain rust-bucket 'bangers', is reflected in his ironic mention of Nikita's car as a 'Qashqai'—actually the aforementioned Moskvitch. British-built Nissan Qashqai SUVs are heavily advertised on television in Russia as a status car, indicative of the achievement of social mobility into the (lower) ranks of the new middle class. Petr's ironic joke is a claim to his retaining 'in' status in the group of friends despite simultaneously aspiring to a high status by virtue of his joining the German plant and buying a Samara Lada. Informants use such language play to articulate genuine desires for the material trappings and status associated with ownership of a 'Western' car, as well as a simultaneous suspicion of the motives of an individual with such aspirations

(more liable to ‘get above his station’—somehow less manly: the Qashqai has a reputation as a ‘woman’s’ car).

By contrast, Nikita’s history of car ownership and approach to mobility is strikingly different from Petr’s. For a short time Nikita had owned a Korean-built SUV but had soon sold it on, partly because of the cost of upkeep but also because of the social opprobrium from family, friends and confrères. As his father had said, shaking his head, ‘a foreign car like that is a cap that doesn’t fit him. Why is he trying to be something that he isn’t?’ The Korean SUV seemed perfect at first. I travelled with Nikita as he used it for all kinds of practical purposes. Like ownership of any car, the SUV was inseparable from Nikita’s self-interpretation and interpretation by others as a breadwinner and as a suitable masculine working-class self-resourcing person. This was the ‘prestige’ enjoyed by his father and others in the old days of the USSR when to work at the factory meant you were building socialism for the whole country and looking after your family and doing okay for yourself—you were valued. But now ownership was also a resource that could be leveraged—practical transport—you could make money as an informal delivery or taxi driver. However, quickly it became evident that, unlike Petr’s cautious and parsimonious perspective on car ownership, Nikita’s car marked him out as a miscalculating risk-taker—like a gambler who does not know when to quit, or an impulsive drinker who lacks self-control. After a series of costly repairs, Nikita sold the car on for a loss. This confirmed his father’s prior comment: a ‘cap that doesn’t fit him’.

For those around him, Nikita’s ‘extravagant’, abortive ownership of the SUV mirrored his lack of self-discipline when it came to staying the course in formal work. ‘He’s fine until the first misfortune and then it seems like he can never get over it,’ said one person. ‘His work history is like his car history—he is enthusiastic until it “breaks” and then he gives up and gets another one.’ A friend commented:

Instead of dealing with the conflict he’ll leave. Like with his car. In seven years he’s changed his car many times. You need to look after it. Just like with work. It’s hard and you need to sort out the faults, and instead of changing himself he tries to change his environment.

There are clear parallels here to global processes of self-transformation and improvement as central elements of normative masculinity, now intensified in the contexts of neoliberal production regimes such as that of the

TNC (Walkerdine 2003, in Griffin 2011: 255). By 2014 these criticisms seemed vindicated in the minds of some of Nikita's friends and relatives when he seemed to have completely given up on formal work for informal taxi-driving, but now in a humble and rusty 1990s Lada. However, as indicated above, among those young men in the garage scene, Nikita maintains his masculine working-class status, prestige even. He does not experience the same 'burden' as Petr in 'consuming himself into being' through automobility (Croghan et al. 2006, in Griffin 2011: 255); the question of 'lack' versus 'possession' of appropriately valued working-class youth masculinity is problematized (cf. Griffin 2011: 255). Both men are subordinated but try to claim domination in relation to other men (cf. Coles 2009)—one in 'laddish' resistance, the other in conforming to a plasticized, remade version of the 'good worker provider'. As Walker (2017) notes in a similar context, the resistance of men such as Nikita to neoliberalized versions of working-class masculinity are 'increasingly difficult to uphold [...] as opportunities to dissociate oneself from the mainstream become limited'.

Around the same time as Nikita is leaving dreams of his SUV ownership behind, Petr, his girlfriend, Katya, and I discuss car ownership. Petr had said that to have a car was 'advantageous' or even 'profitable'. What had he meant by this? Katya takes up the theme:

It shows you are more than just another bloke with no prospects around here. Sure it is just transportation, like Petr said, but it shows your own advantage too among others. He's not a man without a car now. When cars really appeared ten years ago I remember how it started to be that cars became associated with higher paid men.

[Petr cut in quickly:]

But that's not really the case now. You don't *have* to have a lot of money to keep up a car if you are willing to learn, use the internet, ask people how to fix it. Look at your car [indicating me]—you took the carburettor apart didn't you? Lada's don't have them anymore and people are losing this skill. Also, there is the flexibility in terms of time, even with a cheap car. Sure I will spend time learning how to keep it up, but that's an investment. And then I can choose to go by works bus or my own transport. It is much more convenient by car. It is a lot easier to get there by car than on the bus—I can leave home later. [...] And] I can save by investing in my own transport.

Here, themes of parsimony, calculation, as well as work- and personhood-related flexibility, are reflected in the meanings of car ownership.

Later, Nikita, Petr and confrères are celebrating the purchase of Nikita's Moskvich banger with a party. If Petr's choices about car ownership mark him as a 'careful', future-orientated worker, willing to defer gratification, Nikita presents quite the opposite, at least in Petr's eyes. We talk at the party about Nikita's first 'outing'—cruising for 50 kilometres or so at night in the Moskvich along rural backroads:

Me: Nikita, you need to be lighter on the gas pedal or the radiator will boil over again.

Nikita: I can't help it. I love her, you know. I'm just so smitten.

Petr: You can't love your car. You'll find out later why. Only now do I understand with time that I am allowed to love my car. You already allowed others to drive her, so she isn't your love. It's like a prostitute. On the other hand if you don't let us, we won't be able to judge her. A woman with experience, you could say.
[*everyone laughs*]

Nikita: I am the second or third owner of my love and that's it. [*all laugh*]

Petr: What are you saying? I am just kidding, I want you to be glad . . . but you haven't understood us . . . We are happy you bought the car, but you are not paying attention to the right thing. I am glad you got a car after all, but you haven't yet really understood what it means to be an owner.

Petr goes on to explain more clearly that ownership of the car entails responsibilities and planning, as well as 'enjoyment'. Behind the male banter comparing ownership and use to promiscuity and cuckolding lies a rather hard criticism by Petr of Nikita: he isn't yet 'man' enough for ownership of such a 'demanding' mistress; after all, on his first outing with me, the radiator had boiled over, provoking further sexually metaphoric joking at his expense. Petr, now speaking less harshly, but perhaps even more pointedly criticizing Nikita's profligacy and lack of circumspection, describes how since Nikita lives with his parents it is less unfortunate that he had been 'tricked' into buying a 'lemon' [*razvaliukha*]¹—a car with many ongoing

and difficult-to-fix faults. It is easy to be spontaneous and give in to one's desires when one is backed up by the bank of mum and dad:

Petr: Spontaneity is always tempered by the brain. You see a car you like, check it out, talk to the owner, come back, talk to your friends—your *friends*; and then you don't make an offer, you ask how much they want. I can't believe you did this without thinking and planning. Don't you admit that in reality you won't really get behind the wheel for three months until you can get your full licence and fix the chassis?

Nikita: Yes, I know. [sheepish and suddenly sobering up]

Petr: But I know you will [drive it illegally] and that will fucking be it when the cops take it away.

Nikita: I can admit more. Maybe I won't even ever drive it. I might not pass the medical.

Petr: Don't give me that crap. You only won't pass it if you don't really want to. A 'father' [of the car] cannot think of his health. He just needs to have the desire and will to do something. Look at Zhenya: he didn't cheat or pay a bribe, even though they wanted him too. He passed his test through hard work and application.

Sure enough, within six months, after finding the repairs too costly to make and despite passing his test, Nikita sold the car on as scrap. This 'waste' of precious resources reinforced the view of Petr that Nikita was unwilling to 'adapt' to economic necessity—to become a new kind of breadwinner in a new kind of working-class reality. Whereas for Nikita, the more instrumental attitude of Petr to cars marked him out in a negative way as part of the 'new' aspirational group of workers who did not value ownership for its own sake.

Nikita: Ok, the lad will have a flat in Kaluga. And a discount or credit on a fancy foreign-style car that will fall apart on our roads. So fucking what? To break his back for the 'new deal' at the plant that they only won after the strikes? Physically that job, despite the shiny foreign plant and showers and clean overalls, is no different from my old one at the Cement. And we have showers too you know.

DISCUSSION

The Russian case shows the need to acknowledge both the constrictions of working-class masculinity after the socialist project—its doubly subaltern positioning—and also the anchoring and solidaristic communities of the former second world that remain; automobile working-class masculinity is a site for the production of ‘small agency’ in the face of the onslaught of neoliberal processes of self-making.

Two visions of vehicular performative masculinity emerge within the social group, the first of which, represented by Petr, is broadly understood as accepting of the neoliberal challenge of working on themselves to become flexible subjects of Russia’s harsh neocapitalist order (cf. Kideckel 2008; Morris 2012). His story represents the transition from work in a Soviet-type labour habitus to ‘making the grade’ in TNC production regimes. Petr’s ‘new’ working-class masculinity is entrepreneurial, striving and progressive. Aspiring to ownership of a Western car goes hand in hand with (and is the reward for) becoming a flexible neoliberal subject, taking on consumer credit, yet also delaying gratification. These dispositions are symbolized by the purchase of a ‘new’ or, more likely, ‘nearly new’ foreign car, often on credit. Yet such cars are associated too with risk, fear and uncertainty; less used for leisure, they are objects of reverence and nurture in a guarded garage block, where men pay ritual homage in cleaning and maintaining them. As Nikita notes, the car drives the man, whereas it should be the other way around.

The second group examined here are those who choose to remain in lower-paid traditional industrial employment or even semilegal informal work, represented by ‘Nikita’. They are wary of the new neoliberal order, seeing it as restrictive of autonomy and presenting an unequal compact. To them the ‘contract’ offered by new work and new cars is ‘unmasculine’—automobility is about the use of cars in the ‘now’ for pleasure regardless of the ‘risk’ of damage. The ‘risk’ to them is ownership on credit of a ‘delicate’ foreign car. Thus they interpret the care for cars by the first group as unbecoming. They compare this kind of car ownership to new production regimes, involving loss of autonomy and control over life (the car controls the owner). They emphasize a more traditional performative masculinity linked to ‘banger’ car culture that revolves around self-reliance, DIY skills and the car as a source of eternally tinkering homosociality. For those who ‘give in’ to calculated self-moulding according to neocapital’s requirements,

the social affordances—the garage, the key spaces and making of automobile masculinity—are lost.

Thus each group's competing versions of subordinate masculinity are linked with either adapting masculine personhood to neoliberalism or not. A particularly classed performance of gender comes to dramatize the response of persons to changes in production regimes and the advent of the neoliberal order more generally. The significance of this case study lies in the need to acknowledge localized yet globally inflected subaltern masculinities and how they intersect with similarly non-Western working-class responses to both neoliberalism and automobile versions of global modernity.

Contemporary Marxian-inspired critiques of neoliberalism often suffer from the separation of the actually existing production-scapes of neoliberalism outside the West, the expansion of the global working class, indeed, the continued salience of working-class identity, and the production of subjectivities generally. Lazzarato (2014: 13) has recently argued that 'machinic enslavement dismantles the individuated subject, consciousness, and representations, acting on both the pre-individual and supra-individual levels'. He is referring less to traditional models of working-class alienation from labour and more to the postmodern condition, where the person cannot escape incorporation into the (increasingly digitalized) quantification and measurement of self. Nonetheless, the arrival of TNCs in Russia presents a significant example of the renewed confrontation of labour and capital, this time in the former-second world, and with it, it offers the opportunity to witness at least one version of the globalization of working-class struggle.

In this chapter's case study, the machinic assemblage of male, worker and automobility is enslaving but nonetheless dynamic and not uncontested. It recombines new subjectivation (not subjectification—see below) in neoliberal work, as worker, as man, and in relation to that arch-symbol of the machine–human interface, the car. Such dynamism is inevitable as the 'production of subjectivity constitutes the most fundamental of capitalist concerns' (Lazzarato 2014: 14). While major aspects of the entwining of neoliberal self-moulding and claims to approved, if subordinate, masculinity are visible in Petr's story, Nikita's performance of gender and class is interpretively problematic. The deindustrializing community of masculine practice that he inhabits is a fraught place; traditional values of what it meant to be a Soviet-era working-class man remain important but are everywhere under threat. The garage is a refuge, but it is immobile and a compressed,

marginalized space of ‘small agency’ (Honkasalo 2009; Morris 2016) and meagre solidarity in the face of a hostile neoliberalizing society.

The social self-organization of working-class men through the shared experience of automobility and the continuing class salience of the compressed social space of the small industrial town sees subaltern masculinity reconstituted as a meta-occupational community of confrères. Just as they are hailed by the neoliberal reconception of the labouring subject, the spaces of masculine automobility also produce alternative responses. Here, retreating into garage spaces, men articulate and perform practices of homosociality and car-dom that articulate, if not enact, alternative forms of personhood to those offered by the TNC. Nikita’s case illustrates Lazzarato’s argument about the need to link the ‘subjective economy with political economy’ (2014: 8) and highlights the potential weakness of capitalism in the production of (masculine, working-class) subjectivity—even as this production of subjectivity is proposed by thinkers as diverse as Foucault and Guattari as the ‘sole contemporary political questions’ and source of capitalism’s power (Lazzarato 2014: 14).

Lazzarato calls for a new cartography of the production of subjectivity, particularly in relation to production-scapes of neoliberalism and what he terms as the ‘machinic enslavement’ of the global assemblage of the self. Elizabeth Dunn argues that these assemblages are part of ‘making legible’ production processes in Eastern Europe as they take on Latourian ‘immutable mobile’ forms inflected by socialist-era contexts of personhood (Dunn 2005; Ong and Collier 2005: 11). This shows the need to take account of agency despite what Lazzarato sees as a process in which the subject is overwhelmed by their structural positioning. In a sense, Lazzarato’s position can be seen as a digital-age continuation of the Althusserian arguments by Willis (2003) on interpellated ‘lads culture’: where subordinate masculinities simultaneously contest and perpetuate the reproduction of capitalist relations as young men learn ‘their place’. However, Lazzarato’s approach is noteworthy as it is more subject focused. ‘Subjectivation refers to the *state of being* a certain collection of identities whereas enslavement refers to the immanent *process of becoming*’ (Slothuus 2014: 82). Given the focus on processes, it may be less appropriate in these contexts to think of hegemonic or dominant forms of masculinity that are ‘competing’ (Clarke and Roberts 2014: 5) for attention. Instead, a plural or unfocalized sense of masculinity may be more appropriate for men in a subaltern position—they have a Hobson’s ‘choice’ as to how to respond to neoliberalism, but it is still a choice that includes rejecting ‘enterprenurial subjectivation’ (Slothuus

2014: 79). Russian men's automobility and 'garage culture' is witness to working-class masculinity as *process*: renegotiated, refracted in a particular way both in relation to and in contrast to Western models. Many Russian men are subject to symbolic violence and unable to 'propertize' working-class masculine identity (cf. Griffin 2011: 255; Skeggs 2004). But this study would also suggest that Skeggs' search for autonomist working-class values is not in vain (2011); automobile worker-masculinity is a project of personhood inexorably bound to, yet revealing the limits of, projects of neoliberal globalization (Connell and Wood 2005).

NOTES

1. Izluchino is a pseudonym. It is not officially a town but an 'urban settlement' (*poselek gorodskogo tipa*), reflecting its connection to rapid industrialization after World War II. Locally, the town is emblematic of a process that occurred throughout the Soviet Union—the proliferation of small and medium-sized towns. By the end of the Soviet period nearly 30 % of Russia's population lived in industrial cities with less than 100,000 inhabitants (Collier 2011: 111).
2. The town, like all informants, is a composite of several industrial spaces in the Kaluga region and is similarly anonymized.
3. I adopt the term 'propertizing' from Skeggs, who uses it to propose the potentiality of autonomist working-class values among women in the UK (1997: 32). Skeggs' more recent work attempts to deal with the difficulty of applying Bourdieusian 'capitals' analysis in contexts where subjects' claim to personhood are delegitimized by virtue of a lack of access to 'dominant symbolic circuits' (2011: 503).

REFERENCES

- Ashwin, S. (2000). Introduction. In S. Ashwin (Ed.), *Gender, state and society in Soviet and post-Soviet Russia* (pp. 1–29). London: Routledge.
- Bengry-Howell, A., & Griffin, C. (2007). Self-made motormen: The material construction of working-class masculine identities through car modification. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 10(4), 439–458.
- Broz, L., & Habeck, J. O. (2015). Siberian automobility boom: From the joy of destination to the joy of driving there. *Mobilities*, 10(4). Online first, no page numbers.
- Burawoy, M. with Lukács, J. (1992). *The radiant past: Ideology and reality in Hungary's road to capitalism*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Cavanagh, J., Southcombe, A., & Bartram, T. (2014). The role of collaborative learning on training and development practices within the Australian men's shed

- movement: A study of five men's sheds. *Journal of Vocational Education & Training*, 66(3), 365–385.
- Clarke, C., & Roberts, A. (2014). Mark Carney and the gendered political economy of British central banking. *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*. Online version no page numbers.
- Coles, T. (2009). Negotiating the field of masculinity: The production and reproduction of multiple dominant masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 12(1), 30–44.
- Collier, S. J. (2011). *Post-Soviet social: Neoliberalism, social modernity, biopolitics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Connell, R. W., & Wood, J. (2005). Globalization and business masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 7, 347–364.
- Croghan, R., Griffin, C., Hunter, J., & Phoenix, A. (2006). Style failure: Consumption, identity and social exclusion. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 9(4), 463–478.
- Dunn, E. C. (2005). Standards and person-making in east central Europe. In A. Ong & S. J. Collier (Eds.), *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems* (pp. 173–193). Oxford: Blackwell.
- Grace, J. (2013). Heroes of the road: Race, gender and the politics of mobility in twentieth century Tanzania. *Africa*, 83, 403–425.
- Griffin, C. (2011). The trouble with class: Researching youth, class and culture beyond the “Birmingham School”. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(3), 245–259.
- Honkasalo, M.-L. (2009). *Grips and ties—Agency, uncertainty, and the problem of suffering in North Karelia*. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 23, 51–69.
- Kay, R. (2006). *Men in contemporary Russia: The fallen heroes of post-Soviet change?* Burlington/Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Kideckel, D. A. (2002). The unmaking of an east-central European working-class. In C. Hann (Ed.), *Postsocialism: Ideals, ideologies and practices in Eurasia* (pp. 114–132). London: Routledge.
- Kideckel, D. A. (2004). Miners and wives in Romania's Jiu Valley: Perspectives on postsocialist class, gender, and social change. *Identities*, 11, 39–63.
- Kideckel, D. A. (2008). *Getting by in postsocialist Romania: Labor the body and working-class culture*. Bloomington/Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Kononenko, R. (2011). *Avtomobil'nost' v Rossii* [Automobility in Russia]. Moscow: Variant TsSPGI.
- Lazzarato, M. (2014). *Signs and machines: Capitalism and the production of subjectivity*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) (MIT Press).
- Lumsden, K. (2010). Gendered performances in a male-dominated subculture: ‘Girl racers’, car modification and the quest for masculinity. *Sociological Research Online*, 15(3), 6. <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/15/3/6.html>>.
- Morris, J. (2012). Unruly entrepreneurs: Russian worker responses to insecure formal employment. *Global Labour Journal*, 3(2), 217–236.

- Morris, J. (2016). *Everyday post-socialism: Working-class communities in the Russian margins*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Notar, B. E. (2012). 'Coming out' to 'hit the road': Temporal, spatial and affective mobilities of taxi drivers and day trippers in Kunming, China. *City and Society*, 24, 281–301.
- Ong, A., & Collier, S. J. (2005). Global assemblages, anthropological problems. In A. Ong & S. J. Collier (Eds.), *Global assemblages: Technology, politics, and ethics as anthropological problems* (pp. 3–22). Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Ost, D. (2000). Illusory corporatism in Eastern Europe: Neoliberal tripartism and postcommunist class identities. *Politics & Society*, 28, 503–530.
- Ries, N. (1997). *Russian talk: Culture and conversation during perestroika*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Siegelbaum, L. (2008). *Cars for comrades: The life of the Soviet automobile*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Siegelbaum, L. (2011). Introduction. In L. H. Siegelbaum (Ed.), *The socialist car: Automobility in the Eastern Bloc* (pp. 1–16). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class and gender*. London: Sage.
- Skeggs, B. (2004). *Class, self, culture*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Skeggs, B. (2011). Imagining personhood differently: Person value and autonomist working-class practices. *The Sociological Review*, 59(3), 496–513.
- Slothuus, L. (2014). Review: Signs and machines: Capitalism and the production of subjectivity by Maurizio Lazzarato. *Studies in Social and Political Thought*, 24, 79–83.
- Stenning, A. (2005). Where is the post-socialist working-class? Working-class lives in the spaces of post-socialism. *Sociology*, 39(5), 983–999.
- Stuckler, D., King, L., & McKee, M. (2009). Mass privatization and the post-communist mortality crisis: A cross-national analysis. *The Lancet*, 373(9661), 399–407.
- Trumper, R., & Tomic, P. (2009). The Chilean way to modernity: Private road, fast cars, neoliberal bodies. In A. T. McLaren & J. Conley (Eds.), *Car troubles: Critical studies of automobility and auto-mobility* (pp. 165–180). Farnham: Ashgate.
- van Eeden, J. (2012). Picturing the road: Automobility in selected South African postcards. *Communicatio: South African Journal for Communication Theory and Research*, 38, 84–102.
- Vanke, A. (2014). The corporeality of working-class men in labor regimes and the private sphere. *Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research*, 6(1), 60–83.
- Walker, C. (2009). From 'inheritance' to individualization: Disembedding working-class youth transitions in post-Soviet Russia. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 12(5), 531–545.

- Walker, C. (2014). "I don't really like tedious, monotonous work": Working-class young women, service sector employment and social mobility in contemporary Russia. *Sociology*, 49(1), 106–122.
- Walker, C. (2017). 'I just don't want to connect my life with this occupation': Working-class young men, manual labour, and social mobility in contemporary Russia. *The British Journal of Sociology*. doi:[10.1111/1468-4446.12299](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12299).
- Walkerdine, V. (2003). Reclassifying upward mobility: Femininity and the neoliberal subject. *Gender and Education*, 15(3), 237–248.
- Walkerdine, V. (2010). Communal beingness and affect: An exploration of trauma in an ex-industrial community. *Body & Society*, 16(1), 91–116.
- Willis, P. (2003 [1977]). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Yaroshenko, S., Omel'chenko, E., Goncharova, N., & Issouпова, O. (2006). Gender differences in employment behaviour in Russia's new labour market. In S. Ashwin (Ed.), *Adapting to Russia's new labour market: Gender and employment behaviour*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Zdravomyslova, E., & Temkina, A. (2002). Krizis maskulinnosti v pozdnesovetskom diskurse. In S. Oushakine (Ed.), *O muzhe(N)stvennosti: Sbornik statei* (pp. 432–451). Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie: Moscow.

Masculinities, Bodies and Subjectivities: Working-Class Men Negotiating Russia's Post- Soviet Gender Order

Alexandrina Vanke

In union, there is strength.
Aesop

INTRODUCTION

The collapse of the Soviet Union led to political and economic transformations in Russian society that changed its social structure significantly. During the period of transition, some social classes and groups, which had been sustained by the state and respected in Soviet times, were devalued and downshifted. Working-class people, especially men, experienced this downgrade in the greatest measure. In the Soviet Union they had relatively high living standards thanks to welfare and social protection, including social benefits, free medical services, access to education and public housing. To some extent, this allowed working-class men to perform normative masculinity, which, on the one hand, manifested itself in masculine domination, physical strength, commitment to

A. Vanke (✉)

Department of Sociology, State Academic University for the Humanities,
Moscow, Russia

© The Author(s) 2018

C. Walker, S. Roberts (eds.), *Masculinity, Labour, and Neoliberalism*,
Global Masculinities, DOI 10.1007/978-3-319-63172-1_9

195

labour and traditional values. On the other hand, the masculinity of Soviet workers was connected to a lack of initiative and civic virtues, passivity and pessimism, which were produced by institutions of the socialist system (Makovicky 2014).

The post-Soviet gender order reflects Russia's new liberal economic and political ideologies, which have brought new forms of governmentality (Foucault 2010), but these have appeared against the background of Soviet structural elements based on the values engendered by the command economy. The Soviet gender order was organized around hegemonic masculinity expressed in images of Stalin as the father of nations, of heroic soldiers winning the Great Patriotic War, and of the shock workers of communist labour. However, after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the new masculine images of businessmen and entrepreneurs became more and more popular (Rotkirch 2000: 249–50). In this period a new gender order began to generate new strategies of creating masculine subjects, which were differentiated by successfulness in a variety of different fields, including economic, political and even sexual. At the same time, the unstable situation in the labour market in the 1990s, which brought a sharp reduction in workers' incomes and rise in unemployment and underemployment, undermined working-class men's self-confidence (Kay 2006). They could hardly ever sustain normative masculinity in these new circumstances.

Neoliberal reforms introduced by the Russian government from the early 2000s resulted in an intensification in competitive struggle between working-class men and men of other professions (see Vanke and Tartakovskaya 2016). In the new rat race, working-class men have become characterized as 'losers', incapable of reinventing themselves for the new capitalist economy (Walker 2017), although in reality disadvantaged by macrostructural causes rooted in national and transnational features of pervasive neoliberalization. According to Jeff Hearn, neoliberalism generates a new transnational politics of life as well as hegemonic masculinities and patriarchies, which are reproduced by men of the transnational governmental class (Hearn 2015: 67, 129) and which intensify class, gender, age and other inequalities, thus polarizing social structures. Loïc Wacquant expresses the same idea, arguing that "neoliberalism is a transnational political project aiming to remake the nexus of market, state, and citizenship from above. This project is carried out by a new global ruling class..."

(2010: 213). Neoliberalism thus underpins local nationalisms, reflecting the efforts of different elites to succeed (Schreiner 2013: 45; Harvey 2005: 85), the neoliberal state stimulating competition (Davis 2014) and producing “ephemeral winners and losers in the global struggle for position” (Harvey 2005: 85). As Nicolette Makovicky writes, interpreting David Harvey’s approach, “neoliberalism can be seen as a regime of ‘accumulation by dispossession’ ” (Harvey 2005: 159), and its effects are manifested in the dominance of capital over labour (Makovicky 2014). This dynamic is best expressed by Pierre Bourdieu, who argues that

The neoliberal programme draws its social power from the political and economic power of those whose interests it expresses: stockholders, financial operators, industrialists, conservative or social-democratic politicians who have been converted to the reassuring layoffs of *laissez-faire*, high-level financial officials eager to impose policies advocating their own extinction because, unlike the managers of firms, they run no risk of having eventually to pay the consequences. (Bourdieu 1998)

If this occurs, working-class people, grassroots labour movements and independent trade unions are viewed in the neoliberal order as needless and even obstructive elements (Walker 2012: 523), preventing the mobility of global and local capitals.

However, in post-Soviet Russia the neoliberal regime has co-existed alongside Soviet forms of policy and governance. Soviet governmentality referred to the maintenance of the political regime with the help of ideological categories—ideologemes—such as ‘the new man’, ‘the Soviet person’, ‘qualified labour power’ and ‘the working class’ (Guseinov 2003: 19). Similarly, since 2010, the Russian authorities have returned to some Soviet discursive strategies and begun actively to represent male workers as national heroes in public speeches. For example, Vladimir Putin referred to workers as ‘the backbone’ of the Russian economy (Putin 2012), while Dmitry Medvedev has stated that Russia’s modernization would be impossible without qualified workers (Medvedev 2010). Not surprisingly, use of this discursive strategy has been highly instrumental, acting to stabilize the political situation during, for example, the mass civic protests against election fraud in 2011–2012 and the economic crisis at the end of 2014.

Thus considerable changes in social, political and economic spheres in the period of transition at the end of the twentieth century, and the establishment of the neoliberal regime and new governmentality at the

beginning of the twenty-first century, opened up the opportunity for transforming and constituting various types of masculine subjectivities in the Russian gender order. Following Michel Foucault (2004: 311), I understand masculine subjectivity as a set of body-discursive practices, helping to constitute the masculine subject through techniques of care of the self and the body, which acts at work and at rest (Connell 1996: 84). These practices are oriented to self-transformation, self-invention (Walker 2015: 109), and the creation and enactment of the self as a man (Foucault 1986: 58–60). According to Raewyn Connell, masculine subjectivities are multiple (1995) and organized hierarchically, with hegemonic masculinity occupying the top position, justifying the domination of men over women and representing the normative patterns of gender attitudes and practices (1996: 37). The concept of normative masculinity referring to the collective norms of masculine behaviour is deemed fruitful in the analysis of masculine subjectivities among working-class men in contemporary Russia, insofar as it can reveal the widely shared beliefs about what a ‘true man’ should do or be. As Irina Kosterina argues, normalization is an integral part of conservative masculinity, while a variation from the norm is a trait of the modernist masculine project (Kosterina 2013: 20, 22). Norms are constantly negotiated, culturally conditioned and vary from one society to another, for which reason it is difficult to say exactly what components normative masculinity contains (Vorontsov 2015). In addition, the concept of normative masculinity is used by some scholars within the meaning of hegemonic masculinity, implying that a dominating group of men imposes their beliefs, patterns, meanings and so on as a normative mode (see Chernova 2002: 528–29). I also draw special attention to the masculine corporeality of workers and their bodily capital, meaning their accumulated physical labour, which activates social energy and is used for the acquisition of profit (Wacquant 1995: 66). I take as a starting point that the concept of masculine corporeality helps to trace a connection between the neoliberal regime of governmentality and masculine subjectivity through the aspect of the body, and that neoliberal values and ideologies regulate the bodily-mental schemes of workers through power and biopower techniques (Foucault 1995; Wacquant 2010: 205, 210).

In the chapter, I aim to reconstruct the masculine subjectivities of working-class men in early twenty-first-century Russia. These subjectivities are being created through bodily-mental subjection at work as well as through care of the body and the self in private life in the contemporary gender order and labour regimes, which themselves contain both Soviet and

neoliberal elements of governmentality. The chapter is based on 27 in-depth biographical interviews with working-class men conducted during two related research projects. The first of these took place between 2010 and 2013 in Moscow and St. Petersburg and aimed to examine the masculine corporeality of male workers aged 20–50. The second was carried out in 2015 in Nizhny Tagil as part of a wider project on intergenerational social mobility and it contained biographical interviews with respondents of two generations, the first aged 25–30 and the second 45–50.¹

MASCULINE BODIES OF WORKERS IN THE NEOLIBERAL LABOUR REGIME

Nowadays in the Russian industrial sector, old, Soviet-era factories co-exist with foreign-owned enterprises that were established in the 1990s and 2000s. These two types of enterprise have different business and labour cultures. Their directors use different techniques of regulation, which correspond to Soviet and neoliberal types of governmentality, respectively. On the one hand, some Soviet factories have experienced significant decline, manifested in, for example, staff cuts, reductions in salaries and working time, and the obsolescence of capital equipment, and reflecting an inability to restructure their activities in the new market context. On the other hand, some Soviet factories have received significant support from the state and, in turn, support the authorities. A good example of this is Uralvagonzavod (Ural Coach Factory), a state unitary enterprise in Nizhny Tagil in Sverdlovskaya oblast' launched in 1936 to produce tanks and metallurgical products. The state holds 100 % of the company's shares, and in Russian broadsheet newspapers and on central television stations, the workers in this enterprise have been depicted as a pillar of stability (see Vanke and Kulaev 2015). However, against the background of economic crisis in 2014, the salaries of workers at the enterprise were dramatically cut, undermining both their material and their social position, while the mass media continued to depict the factory as a successful industrial complex. In spite of this, workers at Uralvagonzavod have continued to be loyal to the authorities and to express their commitment to the country, but they have also experienced social insecurity and, understandably, they feel a sense of social injustice: "Of course, it is very hard with this crisis at the factory . . . I am offended for my country . . . for the people who toil and toil but cannot live a

normal life” (driver, 46, Ural Coach Factory, 4 November 2015, Nizhny Tagil).

In the meantime, new foreign enterprises (automobile, chemical and others), launched in the 1990s, function according to neoliberal rules, and use neoliberal techniques of managing workers and generating profit, including the need to overcome obstacles presented by the state and independent trade unions. In this part of the chapter I focus on the managerial strategies of foreign-owned factories in Russia, and show how the masculine corporeality and bodily capital of working-class men are produced and alienated in the labour regimes of such factories. Among my respondents were six working-class men aged 30–35 who were resident in St. Petersburg and had experience of working in a range of foreign-owned enterprises, both in the city and the wider Leningradskaya oblast’, such as Nissan, Nokian Tyres, Shin Young Rus, Hyundai, Ford, Tikkurila and Pepsi-Cola. In addition to these I draw on interviews with young workers from the private enterprise EVRAZ in Nizhny Tagil, which illustrate the effects of neoliberal governmentality in enterprises in the Russian regions. I reconstruct the neoliberal labour regime of an enterprise based on respondents’ interviews, videos and photographs.

The neoliberal labour regime should be seen in several dimensions. First, it functions on the level of discourses with a particular type of argumentation (Boltanski and Chiapello 2005), which transmit values of pure market relations, the intensification of competition between enterprises within the country and beyond, as well as competition between workers inside the enterprise. Concomitantly there is a lack of social protection and guarantees, leading to a destabilization of workers’ social positions and a sense of insecurity: “it is true that a worker is unprotected. There are no guarantees. In other words, you could be screwed, put down, thrown out” (loader operator, 30, Shin Young Rus, 4 November 2010, St. Petersburg). In addition, respondents often talked about the different working conditions experienced by blue-collar and white-collar workers in the same enterprise:

We have 900 people working in production, and probably 350-400 people—I don’t know exactly how many there are—in the office. They [office workers] will definitely not join the trade union. Because when you go upstairs from the enterprise to the office, there it’s calm, graceful, nice . . . (rubber compounder, 25, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

Thus, as Wacquant argues, there is an intensification of social differentiation between types of worker and the marginalization of precarious factions of the working-class (Wacquant 2010: 198). Such developments contradict the values of solidarity, unity and mutual support of employees from the same enterprise. In addition, reflecting the position of trade unions within neoliberal discourse as a useless and harmful element in the value chain, companies were reported to be actively suppressing grassroots initiatives among employees, as suggested by a young worker from Nokian:

We are not allowed to be engaged in trade union activity. The managers are always pressing us. They say: ‘You do not have rights.’ (rubber compounder, 25, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

In order to resist this pressure, working-class men need to gain knowledge of their legal rights in relation to collective action, and the organizational skills to become engaged in such action.

Second, the neoliberal labour regime functions as a system of norms determining both practices and models of management (Dardot and Laval 2010: 35). This means at least that the enterprise with neoliberal strategies of governance aims to reach maximum efficiency and to capture the full benefits from workers’ bodily capital and labour (Wacquant 1995: 70). These goals are achieved with the help of biopower techniques through the management of workers’ bodily and mental conditions, both on the individual and collective levels of being. Let us first look at such techniques in the Soviet example. In archetypal constructions of working-class masculinity, the bodily capital of working-class men contains several dimensions, such as physical strength, constitution, health conditions, working efficiency, craft, skills and practical knowledge inscribed in the masculine body (Keller and Meuser 2011). In the Soviet regime the project of working-class masculinity was based on some of these parameters—for example, physical skills and qualifications—which helped men in working-class occupations to sustain normative masculine patterns though their corporeality. The following quotation from an interview with a worker in a Soviet-type enterprise illustrates the ‘intrinsic traits’ of a ‘real man’, represented through elements of bodily capital:

I like working with my hands . . . I like doing something with my hands. I can do everything with my hands . . . A man [muzhik] must . . . know how to work

... I mean, he must be able to do things and know how to do things. (driver, 46, Ural Coach Factory, 4 November 2015, Nizhny Tagil)

The Russian verb *umet'*, to 'know how to do', gives us the word *umelets*, which refers to someone who has the know-how to perform a range of (usually practical) tasks, and is a badge of pride for many working-class men both at home and at work. In the factory context, such men have traditionally been valued assets because Soviet governmentality necessarily functioned in a more 'gentle' way owing to the inconsistency of working patterns, with state orders and often failing capital equipment making work in many enterprises intermittent and disorganized. In addition, in Soviet times, such enterprises bore social responsibility for workers and even for inhabitants of industrial neighbourhoods where they were located (Danshina and Soloyova 2015: 67, 71). This social responsibility of enterprises forced and underpinned by the state manifested itself in the advancement of the living standards of workers and the care of their needs, including disability benefits, health insurance and housing improvements (ibid.).

In contrast to the Soviet labour regime, its neoliberal counterpart tends to regulate workers' bodily capital more harshly in order to increase productivity and maximize profits and efficiency. This labour system orders workers' bodily actions and movements through production turnarounds. It divides up labour practices and, in turn, creates a 'biomass' of individual masculine bodies, as indicated by one respondent: "at work ... we are just a brain dead biomass..." (general mechanic, 33, Nissan, 19 April 2011, St. Petersburg). The 'biomass' as an 'unintelligent' collective refers to Foucault's notion of biopower, the practice of transforming, regulating and controlling a given population through techniques of subjection (Foucault 1978: 140), in this case a population of employees. Thus neoliberal governmentality penetrates workers' bodies and minds by alienating bodily capitals in order to maximize economic profits in correspondence with market demands, while Soviet governmentality exploits or co-opts the corporeality of working-class men by orienting them towards state demands and support of the political regime.

In the neoliberal labour regime the bodies of working-class men are automatized; they merge with machines, while body work (Wacquant 1995: 73) is also instrumentalized in the process of production. At this level, workers frequently work overtime to earn more money, in correspondence with neoliberal ideas of efficiency (Dardot and Laval 2010). In doing

so they exhaust their bodily capital along with their mental health. The body of a worker does not belong to him anymore. Indeed, overtime work by employees allows employers further to win and take advantage of them. In such a labour regime the masculine body ages and wears out fast. Following Wacquant (1995: 83), I call this process bodily deterioration and erosion of bodily capital. Working-class men suffer industrial injuries and even experience sexual disorders because of the stresses they undergo at work. In answer to the question ‘What happens to the body at work?’, a young welder from Nissan answered simply: ‘It is dying’ (welder, 27, Nissan, 4 January 2011, St. Petersburg). This means that in the labour regime of neoliberal enterprise, the body of a working-class man is being exhausted by labour-intensive practices, adverse working conditions and neoliberal techniques of control. An interview with a 31-year-old conveyor operator from a Nokian Tyres plant provides a further example of corporeal exploitation aimed at the increase in efficiency:

There are harsh working conditions and an unwillingness [of top management] to admit health hazards at the plant, there’s no compensation and salary . . . There are some people who were ready to drop at work because they had to work constantly . . . A 22-year-old man worked 12 hours a day every day. He was dead on his feet at work and taken away by an emergency ambulance. He had something like a micro stroke. (conveyor operator, 31, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

As Alexander Bikbov (2011) argues, increasing the number of working days and reducing rest periods, both of which lead to overloads and health problems for workers, are among the new techniques of labour force regulation that are an integral part of Russian and other neoliberal politics (Bikbov 2011).

Countermeasures against the erosion of bodily capital include the exercise of self-care techniques (Foucault 1986: 43; Wacquant 1995: 86) and investment of various resources—time, intellectual and financial—in the masculine body and health. According to Foucault, “taking care of oneself is not a rest cure. There is the care of the body to consider, health regiments, physical exercises without overexertion, the carefully measured satisfaction of needs” (Foucault 1986: 51). These practices help to constitute the masculine subjectivity in neoliberal regimes through the protection of bodily capital and cultivation of the self.

As I have shown elsewhere (Vanke 2014), working-class men are distinct, even if they work in the same enterprise. In that regard, my respondents demonstrate various strategies in relation to their masculine bodies and health: cautious, destructive and mixed types of behaviour. In the interviews they talked about their desire to take care of themselves, ‘to keep in good shape’ and ‘to be good-looking’. These practices refer to neoliberal patterns of investment in the body and cultivation of the self, which are not usually associated with Russian working-class men. For example, most of my respondents pay attention to their nutrition and keep to a diet because they believe that healthy eating habits can minimize the harmful impact of their menial working conditions (see also Vanke 2014: 157). Paradoxically, on the one hand, neoliberal governmentality destroys the bodies, minds and health of workers by overloading them, but, on the other hand, it prompts male workers to take care of themselves in order to maximize the profit from their bodily capital. In contrast, Soviet governmentality, represented today by Russian national industry, does not imply strict discipline or provide medical cover. There are fewer worries about the prevention of accidents at such factories in comparison with foreign-owned enterprises in Russia:

Well, at a Russian enterprise, say you can go without a safety helmet. Then a brick falls on you. Well, it’s your problem. Nobody’s going to make you wear a helmet. But if you’re not wearing a safety helmet in a European factory, you’ll get disciplined. They’ll cut your bonus. You’re forced to take an interest in following the rules. (loader operator, 30, Shin Young Rus, 4 November 2010, St. Petersburg)

However, in general, Russian working-class men often demonstrate a combination of cautious and destructive bodily practices. They can mix healthy diet with smoking and alcohol abuse, or combine worries about being overweight with disregarding occupational safety.

MASCULINE SUBJECTIVITIES OF WORKERS IN POST-SOVIET GENDER ORDER

In this section I define the shape of working-class masculinities in the current Russian gender order, which combines Soviet and post-Soviet gender patterns. Raewyn Connell understands a gender order as “the current state of play in ... macro-politics [of gender]” (Connell 1996:

139). According to her, a gender order produces the categories of ‘masculinity’ and ‘femininity’ through power relations and creates relationships between gender regimes in society (Connell 1996: 135, 137). Using her approach, I argue that the contemporary gender order in Russia is at once reproductive and contradictory, containing both traditional and novel elements. Zdravomyslova and Temkina (2007) describe the Soviet gender order as patriarchal and etocratic,² organized around the concept of hegemonic masculinity and represented by state paternalism and militarism (see also Vanke and Tartakovskaya 2016: 140). During the post-Soviet period, a number of patterns that were typical of the Soviet gender order have proved highly stable, such as the expectation on women to combine employment and motherhood, the transmission of traditional family values, and the normative performance of traditional gender roles across a variety of spheres (Tartakovskaya 2012). At the same time, the current gender order is characterized by less state control over private life, the absence of a singular ideological frame, and more liberal freedoms, as well as by the dominating presence of men in the public domain and the inegalitarian organization of domestic labour (Tartakovskaya 2012). The post-Soviet gender order has also generated a new normative model of hegemonic masculinity, expressed, for example, in the image of a successful, independent and active businessman who has plentiful resources of economic, social, symbolic, bodily and other capitals. This model is hardly ever achieved in practice but constitutes a new vision of masculine success in Russia (Zdravomyslova and Temkina 2012; Walker 2017).

As this latter point suggests, the post-Soviet gender order is not only embedded into a local context of social, economic and political transformations but also experiences the effects of globalization, transnationalization and neoliberalization (Hearn 2015: 68). That is to say, new transnational hegemonic masculinities penetrate the post-Soviet gender order, against which working-class masculinities hold inferior positions both in Russia and beyond. Against the background of decreased social welfare and increased inequality in the labour market, male Russian workers have to choose between the performance of old masculine subjectivities and inventing new ones under conditions of intensive competition between men of different social classes that leads to the production of ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ masculine subjects. Thus, on the basis of the results of my research, I argue that the masculine subjectivity of working-class men could be expressed in two distinct ways, defining both old, Soviet and new, neoliberal masculinities embedded in the post-Soviet Russian gender order.

Classic Masculine Subjectivity

The reproduction of old, classic masculinity was typical for working-class men who grew up in the Soviet Union and were over 40 years old at the time of the interview. This type reconstitutes masculine patterns of the Soviet gender order and forces men to incorporate themselves into the new social reality. Old masculine subjectivity is the result of a pact with the authorities: silent obedience to the neoliberal and political status quo in exchange for a certain level of security, albeit very minimal. However, this results in an alienation from work, industrial injuries, and more stringent regulations on the body and the mind of workers:

There is ... even an illness. I don't remember how it is called ... When you work with a rock-drill for a long period of time, ... even your bones are aching ... It is a hard job. When you work a lot, you can hurt yourself. (shaft man, 46, construction site, 5 February 2011, Moscow)

Political passivity and loyalty to the employer thus lead to a situation in which working-class men have to pay a heavy price for their illusive 'stability' and the reproduction of traditional masculinity.

Workers adopting a classic masculine subjectivity try to correspond to the hegemonic normativity heavily imposed by the Russian mass media and consumer society. This hegemonic pattern includes playing the roles of earner, breadwinner, and defender of the family and the nation:

Of course, the man must be a head of a family. He must be ... a breadwinner, loving ... Well, he must love his children and wife. Well, he must be a defender. That's all. (shaft man, 46, construction site, 5 February 2011, Moscow)

However, as both Kay (2006) and Walker (2017) argue, in most cases it is impossible to perform classic masculine roles absolutely because of the unstable economic and symbolic positions that working-class men hold within Russian society. Anxieties about the downgrading of their social status compared with what they had in the Soviet period undermine workers' masculinity and make them vulnerable and unconfident, which is exacerbated by worries about the ageing masculine body:

Certainly, as a young man you slammed a fist [on the table] and your wife did everything for you. But now you don't put your foot down. Where are you

going to go? Who needs you [turning to another worker]? ... Who needs me? Look, I'm bald already. (foreman, about 50, construction site, Moscow, 12 February 2011)

Indeed, workers in this position frequently mentioned in interviews that their wives had equal rights with them, or dominated, in family relations, which is contrary to hegemonic normativity, and can be explained to some extent by Russian women's high level of education and independence (Tartakovskaya 2012). A middle-aged crane hoist operator based in Moscow gives an example of an egalitarian family relationship and an equal distribution of power between a husband and a wife:

Well, for some reason, and not only in my case but in all cases, wives dominate. Once I had a go—tried to put her in her place. It ended with her having a nervous breakdown. Since then I haven't bothered. . . (crane hoist operator, 54, construction site, Moscow, 12 February 2011)

At the same time, female 'domination' usually operates within the private sphere and is mostly connected to the running of the household and bringing up of children rather than breadwinning.

Workers who aim to create classic masculinity try subjectively to compensate for the masculine vulnerability caused by their unstable social status (Walker 2016) with the help of their corporeal parameters, including physical strength, sexual potential, health and courageous behaviour. This returns us to the Soviet model of a man corresponding with the image of an industrial worker, who was expected to be strong, respectable, and to hold a prestigious position (Kay 2006: 73–5). According to research conducted by Meuser and Behnke (1999: 65–6; Meuser 2010) in Germany, working-class men over 40 demonstrate a pragmatic attitude to masculinity and femininity, and they use their physical strength to sustain habitual certainty, building egalitarian relationships with their wives. In Russia, to create classic gender identity, male workers mostly use skills, abilities, personal characteristics and corporeality (Mescherkina 2002: 284), the worker's body really becoming a resource for the reproduction of masculine subjectivity and allowing, insofar as it possible, a recovery of masculine self-confidence. For example, one of my respondents focused on the masculine body and its parameters in describing a 'real man':

He must have a chiseled chest, broad shoulders. What does a bloke [muzhik] need? And strong hands. (crane hoist operator, 54, construction site, 12 February 2011, Moscow)

In research on the reconstruction of masculine identity in Russia, Elena Meshcherkina (2002: 287) finds that working-class men brought up in the Soviet period are rational, pragmatic and less patriarchal in their approach to gendered divisions of labour in their own lives, and they experience much less gender uncertainty in comparison with middle-class men in situations where their wives earn more than them (Meshcherkina 2002: 283).

While, as noted above, the men in the current research were certainly happy to play a supporting role in the home, the pragmatism that Meshcherkina finds in relation to breadwinning was largely unnecessary, as respondents were in most cases able to continue to represent themselves as ‘providers’, albeit not without significant efforts. During the period of transition they tried everything in their power to find better-paying jobs, even migrating to other cities or changing occupation in order to support their families:

I began to work here [in Moscow] on rotation. What forced me to come here? We educated our eldest daughter. Then, when the bad times started [after 1991], I began to earn ... how much? No more than three, four thousand rubles [USD80–USD100]. There was no money ... We needed to educate our [younger] child, and she is my smart girl ... I put my own education on the back burner. ... and retrained as a crane hoist operator I have been working here for five years to educate her ... (crane hoist operator, 54, construction site, 12 February 2011, Moscow)

Thus, unlike middle-aged working-class men in a number of other studies, who have been ‘defeated’ by the economic dislocations of the post-Soviet period (Zaridze et al. 2014; Pautova and Pautov 2015: 68), men in the present study were able to respond to the downward social mobility they had experienced by adapting to their new circumstances, thereby maintaining the roles expected of them within their family and, in turn, their masculine self-confidence.

New Masculine Subjectivity

A different kind of masculine subjectivity was typical of young working-class men who were born in the decline of the Soviet Union or after its collapse and were between 20 and 35 years old by the time of the research. Most of my respondents from this age group worked in foreign-owned factories and demonstrated various strategies of cultivating masculine subjectivity through social, bodily, sexual, mental and discursive practices, which were exercised in correspondence with processes of neoliberalization and the spread of transnational masculinities in the post-Soviet space. For example, young working-class men with this new masculine subjectivity tended to invest economic and intellectual resources in their appearance and personal development. Some of them engaged in a variety of practices surrounding care of the self, including the performance of ‘new age’ practices such as listening to mantras and reading self-help literature on how to earn their first million. Alongside this, during interviews, younger workers spoke more about their sex lives and sexual pleasure compared with old workers, who tended to avoid answering questions on this topic.

The new masculine subjectivity of young working-class men was cultivated with the help of intensive forms of consumption that might more readily be associated with other social classes and socioprofessional environments, and as such were indicative of a sense of upward social mobility among the respondents, or at least a desire for it. For example, one young worker who was the leader of his trade union rode a ‘chopper’ motorcycle and wore an expensive leather biker jacket and spiked gloves; a young worker from a chemical enterprise had embraced an outward-bound lifestyle, engaging in a range of outdoor pursuits including canoeing, snowboarding, alpine skiing, climbing and cycling (see also Vanke 2014). Needless to say, the maintenance of both of these lifestyles required significant financial investment. Furthermore, I observed these consuming practices not only in Moscow and St. Petersburg but also among working-class men in regional Russian cities. For instance, a 27-year-old crane operator from Nizhny Tagil similarly informed me about his love of extreme sports such as rock-climbing, and that he had recently used credit—something many older workers would balk at—to buy both a car and a single-bedroom flat, notably in a ‘good district’. Again, a desire for social mobility loomed large, in this case both materially and symbolically, but in all such cases, young working-class men emphasized that it all costs money (*stoit deneg*), and in doing so they recognized and drew attention to their often

limited resources compared with the more affluent social groups whose lifestyles they were aspiring to (see also Tartakovskaya and Vanke 2016).

While the pursuit of high-status lifestyles through consumption made younger workers appear entirely accepting of new forms of neoliberal subjectivity, paradoxically, they also opposed neoliberal reforms in the labour arena, as evidenced by their involvement in trade union and strike activity, which demanded wage increases and improvements in working conditions. Such men attempted to emulate a heroic, romanticized and freedom-loving image of man who is an active fighter for social justice and equality. One respondent working at the Nissan car plant in St. Petersburg represents this new romanticized image rather well, speaking about the necessity of trade unions for the establishment of a healthy work-life balance:

Nowadays, even at Nissan, there are these young lads who've never heard about trade unions and the idea that you can actually increase your wages without losing your free time [by working overtime], which is given by law for relaxation, self-improvement, educating yourself. It's possible [instead] to spend this time with your loved ones. For that to happen, you need to be doing overtime only if it's to work to defend our rights. (conveyor operator, 31, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

As a rule, this masculine image is heterosexual and includes some elements of archetypal forms of hegemonic masculinity with regard to strength, proactivity and heroism. However, it differs from the normative model, balancing between strength, hypersexuality, homophobia (Vorontsov 2015) and political loyalty to the state insofar as it builds on defending the social rights of workers and participating in political protests. At the same time, young working-class men tend to build egalitarian and romantic emotional relationships with wives or girlfriends, which allow them to cultivate a different kind of masculine subjectivity in the private sphere. Notions of gender egalitarianism were expressed through principles of the equal distribution of power and absence of a head of the family, as well as in mutual support and trust:

There must not be a head [in a family]. If someone is a head, sooner or later a relationship will end ... neither the woman as a person, nor the man as a conqueror will like to be defeated. There should be absolutely equality. (conveyor operator, 31, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg).

[There must be] equality and trust [in a relationship] ... and mutual support from both sides ... (crane driver, 28, EVRAZ Nizhny Tagil Metallurgical Plant, Nizhny Tagil, 28 October 2015)

This orientation to equal gender relations distinguished young working-class men from male workers of the older generation. At the same time, in the first quote the distinction between the gender roles of ‘a person’ and ‘a conqueror’ within the context of what is described as ‘absolute equality’ shows the complexity and ambivalence of the gender relations he is involved in, where apparently progressive views can be expressed through traditionalist terminology. Similarly, while talking about the necessity of both giving and receiving emotional support and care, such commitments to equality may have stemmed from the problems these young men experienced in constructing their gender identity and living up to notions (and women’s expectations) of masculine success in the context of their inconsistent social status.

In reality, some of the younger men in the research experienced difficulties in building emotional, sexual and family relationships because of the harsh labour regimes they were subjected to at work. As well as feeling simply incapable of starting a family life because of the restrictions and physical exertions they experienced, they often had low self-esteem, perceiving themselves as unsuccessful and unattractive in the intensely competitive labour and marriage markets:

Sexually—yes, it’s really sad ... [I have problems] precisely because of the rhythm [the amount and nature] of my work ... And why would I bother [with a relationship], if I know that in the end it’ll all break off, and then everyone’s unhappy? (welder, 27, Nissan, 4 January 2011, St. Petersburg).

Such working hours do not allow for the creation a family. (general mechanic, 33, Nissan, 19 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

While some respondents, such as the former, passively accepted the logic of neoliberalism, partially blaming themselves for their failures, others, such as the latter, tried to resist the object of their criticism by engaging in trade union activity.

As mentioned above, neoliberal governmentality is aimed at the maximization of productivity, and as such results in the exploitation of male workers leading both to health problems and to sexual and emotional disorders. At the same time, the neoliberal regime forces working-class

men to constitute ‘the neoliberal self’ (Honey 2014: 6) through ‘techniques of the self’ and ‘work on the self’, including self-care, self-education and self-cultivation. However, a lack of material and cultural resources and the unstable social position of working-class men limit their capacity to achieve the normative form of masculinity that these techniques of the self are supposed to realize. For that reason, some of the respondents perceived themselves as ‘losers’. In response to questions about the parameters of success, a young worker from Nokian, for example, said that he did not consider himself a successful person because he has a low financial status and has achieved nothing:

[Success] ... for me it is a person’s status, something that he has achieved in life in terms of personal development, at work, his financial status. (conveyor operator, 31, Nokian, 18 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

Speaking about a past relationship, another young worker from the Nissan car factory draws attention to the significance of a man’s social status in marriage and starting a family. His narrative both reflects and entirely recognizes wider constructions of working-class men as low-status ‘failures’:

For a young guy it can be a problem ... when you get to know a girl, you need to tell her your status. Well, I’m ... jeez, you work on a three-shift rota, and you’re a worker ... What will I do with you? Why the hell would I need you? ... That’s why I won’t ask a girl to marry me ... Why would I ask this question, if I know I’ll receive an answer that ... ‘you’re a loser?’ (general mechanic, 33, Nissan, 19 April 2011, St. Petersburg)

In this way, Russia’s neoliberal gender order devalues the masculinity of working-class men and, through the social and gender uncertainty it creates, prevents them from establishing stable sexual and emotional relationships with their partners. Working-class masculinities in contemporary Russia are subject to anxieties, rueful feelings and vulnerability. In this context, young male workers try to invest money, time and knowledge in their bodily capital to recover masculine subjectivity. As I have explored elsewhere (Tartakovskaya and Vanke 2016), this strategy of construction of the self is also realized by office clerks, who use their bodily capital as a means of representation at work and in their everyday lives, while workers use it for raising self-esteem, improving their social status symbolically and constituting masculine subjectivity.

CONCLUSION

My brief reconstruction of the neoliberal regime in contemporary Russia suggests that it is aimed at maximizing the effectiveness and productivity of industrial enterprises, intensifying competition between workers, reducing social welfare and increasing the social insecurity of employees. A distinguishing feature of the Russian neoliberal regime is that it co-exists with elements of Soviet governmentality, which can be seen as constituting a barrier to uncontrolled neoliberal expansion. Alongside this, the delineation of the features of an emerging Russian gender order demonstrates that this also combines some stable patterns from Soviet gender models with new neoliberal practices and regulations. Crucial aspects of the contemporary gender order in Russia include the diminished control by the state over the private lives of individuals, alongside the more or less independent position of women. In such a context, the post-Soviet gender order allows/demands male workers to create multiple masculinities by forcing them to compete with each other, losing self-confidence in the chase for success. In addition, the Russian gender order imposes traditional gender roles and promotes family values, responding to hegemonic masculinity, which is hardly ever achieved by working-class men because of their inferior social position. However, some of them are able to develop strategies that allow them to represent themselves as breadwinners and defenders, be this through labour migration, changing profession or taking on additional work, as well as through the demonstration of their bodily capital, including physical strength and manual skills.

My research based on local case studies supports Connell's thesis about multiple masculinities (1995), allowing the definition of several types of masculine subjectivity among working-class men in Russia: 'old' and 'new' masculinities generated by both gender order and political regime distinguished by the specific configuration of state socialist and neoliberal elements. By this specific configuration, I mean an ensemble of local gender and political practices, attitudes and regulations. *Classic masculine subjectivity* is typical of working-class men over the age of 40 who exercise conservative and traditional gender practices. This type reproduces 'old' patterns of the Soviet gender order, trying to sustain a normative gender model, while at the same time accepting neoliberal trends and following them. The impossibility of sustaining normative hegemonic patterns undermines the masculinity of this age group of male workers and complicates the system of gender relations they inhabit. *New masculine subjectivity*, which is

mostly typical of working-class men younger than 40, can be divided into two subtypes: consuming and protest masculinities. *Consuming masculinity* emerges from the intensification of competition in the labour and marriage markets. It is because of this intensification that, in the context of neoliberal politics, male workers try to invent new ways of creating the self as a man, investing time, money and knowledge in their bodily capital and consuming fashionable goods and lifestyles. These styles of consumption provide a common ground for young male workers and office clerks (see Tartakovskaya and Vanke 2016), helping them to constitute the consuming masculine subjectivity through demonstration of their well-groomed body and fashionable appearance. However, young workers' intensive consumption and aspirations for class mobility indicate the vulnerability of their masculinity, which is evidenced among other respondents in low self-esteem and, in turn, problems in the spheres of sexual, emotional and family relationships. Meanwhile, the organization of trade unions, participation in protests and coordination of grassroots initiatives brings about the opportunity for the creation of *protest masculine subjectivity*. This masculine type is politically active and critically reflective. It tries to resist neoliberal challenges through the critique of contemporary labour regulations and creates the image of a heroic, romantic and independent man. The response of protest masculinity to neoliberalism lies in its resistance to neoliberal values of individual success, which should be replaced by values of collective cooperation, oriented to the improvement of the working and living conditions of the working class and transformation of an unjust social order. Working-class men with protest masculine subjectivity have a strong sense of social justice and understand the necessity of transnational trade unions and alliances with other dominated social groups.

Acknowledgements I should like to thank my colleagues Irina Tartakovskaya for fruitful discussions on working-class masculinities and Charlie Walker for insightful comments that greatly improved this chapter. I also express my gratitude to the workers who agreed to participate in the research.

NOTES

1. The city of Nizhny Tagil is located in Sverdlovskaya oblast', which is part of the Ural region, famous for iron, metalworking and engineering industries. The respondents whose interviews are cited in the chapter were engaged in manual labour and worked in the industrial sector. The interviews with

working-class men from Nizhny Tagil were generated for the project 'Intergenerational Social Mobility from XX to XXI Century: Four Generations of Russian History', supported by Russian Science Foundation grant No. 14-28-00217.

2. The etacritic (gender or political) system is a system in which the state dominates over other social institutions. In case of gender it means that the state produces and imposes particular gender patterns and practices. In such a system the state tries to regulate gender and sexual behaviour of population.

REFERENCES

- Behnke, K., & Meuser, M. (1999). *Geschlechterforschung und qualitative Methoden*. Opladen: Leske + Bundrich.
- Bikbov, A. (2011). 'Gibkii trud, kratkii otdykh. Ili kak povysit' provoditel'nost' truda, otmeniv uroki geografii?' [Flexible labour, brief rest. Or how is it possible to increase labour productivity by canceling geography classes?]. *Russkii Zhurnal*. <http://www.russ.ru/Mirovaya-povestka/Gibkij-trud-kratkij-otdyh>. Accessed 30 Dec 2016.
- Boltanski, L., & Chiapello, E. (2005). *The new spirit of capitalism*. London/New York: Verso.
- Bourdieu, P. (1998). The essence of neoliberalism. *Le Monde Diplomatique*. <https://mondediplo.com/1998/12/08bourdieu>. Accessed 18 Oct 2015.
- Chernova, Z. (2002). 'Normativnaia muzhskaia seksual'nost': Rerezentatsii v mediadiskurse' [Normative masculine sexuality: Representation in media discourse]. In E. Zdravomyslova & A. Temkina (Eds.), *V poiskakh seksual'nosti* [In search of sexuality]. St. Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1996). *Gender and power. Society, the person and sexual politics*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Danshina, V., & Soloyova, V. (2015). 'Sotsial'naia otvetstvennost' promyshlennykh predpriyati v SSSR' [Social responsibility of industrial enterprises in the USSR]. *Vestnik astrakhanskogo gosudarstvennogo technicheskogo universiteta. Seriya: Ekonomika*, 3, 67–74.
- Dardot, P., & Laval, C. (2010). Néolibéralisme et subjectivation capitaliste. *Cités*, 41, 35–50.
- Davis, W. (2014). *The limits of neoliberalism. Authority, sovereignty and the logic of competition*. London/Thousand Oaks/New Dehli/Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Foucault, M. (1978). *The history of sexuality, an introduction* (Vol. I). New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. (1986). *The care of the self, the history of sexuality* (Vol. III). New York: Pantheon Books.

- Foucault, M. (1995). *Discipline and punish. The birth of the prison* (2d ed.). New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (2004). *Arkhheologiiia znaniia* [Archeology of knowledge]. Saint Petersburg: Gumanitarnaia Akademiia.
- Foucault, M. (2010). *The government of self and others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Guseinov, G. (2003). *Sovetskie ideologemy v russkom diskurse 1990-kh* [Soviet ideologemes in Russian discourse of the 1990s]. Moscow: Tri Kvadrata.
- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press Inc.
- Hearn, J. (2015). *Men of the world. Genders, globalizations, transnational times*. London/Thousand Oaks/New Dehli/Singapore: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Honey, L. (2014). Self-help groups in post-Soviet Moscow: Neoliberal discourses of the self and their social critique. *Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research*, 1, 5–29.
- Kay, R. (2006). *Men in contemporary Russia: The fallen heroes of post-Soviet change?* London: Ashgate.
- Keller, R., & Meuser, M. (2011). Wissen des Körpers—Wissen vom Körper. Körper- und wissenssoziologische Erkundungen. In R. Keller & M. Meuser (Eds.), *Körperwissen* (pp. 9–30). Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.
- Kosterina, I. (2013). “Botaniki” protiv Dzhejmisa Bonda: nekotorye trendy sovremennoj maskulinnosti [Nerds against James Bond: Some trends of contemporary masculinity]. In I. Tartakovskaya (Ed.), *Sposoby byt’ muzhchikinoj* [Ways to a man] (pp. 8–31). Moscow: Heinrich Böll Stiftung—Izdatel’stvo “Zven’ia”.
- Makovicky, N. (2014). Me, Inc? Untangling neoliberalism, personhood, and postsocialism. In N. Makovicky (Ed.), *Neoliberalism, personhood, and postsocialism. Enterprising selves in changing economies* (pp. 1–16). Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.
- Medvedev, D. (2010). *Bez kvalifitsirovannykh rabochikh modernizatsiia ne poluchitsia* [Modernization will not happen without qualified workers]. Videoblog by Dmitry Medvedev. <http://blog.da-medvedev.ru/post/103>. Accessed 24 Apr 2016
- Mescherkina, M. (2002). Bytie muzhskogo soznaniia: opyt rekonstruksii maskulinnoi identichnosti srednego i rabocheho klassa [Being of masculine consciousness: Experience of reconstruction of masculine identity in middle- and working-class]. In S. Oushakine (Ed.), *O Muzhe(N)stvennosti* [On (fe)maleness]. Moscow: New Literary Observer.
- Meuser, M. (2010). *Geschlecht und Männlichkeit. Soziologische Theorie und kulturelle Deutungsmuster*. Opladen: Leske + Bundrich.
- Pautova, N. I., & Pautov, I. S. (2015). Gendernye osobennosti samoocenki zdorov’ja i ego vospriiatija kak sociokul’turnoj cennosti (po dannym 21-j volny RLMS-HSE) [Gender characteristics of health selfassessment and perception as a

- socio-cultural value (based on the data of the 21st round of RLMS-HSE)]. *Zhenshchina v rossijskom obshchestve*, 75(2), 64–79.
- Putin, V. (2012). ‘Stroitel’stvo spravedlivosti. Sotsial’naia politika dlia Rossii’ [Building of justice]. Social politics for Russia]. *Komsomol’skaia Pravda*. <http://www.kp.ru/daily/25833/2807793/>. Accessed 24 Apr 2016.
- Rotkirch, A. (2000). *The man question. Loves and lives in late 20th century Russia*. Helsinki: Department of Social Policy, University of Helsinki.
- Schreiner, S. (2013). Die “Nation” als neoliberale Existenzgemeinschaft. Gescheiterte Heilslehren, gebrochene Versprechen und ökonomisch-soziale Krisen. In S. Friederich & P. Schreiner (Eds.), *Nation—Ausgrenzung—Krise. Kritische Perspektiven auf Europa* (pp. 43–53). Berlin: Edition assemblage.
- Tartakovskaya, I. (2012). Stanovlenie sovremennoi rossiiskoi gendernoi sistemy [Establishment of contemporary Russian gender system]. *GenderPage.ru*. <http://genderpage.ru/?p=744>. Accessed 18 Oct 2015.
- Tartakovskaya, I., & Vanke, A. (2016). Kar’era rabocheho kak biographicheskii vybor [working-class career as choice biography]. *The Russian Sociological Review*, 3(15), 9–48.
- Vanke, A. (2014). The corporeality of working-class men in labour regimes and the private sphere. *Laboratorium: Russian Review of Social Research*, 1(60–83), 154–158.
- Vanke, A., & Kulaev, M. (2015). Rabochie v rossijskom novostnom televizionnom diskurse: Kontekst politicheskikh protestov [Workers in Russian TV news discourse: The context of political protests]. *Neprikosovennyi zapas. Debaty o politike i culture*, 5(103), 11–23.
- Vanke, A., & Tartakovskaya, I. (2016). Transformatsii maskulinnosti rossiiskikh rabochikh v kontekste sotsial’noi mobil’nosti [The transformation of Russian working-class masculinities in the context of social mobility]. *Mir Rossii*, 4, 136–153.
- Vorontsov, D. (2015). Narrativy maskulinnosti v sovremennoj Rossii [Narratives of masculinity in contemporary Russia]. *Novaia Europa*. <http://www.kp.ru/daily/25833/2807793/>. Accessed 11 Mar 2017.
- Wacquant, L. (1995). Pugs at work: Bodily capital and bodily labour among professional boxers. *Body & Society*, 1, 65–93.
- Wacquant, L. (2010). Crafting the neoliberal state: Workfare, prisonfare, and social insecurity. *Sociological Forum*, 25(2), 197–220.
- Walker, C. (2012). Klass, gender i sub’ektivnoe blagopoluchie na novom rossijskom rynke truda: Zhiznennyi opyt molodezhi v Ul’ianovske i Sankt-Peterburge. *Zhurnal issledovaniï sotsial’noi politiki*, 4(10), 521–538.
- Walker, C. (2015). I don’t really like tedious, monotonous work: Working-class young women, service sector employment and social mobility in contemporary Russia. *Sociology*, 49(1), 106–122.

- Walker, C. (2016). In search of “stability”: Working-class men, masculinity and wellbeing in contemporary Russia. In A. Cornwall, F. G. Kariotis, & N. Lindisfarne (Eds.), *Masculinities under neoliberalism*. London: Zed Books.
- Walker, C. (2017). ‘I just don’t want to connect my life with this occupation’: Working-class young men, manual labour, and social mobility in contemporary Russia. *The British Journal of Sociology*. doi:[10.1111/1468-4446.12299](https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.12299).
- Zaridze, D., Lewington, L., Boroda, A., Scélo, G., Karpov, R., Lazarev, A., Konobeevskaya, I., Igitov, V., Terechova, T., Boffetta, P., Sherliker, P., Kong, X., Whitlock, G., Boreham, J., Brennan, P., & Peto, P. (2014). Alcohol and mortality in Russia: Prospective observational study of 151 000 adults. *The Lancet*, *383*(9927), 1465–1473.
- Zdravomyslova, E., & Temkina, A. (2007). Sovetskii etacraticheskii gendernyi poriadok [Soviet ethnocratic gender order]. In E. Zdravimyslova & A. Temkina (Eds.), *Rossiiski gendernyi poriadok: sotsiologicheskii podkhod* [Russian gender order: Sociological approach]. St. Petersburg: EUSP Press.
- Zdravomyslova, E., & Temkina, A. (2012). The crisis of masculinity in late Soviet discourse. *Russian Studies in History*, *2*, 13–34.

The Inertia of Masculinity: Narratives of Creative Aspiration Among Arab-Australian Youth

Sherene Idriss and George Morgan

There are three dominant representations of the figure of the young Arab-Australian. The first is in relation to his criminality, as a member, or potential affiliate, of violent ethnicity-based gangs. The second is as the sexual predator, preying especially on Anglo-Australian women. The third is as the national security threat—a religious fanatic practising some extremist form of Islam with an agenda to commit crimes against ‘the West’. Such media stereotypes bear little resemblance to the lived realities of Arab-Australian young men. Noble (2007) has outlined how notions of ‘respect’ and ‘respectability’ feature heavily as organizing themes of these young men’s lives. As it relates specifically to young Muslim Australian men (the majority of who come from Arabic-speaking backgrounds), research has demonstrated that those who have a strong sense of religious identity are in fact more likely to engage in civic and political participation in Australia (Johns et al. 2015). Our chapter seeks to address a different

S. Idriss (✉)

School of Social Sciences, Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

G. Morgan

Institute for Culture and Society, School of Humanities and Communication Arts, Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

facet of young Arab-Australian men's lives, one that has been overlooked in favour of an emphasis on issues around multiculturalism, belonging and nationhood: work and career aspiration. We offer three case studies illustrating how young men of Arab-Australian backgrounds from Western Sydney, an area of high cultural diversity and socioeconomic disadvantage, adapt to the new economy and labour market insecurity. Despite lacking the contacts and other social resources, they develop aspirations to work in creative vocations. Among their parents and other relatives there was neither much understanding of what constituted the creative career, nor patience with the precarious circumstances that such a career entailed. We argue that longstanding patriarchal 'narrative scripts' around self-employment and independence shape our interviewees' aspirations but that in becoming 'creative workers' these young men challenged communal norms around working life. We found a disjunction between how these young men narrate their future working selves and the harsh realities of the 'gig economy' (Ross 2008, 2009).

The case studies will show these young men do not radically break with the parent culture by pursuing creative vocational pathways. Rather, the communal aspiration for social mobility and the radically changing economic landscape compels these Arab-Australian young men, to weigh up competing forces. Young adulthood, and more specifically the post-compulsory schooling phase of their lives, becomes the point of bounded agency (Evans 2007), of pragmatic reckoning with perceived creative and vocational opportunities and possibilities. In a similar vein to Hardgrove et al. (2015) our aim in this paper is to closely examine the intergenerational relationships of young people entering precarious labour markets. We suggest that the intergenerational dialogue that occurs between grandfathers, fathers and sons about the importance of social mobility, achieved through financial security and independence, is a key way in which young Arab-Australian men articulate their future selves. While there is a body of research that has explored young people's desires for economic security in unstable working environments (Furlong and Cartmel 1997), our chapter is explicit in its focus on the patriarchal cultural templates that continue to guide the way men frame their ambitions and the enduring forms of masculinity that Arab-Australian young men perform within creative sectors wherein the gendered divisions of labour are often blurred.

RUSTBELT ETHNOGRAPHIES

Despite considerable academic research—mostly in community and educational sociology—in the mid- to late twentieth century on how young men from the white working class reproduced the industrial masculinity of their elders (Corrigan 1979; Robins and Cohen 1978; Willis 1977), the literature on postindustrial masculinities is less well developed, particularly in relation to those from minority backgrounds. Paul Willis's classic 1970s study *Learning to Labour* describes the collective subcultural resistance of schoolboys in a British industrial city. His ethnography shows how they fell foul of the discipline and regulation of the education system and, as a result, found themselves in lives of low-paid blue-collar work, where their precocious masculinity could be accommodated. Young men in the West, however, are no longer factory fodder because outside the construction trades, the blue-collar jobs have almost disappeared. As Nayak (2003) observes, in the past, trade skills held the working man in good stead, but today the 'rich reservoir of labouring jobs has all but evaporated' (148), mainly because of technological change and the flight of capital to places away from the West and to places where labour is cheap. Young men in particular face uncertain and fragmented futures (Stokes and Wyn 2007; Furlong and Cartmel 1997), and what Chatterton and Hollands (2003: 81) call a 'bewildering array of labour market transitions', including education and training courses with uncertain labour market destinations, and spells of precarious employment. While employment growth is in traditionally feminized occupations—including much service sector work and caring professions—traditionally masculine sectors have declined dramatically.

A small but growing literature has documented the formidable challenges faced by young men in adapting to the loss of old labour. This is not simply a practical challenge of finding steady and reasonably paid work but of finding the kinds of work and work arrangement congruent with residual masculine identities. As Taylor and Jamieson argue, the disappearance of traditionally masculine work does not lead to 'the sudden and total evacuation of men from the symbolic terrain of work, or the loss of work references in the discursive construction of hegemonic forms of masculinity' (1997: 162). Nixon's (2006, 2009) research into the work aspirations of working-class men uncovered resistance towards white-collar confinements, a short-fuse masculinity that rejects the masquerades of service and emotional work and that seeks to replicate the blue-collar knockabout community of practice and camaraderie. Kenway et al.'s (2006) study explores

youthful masculinities in four Australian regional towns using the frame of globalization to understand the profound social and economic change these areas face. The researchers found that despite the disappearance of blue-collar work in these places, employment remains central to masculine identities. Fathers struggle to fathom the situation that the only jobs available to their sons are in service roles (Walkerdine and Jimenez 2012).

The effects of the decline of old labour are visible other than in the field of work and vocational aspiration, specifically in various youth cultural practices. The early work of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Hall 2006; Cohen 1972) recognized and explored the connection between industrial decline and subcultures. The idea that sub-cultural sites and solidarities provide the means for the magical/symbolic, though not real, resolution of intractable social problems was central to the way scholars made sense of groups such as skinheads and punks. Their resistance and forms of expression betrayed a yearning to recover the social fabric of urban village territoriality of communities that were based around local manual work. While this scholarship attracted a deal of intellectual critique (Thornton 1995; Bennett 1999; Hesmondhalgh 2005), it continues to influence the analysis of contemporary youth cultures and identities.

Such studies are most effective where they are situated in the histories and industrial traditions of place. As Taylor and Jamieson observe, ‘the form of gender identity in place in particular localities will be inflected not only by actually-existing regimes of work but also by nostalgic evocations of such regimes, even in the aftermath of their disappearance’ (1997: 150). In her book *Redundant Masculinities*, McDowell (2003) identifies key differences between her two research sites, the postindustrial northern city of Sheffield and the relatively prosperous southern town of Cambridge, where the young undereducated working-class men who formed her sample fared much better in the environment of economic restructuring, and where hardscrabble blue-collar masculinities are less deeply embedded. This contrast is reinforced in Anoop Nayak’s ethnography (2003) of young men in Newcastle in Britain’s north east. This shows that after the collapse of the occupational and social structures of the industrial era, young men perform analogous forms of masculine identities in their leisure and subcultural lives. Nayak follows a group of supporters of Newcastle United Football Club and finds that those who define themselves as ‘Real Geordies’ reject the forms of service and mental labour characteristic of the new economy: ‘the Real Geordies still viewed mental labour as “soft and babyish” and had yet to

adapt to the new demands of the global economy' (152). In a similar vein, Michael Ward's study of masculinity in postindustrial South Wales (2015) identifies a retraditionalized masculinity enduring in the 'Valley Boiz', one of three subcultural groups that form the focus of his ethnography. While the coal-mines are gone, the forms of precocious working-class masculinity (what Connell (1995) terms 'protest masculinity') endure even among those who undertake post-school education. While there are numerous studies of these resistant (and often patriarchal) forms of youthful expression, less attention has been paid to more conformist young men (the 'ear 'oles' in Willis's study) who sought social mobility from poorer backgrounds (as Roberts 2011 argues). Such young men generally seek to distance themselves from traditional masculinities, and they are the focus of this chapter.

Models of traditional masculinity/gender roles still provide them with key reference points in framing their ambitions, values and understandings of working life. However, these reference points are not absolute brakes or anchors on their fortunes. While recognizing the enduring structures of masculinity, there are elements of agency and adaptability. There is now a considerable literature—much based on Connell's work (Poynting et al. 2003; Howson 2009; McDowell et al. 2014)—that identifies masculinities as plural and hierarchical, as subject to forms of redefinition in different contexts. As Nayak (2003: 148) notes, 'masculinities are contextually contingent and always located in time and place'. 'Hegemonic masculinity', as Messerschmidt argues, 'legitimizes gender relations hierarchically between men and women' (2011: 206). This includes the gender division of labour, with the figure of 'man-as-provider' (see the discussion below of Dasgupta's study of the Japanese salary-man 2000, 2013), which cuts across class divisions. So while structural change in the labour market has profoundly altered the experience of work and working life for men, the cultural models of gender roles have been much slower to change.

CREATIVE WORK AND ASPIRATION

In the postindustrial world where both jobs and skills are precarious, Western governments implore young people to develop their creative skills, believing that economic salvation will be built on intellectual property and the growth of the knowledge/symbolic economy. Our interview subjects heeded this call by aspiring to make a living out of cultural enthusiasms they had developed in their youth. Where in the past those interests might have

been confined to hobbyism/amateurism, now the creative career appears to offer a path to social mobility as politicians promote the idea that intellectual property is the ‘new oil’ and that prosperity rests on our capacity for symbolic innovation (Ross 2009).

However, for many aspirants, this is frustratingly out of reach because of the systemic insecurity and exploitation operating in many creative industries (Morgan and Nelligan 2015; Hesmondhalgh and Baker 2011; Murray and Gollmitzer 2012, Gill and Pratt 2008; Ross 2008). Much work available in the new economy fits the ideal neoliberal economic arrangements—flexible and fast burn—with very little security or predictable rhythm. Young workers are expected to be versatile and entrepreneurial, embracing the constant churn and uncertainty of the creative career. Worker exploitation is normalized as aspirants agree to work for little or no pay in ‘cool’ industries in order to increase their chances of landing well-paid and creatively satisfying work in the future. Many eventually become *supplicant subcontractors*—working irregular (and often long) hours in conditions of ‘flexploitation’ for a single employer. They are forced to spend their non-working time chasing contacts in the informal networks through which work is allocated. Creative workers generally experience considerable poverty (Throsby and Cunningham 2009; Throsby and Hollister 2003) and are forced to seek supplementary work in the down times through ‘episodic migration to other parts of the economy’ (Murray and Gollmitzer 2012: 419). Morgan and Nelligan (forthcoming) argue that creative aspirants from socially disadvantaged backgrounds generally lack the resources and contacts required for their careers to get off the ground.

The gendered dimensions of creative labour are also problematic. In circumstances where work is allocated informally, and by word of mouth, and where work patterns hours are irregular, there is effectively a retraditionalization of gender roles because those with caring responsibilities—almost always women—are unable to accommodate such arrangements (Adkins and Lury 1999; Banks and Milestone 2011). Without the institutional rights, routines and safeguards associated with the traditional career, and in circumstances where work is allocated through channels of social influence, there is more scope for sexism to operate. Morgan and Nelligan (2015) have also argued that the demands of an entrepreneurial networking creative worker, with the capacity for dissimulating and bartering skills in the marketplace, is inconsistent with the model of phlegmatic, blunt working-class masculinity. So while some men (and women)

from middle-class backgrounds may thrive in these circumstances, those from socially disadvantaged backgrounds rarely do.

One of the ironies of the discourses of creative capitalism is that the figure of the ‘starving artist’, once the enemy of free enterprise, has become the model neoliberal worker: independent, risk-taking, innovative and embracing circumstances of upheaval and precariousness. The bohemian lifestyles of young, inner-city creatives suit the needs of new capitalism for rapidly changing stylistic and aesthetic skills, restlessness, enterprise and novelty (Hartley 2007). Affect is central to creative identities and lifestyles—the passion associated with calling something ‘my own work’, thus representing an extension of the self (McRobbie 2002). In our analysis below, however, we will argue that there are cohorts of creative aspirants for whom such a lifestyle is altogether unappealing. Drawing on biographical interview data with four informants—Matt, Nabil, Jacob and Mahmoud—we evaluate the attitudes of young men from working-class, migrant backgrounds towards the precarious conditions of contemporary creative labour. We argue that residual models of masculinity mean that they navigate through creative careers with hesitation and caution, without the readiness to embrace the uncertainty of the creative career (Threadgold 2015).

INTERGENERATIONAL DIALOGUE: BEING COMFORTABLE AND DEPENDABLE

The findings and discussion presented in this chapter are drawn from a larger collaborative project on the creative aspirations of three cohorts of young men—from Anglo, Aboriginal and Middle Eastern backgrounds, around 80 in total, aged between 18 and 30 years, from areas of social disadvantage in Sydney. Using life history interviews, we explored the development of their creative ambitions and vocational choices. Most attended local government high schools, and their parents who arrived in Australia with rudimentary English skills worked in menial and/or low-paid labour jobs. Many of the Arab-Australian informants reported family histories of self-employment and small business enterprise, a finding that aligns more generally with the literature on the large number of family business ventures within migrant communities (Collins et al. 1995; Anthias and Cederberg 2009). According to our informants, these family businesses often required the labour of the entire family from children to grandparents in order to survive. Parents running these businesses aspired for their

children to achieve the kinds of social mobility afforded through higher education that was closed to them as migrants from a non-English-speaking background.

All of our interviewees were enrolled in, or had recently completed, post-school courses in creative skills such as film, multimedia, design or fine arts, but few had found steady work. We did not restrict our sample to one particular vocational field but instead kept the parameters around what constitutes creative work loose enough to cover film, television and media industries, music and theatre, design and production. Few studies have examined the performative function of working-class, migrant masculinities in young people's transitions from aspirant or student to that of a specifically creative worker. Allen and Hollingworth (2013) have considered how some young people in Britain are constrained by their social class in their attempts to 'make it' in emerging creative industries. Here we aim to build some connections between creative labour analysis and theories of masculinity using qualitative narrative analysis.

Aspiration, as has been explored in a number of youth-based studies (Allen and Hollingworth 2013; Evans 2007; Hardgrove et al. 2015), is often framed by young people as being about upward mobility. Government rhetoric in the West has endorsed and encouraged young people to think this way (Allen 2014). To be middle class is good; to be working class is bad. Achieving middle-class status, through personal creative career ambitions, is important to our informants. The weight given to upward mobility, as we will see in the following case studies, manifests itself in narratives around being financially 'comfortable' and also, importantly, as becoming someone who can be *depended on* by their future hypothetical families.

Hassan

Hassan, a 20 year old part Jordanian, part Iraqi-Australian enrolled in a three-year interior design course at his local technical college. His family migrated to Australia from Iraq when he was 13 years old and set up residence in a suburb outside Bankstown, an area with a large number of Middle Eastern refugees and unskilled migrants. Hassan attended a local high school but found it 'disruptive'. The students 'acted like they were in a zoo', and he claimed this was the cause of his poor final results, which meant he failed to get into university. While initially reluctant to enrol in the interior design course purely out of a complete lack of knowledge and

mentorship about what was involved, he told us he could now see connections between his studies and his childhood interests in ‘drawing and painting’. In describing his earliest memories of being creative, he said:

I was so hard on myself though . . . when I was a child I used to draw things and rip them—like rip them apart. Like, I would draw something, leave it for one or two days and then look at it and consider it as rubbish and then I just . . . yeah rip it up.

As he grew older, Hassan realized that his main hobby was building and designing new objects out of existing materials, saying:

I would get a toy and just break it and make my own out of it. Like I would get a car, smash it, smash it, smash it, break it and then I was so interested in like how the dynamics inside the car worked and stuff so I would get pieces, then put my own wheels and then like, get a coat hanger and then just keep bending it to make my own car.

In spite of this clear interest and skill in design, Hassan told us that his first ambition was to be an airline pilot, explaining that this short-lived aspiration was based on his fathers’ line of work in Jordan. An aeronautical engineer in his home country, his father designed military aircrafts. His qualifications were unrecognized in Australia and so he worked on a contractual basis in ‘the mining industry, like helping design machinery. It’s kind of similar I guess’. Of course, the two are not similar, and what Hassan reveals here is a lack of familiarity with what is actually involved in his fathers’ work. He also glosses over what was presumably a very difficult migration and jobseeking process because of the inspiration he takes from his fathers’ professional identity. When asked why he wanted to initially become a pilot, Hassan admitted: ‘it’s the dad influence. Everyone is like that though.’

Hassan did not speak of experiencing paternal pressure about career choice, but he had nonetheless internalized the idea of a ‘good job’ based on financial security. He was one of the top students on his interior design course yet he was considering enrolling in an architecture diploma if he could not find a ‘good job’ in design:

Hassan: I’m really into architecture because like, it’s more of a nine-hour shift. I don’t want to go do like six month contracts. It’s just

more of a normal job. And if you notice, all the best architecture companies are in the city... (trails off)

Q: Right, so you see architecture as more stable?

Hassan: Yeah.

Q: What would your idea of a good job be?

Hassan: Um, well if I finish architecture and get my degree, I'll start at \$70 an hour as a junior, first year working for a company. The only thing is that the best companies they prefer someone from Uni that's why it's a bit challenging. But it's alright, I'll go for it.

Q: Right, so you want to get in the prestigious companies and the ones that you get paid well?

Hassan: Yeah [pause] oh, not really, uh pay wasn't really like ... it's not my first thing in a job...

At one level, Hassan covets the well-paid corporate career, but this expressed aspiration trips over the recognition that financial rewards were not central to the original creative ambitions. We pressed Hassan on whether he felt living in the city, in the creative and professional clusters where the jobs are on offer, was important to him.

Q: How do you feel about living in Western Sydney?

Hassan: Well, this is the first area I came to. I've just always been here, all my mates are from here

Q: Right, so you like it?

Hassan: Ohh now I'm not really into it anymore. It's just a bit too much trouble, it's just interesting to me anymore. I'd like to move somewhere. Like all the good jobs and companies are all in the city so if I got a proper job in one of the companies obviously I'd try to buy a flat somewhere there

Q: Right, so you'd move out of home

Hassan: Oh not really, only if I got married because then I'd always be coming back to this area to be with my mates anyway so why I would I move out you know?

Hassan makes multiple references to a 'proper' job, a 'good' job, in a corporation or large company with regular hours and in a central location. He has a very clear, albeit unrealistic, impression of what is in store for him after he graduates. He does recognize some of the structural limitations of

not having a degree, which hinders his chances, but he is not strategic in how to overcome this problem; the language of entrepreneurship or collaboration with peers or friends in the industry never enters his life history narrative. In spite of calling himself a creative person who spent much of his childhood ‘making things’, excelling in art subjects at high school and completing a design course, he still approaches a future creative identity with a rather traditional mindset, reproducing the templates of his father as a working professional rather than as an artist. He is hesitant to leave home before marriage, preferring instead to remain embedded in the familial and social relationships in which he has grown up as they offer security, but moreover are just ‘how things are done’. As in other studies of young people’s ‘transition’ into the labour market (Hardgrove et al. 2015), we find here that Hassan does not demonstrate increased autonomy as he strives for individual goals but instead reveals enduring class- and place-based masculine identities.

Nabil

For some, the experiences of older individuals in their personal networks acted as cautionary tales against blindly following personal creative ambitions. Nabil was 19 years old and had recently graduated from a local Lebanese Maronite high school. In deciding on his post-schooling pathway, he says he thoroughly researched the career more likely to offer financial security and settled on a law degree, justifying his decision by saying ‘at least it still involves writing and language instead of like medicine [pause]. My dad wanted me to be a doctor because it makes more money, especially if you’re a specialist.’ He chose this pathway in spite of the fact that his ‘true passion’, as he called it, is fiction-writing, a hobby he had developed in primary school initially to overcome the sudden death of his mother.

I would write a lot of high fantasy stuff, mostly using motifs like death angels, stuff like that. Only later, like after I left school that I wrote more realistic pieces.

Nabil was obviously talented. He participated in a local writing and poetry competition and won the top writing prize, resulting in his work being featured in a Western Sydney literary magazine. Despite this talent, he offered a pragmatic explanation for refusing to pursue fiction-writing as any sort of career. He said:

I'd love to be able to write and make money but very few people who do that are lucky enough to get published and make a decent amount. I had a teacher who was a published author and she was only making about thirty grand a year off her writing. It would take me 10, 20 years to be able to buy a house and that's if I squirrel away every dollar. It's just too long, it's not enough money.

Like many of our informants, Nabil was realistic about the financial prospects of a creative-based career and had no desire to struggle in this way for the rest of his life. As we noted earlier, the creative industries favour those who can transfer skills such as creative writing to other employment fields, such as marketing or advertising. Nabil rejects such malleability on two grounds. In the first instance, he treats his writing as a craft, something to be worked on and taken up outside the realm of paid employment rather than abandoning the hobby entirely. He says: 'I do love writing and I will happily write for free just for the satisfaction of it, I don't care whether I'm published or not. I just wouldn't make it my main career'. Second, he acknowledges that while a handful of artists might 'make it', he has seen first hand

A lot of people go through life like my grandfather for instance; he went through life never saving much because he wasn't making much money, just too busy chasing dreams. And umm I look at him now, he has nothing, he's in a wheelchair and they're not very comfortable at all.

Q: Financially comfortable you mean?

Nabil: Yeah and I don't want to end up like that. I want to live life to the fullest. Like, my grandfather wanted to be a designer landscape artist. And he just missed it. He never really had the, umm, he couldn't see outside the box to make something that would stand out. So he never really made it big and he just [pause] just never made it

As Allen has astutely explained, 'aspirations play a pivotal role in institutionalizing neoliberal forms of governance...'. In this system, poverty is 'subject to stigma and shame, constituting the working-class as not just Other but as wholly responsible for their plight' (Allen 2014: 761). This mentality is clearly evident in our interview with Nabil. The disappointment he displays about his grandfathers' vocational pathway is sharply contrasted with the admiration and respect for the entrepreneurial spirit of his father

who has achieved some financial success as a bread supplier for local supermarkets, a business in which Nabil works when not studying at university. He finds the work ‘annoying’ at times as a result of the early morning starts, but, because his father sustained a work injury a couple of years earlier, Nabil is expected, as the eldest child, to take up some of the responsibility of the family business. Despite his frustration at the lack of sleep involved with the job, the business remains a source of pride for him, as demonstrated when he says: ‘Dad put a lot of money into it and it is making decent money, which is great.’ Again, like Hassan, the ability to make money is central to ideas of success.

Furthermore, it is this model of the self-employed business man, comparable to that of the ‘salaryman’ in Dasgupta’s (2000) analysis of upwardly mobile young men in postindustrial Japan, that Nabil seems to be emulating in his own career aspirations. According to Dasgupta (2000), the ‘salaryman’ is embodied by ‘middle class, often university-educated’ young men who enter the world of paid employment on graduation. It is precisely at this moment, postgraduation, that the ‘salaryman’ is most intensely crafted by individuals, in speech, dress and everyday behaviours, when ‘a great deal of stress is placed on the need to rid oneself of one’s *“gakusei kibun”* (loosely, behaviour/values associated with being a student) and take on the serious responsibilities [that come with being the household provider and breadwinner]’ (2000: 194). Such dynamics around responsible masculinity are by no means exclusive to a Japanese context and influenced Nabil as he refused to ‘chase dreams’ as his grandfather had, observing this to be a selfish and foolish pathway, and instead envisioned for himself a future as a lawyer, doing

Something that would make be [financially] comfortable but that I also enjoy. Like I see myself being up front in court, not behind the scenes, it would irritate me other people using my work to represent something ‘cause they wouldn’t understand. No one understands your work better than you.

As Butler has argued, it is through language that gendered identities are produced and performed (1994). Nabil repeatedly mentioned ‘comfort’ as the underlying purpose of work. This signifies a particular way of doing masculinity, associating work with being the breadwinner. This accords with working-class scripts of masculinity inherited from his father and, by way of reflection, his grandfather. Nabil’s mother and grandmother have never been in paid employment; he described his grandmother as a ‘typical

Lebanese housewife'. This status among the women in his family is never contested or elaborated on in our interview exchange, a silence that can be understood as part of the performativity of hegemonic masculinity where the nuclear family in which males and females occupy traditional roles is taken for granted. It is only at the mention of his father's and grandfather's successes and failures that Nabil seems to reflect on how his career options align or depart from the generations of males in his family before him. Again, this intergenerational dialogue was a recurring theme among our informants; very few referred to their mothers or older women in their lives as aspirational role models.

Jacob

In her analysis of the hypermasculine performances of investment bankers on the trading floor, McDowell (2011) suggests that 'workers do not enter their place of employment with their gender firmly fixed in place, rather gender is a fluid and multiple performance which varies according to type of work and its location. What might be suitable in one place is not in another' (345). While our informants' ideas around gender are not firmly fixed in place, the data suggest that they are less likely to embody fluid and multiple versions of gender identity in their creative vocational endeavours. Their approach to work is informed first and foremost by the working attitudes and outlook of their fathers, most of whom were self-employed tradesmen and small business owners.

Jacob is a 19-year-old Lebanese-Australian, from a Maronite Christian background, who works part time as a security guard at a local pub. He had just completed a semester at a local TAFE (Technical and Further Education) studying design and illustration, a decision he says was based on the fact that 'it's hands on' as opposed to sitting in a university lecture theatre learning theory. He referred to himself as

A creative person. I just love creating stuff. I can create sculptures out of small pieces of rock, I can make couches, I can draw things whenever I want.

He recalled one of his earliest childhood memories, aged six, when

I got a Play Doh set for Christmas and I ended up making a crocodile out of it and I still can't believe how realistic it looked and ever since it's like, I've got to do more. Even my parents were impressed.

In his study of craft artists, Mishler (1999) argued that creative identities are always dialogical and emerge out of biographical narrative reconstructions of past events. This is evident in Jacob's case as he recalls that particular memory of impressing his parents with a very life-like crocodile model, but these memories also serve the discursive function of revealing how it is that Jacob understands what it means to be creative more generally. Throughout the interview he described creativity in terms of tactile skills rather than abstract, symbolic expressions of the self. He repeated multiple times in our interview that he simply 'loves creating stuff'. One such example is when he envisioned a future career pathway, saying:

Say someone comes up to me and says, 'I want you to create a sculpture for an entrance to a building' or say a movie producer comes to me and says, 'I need you to help me build a movie set or make props or costume design or whatever', I want [to] get into everything creative, I'm not fussed. If it's creative, I'll do it.

In spite of the fact that Jacob says he will do 'whatever' so long as it is creative, we can see here that he understands creativity in specific and narrow ways that appear to be informed by the kinds of labour that generations of men have done before him. Jacob's father is a self-employed garden landscaper, and his grandfather ran a farm in New South Wales on which Jacob used to help out often during school holidays. He laughs, saying: 'I've slaved away in the dirt so much it's not even funny.' What is interesting about Jacob's narrative is that he draws on the manual labour of his father and grandfather to build a case for why he wanted to pursue a creative career, calling manual labour 'boring and repetitive'. However, his ideas about potential future vocational pathways do not reflect a clear departure from the hands-on, rough work his father did for a living. He stresses the manual work of building a sculpture for a hotel lobby and was less inclined towards more abstract forms of creative expression.

We often found that informants commonly referred back to childhood hobbies and particular skills to rationalize their decisions to pursue a creative career, but as they began to imagine their future selves, they always balanced their youthful creative interests with concerns about financial stability. We asked Jacob:

Why haven't you sought out casual work in your art/design field?

Jacob: I'm trying to do that now but there are certain things you have to do before you can jump into the industry. I know how to use Photoshop and Illustrator, I can come up with ideas but I need to show that I can work and I need to learn how to set up files. Otherwise people won't be able to come to me for a job if I'm a solo designer. Say someone comes up to me and says can you create a logo, a t-shirt, a couple of business cards and set these all up for print. I say, Ok I can do the first two but I can't do the last part. And they'll go, ok we better find someone else. So that's why I've enrolled in this 6 month course which will teach me the essential part of the business and then I can get a job in the industry. But I will continue studying as well, I wanna get a diploma and a Masters in Illustration. And then I can run my own business properly. But I firstly just wanna start off in the industry, learn how it runs, learn how to communicate with clients and set up a proposal because it's very, very difficult to get a job in this industry.

Taylor and Littleton (2008) have explored conflicting narratives of creative vocational aspirants torn between 'art and money'. While some of their informants saw the logic of business as staunchly antithetical to creative expression, many of their informants developed new narrative repertoires to position themselves as both business-minded and as fine artists. The end goal for Jacob is to 'run my own business properly'. In making claims about who he is and what he plans to do with his youthful creative interests, he makes pragmatic, logical connections between his current situation and future career pathways. We found this to be a recurring trend among our sample, which can partly be explained by the fact that there is an overrepresentation of small business enterprise in Arab-Australian communities (Collins et al. 1995), and the communal aspirations for social mobility through traditionally masculine ways.

This is the main model of employment that Jacob has come to know through his father and other male relatives, where men work autonomously and treat their craft as the basis of a small business where the clients' needs must be met, irrespective of whether or not this compromises individual self-expression.

We can also note that Jacob's concerns about financial risks are developed relatively early on in his career, even before he has 'jumped' into the industry in any capacity. Like so many of our informants, he is keen to protect himself from financial insecurity as early as possible, in part because he has seen first hand what this actually looks like. He says: 'My parents have struggled financially, they've been through the hardships but it's not for me to talk about.' This attraction to self-employment, in the terms he describes,

is thus a key indicator of residual working-class masculinities at play because, unlike aspirants from wealthier backgrounds, Jacob has no financial safety net if he were to persevere with a creative vocation without a clear, logical plan to navigate through potential roadblocks and financial setbacks. He speaks about turning his original creative passion, drawing and designing, in the same manner with which one would approach a career in, for example, law or finance—a trajectory that requires formal qualifications, business acumen and interpersonal skills with potential clients. The language Jacob employs around ‘business’ and especially self-employment is very much at odds with the ways creative workers and artists tend to speak about creativity more generally.¹ The swift leaps made in the interview, from a childhood passion for drawing and sculptures to ‘creating a logo, t-shirt and business cards’, suggests that Jacob does not have the freedom to meander for too long in search of a creative identity. We might hypothesize that working-class men feel they have limited time for cultural experimentation when social mobility is at stake.

Mahmoud

Mahmoud was from a Catholic Lebanese background. His parents had a hard life in war-torn Lebanon, living in a village close to the Israeli border, before migrating to Australia. His father worked in various trades and, like many migrants, had his ambitions curtailed: he is a mechanic, a plumber, carpenter, electrician, plumber, you name it, and he would have loved to do something in aviation but couldn’t. His father established a family business installing kitchens and wanted Mahmoud to follow in the trade when he finished school, but Mahmoud refused: ‘I told him no, and I wanted to get another job, we had a massive fight over it and the whole family got involved, which wasn’t good.’ Mahmoud was typical of many young Middle Eastern men in our sample, who resisted the scripted lives in the building trades, in the quest for something more creatively fulfilling. At school he had been inspired by his art teacher—‘She gave us the right to be whatever we liked . . . and art was sort of like a freedom and escape’—to the point where, in the mid-teenage years, he preferred being in the art room to being at home: ‘When I was on holidays I used to go to school and do my artwork there, instead of going home and make a mess [and Mum] . . . telling me off.’

Mahmoud’s school grades were not enough to get him into university. He wanted to continue studying art but needed a course that would mollify

his parents' concerns about his employability. So he applied for a place on a graphic design course at a technical college, expressing a sentiment commonly heard among young people striving to resist lives of repetitive manual work: 'Like you have got that chance to express yourself more passionately.' However, like many people from poor backgrounds, he was walking blindly into a new economy and creative fields with little work or career prospects: 'I got knocked back because I didn't really know what it was, and like I thought it was just an extension of art except you go more into the business side of things.' He enrolled instead in a digital media course with the intention of transferring to graphic design after a year, and he told us that he would apply to study at university if his grades were sufficient.

Our research produced numerous narratives describing the quest to parlay a cultural enthusiasm into a vocationally viable credential. For Mahmoud and others like him, this was prompted by the encouragement they received for their creative talents. But with little knowledge of job prospects, nor contacts to help them succeed in oversupplied labour markets, they were likely to struggle to survive in their chosen career.

Additionally, we get the sense that there are aspects of residual masculinity that work against the niceties expected from a freelancing creative worker. Mahmoud tells the story of conflict that his father had with a customer that he observed when he was helping with the installation of a kitchen:

we were putting the kickboard ... and she saw a speck of dust underneath there, she was like 'what are you doing you are ruining my floor', and ... she started complaining and whinging and my dad turned to her, 'listen if you don't like it that is it I will leave the stuff here, I will pack up my tools and I will go see you later'. She accepted it...

Mahmoud reflected on how he would handle these sorts of demands in working to commission briefs for graphic design. The thing that drew him, and most others, to art/symbolic work in the first place was the ludic autonomy, the magical insulation of the creative space and the support of the artistic community of practice. But to succeed in the creative industries, such people must compromise their independence and meet client expectations. In the larger history of industrial supervision, blue-collar workers have often fiercely resisted Taylorist direction, the interference of those whose understanding of what they do is, at best, only abstract and theoretical, at worst, non-existent. While the artist is very different from the trade/

manual worker, there is something in Mahmoud's description of his early experiences of dealing with commissioned work that suggests that he is brittle, reluctant to assimilate to the demands of the freelancing life:

at the moment I am doing a job for myself with a client and she sees all these great things and all this other stuff, I am more than happy to do it for her because I love doing what I love doing . . . [but] the way I see it, like if you get knocked back by people it is just I take it as . . . if they don't want the type of stuff that I like to do then they can go and find someone else that they like.

This is an attitude that is both old and new. It represents both the tension between the personas of artist and creative worker—the difficulty of making that transition from the independent 'passionate' artist to the flexible gun-for-hire—and the worker's resistance to outside interference.

The other frame for understanding this narrative is around the idea of service work, the sovereign customer and emotional labour. Nixon (2009) has noted that the notion that the 'customer is always right' grates with the model of the taciturn, brittle and implacable working-class masculinity. We are suggesting here that there are residual working-class masculine sensibilities that structure the way kids such as Mahmoud inhabit the identity of artist in the first place and that limit their capacity to reinvent themselves as creative freelancers. In navigating a course from the old economy to the new, young people draw on inherited cultural templates. For men from blue-collar backgrounds in particular, this inheritance works against the rigours of the postmodern career, with its requirements that workers engage to network and perform their worthiness to outsiders; and that they be malleable and ready to parlay their skills and vocational identities in the direction of market demand (Morgan and Nelligan 2015).

CONCLUSION

There has now been much scholarship illustrating the problems associated with what McDowell calls 'redundant masculinities' in the West, and in particular the problems faced by low academic achievers who in an earlier era would have ended up in blue-collar work. Less attention has been given to the fortunes of those who are academically successful and seek to build careers in the volatile and precarious circumstances of contemporary job markets. In this chapter we have reported on a particular group, young Middle Eastern-background men from modest family circumstances who

aspire to creative careers. The economic importance of creative skills is now a policy commonplace but, in the absence of sufficient public support, those who seek to develop these skills often find themselves cast into a competitive neoliberal economic environment where there is very little foreseeability about future work and income prospects. We have tried to show here that although our interview subjects have not framed their ambitions by what is communally conventional, they do not embrace the full precarious package of the creative economy. Rather than seeking to conserve the creative purity of their work, being true to the pure ludic and expressive roots of their medium, they are very quickly forced to consider how to become economically 'steady' so that they can take up their roles as husbands/partners, fathers and providers. While they made a bid to break with the conventional narrative scripts of working life, they are nevertheless pulled back by residual masculinities, and in particular the sorts of script for working life and values about what makes good men, which are inherited from their fathers and other key male figures. These things inform both their decisions about practical vocational options and the way they seek the work and the customers/clients they work for, as well as their attitude to money and financial security. While our subjects are not simply walking in the footprints of those who came before them, their agency is nevertheless curtailed, and, in reckoning with what is vocationally achievable in practical terms, communal masculine templates continue to exercise considerable influence.

NOTE

1. Various scholars have argued that, despite their reliance on the sale/commodification of their work, artists have traditionally believed that their creative vitality depends on remaining at one remove from such processes (Bourdieu 1993; DiMaggio 1977).

REFERENCES

- Adkins, L., & Lury, C. (1999). The labour of identity: Performing identities, performing economies. *Economy and Society*, 28(4), 598–614.
- Allen, K. (2014). 'Blair's children': Young women as 'aspirational subjects' in the psychic landscape of class. *The Sociological Review*, 62(4), 760–779.
- Allen, K., & Hollingworth, S. (2013). 'Sticky subjects' or 'cosmopolitan creatives'? Aspirations for work in the knowledge economy. *Urban Studies*, 50(3), 499–517.

- Anthias, F., & Cederberg, M. (2009). Using ethnic bonds in self-employment and the issue of social capital. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 35(6), 901–917.
- Banks, M., & Milestone, K. (2011). Individualization, gender and cultural work. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 18(1), 73–89.
- Bennett, A. (1999). Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. *Sociology*, 33(3), 599–617.
- Bourdieu, P. (1993). *The field of cultural production*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Butler, J. (1994). Gender as performance: An interview with Judith Butler. *Radical Philosophy*, 67, 32–39.
- Chatterton, P., & Hollands, R. (2003). *Urban nightscapes: Youth cultures pleasure spaces and corporate power*. London: Routledge.
- Cohen, S. (1972). *Folk devils and moral panics: The creation of the mods and rockers*. London: Routledge.
- Collins, J., et al. (1995). *A shop full of dreams: ethnic small business in Australia*. Leichhardt: Pluto Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Corrigan, P. (1979). *Schooling the smash street kids*. Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Dasgupta, R. (2000). Performing masculinities? The ‘salaryman’ at work and play. *Japanese Studies*, 20(2), 189–200.
- Dasgupta, R. (2013). *Re-reading the salaryman: Crafting masculinities*. London: Routledge.
- Dimaggio, P. (1977). Market structure, the creative process, and popular culture: Toward an organizational reinterpretation of mass-culture theory. *Journal of Popular Culture*, 11, 436–452.
- Evans, K. (2007). Concepts of bounded agency in education, work, and the personal lives of young adults. *International Journal of Psychology*, 42(2), 85–93.
- Furlong, A., & Cartmel, F. (1997). *Young people and social change: Individualization and risk in late modernity*. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Gill, R., & Pratt, A. (2008). In the social factory?: Immaterial labour, precariousness and cultural work. *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25(7–8), 1–30.
- Hall, S. (2006). In T. Jefferson (Ed.), *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (2nd ed.). Florence: Taylor & Francis.
- Hardgrove, A., McDowell, L., & Rootham, E. (2015). Precarious lives, precarious labour: Family support and young men’s transitions to work in the UK. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 18(8), 1057–1076.
- Hartley, J., 2007. The evolution of the creative industries—Creative clusters, creative citizens and social network markets. In *Proceedings Creative Industries Conference, Asia-Pacific Weeks*. Available at: <http://www.cci.edu.au/hartley/index.php>. Accessed 11 Jul 2016.

- Hesmondhalgh, D. (2005). Subcultures, scenes or tribes?: None of the above. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 8(1), 21–40.
- Hesmondhalgh, D., & Baker, S. (2011). *Creative labour: Media work in three cultural industries*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Howson, R. (2009). *Challenging hegemonic masculinity*. London: Routledge.
- Johns, A., Mansouri, F., & Lobo, M. (2015). Religiosity, citizenship and belonging: The everyday experiences of young Australian Muslims. *Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs*, 35(2), 171–190.
- Kenway, J., Kraack, A., & Hickey-Moody, A. (2006). *Masculinity beyond the metropolis*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities? Employment change and white working class youth*. Malden: Blackwell Pub.
- McDowell, L. (2011). Doing gender, performing work. In *The SAGE handbook of economic geography* (pp. 338–350). London: Sage Publications.
- McDowell, L., Rootham, E., & Hardgrove, A. (2014). Precarious work, protest masculinity and communal regulation: South Asian young men in Luton, UK. *Work, Employment and Society*, 28(6), 1–18.
- McRobbie, A. (2002). Clubs to companies: Notes on the decline of political culture in speeded up creative worlds. *Cultural Studies*, 16(4), 516–531.
- Messerschmidt, J. (2011). The struggle for heterofeminine recognition: Bullying, embodiment, and reactive sexual offending by adolescent girls. *Feminist Criminology*, 6(3), 203–233.
- Mishler, E. (1999). *Storylines: Craftartists narratives of identity*. London: Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, G., & Nelligan, P. (2015). Labile labour–gender, flexibility and creative work. *The Sociological Review*, 63(S1), 66–83.
- Morgan, G., & Nelligan, P. (forthcoming). *The creativity hoax: Stories from the gig economy*. London: Anthem Press.
- Murray, C., & Gollmitzer, M. (2012). Escaping the precarity trap: A call for creative labour policy. *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 18(4), 419–438.
- Nayak, A. (2003). *Race, place and globalization*. London: Berg Publishers.
- Nixon, D. (2006). ‘I just like working with my hands’: Employment aspirations and the meaning of work for low-skilled unemployed men in Britain’s service economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(2), 201–217.
- Nixon, D. (2009). I can’t put a smiley face on: Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the new economy. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(3), 300–322.
- Noble, G. (2007). Respect and respectability amongst second-generation Arab and Muslim Australian men. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 28(3), 331–344.
- Poynting, S., Noble, G., & Tabar, P. (2003). Protest masculinity and Lebanese youth in western Sydney. In *Male trouble* (pp. 132–155). Sydney: Pluto Press.

- Roberts, S. (2011). Beyond 'NEET' and 'tidy' pathways: Considering the 'missing middle' of youth transition studies. *Journal of Youth Studies*, 14(1), 21–39.
- Robins, D., & Cohen, P. (1978). *Knuckle sandwich: Growing up in the working-class city*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- Ross, A. (2008). The new geography of work: Power to the precarious? *Theory, Culture & Society*, 25(7–8), 31–49.
- Ross, A. (2009). *Nice work if you can get it: Life and labor in precarious times*. New York: NYU Press.
- Stokes, H., & Wyn, J. (2007). Constructing identities and making careers: Young people's perspectives on work and learning. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 26(5), 495–511.
- Taylor and Jamieson. (1997). Proper Littler Meesters: Nostalgia and protest masculinity in de-industrialised Sheffield. In S. Westwood & J. Williams (Eds.), *Imagining cities: Scripts, signs, memory*. London/New York: Routledge.
- Taylor, S., & Littleton, K. (2008). Art work or money: Conflicts in the construction of a creative identity. *The Sociological Review*, 56(2), 275–292.
- Thornton, S. (1995). *Club cultures: Music, media and subcultural capital*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Threadgold, S. (2015). (Sub)cultural capital, DIY careers and transferability: Towards maintaining 'reproduction' when using Bourdieu in youth culture research. In S. Baker, B. Robards, & B. Buttigieg (Eds.), *Youth cultures and subcultures: Australian perspectives* (pp. 53–64). Surrey: Ashgate.
- Throsby, C., & Hollister, V. (2003). *Don't give up your day job: An economic study of professional artists in Australia*. Surry Hills: Australia Council.
- Throsby, D., & Cunningham, S. (2009). *Artist careers: Do you really expect to get paid? An economic study of professional artists in Australia: what is your other job? A census analysis of arts employment in Australia*. Surry Hills: Australia Council for the Arts.
- Walkerdine, V., & Jimenez, L. (2012). *Gender, work and community after de-industrialization: A psychosocial approach to affect*. Springer.
- Ward, M. R. M. (2015). *From labouring to learning*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon.

Gender, Neoliberalism, and Embodiment: A Social Geography of Rural, Working-Class Masculinity in Southeast Kansas

Levi Gabman

INTRODUCTION

We don't have time to fuck around . . .
. . . time to get to work. (Rick, 27-year-old Kansan)

I received this brusque comment in jest (along with a firm pat on the back) from a smiling, long-time friend of mine as we prepared to start work for the day. After being away for nearly seven years, I had just returned to my home community in Southeast Kansas to conduct participant observation research on rural masculinity.¹ The statement caught me off guard (much to the delight of both my friend and my co-workers) as I had not been exposed to such directives in quite some time. It caused me to falter a bit in my thoughts as I was still in somewhat of a 'researcher' frame of mind, or what was referred to several times by my friends as 'being up in my head too much.' After abruptly redirecting my behavior so I was not 'standing around and thinking so much,' I began the actual process of physically moving, and started loading up the truck with fencing supplies. As we finished tossing the dull, dented, and grime-caked tools into the back of

L. Gabman (✉)

The University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad and Tobago

the truck, my boss and long-time acquaintance started up the sputtering, sun-faded tan, 1987 Ford F-150 while the rest of us jumped into the back, took our respective seats along the truck bed, gripped the rusty bedrail tightly with our worn, beaten cowhide gloves, and headed down a dusty gravel road towards one of the many sprawling wheat fields and enclosed cattle pastures that lay ahead. It was at this moment (and what would prove to be several to follow) that I began to further ponder just how powerful (yet oft-banal) of a relationship ‘manhood’ has with working-class sentiments in the area.

I realized that my friend’s comment, while highly laden with gendered power dynamics, hierarchical subject positioning, and masculinist framings of capitalist production, did very much resonate with me. I had grown up amid such assertions, they had become normalized over the course of my childhood, teenage years, and early 20s; and up until my introductions to feminist praxis, decolonial thought, and critical discourse studies, served as the edifice on which my ideological perspectives were built. As it was my first week of work back in Southeast Kansas, I quickly realized the discursive and non-discursive practices of masculinity associated with ‘working in the country’ were loaded with gendered complexities, some of which reinforce both overt and veiled displays of power, control, and dominance. What follows, then, is an examination of these dynamics, as well as an articulation of how working-class masculinity in rural Southeast Kansas is being transformed and embodied in everyday life through the logic and discourse of neoliberalism.

MASCULINITY AND PLACE

In her theorizations on masculinity, R.W. Connell (1995) suggests we take into account the culturally produced nature of gender by recognizing that masculinity takes multiple forms and consequently can be best understood as *masculinities*. Connell (1995: 44) thus defines masculinities as ‘configurations of practice structured by gendered relations’ that are influenced by ‘bodily experience, personality, and culture.’ From this perspective, masculinity can be most accurately conceptualized as relational, pluralistic, and context dependent. This standpoint argues that masculinity is not a static archetype but rather that masculinities are social constructs iteratively produced by the actors seeking to embody them, as well as by the discourses, spaces, and flows of power within which they operate (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005).

In elaborating on the power relations inherent in practices of masculinity, Connell (2005, 2000, 1995) has also developed the concept of ‘hegemonic masculinity,’ which can be thought of as the normative ideals operating across differing cultures that define the most socially acceptable ways of being a ‘man.’ Her notion of hegemonic masculinity stresses that within given circumstances, certain masculinities are granted superiority over ‘others’, which become subordinated or marginalized (Connell 1995). In recognizing masculinities as fluid and relational, it should be noted that wholly embodying hegemonic masculinity is impossible because it is an imagined ideal that forever remains in a constant state of flux and redefinition, largely because of its spatiality and mutable nature (Hopkins and Noble 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005).

The unstable and variegating nature of masculinity, as well as its inextricable link with space and place, has thus become an intriguing topic of study, particularly in regard to marginalized, subordinated, and complicit masculinities (Gorman-Murray and Hopkins 2014; Ní Laoire 2005; Longhurst 1997; Jackson 1991). This has been reflected in the increase in literature pertaining to the relationship of geography with non-hegemonic (e.g. queer, transgender, non-citizen, racialized, disabled, aged) masculinities, which started gaining momentum in the early 1990s (Gorman-Murray and Hopkins 2014; Little 2006; van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005; Ní Laoire 2002; Knopp 1992). As a result of these analyses, there is now greater acknowledgment that masculinity is neither innate nor inert, but instead is the gendered product of sociospatial relationships operating across personal, cultural, and institutional levels of society. Researchers focusing on this area of study have thus carved out more room for critical scholarship to explore how gendered subjects/subjectivities are (re)fashioned by place, as well as how masculinity is (re)produced and (re)asserted across space (Gorman-Murray 2014; Lewis 2013; Myrdahl 2013; Hoven and Horschelmann 2005; McDowell 2003; Connell 1995).

It must be noted that while theorizations of hegemonic masculinity have been instrumental in advancing critical research on men, ‘manhood’, and masculinities, numerous academics have indeed taken the term to task (Beasley 2008; Collier 1998; Hearn 2004). Thus, notwithstanding the fact that the general premise of hegemonic masculinity is widely accepted, contestations have argued that the concept is monolithic, immaterial, and structuralist, and even, contradictorily, does the work of instantiating masculinist practices as normative, despite its emergence being prompted by scholars recognizing the exigency of exposing, unsettling, and destabilizing

what is considered ‘normal’ (McInnes 1998; Whitehead 1998; Demetriou 2001; Beasley 2008).

Critiques also contend that foregrounding hegemonic masculinity fails to address the experiences and occurrences comprising day-to-day life, unwittingly reifies and categorizes static ideals of what manhood is, and does not account for the sociopsychological complexities permeating processes of masculinist subjectification that do not necessarily reproduce hegemony (Anderson 2009; Edley and Wetherall 1996). While many of these appraisals certainly have merit, many can be read as calls for the concept to be further clarified, expanded on, and reconfigured (rather than jettisoned completely) so as to center and grapple with the complexities, nuances, anomalies, and paradoxes involved in the contexts, assertions (as well as non-assertions), and emplacements of both masculinities and power. It is with the aim of expanding on critical interrogations of situated, particular, and localized forms of masculinity, then, that I call back to the concept of hegemonic masculinity throughout the chapter.

EMBODIMENT AND SPACE

I follow a line of thought suggesting that masculinity is partially produced through the material performances and actions of the body. In this way any efforts made to analyze masculinities need to take into account the ‘norms and assumptions that surround the body’ by recognizing that the body is culturally constructed and reflects many of society’s expectations itself (Little 2006: 183). From this perspective I also suggest that material actions are spatialized, meaning that place is an essential part of the mutual constitution of gendered practices. With this in mind, it is essential to note that the body itself is a place that becomes a representation of identities and is inscribed with socially produced meanings and values.

In taking this stance regarding the production of masculinity and its relationship to the body, I want to be clear to note that the body is not simply one side of a dualistic mind/body dichotomy, nor is it simply a passive receptacle that becomes unknowingly marked by shared norms (Butler 1993). It is important to steer away from reductionist and biologically deterministic standpoints that suggest that the body is imbued with predetermined characteristics causing particular behaviours and actions. It is also crucial to realize that the body is not merely a blank canvas on which cultural values are written. Rather, I adhere to a non-essentialist and relational perspective, as promoted by numerous poststructuralist and feminist

theorists, that the body matters because it plays a key part in the spatialized reproduction of masculinities and femininities (Nunn 2013; Gorman-Murray 2009; Lawler 2008; Hopkins and Pain 2007; Browne 2006; Grosz 1994; Butler 1990; Foucault 1977). More precisely, bodies matter not because they are the origin or genesis of masculinity and femininity, but rather because they are sites on which masculinity and femininity are signified and implied to exist (Abrahamsson and Simpson 2011; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Butler 2004).

This theoretical framework similarly echoes Judith Butler's (1990) conceptualization of performativity. She suggests that bodies are not merely objects blanketed by gender; rather, gender is 'a continuing performance between bodies and discourses' (Brook 1999: 14). As such, the gendered body is the product of both structural interpellation and individual agency that becomes discursively and materially fashioned by the complex interlocking relationships of power, personality, and differing subject positions (i.e. race, class, gender, age, citizenship, nationality, religion, sexuality, ability etc.). More recently, one area of research that critical theorists have been particularly exceptional at investigating involves the recursive dynamics operating between gender, place, and the body (Kidd 2013; Simonsen 2013; Ní Laoire 2005; Longhurst 2000; Gregson and Rose 2000; Rose 1993). Current intersectional research on embodiment and space has focused on how power, identity formation, and heteronormativity influence notions of masculinity across urban and rural settings (Pini 2008; Pollard 2013; Cowen and Siciliano 2011; Pease 2010; Dixon and Grimes 2004; Little and Leyshon 2003; Binnie and Valentine 1999). This area of work has proven to be diverse, wide-ranging, and nuanced, as well as explicitly geographical, primarily because of the prominence it has granted to *place* as a key factor operating in the construction of masculinities (Gorman-Murray 2014; Hopkins and Noble 2009; van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005).

Thus, for scholars researching gender, the emphasis on multiple masculinities, interlocking social identities, and the production of space has become a rich area of enquiry. This can be seen in a variety of studies ranging from corporate, academic, rural, military, gay, disabled, Latino, and black masculinities, to the ways in which masculinity is implicated in advertising, home life, suicide, addiction, health, aging, and fathering (Bryant and Garnham 2015; Gorman-Murray and Hopkins 2014; Aitken 2012; Alston and Kent 2008; Bryant 2006; Day 2006; Ní Laoire 2005; Hubbard 2004; McDowell 2003; Herod 2000; Jackson 1994). This growing area of place-centric research can be further expanded through empirical investigations into

how masculinities are being mediated and slowly transformed by neoliberalism and the ideals it promotes.

NEOLIBERALISM AND GEOGRAPHY

Academic research pertaining to neoliberalism has seen a marked increase dating as far back as the mid-1990s, which is reflected in the amount of studies focusing on the escalating roles that free enterprise and global market forces play in shaping society (Larner et al. 2013; Peck 2011; Samson 2010; Kimmel et al. 2004; Larner 2003; Mac an Ghaill 1996; Jackson 1991). Neoliberalism, broadly, is the term typically ascribed to the constellation of socioeconomic and politico-cultural relations that have become the status quo during the post-Keynesian era. This period has largely been marked by the intensification of economic liberalism, along with a rise in pro-capitalist, sociopolitical theories that largely promote privatization, deregulation, and a purported ‘opening up’ of markets (Peck 2011; Hubbard 2004; Herod 2000; Larner 2003). Neoliberalism can therefore be explained as a philosophy purporting to promote ‘free trade, open borders, and less government,’ which argues ‘the marketplace’ will expand consumer-citizen sovereignty.

More recent studies critiquing neoliberalism are now suggesting that its rationales, in addition to generating a multifaceted web of highly managed international economic policies, are also a governing logic shaping cultural norms, assembling new ‘regimes-of-truths’, and establishing their own hegemonic discourses (Springer 2012; Lemke 2001). Feminist, poststructuralist, queer, crip, and critical race theorists have also applied the notion of neoliberal discourse to the politics of identity, alterity, and recognition, as well as processes of subjectifications, by interrogating the influence of neoliberalism in relation to the spatialized reproduction of racial hierarchies, capitalist exploitation, heteronormative gender orders, ableist exclusions, and structural violence (Springer 2012; Roberts and Mahtani 2010; Van Hoven and Horschelmann 2005). In focusing on the spatiality of these relationships, critical scholars are making important contributions to theories of gender by highlighting how the impacts of neoliberalism are emplaced, situated, and inherently geographical, in addition to being embodied (Pain 2014; Joronen 2013; Peck 2011; Roberts and Mahtani 2010).

Thus, for critical social theorists looking at neoliberalism as a ‘technology of power’ (Foucault 2010), we are confronted with the question: What,

then, is produced by the interlocking relationship of neoliberal discourse, gender, and place? In many cases there is evidence to suggest that neoliberal governmentality disciplines subjects into consenting to more acute forms of surveillance and control that covertly exacerbate already-existing arrangements of oppression, exclusion, and privilege (Springer 2012; Roberts and Mahtani 2010; Dean 2008; Marcos 2002). Concurring with this perspective, my chapter thus takes up the task of illustrating how neoliberal discourse is accelerating market-centric notions of ‘manhood’ in rural Southeast Kansas, as well as magnifying the seemingly prosaic configurations of exploitation and privilege that working-class men are at once complicit with, compromised by, benefiting from, and subordinated to.

In stating this, I should be clear in saying that I am not arguing that hard work and rugged individualism are new signifiers of hegemonic masculinity being brought on by neoliberalism. There exists a great deal of literature underscoring how these characteristics have been attributed to masculinity in colonial and capitalist societies dating well back into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Campbell et al. 2006; Kimmel et al. 2004; Kimmel 1996; Mac an Ghaill 1996). Rather, I am suggesting that neoliberal discourse is pushing the prevailing ideals surrounding rural, working-class masculinities in distinctively market-oriented directions. In this way my study adds to the niche of critical scholarship addressing masculinity and embodiment by articulating how the practice of neoliberal self-making is reshaping the assertion of manhood for working-class men in rural Southeast Kansas.

CONTEXT, METHODS, DATA COLLECTION

For the project I moved back to Southeast Kansas to live near my former hometown of approximately 600 people and once again experience the rhythms of everyday life in rural America. The community where the research was located is set among sprawling agrarian countryside and maintains, as several participants noted, a stereotypical ‘slow pace of life.’ The area is situated in an economically depressed region of the central USA lying just outside the western cusp of the Ozark Mountains. The majority of the participants’ incomes were dependent on large-scale industrial agriculture and livestock production, as well as employment in the hydraulic fracturing, construction, manufacturing, and transportation sectors of the economy. During my nine months in the field I conducted 60 in-depth interviews,

held eight focus groups (each with five informants), and recorded daily field notes as a participant-observer (i.e. farmhand).² In responding to specific questions I developed for demographic information during individual interviews, participants all noted being 'local/from the country,' as well as 'white/Caucasian', 'heterosexual', 'Catholic' or 'Christian', and 'working' or 'middle' class, with their ages ranging from 19 to 77.

As I was raised in the area, obtaining access simply consisted of a few upfront conversations with friends-of-friends about the nature of my project, after which I found myself regularly, yet informally, working for a local farmer. The arrangement we made was that I could conduct research in the way of participant-observer (i.e. 'hanging out and pitching in here and there') in exchange for a bit of manual labour, which primarily consisted of day-to-day physical upkeep of his farming/cattle operation. He had agreed to let me 'tag along' regardless of whether I worked or not, but I felt it more appropriate to offer and contribute. The chores I was tasked with included the necessary maintenance needed to keep his 'small rural enterprise running like a well oiled machine.' The bulk of my activities consisted of mending fences (electric and barbed wire), feeding cattle, bush-hogging (mowing pastures), bucking hay, applying chemicals to unwanted weeds/shrubs/bushes/trees/etc., burning brush/trash, as well as planting, fertilizing, and harvesting fields of wheat, corn, and soybeans. As the nature of the work was primarily manual, and not overly technical, I received little other than quick hands-on training and refreshers of how to use tools and equipment, most of which I had used during my youth, teenage years, and early 20s while living in the area (e.g. driving tractors and loaders/forklifts, using chainsaws, pump-action/pressurized sprayers, air compressors, 'crimpers' [to fix fences], and mixing chemicals).

I was not paid a formal wage; rather, I was allowed to be present during the day-to-day regularities, movements, and conversations that took place on his, as well as other, farms and at local meeting places (e.g. hardware stores, banks, bars, butcher shops, pharmacies, sale barns (cattle), churches, 'mom and pop'/'greasy spoon' restaurants, gas stations, convenience stores, and cafes). I was also compensated through what essentially unfolded as mutual aid, which meant that in several instances I was quite generously offered 'fresh, homegrown beef' (e.g. cuts of meat, steaks, ground hamburger, and ribs) to share with my family, purchased lunch nearly every Friday (generally at a Mexican restaurant in a slightly more populous neighboring town ['big enough to have stoplights']), and occasionally handed 10 or 20 dollars for 'fuel', 'my trouble', or 'the hassle' (i.e. gas

money for the time it took to get from place to place as I was traveling across the countryside for several miles everyday). In essence, the arrangement was one of reciprocal support, gift exchange, and equal benefit, in addition to being a sharing of knowledge, conversation, and rapport as I got to know more about my 'boss' and his community network ('all the local folks'), and he got to know more about me, the nature of my curiosities, and even had a 'helping hand to kick around with.'

Over the course of my time in the field, I occupied a liminal insider-outsider position, meaning that I benefited from differing degrees of 'insiderness' or 'outsiderness' depending on the places I was in, as well as who I was around (Butz and Besio 2009). More precisely, there were several instances when my status as a 'local boy' was blurred as a result of my role as a researcher. This dynamic meant that my standing with participants was in a constant state of flux, as was evidenced in the fact that some of the interviews I conducted elicited forthright and blunt statements owing to participants' familiarity with me, but in other circumstances our conversations were tentative and hesitant because many of the informants also realized I knew several people in the community. Despite the inevitable murkiness that ensued as a result of my indistinct role as a researcher returning home, I was able to tease out a host of tendencies and aberrations about masculinity from the empirical data I gathered. Some of the major themes that arose on analyzing my transcriptions and field notes pertained to being 'guys from the country', a label also largely tied to participants' perceived notions of being a 'hard worker,' 'competitive,' and worthy of 'respect.' Socially conservative viewpoints were also espoused quite extensively, as participants widely cited 'traditional values' and a generational work ethic as a source of pride. This dynamic is similar to that in other studies on masculinity, suggesting that the ability to be a 'hard worker' within the realms of labour, athletics, history, politics, fathering, and family carries significant meaning for men (Pease 2010; Pini 2008; Little 2006; Ní Laoire 2005; Parr et al. 2004; Kimmel 1996).

While the research I conducted in rural Southeast Kansas echoes similar findings, one unassuming yet ubiquitous factor attributed to working-class masculinity that emerged was the emphasis placed on the link that masculinity has with 'succeeding in the market.' The men I spoke with intimated that being a 'hard worker' in and of itself is no longer enough. Rather, they noted that 'hard work' must now be coupled with innovation and entrepreneurialism, which in turn was evaluated by being able to 'turn a profit,' 'reduce company costs,' and 'help the bottom line.' Put differently, what

surfaced in my interviews is that, despite being exposed to the socially conservative views I expected, I also ran into the fact that rural working-class masculinity in the area is being *neoliberalized*. The following sections will thus examine the social construction of masculinity in rural Southeast Kansas and how notions of ‘manhood’ are gradually being reforged by neoliberalism. The chapter proceeds by interrogating the ways in which, both materially and discursively, men embody masculinity in the face of the neoliberal self-making practices of entrepreneurialization, self-commodification, fragmentation, and responsabilization.

ENTREPRENEURIALIZATION AND SELF-COMMODIFICATION

Entrepreneurialization relates to the pressures that people face to monetize their capabilities, passions, and desires for the goal of financial self-capitalization, and the accumulation of profit and individual recognition (Sparke 2012). In rural Kansas, one’s status as a ‘man’ is intimately tied to the practice of personal ‘work ethic,’ particularly in regard to being a ‘provider.’ While this is neither unique nor new to many conceptualizations of hegemonic masculinity, what is interesting about this phenomenon in contemporary settings is how entrepreneurship is increasingly being attached to notions of both work ethic and manhood. Throughout my conversations with participants, common characteristics that all the men stressed as being important in terms of ‘being a man’ as well as having a ‘good work ethic’ included having a ‘bootstraps’ mentality, ‘not freeloading,’ ‘not taking hand-outs,’ ‘being the earner of the family,’ and ‘contributing to the economy.’ This focus on market-centered breadwinning is largely tied to attaining waged labour, capitalist production, and what many of the participants referred to as ‘earning a paycheck.’ Again, while these statements are not pathbreaking with regard to gender theory, uniquely emergent is that most of the working-class men I interviewed also quite readily discussed the importance of ‘staying on top of the market,’ being seen as a ‘financial asset,’ and striving to become more ‘innovative/productive’ in the workplace. In short, the conversations we had surrounding ‘work ethic’ were emblematic of time-honored notions surrounding hegemonic masculinities; however, they also provide novel insight into how working-class masculinities are being neoliberalized because of the focus that the participants had regarding entrepreneurial self-commodification, as well as their continual references to a (perceived-to-be) naturally existing, inescapable ‘market.’

Accordingly, as the vast majority of all participants I interviewed had spent at least some of their childhood or adolescent years in the country ‘working fields/cattle/hogs/etc.’ (e.g. on farms, bucking hay, fixing fences, tending to/castrating livestock, or doing maintenance on farm equipment), they maintained that ‘hard work’ was cultivated in rural areas, was part of the community’s tradition, and, more tellingly in terms of neoliberal logic, was something that served them well when ‘entering the market.’ This was evident in a variety of statements of most participants, and summed up aptly by Bruce, a 46-year-old who noted:

Growing up out in the country you learn what hard work is when you are young. Hell, we were probably doing chores from the time we could walk. When we got to junior high and high school we would go help out in the fields . . . it was backbreaking work, but I will tell you what—we were all better for it. It kept our priorities straight, we learned the value of a dollar, and we could go to sleep at night knowing we were earning our keep. ‘Round here, guys know how to ‘man-up’ and put in a good days work. It pays off for them in the end too. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that the fellas who worked the hardest growing up end up owning land, knowing to how manage their money, and can turn a profit. Something to be said for that given how the world, and market, operates nowadays.

Bruce’s account sheds light on how longstanding disciplinary capitalist exercises of ‘learning the value of a dollar,’ ‘earning one’s keep,’ managing money, and owning land have become, and continue to remain, normalized rites of passage for men in Southeast Kansas. More revealingly, though, is his statement about accumulating profit in relation to global processes and the ‘market,’ which subtly, yet distinctively, exposes a neoliberalizing tendency in masculine subjectification, particularly in how it is intimately linked to the practices that male bodies perform in rural spaces and how such actions are reaffirmed as being an inherent part of ‘growing up out in the country.’ This ‘growing up’ in a rural area is subsequently applied to how the lessons learned from working in the countryside serve as a foundation and catalyst for later (neoliberal) success in an ever intensifying capitalist global economy.

In defining ‘neoliberal’ I am proposing that neoliberalism is not only an arrangement of free trade economic policies regulating finance and industry but also that it produces ways of thinking, doing, and being that condition people to understand social relations as discrete, individual choices that exist

in an omnipresent global market (Fraser 2013; Peck 2011; Dean 2008; Marcos 2002; Lemke 2001). This contrasts with classical liberalism, which suggests that while the world does indeed contain markets, operating outside of non-monetized social interaction (e.g. being involved in family life, getting an education, participating in government, practicing religion, and engaging in leisure activities) can also constitute life, albeit one in which people are reified as *Homo oeconomicus* ('economic man'). In other words, classical liberalism posits that life comprises individual, economically rational choices, some of which involve making the decision to participate (i.e. 'succeed' or 'fail') in markets. Neoliberalism's regime-of-truth, on the other hand, argues that life is essentially a series of transitions from one economic transaction to the next, that the world itself is nothing more than a market, and that the only choices individuals have with regard to life are how they respond to the incentives and disincentives of said world/market. Strictly speaking, then, since there is no escaping the world/market, people must *entrepreneurialize* themselves and commodify their talents and passions in order to survive in it.

This imposition of capitalist social relations can be seen in the most banal of everyday interactions. This is because neoliberal metaphors seep into commonplace occurrences on a day-to-day basis—for example, 'pulling yourself up by your bootstraps,' 'business as usual,' 'a rising tide lifts all boats,' 'competing to win,' and 'letting the market decide'. Statements such as these are hallmarks of neoliberal discourse and entrench individualistic notions of what life's goals should, as well as *can*, be. Comments of this nature made their way into the vast majority of the conversations I had as several participants noted that 'success/profit,' 'achievement,' 'competition,' 'pride of ownership,' and having an 'entrepreneurial spirit' were important qualities to have. They also avowed that these characteristics were part of being a 'man', and ultimately were ways in which one could 'earn respect.' An instance of this is reflected by Gary, a 52-year-old rancher, who, while driving me around the countryside and showing me the land and cattle he owned, stated:

These [cattle] are basically my bank account. Running a farm and owning property is the same as managing any other business. I work hard at it, and it takes a lot of smarts to make it in today's economy. I actually think it's a little more work for a guy to make a profit running a farm than it is for a paper-pusher in a business suit [laughs]. We don't quite get the credit they do, but I'm basically running a successful commercial enterprise out here in the

countryside . . . I know how to make money, and I get to live the American Dream while doing it. I also know how to put my land to use. Nowadays a guy's got to learn to do that. Hell, some of it I use for ranching, some of it I plant on, some of it I lease, and some of it I even rent out to rich city guys who want to come down here and play 'hunter' on their vacations. They pay a pretty penny to do that shit, and I'm more than willing to let them. You see, I had to diversify my land . . . I got pretty innovative with it and now it's turning a profit for me.

The neoliberal ambitions expressed in this comment, and ultimately the link they have with settler colonialism, masculinity, capitalism, and nationalism, are distinctly entrepreneurial and illustrate how the work performed in rural settings is deeply meaningful, yet mediated by market-oriented notions of success and intelligence.

In addition to his nationalistic sentiments regarding the 'American Dream,' particularly telling about Gary's testimony is just how neoliberalized discourses in the area have become. This is highlighted in his description of colonially appropriated rural land and how he is 'managing it as a business,' 'diversifying it,' has gotten 'innovative with it,' and has transformed it into a 'commercial enterprise' that is 'turning a profit.' Assertions such as these were not uncommon among the participants, whether about land or themselves (i.e. self-commodification). This is underscored by the several instances in which the participants also stated that they frequently thought about, and discussed, ways in which they could 'capitalize' on the hard work they did, as well as the land and possessions they owned.

Market subjectivities such as the ones above were observable in the statements of many of the men I spoke with, which in addition to exposing how masculinity is being neoliberalized also elicit understandings of how rural, working-class masculinity remains tied to ongoing colonialism and settler nationalism. This was evident in how the occupations of many of the men (e.g. hydraulic fracturing, heavy equipment operation, highway/bridge/building construction, automechanical, trucking and transportation, factory work, logging, carpentry, and farming) were described on several occasions as the type of work that 'the country was founded upon,' as 'what keeps the economy going,' and as what 'is good for all Americans.'

FRAGMENTATION AND RESPONSIBILIZATION

Fragmentation involves the withholding of one's thoughts, time, and even presence for the purpose of eventually selling them at a given rate. It also involves drawing boundaries around and marketing personal skills and assets (i.e. 'branding of the self') for the intended purpose of 'separating yourself from the pack' in order to attain profit, status, or recognition (Sparke 2012). In describing their jobs, many participants pointed out that the labour they performed was 'not for everyone,' that it 'separates the men from the boys,' and being in their line of work meant one should 'not be afraid to get their hands dirty.' They often followed up by describing their mentalities as 'blue-collar,' 'lunch pail,' and 'roll-up-your-sleeves,' and all argued that the jobs they performed demanded someone who 'took pride in what they did.' In making these statements many often specified that there was underappreciated economic value in their efforts, acumen, and skills, which is reflected by the fact that several stated that other people, and even co-workers, 'can't do what I do.' In this regard the participants' perspectives surrounding their status as exploited labourers having surplus value extracted from them was readily acknowledged. However, their general disposition in regard to workplace relationships was not oriented towards class/race/gender solidarity and common struggle. Rather, much of what was spoken about in terms of the working environments that the participants found themselves in was dominated by reflections about the pressures and anxieties they felt to prove that they were productive individuals who, as many stated, 'were worth keeping around.'

Many, but not all, of the participants also confessed to being less inclined to take time out of their shift to support a co-worker because it disrupted their own productivity and they needed to prove to the 'bossman' (or 'brass') that they were distinctly a 'hard worker,' as well as irreplaceable. Several disclosed 'just not having the time to worry about everyone else.' This dynamic, that of becoming competitive, anxiety-riddled, and making sure to 'cover my own ass,' was iterated countless times and often elevated above the practice of mutuality, interdependence, and camaraderie, despite the fact that collaboration and cooperation among workers might otherwise benefit the whole company through overall productivity, as well as a more healthy workforce. This contradiction was not lost on several of the participants, as numerous of them noted that it was 'bullshit' that their bosses told them that 'teamwork' was essential because when it came down to it, as one participant affirmed, 'you know god damn well that you're being watched

individually . . . and they'll find ways to "can your ass" [fire you] if you start missing days 'cause you're hurt or sick.'

This is not to say that every instance of the participants' lives were dictated by alienating, market-centric, survival-of-the-fittest practices, as there was a great deal of affinity, friendship, and fraternal bonds expressed by the men, particularly with regard to leisure (e.g. sports, cars, hunting, fishing, and even commiserating about their jobs), as well as family (e.g. fathering, religious practices, home renovation projects, yard maintenance, rites of passage). What neoliberal notions of work ethic and efficiency often produce for working-class men, then, is a fragmented sense of being in which 'pulling your weight' and embodying competitive self-reliance is given precedence over collective unity, mutual aid, and even personal/community wellbeing. This occurs despite the paradoxical fact that an environment of cooperation may actually lead to potential boosts in efficiency and output, as well as health. As a consequence, many of the participants reproduced social fragmentation by complaining about, and negatively critiquing, their co-workers more often than their bosses, managers, or even capitalist economic systems as a whole.

These fractured social relations disconcertingly mirror the infamous neoliberal decree of the former British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher, who stated: 'there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women. . . ' (Margaret Thatcher Foundation 2014). This interpretation of society (or rather, entire dismissal of it) negates any recognition of underlying systemic relationships by omitting the exploitative forces of capitalism that marginalize multitudes of people at both cultural and institutional levels, in favor of blaming victims and *responsibilizing* individuals for the hardships they endure. Responsibilization is the process of framing the social conditions that individuals or groups face as the accumulative result of their individual choices, which negates a recognition of systemic forces at play (Ong 2006). Sentiments such as these were also carried forward by men in Southeast Kansas who readily made statements about poor, often racialized (but also other white, working-class) people needing to 'quit being so lazy,' 'stop expecting hand-outs,' and 'stop blaming everyone else for the problems they have.' Perspectives like these erase any structural analysis that may be offered for the institutional barriers that others are facing, further divide the working class via lateral hostility and claims to racial superiority, thereby entrenching individualistic behaviours as necessary and natural.

The liberal ambitions mentioned by the participants in relation to work ethic also shed light on how masculine subject positions have become linked to capitalist economies. While I should like to steer away from archetypes and generalizations in terms of theorizing masculinity in the area, it became conspicuously clear that in Southeast Kansas, work ethic and paid employment provide opportunities for men to define themselves as competitive, skilled, independent, and even entrepreneurial. As reflected above, of the many values stressed by participants, ‘being competitive’ and ‘preparing yourself for the market’ featured prominently. One 34-year-old, George, believed that his financial stability and ‘success’ in life were attributable to being raised in a competitive household, which he illustrated by pronouncing:

Everything we did was competitive . . . we were taught to win, we were taught to push hard, we were taught to be better than the other guy. I mean, everybody likes to win, it’s in our blood. I know I work hard in all I do, and if a guy sticks with it long enough, eventually all that hard work will pay off. Learning to compete prepared me to make it. Competition is an important life lesson to learn, especially when it comes to surviving in today’s economy.

When asked whether he thought any form of privilege (race, class, gender, ablebodiedness, religion, citizenship etc.) was a factor in any of his success, George responded by declaring: ‘No one gave me shit, I worked my ass off for all I have . . . never complained, never was on welfare, never asked for a damned hand-out.’ These narratives, which exalt the capacity to work hard as an individual in order to attain success in the arena of free enterprise, while concurrently denying the systemic exclusions and privileges that result from capitalism, colonialism, and patriarchal social relations, further reinforce neoliberal logic by depoliticizing social relations and reducing human interaction to disintegrated individual acts and isolated personal decisions (Razack 2002).

CONCLUSION

In returning to the question posed at the beginning of the chapter pertaining to what is produced by the nexus of neoliberal discourse, gender, and place, my research in Southeast Kansas sheds light on how notions and practices of hegemonic masculinity, neoliberal self-making, and rurality are recursive and mutually constitute one another, as well as normalize individualistic and hierarchical social orders. The empirical evidence I draw on also

demonstrates that trying to tease out what working-class masculinity in rural Southeast Kansas determinedly is remains a dubious, indeterminate, and context-dependent task. Nonetheless, readily apparent from the data is that neoliberal logics are affecting working-class men not only in terms of the privilege and enablement they have been historically and still are socially afforded, but also in terms of their experiencing intensifications in political alienation and economic exploitation at the same time.

From one vantage point, they are facing subordination in new ways as a result of how they are situated within ever-liberalizing, capitalist class relations, meaning that their earning power, livelihoods, and traditionally-granted cultural notions of masculine currency are being destabilized owing to declines in industrial production and a rise in the service and technology sector, which desires workers from the formally educated/credentialed and professional-managerial class. From another vantage point, neoliberal policies and practices are refashioning masculinity in ways that further entrench the material and symbolic dividends afforded to (normative) men over other social groups (e.g. women, migrant labour, racialized workers, queer folks, transgender people, and disabled people) through the continued propagation of the idea that 'men' are more equipped to, and must, be individualistic, hard-working, and self-reliant. The expectation emerging is that these characteristics should now be embodied in more entrepreneurial, capitalocentric, and profit-oriented ways.

To end, the realities that this research points to indicate that there are indeed neoliberalizing tendencies operating in rural Southeast Kansas, which are simultaneously reasserting rigidly hierarchical gender orders and promoting market-anchored subjectivities that both compromise and enable men. The situation that rural working-class men in particular currently face with regard to masculinity and geography is thus one in which they are reaping both the luxuries and anxieties that neoliberal reason has sown. And while many aspects of the status quo in rural Kansas are explained away as 'natural' (consequently allowing interlocking oppressions to continue in an unfettered and unchecked manner), there also remains room for confronting and contesting these marginalizing and exploitative forces, principally through resisting the discourses and practices of both sexism and neoliberalism. In light of what this research exposes, then, it becomes evident that struggling against and abandoning neoliberal logics and patriarchal mindsets will not only create more harmonious social relations with others, but also contribute to the overall wellbeing of working-class men themselves.

NOTES

1. Southeast Kansas is the colonial name of a region found within the ancestral territories of the Osage Nation. It is used throughout this chapter because it is the commonly referred to vernacular region of the area, as well as chosen descriptor of all the people who were part of the research project.
2. Participants have been given aliases. Ethics for this project was issued on behalf of the University of British Columbia's Behavioural Research Ethics Board: H11-02552.

REFERENCES

- Abrahamsson, S., & Simpson, P. (2011). The limits of the body: Boundaries, capacities, thresholds. *Social and Cultural Geography*, *12*, 331–338.
- Aitken, S. (2012). Young men's violence and spaces of addiction: Opening up the locker room. *Social and Cultural Geography*, *13*, 127–143.
- Alston, M., & Kent, J. (2008). The big dry: The link between rural masculinities and poor health outcomes for farming men. *Journal of Sociology*, *44*, 133–147.
- Anderson, E. (2009). *Inclusive masculinities: The changing nature of masculinity*. London: Routledge.
- Beasley, C. (2008). Rethinking hegemonic masculinity in a globalizing world. *Men and Masculinities*, *11*, 86–103.
- Binnie, J., & Valentine, G. (1999). Geographies of sexuality – A review of progress. *Progress in Human Geography*, *23*, 175–187.
- Brook, B. (1999). *Feminist perspectives on the body*. London: Pearson Education.
- Browne, K. (2006). Challenging queer geographies. *Antipode*, *38*, 885–893.
- Bryant, L. (2006). Marking the occupational body: Young women and men seeking careers in agriculture. *Rural Society*, *16*, 62–79.
- Bryant, L., & Garnham, B. (2015). The fallen hero: Masculinity, shame and farmer suicide in Australia. *Gender, Place and Culture*, *22*, 67–82.
- Butler, J. (1990). *Gender trouble: Feminism and the subversion of identity*. London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter: On the discursive limits of 'sex'*. New York/London: Routledge.
- Butler, J. (2004). *Undoing gender*. New York: Routledge.
- Butz, D., & Besio, K. (2009). Autoethnography. *Geography Compass*, *3*, 1660–1674.
- Campbell, H., Bell, M., & Finney, M. (Eds.). (2006). *Country boys: Masculinity and rural life*. University Park: Penn State Press.
- Collier, R. (1998). *Masculinities, crime and criminology*. London: Sage.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Sydney: Allen and Unwin.

- Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2005). Change among the gatekeepers: Men, masculinities, and gender equality in the global arena. *Signs*, 30, 1801–1825.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender and Society*, 19, 829–859.
- Cowen, D., & Siciliano, A. (2011). Surplus masculinities and security. *Antipode*, 43, 1516–1541.
- Day, K. (2006). Being feared: Masculinity and race in public space. *Environment and Planning A*, 38, 569–586.
- Dean, J. (2008). Enjoying neoliberalism. *Cultural Politics*, 4, 47–72.
- Demetriou, D. Z. (2001). Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity: A critique. *Theory and Society*, 30, 337–361.
- Dixon, D., & Grimes, J. (2004). Capitalism, masculinity and whiteness in the dialectical landscape: The case of Tarzan and the Tycoon. *GeoJournal*, 59, 265–275.
- Edley, N., & Wetherall, M. (1996). Masculinity, power and identity. In M. Mac an Ghail (Ed.), *Understanding masculinities*. Buckingham: OUP.
- Foucault, M. (1977). *Discipline and punish: The birth of the prison*. Toronto: Random House of Canada.
- Foucault, M. (2010). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the College de France (1978–9)* (trans: Burchell, G.) M. Senellart (Ed.) 1st picador paperback edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Fraser, N. (2013). *Fortunes of feminism: From state-managed capitalism to neoliberal crisis*. New York: Verso Books.
- Gorman-Murray, A. (2009). Intimate mobilities: Emotional embodiment and queer migration. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 10, 441–460.
- Gorman-Murray, A. (2014). Twentysomethings and twentagers: Subjectivities, spaces and young men at home. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 22(3), 1–18.
- Gorman-Murray, A., & Hopkins, P. (Eds.). (2014). *Masculinities and place*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, Ltd.
- Gregson, N., & Rose, G. (2000). Taking Butler elsewhere: Performativities, spatialities and subjectivities. *Environment and Planning D*, 18, 433–452.
- Grosz, E. (1994). *Volatile bodies: Towards a corporeal feminism*. St. Leonards: Allen and Unwin.
- Hearn, J. (2004). From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men. *Feminist Theory*, 5, 49–72.
- Herod, A. (2000). Workers and workplaces in a neoliberal global economy. *Environment and Planning A*, 32, 1781–1790.
- Hopkins, P., & Noble, G. (2009). Masculinities in place: Situated identities, relations and intersectionality. *Social and Cultural Geography*, 10, 811–819.

- Hopkins, P., & Pain, R. (2007). Geographies of age: Thinking relationally. *Area*, 39, 287–294.
- Hubbard, P. (2004). Revenge and injustice in the neoliberal city: Uncovering masculinist agendas. *Antipode*, 36, 665–686.
- Jackson, P. (1991). The cultural politics of masculinity: Towards a social geography. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 16, 199–213.
- Jackson, P. (1994). Black male: Advertising and the cultural politics of masculinity. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 1, 49–59.
- Joronen, M. (2013). Conceptualising new modes of state governmentality: Power, violence and the ontological mono-politics of neoliberalism. *Geopolitics*, 18, 356–370.
- Kidd, B. (2013). Sports and masculinity. *Sport in Society*, 16, 553–564.
- Kimmel, M. (1996). *Manhood in America*. New York: Free Press.
- Kimmel, M., Hearn, J., & Connell, R. W. (Eds.). (2004). *Handbook of studies on men and masculinities*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Knopp, L. (1992). Sexuality and the spatial dynamics of capitalism. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 10, 651–669.
- Larner, W. (2003). Neoliberalism? *Environment and Planning D*, 21, 509–512.
- Larner, W., Fannin, M., MacLeavy, J., & Wang, W. W. (2013). New times, new spaces: Gendered transformations of governance, economy, and citizenship. *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society*, 20, 157–164.
- Lawler, S. (2008). *Identity: Sociological perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Lemke, T. (2001). The birth of bio-politics: Michael Foucault's lectures at the College de France on neo-liberal governmentality. *Economy and Society*, 30, 190–207.
- Lewis, N. M. (2013). Beyond binary places: The social and spatial dynamics of coming out in Canada. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 12(2), 305–330.
- Little, J. (2006). Embodiment and rural masculinity. In H. Campbell, M. Bell, & M. Finney (Eds.), *Country boys: Masculinity and rural life*. University Park: Penn State Press.
- Little, J., & Leyshon, M. (2003). Embodied rural geographies: Developing research agendas. *Progress in Human Geography*, 27, 257–272.
- Longhurst, R. (1997). (Dis)embodied geographies. *Progress in Human Geography*, 21, 486–501.
- Longhurst, R. (2000). Geography and gender: Masculinities, male identity and men. *Progress in Human Geography*, 24, 439–444.
- Mac an Ghaill, M. (Ed.). (1996). *Understanding masculinities: Social relations and cultural arenas*. Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- Marcos, S. (2002). *Our word is our weapon: Selected writings*. New York: Seven Stories Press.

- Margaret Thatcher Foundation. (2014). Margaret Thatcher interviewed by Douglas Keay for *Woman's Own*. <http://www.margaretthatcher.org/document/106689>. Accessed 29 Apr 2015.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities: Employment change and white working-class youth*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McInnes, J. (1998). *The end of masculinity: The confusion of sexual genesis and sexual difference in modern society*. Buckingham: OUP.
- Myrdahl, T. M. (2013). Ordinary (small) cities and LGBQ lives. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies*, 12, 279–304.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2002). Young farmers, masculinities and change in rural Ireland. *Irish Geography*, 35, 16–27.
- Ní Laoire, C. (2005). “You’re not a man at all!”: Masculinity, responsibility and staying on the land in contemporary Ireland. *Irish Journal of Sociology*, 14(2), 94–104.
- Nunn, N. (2013). ‘It can be dangerous for the uterus’: Hegemonic masculinity and cooperative recycling in São Paulo, Brazil. *Gender, Place and Culture*, 20(6), 1–17.
- Ong, A. (2006). *Neoliberalism as exception: Mutations in citizenship and sovereignty*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Pain, R. (2014). Everyday terrorism connecting domestic violence and global terrorism. *Progress in Human Geography*, 38(4), 531–550.
- Parr, H., Philo, C., & Burns, N. (2004). Social geographies of rural mental health: Experiencing inclusions and exclusions. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 29, 401–419.
- Pease, B. (2010). Reconstructing violent rural masculinities: Responding to fractures in the rural gender order in Australia. *Culture, Society and Masculinities*, 2(2), 154–164.
- Peck, J. (2011). *Constructions of neoliberal reason*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pini, B. (2008). *Masculinities and management in agricultural organizations worldwide*. Aldershot: Ashgate.
- Pollard, J. (2013). Gendering capital financial crisis, financialization and (an agenda for) economic geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(3), 403–423.
- Razack, S. (Ed.). (2002). *Race, space, and the law: Unmapping a white settler society*. Toronto: Between the Lines.
- Roberts, D. J., & Mahtani, M. (2010). Neoliberalizing race, racing neoliberalism: Placing “race” in neoliberal discourses. *Antipode*, 42, 248–257.
- Rose, G. (1993). *Feminism and geography*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Samson, M. (2010). Producing privatization: Re-articulating race, gender, class and space. *Antipode*, 42(2), 404–432.
- Simonsen, K. (2013). In quest of a new humanism embodiment, experience and phenomenology as critical geography. *Progress in Human Geography*, 37(1), 10–26.

- Smith, A., & Stenning, A. (2010). Social justice and neoliberalism: Global perspectives. *Journal of Economic Geography*, 10, 481–483.
- Sparke, M. (2012). *Introducing Globalization: Ties, tensions, and uneven integration*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
- Springer, S. (2012). Neoliberalism as discourse: Between Foucauldian political economy and Marxian poststructuralism. *Critical Discourse Studies*, 9(2), 133–147.
- van Hoven, B., & Horschelmann, K. (2005). *Spaces of masculinities*. New York: Routledge.
- Whitehead, S. M. (1998). Hegemonic masculinity revisited. *Organizations*, 6, 58–62.

Working-Class Masculinities at the Nexus of Work, Family and Intimacy in the Age of Neoliberalism: Or, Are the Times Really A-Changin’?

Kirsty Whitman

INTRODUCTION

Neoliberal discourses are becoming increasingly pervasive in Australia. Constructions of the individualistic citizen, a meritocratic social and economic order, and personal responsibility have become ‘mainstream’ common-sense knowledge (Howson 2006). Politically, the acceptance of neoliberalism as the prevailing discursive ‘truth’ has allowed for widespread market deregulation, a weakening of the social safety net—and the continual stigmatization of those members of Australian society who rely on the welfare system—and changes to industrial relations policy. Changes in the labour market have seen employment opportunities for working-class men increasingly shift from largely traditional modes of blue-collar labour (including manufacturing and semiskilled trades) to service sector work, as explored by Roberts (2013). Such labour market shifts are common in postindustrialized societies. However, the Australian experience of labour-market deregulation and the increasing hegemony of neoliberal discourse

K. Whitman (✉)
University of Adelaide, Adelaide, SA, Australia

are different from other postindustrial societies in several ways. First, Australia has thus far weathered the Global Financial Crisis relatively well, in part owing to a robust resource sector. Furthermore, Australia has a unique relationship with working-class masculinity, one that has allowed mainstream discursive constructions of such to shift and adapt to neoliberal discourse. Working-class masculinity occupies a position of hegemony in Australia (Beasley 2008; Whitman 2013), allowing for it both to be absorbed by and to absorb neoliberal discourse. This chapter will explore this, considering the hegemony of working-class masculinities (for they are both multiple and changeable), and the neoliberalism embedded within mainstream cultural and political manifestations of them. The main focus of this chapter will rely on both theoretical and empirical research, undertaken during the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis. This research showed that in terms of engagement with discursive constructions of working-class masculinities, working-class men largely ‘stuck to the script’ in their relations with and to the labour market. However, normative gendered dichotomies were more likely to be either challenged or disrupted within the private sphere of the home, the family and intimate relationships. Using these data, the chapter will explore this phenomenon and deconstruct the way in which an increasingly neoliberal labour market may actually be seeing progressive shifts occur in the ways that people ‘do’ and ‘undo’ gender and class in the private sphere (Lyonette and Crompton 2015).

WORKING-CLASS MASCULINITY IN AUSTRALIA: CONTEXTUALIZING HEGEMONY, INDUSTRIAL CHANGE, THE ‘PRIVATE SPHERE’ AND EMOTION WORK

With the focus of this chapter being on how working-class men engage with working-class masculinity in Australia in relation to neoliberal industrial change and involvement in the emotion work of the ‘private sphere’, it is necessary to unpack the complexities around this area of inquiry. Before looking at the data supporting a claim that men may be finding new spaces in which to ‘do’ gender and class, I want to engage with the theoretical frameworks around which working-class masculinity can be defined as hegemonic, ongoing changes to the Australian industrial landscape, the role of the ‘private sphere’ and the theoretical construction of ‘emotion work’.

I have previously argued that, in Australia, a very narrowly constructed (white, heterosexual, aspirational) working-class masculinity occupies a position of considerable hegemony, one that is both coercive and achieves consent, not only about what it means to be an Australian man but about what it means to be the ideal Australian citizen (Whitman 2013, 2014). Within masculinity studies, the theory of hegemonic masculinity is one of the most widely debated. This theoretical construct is, however, important to this chapter in terms of the argument that working-class masculinity does occupy a socially and culturally hegemonic position *in some spaces*. While it may not occupy a position of hegemony in all spaces, even in those where it does not, it is still complicit. Complicity and hegemony are closely intertwined. Australian working-class masculinity operates between hegemony and complicity, in a constant state of what Gramsci defines as ‘unstable equilibria’ (1971: 182). Like all such discursive constructions, working-class masculinities are never static but shift in terms of practice, being and process. Whether it is occupying a position of hegemony, or complicitly working class, masculinity is always ubiquitous in relation to an increasingly neoliberal Australian national identity in a way that helps configure the hegemony of masculinity itself. Raewyn Connell argues that

At any given time, one form of masculinity rather than others is culturally exalted. Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women. (1995: 77)

Connell’s definition of hegemonic masculinity as the answer to the ‘legitimacy of patriarchy’ is a key theoretical concept, albeit a highly contested one (Demetriou 2001; Beasley 2008). The hegemony of working-class masculinity and its legitimacy bolsters neoliberal discourse and supports a neoliberal social, political and economic paradigm. It is how hegemonic identities, *as discourse as well as practices*, create spaces in which neoliberalism is ‘common sense’ (e.g. in most workplaces) and yet is simultaneously challenged (e.g. in the gendered structures within working-class families) that this chapter will explore.

Working-class masculinities in Australia do indeed occupy a position that is somewhat central to discursive constructions of class, gender, ethnicity, sexuality and national identity. The everyman ‘battler’ archetype (Beasley 2009) can be represented in positive, negative or highly ambiguous ways,

but his image informs the way Australians are invited to identify with socially sanctioned or ‘normal’ ways to do masculinity. As Elder argues, ‘the trope of the working man centralized what were regarded as unique and positive characteristics of being Australian’ (2007: 43). However, as neoliberalism has become the commonly accepted paradigm, working-class masculinities have morphed in ways that have absorbed its central tenants of individualism, personal responsibility and meritocracy. Increasingly the collectivism associated with more traditional modes of working classness has been replaced with this more aspirational, individualistic version of working-class masculinity in Australia (Whitman 2013, 2014).

While neoliberalism ‘dominates primarily through a combination of economic and extra-economic coercion’ (Cahill 2008: 215), discursive working-class masculinity is often employed to gain consensus. Indeed, as Damien Cahill argues, neoliberalism has a harder time creating the consensus needed for social and cultural hegemony than it does being coercive (2008: 214). Therefore, working-class masculinity is extremely useful as a political tool because it encourages social and cultural consensus through its position as highly legitimized. In particular, the individualistic neoliberal version of Australian working-class masculinity encourages cultural consensus to systems of privilege and inequality.

This takes up Beasley’s (2009) assertion that hegemony rests in legitimacy. It is not the dominant position. Indeed, the anti-elitism that is such a part of working-class masculinity cannot operate as a dominant position. Legitimacy is granted through *authenticity*, and it is the subjective white, male, heterosexual and often working-class position that is portrayed as truly authentic in terms of Australian national identity. As Beasley argues, ‘the notion of an idealized working-class-inflected ‘every-bloke’ may work in certain contexts as a generalizable representation of proper, honoured manliness—that is, as a form of hegemonic masculinity’ (Beasley 2009: 61).

In their content analysis of an online forum for the partners of mining industry employees, Pini and Mayes (2012) found that overwhelmingly, despite some challenges to mainstream ways of ‘doing’ gender, gendered norms were often upheld within these relationships. In research on emergency service technicians and gendered divisions of labour within the private sphere, Shows and Gerstel (2009) found that often for these couples traditional modes of ‘doing gender’ were challenged. Brady et al. (2017) found that class was also a deciding factor in how gender was ‘done’ with regard to bonding with infants and gendered roles within families. Lyonette and Crompton (2015) also found class to be highly salient in shaping the

time spent undertaking domestic duties. Previous research considering the relationship between gender, class and approaches to paid and unpaid labour have often argued that in working-class households, the necessity for both partners to work allows for various challenges to the ways that these couples 'do' gender in terms of parenting and intimacy (Shows and Gerstel 2009; Legerski and Cornwall 2010; Brady et al. 2017; Liong 2015; Lyonette and Crompton 2015; Hunter et al. 2017). Furthermore, these challenges to normative gendered expectations of who will do 'what' within the private sphere may also be challenging neoliberal narratives about the importance of labour market participation and the devaluing of the unpaid labour that is associated with the private sphere, and is still often undertaken by women (Pocock 2005). Before teasing this out, the gendering of intimacy and the private sphere needs further exploration.

Jamieson (1999) notes that intimacy is often a site for the reiteration of gendered divisions, and that often, even in relatively egalitarian sexual relationships, the focus is phallogentric and that women are often posited as the 'sexual carers' (1999). Beasley argues, however, that heterosex can be a site for challenging gendered and sexual norms (2011). Furthermore, she posits that heterosexual intimacies can challenge normativity and that heterosexuality is not automatically heteronormative. One assumption that such non-normative heterosexuality may challenge is that men are more concerned with sex and women more concerned with intimacy (Jamieson 1999). Emotion, specifically emotional maturity, is often constructed as feminine, or, as Whitehead posits,

The idea that emotional maturity is the province of the female, and that men are emotionally incompetent, only serves to further reinforce the gendered public and private dualism at the heart of most societies, modern or otherwise. (2004: 175)

The relationship between intimacy and sexuality becomes fraught when intimacy and sexuality are separated along gendered lines. Connell (1995) found that intimacy, sexuality and equality were difficult for men to reconcile in light of embodied masculinities. Working-class masculinities in Australia are constructed as being tough and unemotional (Murrie 1998), while also being represented as sexual (in an aggressively heterosexual, phallogentric sense). Such constructions are limiting in relation to sex and sexuality (Beasley 2011). However, this is beyond the scope of this chapter. What this chapter does explore in more detail is the tension between

constructions of the stoic, unemotional ‘Aussie Bloke’ and emotional intimacy within familial groups, in relation to intimacies with both children and partners. It is here that constructions of work (both paid and unpaid), family and gender collide, creating new spaces in which to ‘do and undo gender’ (Lyonette and Crompton 2015).

As previously discussed, class is an important factor in how people navigate paid and unpaid labour, particularly in relation to family, childcare and intimacy (Hunter et al. 2017). In turn, class intersects with ethnicity, ability, sexuality and age to influence approaches to the balance between paid and unpaid labour. This is further complicated by national neoliberalism. In countries such as Australia, where neoliberal constructions of the ‘good citizen’ are tied directly to engagement with the labour market, unpaid labour is often devalued. In Australia this has been manifested in a punitive and paternalistic welfare system (Brady and Perales 2016), and cultural narratives about the ‘problem’ of mothers not being engaged in the labour market. Furthermore, much of the research on parental engagement around gender has focused on middle-class families (Brady et al. 2017). Liong (2015: 2) takes a Bourdieusian cultural capital approach to the study of ‘doing’ parenting at the intersection of class and gender, arguing that in relation to cultural capital, ‘class, therefore serves as an important social dimension that differentiates fathers and their fathering practices in a hierarchy, as indicated by the concept of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Raewyn Connell’.

It becomes clear that the link between middle-class gendered and classed constructs of family with working-class masculinities creates a significant tension. However, it is resolved in a variety of ways. For example, Gillies (2005b) notes that working-class parents are expected to raise middle-class children in order to have access to narratives of the ‘worthy’ parent, reflecting neoliberal discursive constructions of the ‘worthy’ citizen being one who is economically successful. Political, media and cultural representations of working-class fathers are sometimes less than flattering—particularly when being working class is correlated within such mainstream cultural and political discourse with ‘being poor’ and the stigma of unemployment (Liong 2015). Within neoliberal discourses, poverty is constructed as a direct result of having made ‘bad’ choices, and the poor and welfare reliant are constructed as being in direct opposition to the ‘good’ citizen who is engaged with the labour market and pays taxes (Morris 2016). In relation to families and parenting, provision of a middle-class lifestyle, or the aspirational striving to achieve a middle-class lifestyle, is posited as the best choice,

while working classness is defined as a ‘lack’ (Skeggs 2003). Gillies explains how this results in some choices being included as right or ‘worthy’ while others are not:

the ‘included’ worthy citizen subscribes to middle-class values and ambitions and can therefore be trusted to raise the next generation. The excluded, however, are destined, through their own personal failings as parents, to reproduce their poverty. (Gillies 2005b: 840)

A reduced focus on providing could arguably allow for new, more involved ways to be engaged with parenting. Yet, for working-class fathers in Australia, the desire to establish themselves as ‘good’ fathers by involvement with their children may be tempered by the lack of family-friendly workplace policies. While workplaces may be argued to be becoming more family friendly, this is often not the case because, as Pocock argues, ‘public policy discussion about the ‘family friendly’ workplace, and men’s changing roles, is revealed as more rhetorical than real’ (2003: 258). In their research on primary caregiving fathers, Hunter, Riggs and Augoustinos (2017) found that the role of the engaged father is still embedded within hegemonic masculinity:

Families that have a primary caregiving father may not be breaking away from traditional norms, and rather, may be enacting understandings of masculinity and femininity in a similar way to more traditional understandings. (5)

If this is the case, are working-class fathers indeed more likely to subvert gendered roles within the family, or are they merely engaging with a different iteration of hegemonic masculinity?

While there are some limits to working-class fathers’ abilities to subvert gendered discourses about parenting, particularly the importance of the ‘breadwinner’ role as part of a socially constructed set of Australian working-class masculinities, there are also several opportunities for them to do so, as explored below. Discourses about parenting, and specifically fathering, are changing. Pocock argues that

some commentators assume that a slow and inevitable convergence between men’s and women’s sharing of domestic work will occur in countries such as Australia, as young women assert their right to a fair sharing of work and care. (2005: 91)¹

The desire for more equitable parenting practices is becoming more common. The ‘new father’ takes a more hands-on role as a parent, as Wall and Arnold explain: ‘the “new fathers” of today are ideally more nurturing, develop closer emotional relationships with their children, and share the joys and work of caregiving with mothers’ (2007: 509). In circumstances where a father is unable to fully perform the breadwinner role, owing to unemployment, part-time employment or lower wages, taking on the ‘new father’ role is more likely (Shows and Gerstel 2009; Liong 2015). Men are more likely now to want to spend more time with their children (Western et al. 2007; Elliot et al. 2017). However, often fathers are more likely to undertake what Shows and Gerstel deem ‘public parenting’ (2009), as is explored in the next section. What needs further exploration is the fact that despite women’s increasing role in the workplace and men’s increasing desire to be more hands-on, women are still more likely to do more in terms of caring for children (Western et al. 2007: 248; Elliot et al. 2017).

In Australia there are several reasons why women continue to carry most responsibility for unpaid labour. Workplaces are becoming less flexible, making it harder to balance work and family (Pocock 2003). The Australian Council of Trade Union’s *50 Families* report by Pocock et al. (2001) on unreasonable working hours found that for many men and women neoliberal workplace policies had severely affected their family lives: ‘limited time at home affected intimate relationships, and relationships with children’ (34). In fact, the implementation of WorkChoices, the neoliberal Coalition Government’s key industrial relations policy, that was implemented in 2006 and led to sweeping changes to industrial relations law that saw an erosion of worker’s rights, increased use of individual contracts, and the removal of unfair dismissal laws for businesses with less than 100 employees, had further negative effects on the work–life balance (Muir 2008). Even with WorkChoices having been largely overturned, work–life balance is still a major issue for many Australians Peetz (2006). One factor is arguably the ongoing cultural ubiquity of neoliberalism. Despite challenges to the gendered nature of parenting, the image of the working-class ‘bloke’ as a ‘provider’ still lingers (Hunter et al. 2017). Furthermore, in Australia, working-class masculinity is often used to reinforce notions of workplace loyalty (Whitman 2013). Culturally, individualistic neoliberal attitudes to work are still deeply entrenched in the Australian psyche, particularly in relation to masculinity. Challenging the gendered nature of families, and the gendered nature of parenting, is difficult to achieve when more traditional, conservative

and highly individualistic models are so often reinforced culturally, socially and, most importantly, in the workplace itself.

The theorizing of class often concentrates on employment and economic issues, while paying less attention to the more intimate, personal ways of doing class. However, class impacts on the intimate and personal. As Johnson and Lawler explain, ‘when related to personal issues such as love, class is ruled out of an analysis of matters deemed more ‘cultural’ than economic’ (2005: 1.2). Yet they state that it is

doubly important to analyze class in terms of the personal and the domestic (‘home’): first because class has *always* been forged in the private sphere, as well as the public; and secondly because we need to investigate the ways in which class continues to matter despite a rhetoric which would place inequality ‘within’ the person. (Johnson and Lawler 2005: 1.5)

Indeed, Johnson and Lawler (2005) found that class is still a major structuring force that determines how people will enact and experience their personal relationships. The limited research available on class and relationships has shown that people tend to partner with members of their own class grouping (Weis 1990, 2004, 2008). Furthermore, when heterosexual couples come from different classed backgrounds, it is more likely to be the woman who comes from a working-class background and the man who comes from the middle/upper classes (Johnson and Lawler 2005: 5.5). Indeed, Johnson and Lawler found that heterosexual romantic relationships were not only based around class but also maintained classed and gendered hierarchies within them (2005: 5.9). Class then exists as a determining factor in creating an intimate relationship, while it is also replicated within intimate relationships. Research on working-class students’ experiences of higher education found that for working-class women, the challenge that undertaking university study posed to gendered and classed power structures within their intimate relationships often led to familial breakdown (Habel et al. 2016).² For working-class men, their gender and their class intersect in ways that shape their intimate relations. Furthermore, their class and gender are embedded within each other in ways that create unique spaces for the forging of intimate relations and sexualities that may either maintain or disrupt gendered and classed intimacies.

Research considering the links between gender, class, intimacy and unpaid labour has become more prominent since the mid 2000s, with several studies exploring such diverse areas of inquiry as parenting at the

intersection of gender and class (Shows and Gerstel 2009); young men ‘doing’ hegemonic masculinity in the UK (Roberts 2013); masculinity and class in representations of stay-at-home fathers in Hong Kong (Liong 2015); partner earnings and the division of domestic labour (Lyonette and Crompton 2015); men’s narratives of fathering young children in the UK (Elliot et al. 2017); and primary caregiving fathers in Australia (Hunter et al. 2017). In their 2009 paper, Shows and Gerstel explored class and fathering, and compared the fathering practices of working-class and middle-class men. They found that working-class men employed as emergency medical technicians were not only much more flexible in their parenting practices than the middle-class medical practitioners they interviewed but that their parenting styles were much more likely to challenge gendered notions of parenting. In particular, they found that the working-class men were more likely to engage in what they defined as private parenting, while the middle-class men were more likely to engage in public parenting. They define public and private fathering as follows:

we distinguish between ‘public’ fathering, which entails primary involvement with children in leisure activities and events outside the home that are visible to the larger public; and ‘private’ fathering, which entails a primary focus on the quotidian tasks of families, typically less visible to the larger public because much occurs at home. (2009: 169)

For the working-class men in Shows and Gerstel’s study, family time was a carefully considered part of doing overtime in order to earn more money, whereas the middle-class fathers were largely reluctant to sacrifice money for more time with their families. Lyonette and Crompton (2015) also found that class played a role in the division of domestic labour, finding evidence of ‘a larger contribution [to housework] by men in lower-earning families’ (36). Their findings differed from Shows and Gerstel in that they found that families from both upper-middle and working-class backgrounds were more likely to share domestic labour, but for different reasons. The upper-middle class families had access to resources, most specifically the paid labour of working-class women. This allowed them to offload domestic duties and therefore decrease the need for either partner to undertake much of the unpaid labour (2015: 37). Their findings were particularly interesting in that they found that upper middle-class men were more likely to engage in ‘*spoken* egalitarianism’, whereas working-class men were more likely to engage in ‘*lived* egalitarianism’ (Usdansky 2011 in Lyonette and Crompton

2015). In both cases, working-class families' lack of access to material resources led to equality by necessity.

The lack of access to resources that is a common reality for most working-class families as a factor influencing the gendered division of unpaid labour is further supported by Brady et al. (2017) and by Legerski and Cornwall (2010), who find that working-class families often need to rely on dual incomes to get by. Cha and Thébaud argue that men's attitude to gender 'is distinctly related to their individual breadwinning experiences, not just the degree to which women have an overall presence in the labour market' (2009: 237). Thus, as indicated above, Shows and Gerstel (2009) argue that some middle- and upper-class men who earn more and are therefore more able to be the sole breadwinner of a single-income household may be more likely to have traditional views than men from working-class households (which are often dual income). However, as Lyonette and Crompton (2015) found, many middle-class men have highly educated middle-class partners who are invested in their careers, and indeed, for inner-city, younger, middle-class couples, adherence to traditional gender roles may be something they actively avoid. Liong found that for men in Hong Kong where the breadwinner role remains privileged, working-class men were far more likely to adopt a nurturing role outside hegemonic masculinity discourses. In contrast to this, Elliot et al. (2017) found that class didn't have much impact on the likelihood of men taking an active nurturing role with young children, although they do argue that it is an area in which more data are needed. While this is a burgeoning area of inquiry, research considering the emotion work involved in family life, and the intersection of class and gender on intimacies, is still relatively new.

METHODOLOGY

The data discussed in this chapter come from a series of qualitative interviews undertaken with self-identified working-class men, looking at the hegemony, or what I argued were, in fact, *hegemonies* (Whitman 2014), of working-class masculinities in Australia and how this informed and enmeshed with the lived experiences of those men who did identify as working class. I undertook qualitative, semistructured interviews with seven working-class men in the aftermath of the Global Financial Crisis and after the election of the first Labour government in Australia in more than ten years, utilising a grounded theory approach (Charmaz 2006). During these interviews we discussed several key sites at which gender and

class are ‘done’, including experiences with education, the labour market, families and intimacy. Data collection relied on a grounded theory approach, one in which a reflexive and subjective researcher stance was employed to permit the recognition of the subjective position of both the researcher and the participants (Gomm 2004). The open-ended, conversational interviews considered the ‘micro-histories’ of the participants (Hughes 2012). In doing so the data reflect how participants ‘experience the world and/or make sense of it’ (Gomm 2004: 7).

The data gathered from the interviews was then analysed using critical discourse and textual analysis (Charmaz 2006). Critical discourse analysis allowed for a deeper understanding of how socially constructed working-class masculinity reflects a cultural shift towards individualism as one of the more distinguishing features of neoliberal society in Australia. In considering the data from a critical perspective, I was able to explore both what was said and the silences in between, recognizing the subjective nature of participants’ discursive constructions of themselves and those around them (Charmaz 2006). Reflexivity allowed me to recognize my own position as researcher, but also as a white, working-class woman who is also highly educated. Researcher subjectivity is an increasingly important factor in both gender and class research (Mauthner and Doucet 2003; Stahl 2016b). Most important to the collection and analysis of these data was the utilization of a grounded theory approach. I was not originally looking for data about intimacy and emotion work; indeed, I doubted my participants would be overly forthcoming in this area. However, as shown by the following responses, it was when discussing intimacy and emotion work that I received the richest data, and that gendered and classed constructions of working-class ‘blokes’ were most challenged and disrupted.

WORKING-CLASS MEN AND NEOLIBERAL INDIVIDUALISM

The data from interviews reflected the type of individualism that is typically a factor in neoliberal constructions of the idealized citizen (Stahl 2016a). This was particularly notable in relation to participant responses pertaining to work, education and the opportunities they were afforded as working-class men. For example, T discussed his relationship with education as follows:

Uh, one, I was going to fail so I didn’t want to deal with the concept, and also I had probably reached the stage where I realized I wasn’t going to be that

academic, so it was take the easy option out and perhaps look at a trade and that sort of thing, so I looked in those areas and came across a pre-vocational course at TAFE and, uh, and went and did that in carpentry and that's how I started my working life I guess. (T, union worker, 41, married)

Another participant, B, discussed how his working-class high school failed to provide the opportunities for him to move in to the science, technology, engineering and medicine fields he was interested in:

K: If you could do it again would you make any different decisions regarding your education?

B: I wouldn't go to [Adelaide Northern Suburbs Public High School], because they stuffed me up big time.

K: Did you want to expand on that?

B: My classes weren't the classes that I chose. I chose IT courses and stuff like that and they couldn't put me in there because of lack of funding and they basically didn't have the resources so I was stuck in courses which I had no interest in and they wouldn't help me at all which pretty much didn't help me find a job. For example, my psychology class didn't have a teacher. I was just left in the library the whole lesson, I had no work to do, and I couldn't pass at all but I still got Ps (pass grades) because the teacher said 'we'll give you an average grade of B even though I did not work at all'. (B, Unemployed, 18, living with partner and her family)

In this narrative, B was aware that he 'missed out' on specific educational opportunities as a result of the issues with his very working-class school. Yet most participants still constructed their educational selves in neoliberal

fashion, blaming their lack of opportunity on personal failings and ‘bad choices’ as opposed to structural social, cultural and economic factors that often make it difficult for working-class men to engage successfully with education (Aaltonen and Karvonen 2016; Loveday 2016).

As Stahl explains, neoliberal educational systems work to shape the ideal neoliberal citizens, ‘who must espouse values of ‘self-reliance, autonomy and independence’ in order to gain ‘self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth and self-advancement’ (Davies and Bansel 2007: 52, in Stahl 2016a: 665). For example, T blamed his failure to go beyond high school on a failure to ‘try’:

T: Um, yeah, I’d probably try a lot harder, you’ll probably find that a lot of people say that! . . . Um, yeah, if I had my time over I’d probably study harder, do all the right things, you know, and perhaps reach my full potential which I didn’t think I did in terms of an academic education. (T, union worker, married)

He viewed his ‘choice’ to work in labouring roles, which have become increasingly insecure, as a personal one. However, he also recognized the inequity in educational opportunity in Australia:

We had a culture of haves and the have nots and, look, we’re always gonna have it, particularly in terms of a university education . . . If you have the smarts and the drive money shouldn’t hinder you from being a better person than you are. (T, union worker, 41, married)

Structural inequality, gendered and classed norms (which are closely linked to Australian national identity and are therefore socially and culturally sanctioned and monitored) are ignored. In these arenas, neoliberal discourse is peppered throughout the participants personal narratives. They construct themselves in neoliberal terms: as having ‘failed’, as having made ‘bad choices’, as needing to own complete personal responsibility for the outcomes of their lives. While these participants didn’t find blame with a constructed ‘other’ (e.g. women, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and intersex (LGBTQI) people, and people from non-white cultural and ethnic backgrounds), other research has found that often if blame is

allocated, it will be with individuals and groups that are further marginalized, as opposed to overall structures of power, inequality and privilege (Reay 2001: 335). Furthermore, neoliberal constructions of white, working-class masculinity were not challenged when participants were discussing their working or educational lives, the choices they had made and the circumstances they were in. They had largely bought in to hegemonic neoliberal discourses, which champion the notion of individual responsibility, capitalist aspirationalism, and a meritocratic social and economic system. As G discussed in relation to opportunity and privilege,

K: Do you think Australia is equal as far as opportunities and privileges go?

G: Yep. For sure.

K: Why do you think that is?

G: Because it's made so easy. It's all out there if you want it and you're motivated to do it. You can do whatever you want, you can get there. There's nothing stopping you. I think people complain about not having options half the time, I mean, there's obviously people who don't have jobs, but most of the time it's just laziness. (G, contract worker, 25, single)

There was a theme in participant self-construction of individualism, of taking 'responsibility' for life opportunities and outcomes, and of stoicism in relation to work, education and the equity of Australian society and culture. As previously iterated, they largely 'followed the script' that might be expected from men engaging with working-class masculinity. Indeed, it was only when talking about family, intimacy and emotion work that their responses were surprisingly candid, open and in contrast with social and cultural construction of Australian working-class masculinity.

FAMILY, INTIMACY AND EMOTION WORK: UNDOING GENDER?

While a largely neoliberal narrative emerged in the bulk of the interviews and in relation to the majority of the areas discussed, there was one very interesting and unexpected exception. In their discussions of their families and intimate lives, a different narrative emerged, one that aligned with several of the studies discussed previously: that within working-class families, economic pressures and the need for both partners to work had an effect on the ability to 'do' gender in normative ways. Furthermore, as Roberts found in his 2013 exploration of young working-class masculinities employed in the retail sector, access to ways to 'do' traditional working-class masculinity are on the decline, with service industries overtaking manufacturing and other blue-collar labouring industries. This, he found, leads to working-class men negotiating with hegemonic masculinity both in relation to work, and in relation to family and domestic duties (Roberts 2013).

In the present research, the responses from participants did illustrate some egalitarian attitudes to parenting in working-class households, with parenting being central to the men's concepts of themselves as men. However, while my respondents were relatively forthcoming in terms of fathering, none spoke about their duties around the house, or their 'work' outside paid employment. Nevertheless, it is important to note that although these participants did not discuss other unpaid domestic labour in detail, previous research shows this as a further site where gendered familial constructs are being challenged. Parenting and unpaid labour are sites where gender can be done and yet undone, as Lyonette and Crompton argue: '[parents] are simultaneously challenging or 'undoing' (Deutsch 2007) as well as 'doing' gender' (2015: 34). In the case of working-class families, this was often produced through necessity, both partners needing to work, as opposed to a desire to challenge gendered norms (2015: 35).

While participants in this study did not discuss non-childcare domestic duties in detail, they did discuss actively working to challenge more traditional notions of the 'good' working-class father as breadwinner alone. The following quote represents a willingness to learn from the past and challenge a 'macho image':

I think you have this concept of parenting that comes from your experiences as a child, and sometimes I think that's not the best way. I think as males we have a lot of pride, and we tend to, even if we might be wrong we tend not to admit

it. I think one of the best things you can do as a man is be able to learn how to say ‘sorry’ not only to your partner but to your kids. And I think we have this perception of this macho image that we need to sort of break down and we need to realize that it’s okay to even say to your son that you love him. (T, union worker, married, 41)

Much like the responses about intimacy, this response highlights a lack of concern with maintaining a façade of unemotional masculinity in favour of being open, caring and loving not only with a partner but also with children. This certainly defies the theory that men are unlikely to want to be actively engaged on an emotional level with children and partners, and supports arguments such as those provided by Roberts (2013) and Brady et al. (2017), and indeed may challenge some of the assumptions about hegemonic masculinity itself, especially constructions that fail to recognize the fluid and changeable nature of hegemonic masculinities (as they are multiple), and the nature of changes to discursive constructions of class and gender across space and place.

While this may illustrate some disruption to gendered mores surrounding parenting, it does not prove definitively that a working-class household equals an egalitarian one. As Cha and Thébaud recognize, attitudes to gender are often ‘negotiated through private experience of norm contestation and resolution within the family’ (2009: 237). However, these authors did note that hegemonic masculinity had an effect on how men felt about gender within the family (2009: 238). Despite the fact that working-class identity is linked with traditional masculine mores and breadwinner masculinity, the working-class family offers some powerful spaces and places for gendered change. The importance of ‘family’ to the working class has been established (Donaldson 1991: 25). Certainly, the importance of family as central to having a good life was often established in the interviews:

I think what’s important in life is to have a good family life and ... a good environment where you can pass that on to your kids. (T, union worker, 41, married)

Family is a classed and gendered construct. While the family is seen as being central to working-class life, different aspects of family life are marked by class, including parenting (Gillies 2005a) and marriage (Johnson and Lawler 2005). Different types of family are classed. For example, research shows how single-parent families with several children by different fathers

are associated with the subjective position of the ‘disgusting’ working-class woman (Lawler 2002; Skeggs 2005). This is evidenced in both cultural and political discursive constructions of the welfare-reliant single mother, who is represented as antithetical to the ideal responsible, individualistic neoliberal citizen in terms of both her poor ‘choices’ and her continual reliance on welfare. In Australia, the ‘working families’/‘battler’ archetypes so strongly linked to working-class masculinities are represented by a very classed and gendered notion of what a family entails. In part this is linked with ‘bread-winner’ masculinity, which creates a source of tension when well-paid, local work may be hard to find.

As evidenced below, some of the most interesting responses during data collection for this project came about when discussing relationships. There were few in-depth questions about intimacy, but several of the men were quite forthcoming about their relationships and what they defined as important in their intimate lives. For the interviewees between the ages of 30 and 45, there were some very specific and emotive responses when asked about their partners, their lives and what was important to them.

You don’t need heaps of money, because if you enjoy each other’s company it’s half the battle. Like if you can sit all night and have a talk with no TV on or anything you’re laughin’ I reckon, y’know there are lots of people that are materialistic . . . to have love, to be able to get along, I mean there’s plenty of simple things you can do like you can go for a walk or whatever just if you enjoy each other’s company that’s the biggest part of it. You’re not entertaining yourself with outside influences like you can come home and just sit and watch TV for like, five hours, and say, ‘we have a relationship’ but you’re watching telly, you’re not talking and to have a great relationship you’ve got to be by yourself as you are straight and normal. (M, manufacturing worker, engaged, 35)

This illustrates the importance of intimacy to this participant’s life, and shows that he has no concerns about discussing intimacy. This inverts the notion that intimacy is something ‘done’ by women and that ‘real’ men, as are often represented in Australian pop cultural manifestations of working-class masculinity, are largely unconcerned with intimacy and relationships. Indeed, one interviewee stated that the

Qualities of being a man would be, I think, mostly is to be a person that ... is loving and caring. I guess a person that understands people, understands their

families and contributes not only in a monetary sense but in an emotional sense as well. (T, union worker, 41, married)

These responses show that emotional intimacy is important to these men, not only as part of their relationships but as a part of their embodied masculinity. This offers a contrast to more deterministic constructions of hegemonic masculinity that link it directly to set behaviours and beliefs inherent in men as a distinct category (Hearn 2004; Connell 2005). Furthermore, much of the literature problematizes working-class men as hypermasculine, homophobic, sexist and resistant to change (Legerski and Cornwall 2010; Nixon 2009). Responses from the participants in this study challenge these assumptions about working-class masculinities, and indeed men. When these participants answered questions about their family, it became clear that, for them, enacting intimacy was not a way of subverting discourses about masculinity but was in fact part of an embodied Australian working-class masculinity that was fluid and changeable.

This illustrates a very important division between working-class men doing intimacy and contractions of working-class masculinities; and it highlights the problems with 'slippage' between talking about men and talking about masculinity that Beasley (2008) discusses in relation to the conceptualization of 'hegemonic masculinity'. Indeed, working-class masculinities are constructed as individualistic, unemotional and averse to any real, deeper forms of intimacy that could be construed as feminine, while these men were not only happy to discuss intimacy but it was an important part of their classed and gendered identities. This could suggest that, for these men, their intimate relationships are a space in which they disrupt mainstream gendered ideologies. While Jamieson points out, that 'there is a general taken-for-granted assumption that a good relationship will be equal and intimate' (1999), he argues that intimacy is not necessarily correlated with gender equality. A sense of equality is often an important part of intimacy. However, 'creative energy is often deployed in disguising inequality, not in undermining it' (Bittman and Lovejoy 1993 in Jamieson 1999). In contrast with Jamieson's theory, the desire for a more equitable intimacy that involves a willingness to open oneself up to emotional equality in a relationship may be a contributory factor in challenging gendered inequalities within the family.

CONCLUSION

The family is obviously an important site within which the working class can construct themselves. These constructions can either challenge dominant ideologies around gender or reflect and maintain such ideologies. The importance of the family in this context is somewhat at odds with the neoliberal individualism and the conservatism that are becoming an increasing part of Australian working-class masculinities, and which are so clearly evident in the character of Kenny Smyth from *Kenny* (2006) or images of the ‘Aussie bloke’ engaging with the mining industry. While Pini and Mayes found an adherence to traditional gender roles in mining families, in other working-class families it seems that there may be space opening up to challenge the dominant paradigm—the one in which men are largely engaged with the labour market and women are responsible for the maintenance of the private sphere, including not only unpaid domestic labour but intimacy and emotional work. In a neoliberal society in which individualism is championed and engagement with the labour market is positioned as being paramount, finding new ways to ‘do’ gender in the private sphere may provide a space in which to challenge not just gender but also class and neoliberalism. Clear at this point is that this is an area in which far more research is needed, research that takes into account the importance of intimacy and private sphere work in relation to both gender and class.

NOTES

1. It must be noted that Pocock is taking issue with this assumption.
2. Out of 14 women interviewed for this project, 6 had split with their partners within the first 18 months of commencing university study. As argued by Habel, Whitman and Stokes (2016), this is an area in which further study is needed.

REFERENCES

- Aaltonen, S., & Karvonen, S. (2016). Floating downstream? Parental support and future expectations of young people from less privileged backgrounds. *Sociology*, 50(4), 714–730.
- Beasley, C. (2008). Rethinking hegemonic masculinity in a globalizing world. *Men and Masculinities*, 11(1), 86–103.

- Beasley, C. (2009). Male bodies at the edge of the world: Re-thinking hegemonic and 'other' masculinities in Australian cinema. In S. Fouz-Hernández (Ed.), *Mysterious skin: Male bodies in contemporary cinema*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Beasley, C. (2011). Libidinous politics. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 26(67), 25–40.
- Brady, M., Stevens, E., Coles, L., Zadoroznyj, M., & Martin, B. (2017). 'You can spend time ... but not necessarily be bonding with them': Australian fathers' constructions and enactments of infant bonding. *Journal of Social Policy*, 46(1), 69–90.
- Brady, M., & Perales, F. (2016). Hours of paid work among single and partnered mothers in Australia. *Journal of Family Issues*, 37(3), 321–343.
- Cahill, D. (2008). Hegemony and the neo-liberal historic bloc: The Australian experience. In R. Howson & K. Smith (Eds.), *Hegemony: Studies in consensus and coercion*. New York: Routledge.
- Cha, Y., & Thébaud, S. (2009). Labor markets, breadwinning, and beliefs. *Gender & Society*, 23(2), 215–243.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. London: Sage.
- Connell, R. W. (1995, 2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest.
- Donaldson, M. (1991). *Time of our lives: Labour and love in the working class*. Sydney: Allen & Unwin.
- Demetriou, Z. D. (2001). *Theory and Society* 30(3), 337–361.
- Deutsch, F. M. (2007). Undoing gender. *Gender & Society*, 21(1), 106–127.
- Elder, C. (2007). *Being Australian: Narratives of national identity*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Elliot, H., Parsons, S., Brannen, J., Elliot, J., & Phoenix, A. (2017). Narratives of fathering young children in Britain: Linking quantitative and qualitative analyses. *Community, Work and Family*. doi:10.1080/13668803.2016.1241758.
- Gillies, V. (2005a). Meeting parents' needs? Discourses of 'support' and 'inclusion' in family policy. *Critical Social Policy*, 25(1), 70–90.
- Gillies, V. (2005b). Raising the 'meritocracy': Parenting and the individualization of social class. *Sociology*, 39(5), 835–853.
- Gomm, R. (2004). *Social research methodology: A critical introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Gramsci, A. (1971). In Q. Hoare & G. Howell Smith (Eds.), *Selections from the prison notebooks*. London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Habel, C., Whitman, K., & Stokes, J. (2016). *Exploring the experience of low-SES students via enabling pathways*. Report. National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education, Monash University.
- Hearn, J. (2004). From hegemonic masculinity the hegemony of men. *Feminist Theory*, 5(1), 97–120.
- Howson, R. (2006). *Challenging hegemonic masculinity*. Abingdon: Routledge.

- Hughes, K. (2012). Micro-histories and things that matter. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 27(73), 269–278.
- Hunter, S., Riggs, D., & Augoustinos, M. (2017). Hegemonic masculinity versus a caring masculinity: Implications for understanding primary caregiving fathers. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 11, 1–9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12307>.
- Jamieson, L. (1999). Intimacy transformed? A critical look at the “pure relationship”. *Sociology*, 33(3), 477–494.
- Johnson, P., & Lawler, S. (2005). Coming home to love and class. *Sociological Research Online*, 10(3). <http://www.socresonline.org.uk/10/3/johnson.html>
- Kenny. (2006). Directed by Clayton Jacobson. Thunderbox Films, Australia.
- Lawler, S. (2002). Mobs and monsters: Independent man meets Paulsgrove woman. *Feminist Theory*, 3(1), 103–113.
- Legerski, E. M., & Cornwall, M. (2010). Working-class job loss, gender, and the negotiation of household labour. *Gender and Society*, 24(4), 447–474.
- Liong, M. (2015). Sacrifice for the family: Representation and practice of stay-at-home fathers in the intersection of masculinity and class in Hong Kong. *Journal of Gender Studies*. doi:10.1080/09589236.2015.11112000.
- Loveday, V. (2016). Embodying deficiency through ‘affective practice’: Shame, relationality, and the lived experience of social class and gender in higher education. *Sociology*, 50(6), 1140–1155.
- Lyonette, C., & Crompton, R. (2015). Sharing the load? Partners’ relative earnings and the domestic division of labour. *Work, Employment and Society*, 29(1), 23–40.
- Mauthner, N. S., & Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. *Sociology*, 37(3), 413–431.
- Morris, L. (2016). The moral economy of austerity: Analysing UK welfare reform. *The British Journal of Sociology*, 67(1), 97–117.
- Muir, K. (2008). *Worth fighting for: Inside the your rights at work campaign*. Sydney: University of New South Wales Press.
- Murrie, L. (1998). The Australian legend: Writing Australian masculinity/writing ‘Australian’ masculine. *Journal of Australian Studies*, 22(56), 68–77.
- Nixon, D. (2009). I can’t put a smiley face on: Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the “new economy”. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), 300–322.
- Peeetz, D. (2006). *Brave new workplace: How individual contracts are changing our jobs*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Pini, B., & Mayes, R. (2012). Gender, emotions and fly-in fly-out work. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 47(1), 71–86.
- Pocock, B. (2003). *The work/life collision*. Sydney: The Federation Press.
- Pocock, B. (2005). Work/care regimes: Institutions, culture and behaviour and the Australian case. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 12(1), 32–49.

- Pocock, B., van Wanrooy, B., Strazzari, S., & Bridge, K. (2001). *Fifty families: What unreasonable hours do to Australians, their families and their communities*. Report for the Australian Council of Trade Unions.
- Reay, D. (2001). Finding or losing yourself?: Working-class relationships to education. *Journal of Education Policy*, 16(4), 333–346.
- Roberts, S. (2013). Boys will be boys . . . won't they? Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities. *Sociology*, 47(4), 671–686.
- Shows, C., & Gerstel, N. (2009). Fathering, class, and gender: A comparison of physicians and emergency medical technicians. *Gender & Society*, 23(2), 161–187.
- Skeggs, B. (2003). *Class, self, culture*. London: Routledge.
- Stahl, G. (2016a). White working-class male narratives of 'loyalty to self' in discourses of aspiration. *British Journal of Sociology in Education*, 37(5), 663–683.
- Stahl, G. (2016b). Relationship-building in research: Gendered identity construction in researcher-participant relationships. *Studies in Qualitative Methodology*, 14, 145–165.
- Wall, G., & Arnold, S. (2007). How involved is involved fathering? *Gender and Society*, 21(4), 508–527.
- Weis, L. (1990). *Working-class without work: High school students in a de-industrializing economy*. New York: Routledge.
- Weis, L. (2004). *Class reunion: The remaking of the American white working class*. New York: Routledge.
- Weis, L. (2008). Toward a re-thinking of class as nested in race and gender: Tracking the white working class in the final quarter of the twentieth century. In L. Weis (Ed.), *The way class works: Readings on school, family and the economy* (pp. 291–304). New York: Routledge.
- Western, M., Baxter, J., Pakulski, J., Tranter, B., Western, J., van Egmond, M., Chesters, J., Hosking, A., O'Flaherty, M., & van Gellecum, Y. (2007). Neoliberalism, inequality and politics: The changing face of Australia. *Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 42, 401–418.
- Whitehead, S. M. (2004). *Men and masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Whitman, K. (2013). The 'Aussie Battler' and the hegemony of centralizing working-class masculinity in Australia: Gender, class mainstreaming and the axis of visibility in *Kenny*. *Australian Feminist Studies*, 28(75), 50–64.
- Whitman, K. (2014). *Looking out for the 'Aussie Bloke?': Gender, class and contextualizing a hegemony of working-class masculinities in Australia*. PhD thesis submitted June 2013, University of Adelaide.

Driving Through Neoliberalism: Finnish Truck Drivers Constructing Respectable Male Worker Subjectivities

Timo Aho

INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses how Finnish male truck drivers (re)produce themselves as respectable male workers in the face of the recent economic, technological and institutional transformations impacting the European haulage sector. Departing from the economic deregulation and neo-Taylorist work process control that characterizes truck drivers' working conditions within the modern haulage industry, the chapter examines how these neoliberal tendencies challenge truckers' autonomy, occupational image, practical knowledge and ability to earn, which have all traditionally been essential for truck drivers' occupational identity and their class-based, gendered construction in the USA, Sweden and Finland (Bergholm 1999; Ouellet 1994; Nehls 2003; Petterson 2006; Levy 2016). In the context of neoliberal restructuring of work and organizational settings (Crowley and Hodson 2014), this study asks to what extent trucking in Finland can be perceived as a particular kind of blue-collar occupation offering resources for gender construction not

T. Aho (✉)

Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä, Jyväskylä, Finland

available in manufacturing or (other) service sector work, as Lawrence Ouellet (1994) has described male truckers' work in the USA.

While Finland has traditionally had relatively strong support for the Nordic welfare state model, neoliberal doctrines such as the deregulation of financial markets, global competition, new public management procedures and competitiveness policy began to influence the Finnish economy and working life back in the 1980s (Patomäki 2007: 55–68). With regard to the development of Finnish working life from 1977 to 2008 (Lehto and Sutela 2009), different work organization models aimed to increase flexibility as well as leadership methods, with an emphasis on local arrangements and competition being introduced across various occupational sectors. Performance in the workplace and organizations became assessed more according to their productivity and profitability, which intensified the competition between employees, work groups and departments. While technological advances have created new jobs, requirements and competencies, uncertainty among workers has increased and many fear losing their jobs (Lehto and Sutela 2009: 141–2).

The trucking industry, as a link between complex manufacturing and global distribution chains, provides a powerful example through which to investigate how an intensified neoliberal economy fashions the experiences of men working in a male-dominated blue-collar occupation in Finland. Drawing on ethnographic data, the study argues that unlike Ouellet's (1994) portrayal of trucking as work that allows men to demonstrate heroic working-class masculinity based on independence, mobility and motorists' admiration, Finnish truckers have experienced their independence and value in the work process becoming challenged and they are being occupationally stigmatized. In the face of neoliberal degradation, however, Finnish truckers are able to mobilize a narrative of respectable working-class masculinity that is based on valorizing their practical experience, manual skills, professional capacities and a role as a hard-working wage-earner. It seems that unlike working-class women who strive to move away from stigmatized working-class femininity into recognized middle-class qualities (Skeggs 1997), male Finnish truckers are able to draw from archetypal blue-collar masculinity in order to construct their own sense of respect.

THE HAULAGE SECTOR IN THE CONTEXT OF NEOLIBERAL TENDENCIES

At the beginning of the twentieth century the transportation system in Europe and the USA relied mainly on horses and trains. However, owing to improvements in infrastructure and automobile technology, as well as the expansion of mass consumption, road freight transportation developed rapidly in both regions after World War II (Belzer 2000: 22–3; Vahrenkamp 2011). In Europe, purchasing a truck and entering the road haulage industry was an opportunity for employment, and investment capital remained low as army lorries could be used to begin such a business (OECD 1997: 16). While the haulage industry was subject to the need for permits and driving licences from the beginning, more extensive regulation and supervision practices were needed to prevent the unintended effects of fierce competition, such as conspiring between hauliers, bankruptcies, unreliable service, road damage, accidents and disturbance to residents (OECD 1997: 16–7; Blomberg 1996: 94–108).

Until the last quarter of the twentieth century, trucking in Europe and the USA remained a strictly institutionally regulated business (OECD 1997; Belzer 2000, 2002: 375). Competition in the haulage sector, however, was intensified by the global expansion of markets and by systematic economic deregulation (Gentry et al. 1995; OECD 1997; Belzer 2000; Hilal 2008), which started to gain favour in the USA and Europe as part of broader worldwide liberalization processes from the 1970s onwards (Harvey 2005). The pursuit of economic growth, cost efficiency and flexible services by reducing entry barriers, collective rate-making, and abandoning quotas and fixed tariffs worsened the hauliers' and truckers' conditions in both regions: the great numbers of subcontracted, self-employed and unskilled hauliers who entered the market decreased hauling rates and forced haulage companies and their employees to operate within tighter time margins set by large-scale shipping and consignment companies. As a consequence, traffic safety worsened, hauliers received smaller profits, hundreds went bankrupt, turnover rates increased while drivers' unpaid work increased, their work-life balance suffered and earnings declined by nearly 30 % (Belzer 2000, 2002; Hilal 2008; also Belman and Monaco 2001). These undesired effects of the competition and impaired image of the sector, in turn, led to the enactment of a patchwork of social and safety regulations concerning drivers' formal qualifications, working and driving time, as well as equipment standards and certifications (Belzer 2000; Salanne and Rantala 2008; EC 2014).

Another effect of the intensified global capitalism is that industries and companies now operate in an extremely hectic and competitive global environment, which has pushed them to rationalize their businesses by enacting neo-Taylorist principles and methods: logistic services have been outsourced and many companies have moved into a lean manufacturing process accompanied by just-in-time (JIT) management in order to optimize their effectiveness, and to save inventory and storage costs (Sewell and Wilkinson 1992; Belzer 2002: 380–2; Vidal 2007). The logistics process where goods are delivered at the moment a company needs them requires the precise coordination of information flows and tasks between actors within a supply chain, which is conducted by the extensive use of information and communication technology (ICT) (Belzer 2002; Kallberg et al. 2005). As a result of ICT, the interconnections between trucking companies and large-scale forwarding agencies, manufacturing, sales and supply chains is becoming more transparent, which increases their receptiveness to the pressures of the various business domains, as well as the influences of the whole distribution chain (Belzer 2002). While the ICT-assisted real-time delivery process has improved the collaboration and productivity of the supply chain (Hubbard 2003; Rishel et al. 2003), it has pushed truckers to drive for more hours without receiving additional compensation (Belman and Monaco 2001) and made their work more heavily pressurized, service orientated and controlled (Belzer 2002; de Croon et al. 2004; Salanne and Rantala 2008; OSH 2011: 19–20). Levy (2015), for instance, has shown how the abstracted and aggregated data streams of the electronic fleet-management systems allow dispatchers to quantitatively assess truck drivers' work performance across new metrics and to challenge truckers' accounts of local and biophysical conditions.

The intensification of truckers' labour is not caused solely by economic pressure, but also by the difficulty of synchronizing economically driven logistics rhythms with an institutionally driven juridical rhythm (driving time regulation, Europa 2006¹) (Aho 2015). Juridical rhythm, in particular, has become an extra burden for truckers because its rigidity contradicts the logic of highly receptive logistics rhythm that call for constant adaptation and readiness for quick temporal changes. Juridical rhythm not only hinders truckers' ability to get their work done but also stigmatizes them, as has happened in Sweden where the constant gazing of the police and the state has generated 'an underdog identity' for truckers (Nehls 2003; Pettersson 2009). In this regard, Lotta Pettersson (2009) claims that truckers are governed more by the state and associated control apparatus today than by their employers. Belzer (2000, 2002), in contrast, asserts that unprecedented

growth of institutional control over hauliers and truckers is a paradoxical result of the replacement of institutional regulation with market regulation.

WORK, CLASS AND RESPECTABLE MASCULINITY

The fact that 90 % of Finnish truckers are male (Olkkonen et al. 2003) means that observing truckers' occupational performance is very much about observing 'men's practices' (Hearn 2004). Working as a male trucker is not just doing the work per se; it is also a conduct where gendered meanings, practices and expectations are created, reproduced and challenged (West and Zimmerman 1987). However, the way gender works cannot be fully understood without considering class, and vice versa (see Connell 2005: 75–6). In the modern industrial era, as David Morgan (2005: 172) points out, relations between work, masculinities and class were recognizable because class was conceptualized through occupations and a (male) person's position in the production process. A respectable working-class masculinity, in this respect, was performed traditionally through (paid) work, breadwinning and by such occupational characteristics as manual skills, physical strength, enduring hardships, the ability to control machinery and tools, independence and resistance against authorities (Tolson 1977; Willis 1977; Cockburn 1983; Collinson 1992; Morgan 1992; Collinson and Hearn 1996). While trucking has shared these qualities, it has also provided a sense of exclusivity, stemming from the mobility, variegated rhythm and freedom afforded by manoeuvring a valuable vehicle and cargo away from an employer's direct supervision, which, as Ouellet (1994) argues, has distinguished truckers from their peers and the average wage-earner.

In the postindustrial era, however, the identification of class-based masculinities is becoming more complicated, as economic restructuring blurs the clear-cut boundaries of production relations and occupations (Morgan 2005: 173–4). Recent studies suggest that men, especially in blue-collar occupations, face clashes between their gendered selves and their surroundings, as market transformations, global competition, technological innovations, environmental concerns and new regulative practices change labour markets and reorganize work and its embodied requirements (McDowell 2003; Dolby et al. 2004; Nixon 2009; Filteau 2014). While some men are more reluctant to adopt new occupational practices and skills, others begin to redefine their masculinity through these new practices and requirements. In the Nordic agricultural industry, for example, technological innovations and new regulations have unsettled the picture of a 'tough man' who controls nature through his brute bodily strength to a more

‘business-like masculinity’, favouring rational economic decision-making (Brandth and Haugen 2000).

Instead of perceiving class merely as a given objective category derived causally from society’s economic or occupational structure, class in this study is understood also as a mode of cultural differentiation (Bourdieu 1984; Skeggs 1997). Class, as Bourdieu (1984) and Skeggs (1997) perceive it, refers to a person’s position in an economic process, but it is also a culturally formed classifying process, lived experience and constellation of capitals accumulated in different overlapped societal fields during a person’s lifetime. The notion that class is manifested in and through a person’s embodied *habitus* (Bourdieu 1984) is important for this study because the concept of habitus enables us to see, in Darren Nixon’s (2009: 319) words, ‘how classed and gendered dispositions to act or think in particular ways are internalized in the unconscious and manifest themselves in embodied social practices’. Nixon (2009) thus explains that poorly educated unemployed men in northern England are reluctant to apply for entry-level jobs in the service sector because such work requires (emotional) skills, dispositions and demeanours which are antithetical to these men’s working-class masculine habitus.

In line with Nixon, gender and class are understood as culturally and materially formed structures, intertwined in a person’s habitus, which unconsciously generate the practices, routines and dispositions of an actor within a given social field (Bourdieu 1984; Skeggs 1997). The ‘field’ in which truckers engage in this study is perceived as an occupational site within the haulage sector influenced by the broader intersecting field of the economy. By the gendered and classed structure of the occupational site itself (see Adkins and Skeggs 2004), certain occupational resources, performances and competencies are regarded as more valuable than others for constructing oneself as a recognized worker and as a man. Within the limits of one’s gendered habitus, a truck driver tries to apply his resources to the degree that feels natural to him and valued in the occupational site in which he participates. In the face of economic, legislative and technological transformations, however, skills and practices once regarded as valuable may lose their potential as a gendered resource, which may cause dissonance and conflict between a truck drivers’ habitus and the field he operates in (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 95–140). Truckers can resist changes, adapt to them or try to change the relative weight of the valued capitals and resources of the ‘game’ in order to maintain their positions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 98–100). By using the concept of habitus, I try to map out whether truck driving still invites men to reproduce practices, skills and dispositions favourable to their working-class habitus.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

This study is based on ethnographic methodology, which is understood as an intense participation in the life of the informants in order to produce a plausible cultural description of the phenomenon (Hammersley and Atkinson 2008). The data were gathered during the years between 2012 and 2016 by riding along on assignments with ten Finnish male truck drivers who work in different fields of operation in Finland. On the whole, I conducted 18 different trips with the truckers, varying from six hours to four days, and the total time spent on the road with the drivers was around 350 hours. The informants in this study are highly experienced male truckers, having been involved in trucking for periods of 15–35 years. They all have spouses and (grown) children, and are aged between 45 and 62 years. Two of the drivers were classified as owner-operators, but the rest had employee status. None of the informants had acquired any other formal education for driving a heavy truck besides the appropriate driving licence because their enrollment into the sector took place in an era when other formal qualifications were not required in Finland.

The analysis is based on two intertwined data sets. The first was produced by taking notes at different work-related arenas such as loading sites, terminals, harbours, gas stations and especially in the truck cabin. I observed and wrote down how driving and other work practices were performed, what was involved in these practices, how the informants reacted to the events occurring in traffic, and how they commented on their actions in relation to other truckers and motorists. The second data set consists of open-ended field discussions conducted while driving, which were also tape-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The tapes are relatively long (five to eight hours each) because the recorder was kept on constantly while in the cabin. This enabled me to recall events and discussions, and situate them while reading my notes. In practice, the field discussions and observations were produced and utilized together. I was, for example, able to experience how technological surveillance worked in practice, but also to discuss these observations with the drivers on the spot and take the conversations as my 'interview frame' for the next field trip.

The objective in the analysis was to identify how a respectable male worker was constructed by the truckers, and what might challenge this construction. While the informants were not purposively picked for their experience or age, their relatively 'old' age and long-term experience on the road directed my attention to the historical (temporal) dimension in

their accounts. By applying the concept of habitus as my theoretical-methodological lens, I found that a significant contrast between the accounts describing present work practices and those describing work practices in the past emerged quite systematically while discussing regulations and digital tachographs, or when the drivers were using work-related ICT applications. By evaluating these accounts further against work process theory and masculinity studies, I figured that respectability as a male worker was structured by the question of how he could maintain himself as valuable in the work process. These findings are presented in the first section of the analysis.

In the second section I extended my reading outside the work process as such to examine accounts where the truckers expressed their concerns about the haulage sector's professional image. The idea of paying attention to these accounts was directed by the contradictory picture made by Ouellet (1994) and Nehls (2003) in previous studies. While Ouellet's truckers appear to see themselves as iconic working-class heroes whose self-image is constituted partly from the admiration of motorists' and thus a sense of highway superiority, Nehls' truckers see themselves more as providers as well as 'criminals' and 'underdogs' who are constantly gazed on by the police. I found that Finnish truckers' experience of being in the middle of negative attention and unprofessional practices generated a counternarrative that valorizes not only their practical knowledge but also their role as a man who has earned his wage through extremely hard work. The second section of the analysis describes how truckers defend themselves and their respectability by exploiting and valorizing the occupational resources they have.

MAINTAINING ONE'S OCCUPATIONAL VALUE IN THE WORK PROCESS

In industrial capitalism, timekeeping has been a central way to discipline workers' performances and rationalize human value of time in the Taylorist work process (Braverman 1974; Blyton et al. 1989; Thompson 1969; Hassard 1989). While the time and space control of 'traditional' factory work has typically been used as a point of comparison with truckers to highlight the autonomous and mobile nature of trucking (Ouellet 1994; Nehls 2003: 68–9), the extension of technological monitoring systems and devices into the trucking industry challenge this experience. Being

‘unreachable’ is no longer possible because hauliers have pushed to have technological tracking systems, onboard computers, telematics and cell phones in constant daily use in order to enhance logistic efficiency, productivity, flexibility and responsiveness to their customers’ demands, as described in previous studies (Belzer 2002; Hubbard 2003; Levy 2015; Kallberg et al. 2005).

My own material provides further confirmation of these developments. Signals of driving computers, laptops and cell phones in the truck cabin activated the informants’ habitus (Bourdieu 1990: 54), and many started to recall ‘the old times’ in the 1980s and 1990s by explaining how the instructions for the assignments were given face to face at the transport coordinator’s office. In a time before the advent of global positioning systems (GPSs), and when cell phones and other electronic receivers were scarce, employers, shippers, consignees and transport coordinators were unable to monitor the truckers’ progress on the road and additional instructions for the next assignment were typically received after the delivery by using a phone booth or the unloading site’s landline telephone (see also Ouellet 1994: 29). Comparing with the past, the truckers explained how their location could now be tracked by GPS, and the driving computers in their trucks enabled the employers and management to monitor practices concerning driving behaviour, such as fuel consumption, steady driving, breaking and routing. Updated information from loadings and unloadings was received in real time via cell phones and laptops, while in many companies the drivers were also obliged to mark the starting and ending times of the loadings and unloadings into the product management system so that shippers, consignees and transport coordinators could follow how quickly goods proceeded within the supply chain. Despite the fact that technology-driven monitoring has enhanced the truckers’ possibilities to communicate with other actors in the supply chain (de Croon et al. 2004; Kallberg et al. 2005), this neoliberal rationale of optimizing economic performance by applying ICT-based JIT management made the truckers’ work more transparent and controlled, which is distinct from former occupational practices:

I mean, well, companies do not have stocks as they had before, the stocks are on the wheels today. That’s the reason for the insane rush (...) At the beginning of the 90’s, when I started to drive heavy vehicles ... well, it was totally different, from a different world. Oh, it was so relaxed and peaceful and a nice way to work.

TA: At the beginning of the 90s?

Yeah. You could drive in peace and there were no phones, not this kind of e-mails [tapping a laptop] When you got an assignment, well, of course you knew at the same moment where you were going to be empty. And if there were any changes you were asked to call from the last unloading place after unloading. Then we phoned and asked what next? [laughing] You could just drive and whistle in peace and nobody knew where you where. (Kari, 49, field discussion)

The frictional relationship between the neoliberal shift in the haulage sector's operational environment and truckers' (gendered) habitus (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992: 39, 95–140) was structured by the question of how to maintain one's value and autonomy in the work process (see also Levy 2015: 167–8; cf. Burawoy 1985). Nehls (2003) argues that a trucker who is being entrusted on the road alone with a valuable cargo and an expensive truck signals the employer's trust, which he defines as a hegemonic ideal in Swedish male truckers' gendered working culture. Pettersson (2006: 116) similarly asserts that the capability to overcome challenges and solve practical problems on the road is an essential part of the construction of hegemonic masculinity among Swedish truckers. In this respect, my informants' experience of being valued at work was fostered by the idea of being unreachable because it emphasized the ideals and qualities presented by Nehls and Pettersson. It seems, as Levy (2015: 167) also points out, that the non-existence of technological monitoring and tracking systems allowed truckers to feel that they had almost exclusive possession and control of the information concerning the delivery proceeding, shipment location, speed and rhythm of driving. Drivers, for instance, could sit on information, lie about locations and explain delays by referring to traffic jams and changing weather conditions. While ICT-based surveillance has not managed to invalidate truckers' 'hidden' knowledge, discretion and autonomy completely as expected in traditional Taylorist deskilling processes (Braverman 1974; cf. Burawoy 1985), the adoption of neo-Taylorist principles has generated the feeling that formerly truckers had more power over their work than today and felt less accountable for their time and actions, because the shipping and consignment companies, employers and dispatchers had to rely on truckers and their word.

In truck drivers' gendered working culture(s) there has traditionally been a particular salience around one's ability to drive and endure fatigue (Blomberg 1996; Levy 2016; Ouellet 1994: 134–6). Ouellet (1994), for instance, claims that truckers in the USA brag about how many kilometres

and hours they have driven without breaks, how little they have slept and how quickly they have accomplished assignments, because hard effort not only increases their (economic) worth in the eyes of their employers but also among their counterparts. I found similar practices in my data, but these were attached either to assignments ‘in the past’, in the 1980s and in the 1990s when regulations were looser and supervised by the old-fashioned paper disc tachograph, or they were sustained by truckers whose company had not yet adopted digital tachographs. Despite the fact that the rules in principle were the same regardless of the tachograph one was using, a paper disc tachograph provided more leeway to rhythm driving within given un/loading schedules because the machine cannot recognize overruns of several minutes and it enables the covering of one’s tracks by forging and hiding discs. While the informants rarely profit directly themselves from giving up their statutory breaks, the ability to respond to rapidly changing logistics rhythms affirmed the truckers’ feeling that their embodied potential has an indispensable role not only for their employers’ economic success but also for the functioning of the whole industry, which is dependent on quick and flexible hauling services (see also Eastman et al. 2013):

A year ago, I did one pretty tough assignment and broke the law ... well, because I understand that there are certain shipments which are in a real hurry. I was heading to Helsinki for loading when I received a call telling me to forget that loading and go to [a town in Finland], there is a company which manufacturers rollers for the paper industry. I had to pick up a roller and deliver it to [a Swedish company], because there was a paper machine that needed a new roller to replace a broken one. And actually we got a much better rate for that delivery, because, well, it is understandable that if a paper mill is shut down for two days, it will cause a tremendous loss. So they asked me when I would be in ‘Lake’? I counted a moment and replied that 20 hours and I will surely be there. ‘You won’t take a break at all?’, they asked. ‘Didn’t you say that the roller is in a hurry’, I replied. (...) I pushed myself and just got by, changing the paper discs after they filled up ... without a wink of sleep. The guys [in ‘Lake’] were totally baffled, you can’t be here yet!? I am, take it off. (Kari, 49, field discussion)

It also seems that the drivers using the old-fashioned tachographs in particular felt they were ‘expected’ to cheat a little for the reason that they ‘could’. The drivers’ consent to drive more than permitted while confronting the new tightened surveillance environment was unsurprising in a sense that they had already internalized the effects of economic

deregulation that favour ‘the survival of the fittest’ mentality as a desirable way of conducting trucking (see Belzer 2000). The paper disc tachograph meant that their habitus could still continue to produce some of the old, familiar practices which reasserted their sense of usefulness compared with that of the truckers who had switched over to the digital tachograph. While the latter often express their relief at not being able to drive endlessly now, they felt that the tightened regulations alongside the accuracy of the digital machine ignored their embodied experience and hampered their chance to use their bodily potential in full for the appropriate purposes, such as advancing a delivery. Regulations that make you interrupt driving during an urgent delivery when you still have energy oppose the economic rationale of trucking and the practical sense of ‘the game’ (Bourdieu 1990), which has typically enabled truckers to control their work and bodily limits within broader temporal boundaries:

It sometimes feels a bit funny . . . I mean, how could it be possible that the most important thing about the work is when you take your break?!

TA: Do you mean that it is too regulated or you think that you can freely. . .

That’s exactly the point, I mean, it is too regulated from the outside. For example, when you are hungry, when you are able to go take a crap, when you should feel tired and so on . . . the pause must always be in your mind, now you must take it, no matter how keen you are to continue (...) It is good that the regulations exist, so that one is not driving these rigs exhausted, but it gets too regulation-based. There is no room for common sense, it’s starting to work against its purposes. (Veikko, 47, field discussion)

Interestingly, truckers who had switched to the digital tachographs also made numerous references to the hours driven and lack of sleep in the 1980s and 1990s, similar to ‘Kari’ earlier, which implies that the persistence of endurance driving as a sign of a valuable and respectable worker was deeply rooted in their habitus and occupational identity. By bringing up their past experiences and embodied effort in the present (Bourdieu 1990: 54), the truckers reproduce themselves as a hard and valuable male worker in the context where the focus of pacing work for the sake of delivery has shifted more in the direction of pacing work for the regulations themselves (see also Pettersson 2009; Aho 2015). Criticism towards the impracticality of the law can also be seen as an attempt by drivers to distance themselves from the middle-class, ‘white-collar’ masculinity represented by bureaucrats who, as Pettersson (2006) argues, while designing and enacting the regulations, lack practical sense.

DEFENDING ONESELF AGAINST OCCUPATIONAL DEGRADATION

Ouellet (1994: 171) argues that truckers in the USA feel that getting support from motorists means that their work is regarded as skilled and notable, because truckers tend to be 'predisposed to interpret responses by their audiences as indications of respect'. In this study, Finnish truckers acknowledge that driving a massive vehicle commands attention, but, unlike Ouellet's truckers, the informants feel that the size and visibility of their trucks places them under constant suspicion, as happened to their colleagues in Sweden (see Nehls 2003; Pettersson 2009). Many of the informants felt that they were an easy target for the police, motorists and the media because substantial damage resulted often when trucks were involved in accidents on the road, while some complained that the mere existence of trucks was enough to generate a hostile attitude against truckers who were always blocking motorists' and other road users' path with their enormous vehicles (cf. Moore et al. 2005). Becoming misrecognized on their 'home turf' by people who lacked practical experience of driving big rigs was an affront to a trucker's identity as a 'professional driver' because the road was the site where truck drivers' hard-earned (driving) competence should come into its own. Instead of taking on this occupational stigma, truckers redressed such misrecognitions by mobilizing a heroic narrative in which they valorized their traffic skills as superior to those of motorists (see also Ouellet 1994: 155–179). Confronting dangers on the road and overcoming risks caused by motorists affirmed the truck drivers' sense of their skills and bravery.

Heavy vehicles themselves have only a minor role in accidents, something always occurs before (an accident) which causes that accident. The general perception, though, is that the heavy vehicle is the guilty party (...) let's say that from the Konginkangas² incident onwards, there has been talk about 'killer trucks'.

And you take it to heart, because once there was the saying 'big but well-mannered' attached to trucks' rear bumpers. (...) That time has passed. We are being pressurized so heavily in traffic and every day we have to assess risky situations in traffic, which are caused by someone else. (...) Motorists can't recognize their behaviour while shuttling on the road. It becomes extremely visible from the bus driver's or heavy truck driver's viewpoint what is going on around the vehicle. (Pete, 62, field discussion)

As this example illustrates, then, turning to practical knowledge was common, especially in situations where someone outside truckers' occupational position questioned their performance. While truckers' tendency to defend occupational respect by valorizing and exploiting practical knowledge is not surprising given that practical knowledge has been identified as a constitutive part of truckers' occupational identity (Nehls 2003; Pettersson 2006, 2009), it was interesting also how the value of practical knowledge was protected. Many asserted how access to recognized trucking competence can only be achieved by years of practical involvement in trucking (see also Nehls 2003: 52–53), which typically followed a certain age-related trajectory in the drivers' accounts: as young rookies, many had begun their careers at the 'bottom' by driving a delivery truck before getting more responsible assignments and bigger vehicles to handle. The point here is that by presenting the achievement of their practical knowledge as an arduous, hierarchical and long-lasting process, my truckers not only valorize their competence by the fact of being a 'trucker' but also simultaneously distinguish themselves from those who cannot (yet) be recognized as professionals. The truckers' occupational habitus uniformly positioned age as central to the acquisition of practical knowledge by classifying younger drivers as incompetent because of their presumed inexperience:

A guy who is 20 or 25 cannot have such driving experience . . . he has not yet reached the point when he can feel the behaviour of the vehicle in his bones. Driving big rigs comes from the backbone. I have always said that even I have had to learn to drive on a slippery road every autumn over the past 50 years. And while there are discussions about labour shortage and many insist that you have to give youngsters a chance, the path there used to be one in which you work your way up from journeyman to driver, from a single lorry driver to a semi-trailer combination driver, and then proceed to drive heavy full-trailer combinations, but that path does not exist anymore. There is a guy around 20 who got his driving license for heavy full-trailer combinations and they give him a half million euro truck and say go and drive. Well, then what we saw in Lahti [a city in Finland] happens (...) a completely inexperienced driver crashed his truck loaded full of sulfuric acid into an apartment building wall. (Pete, 62, field discussion)

Some of my informants complained that reducing the entry barriers had tempted incompetent amateurs and dishonest hauliers to enter the sector and experiment with trucking as a subsidiary trade without any serious intention to stay and develop their competence and business operations in

a professional direction. These accounts can be seen to reflect the situation in the USA after deregulation when experienced truckers exited the industry and were replaced by less experienced drivers who appeared to have weaker safety records and were more likely to make mistakes that led to accidents on the road (Belzer 2002: 392). By setting a high standard for entry and approved competence, my experienced truckers attempted to protect their occupational expertise and the sector's reputation from the deskilling engendered by the open-door policy of the neoliberal era, positioning themselves as 'true professionals' against the unskilled charlatans apparently making their way into the trade:

Liberating the licence was the very last straw.³ They should not have done it, it was a shock for this sector. Licenses should have remained means-tested at all times. We had a guy who operated as a subcontractor for us, and, god damn it, he can't even reverse! He was a metal worker all his life and then he gets an inheritance from his dad and decides to start a haulage company, and the poor guy can't even reverse his truck (...) There has been such a motley group of people and hauliers [since deregulation] (Pentti, 53, field discussion)

While it was important to get symbolic approval for one's experience and hard-earned practical knowledge, many felt that it should also be recognized financially. Unsurprisingly, most truckers emphasized the importance of money, and many of my informants mentioned having rejected jobs that paid below the minimum level collectively agreed by unions.⁴ Truckers tend to be relatively satisfied with payment practices in their present job, but their numerous references to illegal practices in certain subsectors and hauling companies, such as tax avoidance, price dumping and employees' exploitation, imply that getting decent compensation was not straightforward, as has been found in studies elsewhere (Belzer 2000; Belman and Monaco 2001; Hilal 2008). By insisting on their ability to avoid exploitative jobs, the informants positioned themselves as honest men who are not willing to sell their labour on the cheap and be party to illegal practices in the sector. Accounts imply, however, that taking this position would have been much more difficult without having years of experience from different assignments and without being a Finn. In this respect, the neoliberal principle that favours unrestricted movement and competition of labour, goods, services and capital (Harvey 2005) keeps haulage rates low and gives the haulage companies a constant incentive to hire the most defenceless labour, such as young, inexperienced and foreign (Eastern European) drivers.

TA: how about the pay, is the collective agreement followed here?

Yes.

TA: I have understood that the collective agreement is not followed within semi-trailer traffic?

No. They can't pay, hauling is so low-priced there. They try to cop out at every payment . . . it's a totally wild segment. And that's why they often hire youngsters, they've got poor wages and they cannot fight for their rights and don't dare to insist on their rights (...)

TA: Yeah, I got the picture that they don't follow the collective agreement.

And while I have been looking through different vacancies and heard about the pay. . . oh phew, they are not for me.

TA: Is it that youngsters more often apply for jobs on the semi-trailer sector?

It depends on what you manage to get at the beginning of your career. If you don't have connections, you have to take what is offered and acquire experience somewhere. Without experience it's difficult to find anything. (Pentti, 53, field discussion)

They operate with poor rates, the guys in semi-pulling traffic, I mean . . . that's the reason why the sector is mostly occupied by Russians (Antti, 51, field discussion)

It became clear, however, that many of the experienced truckers were ready to endure relatively extensive hardships as long as the compensation remained agreeable. This finding was interesting in relation to Ouellet (1994: 199–224), who claims that the wage is a major motivator only for truckers he called 'workers', while the truckers he labelled 'super truckers' are primarily attracted by qualities such as adventure, variety and fancy equipment. While 'the adventurous nature' of trucking had attracted my informants especially at a younger age, and some mentioned the fascinating cities and villages they had driven through, trucking as a glamorous lifestyle or 'adventure' was strongly rejected. Instead, many pointed to the rugged daily routines and rhythms of trucking: working frequently by night, enduring fatigue, waiting for hours to get loaded and unloaded, constrained social and personal facilities on the road, and an inability to participate in 'normal' daily leisure pursuits and social activities (see Aho 2015; Belzer 2000). By stressing the difficulty and unconventional rhythm of trucking, informants emphasized that the earnings from the road had not come without sacrifices and a substantial effort, which reinforced their sense of themselves as particular (male) wage-earners:

Earning money has always been a motivator for doing this, although it means that you can barely have a life outside work. But I chose this job and I have been doing this for so long that it is difficult to think of [other] options.

TA: ...not driving for fun?

No, no. The money, but it's kind of a pity that you have to work crazy hours for your wage at this job, it would be nice if you got the same money for 200 hours [a month]. (Kari, 49, field discussion)

It seems that wages form an important signal of respect for my truckers because it compensates for harsh work and the men's alienating experiences within the capitalist system (see Tolson 1977; Willis 1977). In this respect, my informants are close to Ouellet's 'workers', who despise 'super truckers' for giving their time and effort to their employers without getting decent compensation (1994: 206–7). But while it seems that the truckers acknowledge their value, their accounts are also reminiscent of the situation in the USA after economic deregulation, which reduced hourly wages so much that the only option to earn a living was to extend working hours hugely (Belzer 2000: 8–9).

CONCLUSIONS

This study broadens the discussion of truckers' gendered working culture by illustrating how the Finnish male truck driver's position as a respectable male worker is constructed in the context of recent economic, technological and institutional transitions. Based on my findings, I agree with Ouellet (1994), Nehls (2003), Petterson (2006) and Levy (2016), who all suggest that maintaining authority over one's own work is a vital component of truck drivers' masculinity. In line with Levy (2015), however, the study shows that technology-based economic and institutional surveillance narrows truckers' autonomy, which not only hinders their ability to retain exclusive control over their work procedures but also devalues their hard-earned practical knowledge. Preventing drivers from exploiting this embodied competence in full is experienced as a limitation on truckers' ability to perform their position as a respectable worker and as a man. This study, then, challenges and updates Ouellet's study, which sees trucking as an attractive and special kind of blue-collar work based on its autonomous nature. While the mobility of trucking ensures that truck drivers cannot easily be subjected to Taylorist-Fordist forms of control similar to those operating in factories, mines or construction sites, the case of Finnish

truckers nevertheless concurs with Levy (2015) and Belzer (2000, 2002) in finding that contemporary trucking in Europe, as in the USA, is becoming an extremely rationalized business affected by a combination of global competition and neo-Taylorist control. An unreachable trucker, whose performance has a huge impact on companies' economic success, is at odds with organizations' neoliberal rationale that pursues economic effectiveness by calculating, quantifying and measuring workers' performances.

The analysis also revealed that truckers in Finland, as in Sweden (Nehls 2003; Pettersson 2009), tend to feel themselves less celebrated and recognized than their counterparts in the USA. A striking finding, however, was that despite the experience of decreasing autonomy, the intensified work pace, occupational stigma and fierce competition, Finnish truckers were able to sustain their sense of respect by creating a defence that valorized their practical experience, manual skills, embodied effort and hard-earned wage. This finding comes close to Nixon's (2009) in the sense that in both cases a male workers' habitus continues to produce quite traditional working-class practices and dispositions in order to sustain a respectable male worker subjectivity. These results of the study also carry relevance in relation to Skeggs' (1997: 74) assertion that working-class men can use class as a positive source of identity, in contrast to working-class women, for whom class is experienced more as a source of exclusion. While working-class women in Skeggs' study have to work on themselves continually in order to live up to the standards established by the middle classes (Skeggs 1997: 67, 74–95), experienced male truckers in this study were not uncertain about themselves for a moment. Unlike Skeggs' women, who seek acceptance through criteria set by someone else, male truckers rejected assessments that came from outside their socioeconomic position and, by contrast, evaluated themselves and their colleagues through the standards they set themselves. Despite the fact that economic restructuring has undermined some components of traditional forms of working-class masculinity (e.g. McDowell 2003; Dolby et al. 2004), this study has shown that masculine codes surrounding manual skills, physical effort and a hard-earned wage, where it is available, still provide a language for making oneself a respectable male worker.

NOTES

1. Regulation (EC) 561/2006 set the maximum driving hours and minimum rest periods for truckers and makes the onboard digital tachograph

- compulsory for all new vehicles registered in the European Union from May 2006. The regulation restricts the truckers' driving time within a 24-hour period to a maximum of nine hours, while the daily rest period must be at least 11 hours. Breaks should be taken after four-and-a-half hours at the most and they must be at least 45 minutes long (see Europa 2013: 26–7, Europa 2006).
2. The collision of a truck and a bus in 2004 led to the death of 23 people, which is the most disastrous road accident in Finland.
 3. In 1991 the means-tested licence system was replaced by applicability discretion.
 4. Set out in a bilateral agreement between employers' and employees' organizations.

REFERENCES

- Adkins, L., & Skeggs, B. (2004). *Feminism after Bourdieu*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.
- Aho, T. (2015). Rekkamiesten työn rytmihäiriöt [Rhythm conflicts of truck drivers work]. *Janus*, 23(3), 44–67.
- Belman, D. L., & Monaco, K. A. (2001). The effects of deregulation, de-unionization, technology, and human capital on the work and work lives of truck drivers. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 54(2a), 502–524.
- Belzer, M. H. (2000). *Sweatshops on wheels. Winners and losers in trucking deregulation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Belzer, M. H. (2002). Technological innovation and the trucking industry: Information revolution and the effect on the work process. *Journal of Labour Research*, 23(3), 375–395.
- Bergholm, T. (1999). Automies – Yksinäinen susi vai lauman jäsen [‘Driverman – A lone wolf or a member of crowd’]. In R. Parikka (Ed.), *Suomalaisen työn historiaa. Korvesta konttoriin* [History of Finnish work. From woods to office] (Finnish Literature Society reports 730, pp. 371–394). Hämeenlinna.
- Blomberg, O. (1996). *Maanteiden tavaraliikenne – talouselämän perusedellytys. Suomen kuorma-autoliikenteen historia I* [Road freight transportation: The principle of economic life. The history of Finnish road transport sector I]. Forssan Kirjapaino Oy.
- Blyton, P., Hassard, J., Hill, S., & Starkey, K. (1989). *Time, work and organisation*. London: Routledge.
- Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction. A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P., & Wacquant, L. J. D. (1992). *An invitation to reflexive sociology*. Oxford: Polity Press.

- Brandth, B., & Haugen, M. S. (2000). From lumberjack to business manager: Masculinity in the Norwegian forestry press. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 16(3), 343–355.
- Braverman, H. (1974). *Labor and monopoly capital: The degradation of work in the twentieth century*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Burawoy, M. (1985). *The politics of production*. London: Verso.
- Cockburn, C. (1983). *Brothers: Male dominance and technological change*. London: Pluto Press.
- Collinson, D. L. (1992). *Managing the shopfloor: Subjectivity, masculinity and workplace culture*. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter.
- Collinson, D., & Hearn, J. (1996). ‘Men’ at ‘work’: Multiple masculinities/multiple workplaces. In M. Mac an Ghail (Ed.), *Understanding masculinities. Social relations and cultural arenas* (pp. 61–76). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Connell, R. (2005). *Masculinities* (2nd ed.). Cambridge: Polity.
- Crowley, M., & Hodson, R. (2014). Neoliberalism at work. *Social Currents*, 1(1), 91–108.
- de Croon, E. M., Kuijter, P., Paul, F. M., Broersen, J. P. J., & Frings-Dresen, M. H. W. (2004). Information technology and road transport industry: How does IT affect the lorry driver? *Applied Ergonomics*, 35(4), 313–320.
- Dolby, N., Dimitriadis, G., & Willis, P. (Eds.). (2004). *Learning to labour in new times*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Eastman, J. T., Danaher, W. F., & Schrock, D. (2013). Gendering truck driving songs: The cultural masculinization of an occupation. *Sociological Spectrum*, 33(5), 416–432.
- Europa. (2006). *Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council*. <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32006R0561&qid=1453140703301>. Accessed 11 Jun 2015.
- Europa. (2013). *Social and working conditions of road transport hauliers* (European Parliament). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/495855/IPOL-TRAN_ET%282013%29495855_EN.pdf. Accessed 23 Sept 2015.
- European Commission. (2014). *Report from the commission to the European Parliament and the council: On the State of the Union Road Transport Market*. http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/news/com%282014%29-222_en.pdf. Accessed 22 Sept 2015.
- Filteau, M. R. (2014). Who are those guys? Constructing the oilfield’s new dominant masculinity. *Men and Masculinities*, 17(4), 1–21.
- Gentry, J. J., Semeijin, J., & Vellenga, D. B. (1995). The future of road haulage in the new European Union – 1995 and beyond. *Logistics and Transportation Review*, 31(2), 145–160.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (2008). *Ethnography: Principles in practice*. London: Routledge.

- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hassard, J. (1989). Time and organization. In P. Blyton, J. Hassard, S. Hill, & K. Starkey (Eds.), *Time, work and organisation* (pp. 13–34). London: Routledge.
- Hearn, J. (2004). From hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men. *Feminist Theory*, 5(1), 49–72.
- Hilal, N. (2008). Unintended effects of deregulation in the European Union: The case of road freight transport. *Sociologie du travail* 50, *Supplement*, 1, 19–29.
- Hubbard, T. N. (2003). Information, decisions, and productivity: On-board computers and capacity utilization in trucking. *The American Economic Review*, 93(4), 1328–1353.
- Kallberg, H., Kalenoja, H., & Rantala, J. (2005). Tietotekniikka muuttaa liikennettä: Liikenteen telematiikka ja älykäs liikenne [Information technology change transportation: Telematics of the transportation and intelligence transport]. In A. Kasvio, T. Inkinen, & H. Liikala (Eds.), *Tietoyhteiskunta – Myytit ja todellisuus* [Information society: Myths and reality] (pp. 229–253). Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy – Juvenes Print.
- Lehto, A.-M., & Sutela, H. (2009). *Three decades of working conditions – Findings of Finnish quality of work life surveys 1977–2008*. Helsinki: Statistics Finland, Multiprint.
- Levy, K. E. C. (2015). The contexts of control: Information, power, and truck-driving work. *The Information Society*, 31(2), 160–174.
- Levy, K. E. C. (2016). Digital surveillance in the hypermasculine workplace. *Feminist Media Studies*, 16(2), 361–365.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities? Employment change and white working-class youth*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Moore, R. S., LeMay, S., Moore, M. L., Lidell, P., Kinard, B., & McMillen, D. (2005). An investigation of motorists' perceptions of trucks on the highways. *Transportation Journal*, 44(1), 20–32.
- Morgan, D. H. J. (1992). *Discovering men*. New York: Routledge.
- Morgan, D. H. J. (2005). Class and masculinity. In M. S. Kimmel, J. Hearn, & R. W. Connell (Eds.), *Handbook of studies on men and masculinities* (pp. 165–177). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Nehls, E. (2003). *Vägvel. Lastbilsförare i fjärrtrafik – perspektiv på yrkeskultur och genus*. Etnologiska skrifter 29. Göteborg: Umeå universitet. Skrifter från Etnologiska föreningen i Västsverige 41.
- Nixon, D. (2009). I can't put a smiley face on: Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the new economy. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(3), 300–323.
- OECD. (1997). *Liberalization and structural reform in the freight transport sector in Europe*. <http://www.oecd.org/tad/envtrade/2387068.pdf>. Accessed 4 Aug 2015.

- Olkkonen, S., Ylä-Outinen, A., & Pulkkinen, R.-L. (2003). *The national report on working conditions in road transport in Finland*. Lappeenranta: Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/sites/default/files/ef_files/ewco/employment/documents/RoadFinland.pdf. Accessed 6 Mar 2015.
- OSH. (2011). *Occupational safety and health in the transport sector – An overview, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
- Ouellet, L. J. (1994). *Pedal to the metal. The work lives of truckers*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Patomäki, H. (2007). *Uusliberalismi Suomessa. 3. painos* [Neoliberalism in Finland 3rd edition]. Vantaa: Dark Oy.
- Pettersson, L. (2006). Masculinities in an occupational setting: A gender perspective on resistance toward formal control. *Journal of Scandinavian Studies in Criminology and Crime Prevention*, 7(2), 107–125.
- Pettersson, L. (2009). *Frihet under kontroll. Om kontroll i åkerinäringen*. Stockholms: Kriminologiska institutionen, Stockholms universitet.
- Rishel, T. D., Scott, P. J., & Stenger, A. J. (2003). A preliminary look at using satellite communication for collaboration in the supply chain. *Transportation Journal*, 5(42), 17–30.
- Salanne, I., & Rantala, J. (2008). *Logistiikkajärjestelmä, tiekuljetusten turvallisuus ja alan kehittyminen: Logistiikkajärjestelmän vaikutukset tiekuljetusten toimintamalleihin, liikenneturvallisuuteen ja alan houkuttelevuuteen sekä kehittymiseen* [Logistics System, Road Transport Safety and Development of the Industry: The affects of logistic system-level factors to the traffic safety of road transportation and the attractiveness and development of the road transportation industry]. Helsinki: AKE.
- Sewell, G., & Wilkinson, B. (1992). Someone to watch over me: Surveillance, discipline and the just in time labour process. *Sociology*, 26(2), 271–289.
- Skeggs, B. (1997). *Formations of class & gender: Becoming respectable*. London: Sage.
- Thompson, E. P. (1969) 'Time, work-discipline, and industrial capitalism', *Past & Present* (38), 56–97.
- Tolson, A. (1977). *The limits of masculinity*. London: Tavistock.
- Vahrenkamp, R. (2011). The limits of railway transportation in a mass consumption society: Germany, 1900–1938. *Journal of Transport History*, 32(1), 1–16.
- Vidal, M. (2007). Manufacturing empowerment? 'Employee involvement' in the labour process after Fordism. *Socio-Economic Review*, 5(2), 197–232.
- West, C., & Zimmerman, D. H. (1987). Doing gender. *Gender and Society*, 1, 125–151.
- Willis, P. (1977). *Learning to labour: How working-class kids get working-class jobs*. Farnborough: Saxon House.

Masculinities and Health Inequalities Within Neoliberal Economies

Steve Robertson, Brendan Gough, and Mark Robinson

INTRODUCTION

There has been recognition that shifting employment patterns, particularly the move from manufacturing towards service industries, within the UK and across other areas of the ‘Western world’, has had a particularly negative impact on male employment, especially for working-class men (Bell and Blanchflower 2011; Gulliford et al. 2014). Furthermore, the working patterns often required within service industries—such as the increasing requirement for ‘flexible working’, the (re-)emergence of zero hour contracts and associated underemployment, what has been termed the ‘gig economy’—are regarded as especially alien and problematic for some men, many of whom continue to identify with traditional notions of being the main ‘breadwinner’ and ‘provider’ for themselves and their family (Nixon 2009). There is related concern that many men, particularly those from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, are ill-equipped for service

S. Robertson (✉)

Centre for Men’s Health, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

B. Gough

Social Psychology, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

M. Robinson

Centre for Men’s Health, Leeds Beckett University, Leeds, UK

industries, particularly lacking skills involving proficient interpersonal communication and the concomitant emotional labour that this requires (Nixon 2009).

Such shifts and changes are known to impact on the health of individuals and populations. For example, the impact of recent economic austerity and related redundancy and unemployment are suggested to have had a particular impact on the health and wellbeing of men. Evidence from the USA (Mossakowski 2009) and Spain (Artazcoz et al. 2004) shows that unemployment has a stronger negative influence on men's mental wellbeing than on women's, and evidence from Greece shows the more significant impact of economic recession (fiscal austerity) on male suicide compared with female suicide (Antonakakis and Collins 2014). The anticipation of unemployment, even when still in work, affects health and wellbeing (Bambra 2010), and the impact of this (and of unemployment) is likely to be more marked for those from poor socioeconomic backgrounds as they are less likely (lower skilled) to find future work (Green 2011).

It seems then that the embedding of work as fundamental to a positive male identity (Olliffe and Han 2013) might lead to greater mental and physical health issues for men during times of economic change and uncertainty. However, despite emerging literature that links masculinities, patriarchy and neoliberalism to men's health outcomes (Stanistreet et al. 2005; Williams et al. 2009; Scott-Samuel et al. 2015), and health inequalities to masculinities (Lohan 2007), little attention has yet been paid to shifts in male employment. This chapter therefore aims to draw together and integrate relatively disparate literature relating to neoliberal policy agendas and employment patterns; masculinities; and men's health and wellbeing. We will give consideration to how work on gender relations and masculinities can inform our understanding of the relationship between employment patterns and men's health in the neoliberal context. Particular attention will be paid to men from poor socioeconomic backgrounds in the UK, with the majority of studies being based on white working-class men. Finally, we will develop a conceptual framework for understanding the links between neoliberal employment patterns, masculinities, and men's health and wellbeing.

NEOLIBERALISM AND HEALTH SYSTEMS

While definitions of neoliberalism undoubtedly vary (Bell and Green 2016), in this chapter we take the general view that it is a system that privileges economic growth and imperatives over principles such as democracy, equity and social justice. After McGregor (2001), we see this system as underpinned instead by the three principles of individualism, privatization and decentralization. Others have described the conditions that gave rise to the adoption and spread of these neoliberal economic principles from the 1970s, mapping its globalizing impact following the election of conservative governments committed to embedding these principles first in the USA and then the UK, Germany and beyond into other ‘economically advanced countries’ (e.g. Labonté and Stuckler 2016: 313).

Within the USA, this move to neoliberalist principles has perhaps intensified rather than radically changed how healthcare is structured and delivered given that there is a long history of a mixed and fragmented economy of health and of services being delivered mainly by the private sector with minimal state or federal intervention (Carter 2015). In the UK, however, the situation is different because the history of the National Health Service (NHS) is tied to a commitment to government-led social welfare situated within a Keynesian economic system. The NHS was established and subsequently dedicated to universal coverage of healthcare that was free at the point of use. However, following the election of the Conservative government under Margaret Thatcher in 1979, neoliberal principles became established in legislative frameworks and applied within the NHS. Initially these measures were tentative, commencing in 1983 with the opportunity to contract out certain non-clinical services (cleaning, catering and laundry). However, by the time of the NHS and Community Care Act of 1990, the foundation of the ‘purchaser–provider split’ had developed significantly and extended to include initiatives such as general practitioner fundholding, thereby increasing internal competition to provide NHS services (Scott-Samuel et al. 2014). However, it was not until later that clinical services were legally allowed to be contracted out. As others have noted (Scott-Samuel et al. 2014), in this way the Thatcher era created key system changes that laid the foundations for the even greater marketization and private sector developments that followed under New Labour (1997–2010), such as the Private Finance Initiative, and under the Coalition government (2010–2015). This later era of ‘neoliberalism with a human face’ culminated in the Health and Social Care Act of 2012, which ‘unveiled a robust

pro-market agenda for the NHS, including plans to allow commissioners to purchase services from “any willing provider” and to allow up to 49 % of NHS trusts’ work to be in the private sector’ (Sturgeon 2014: 409).

The implementation of neoliberal principles across the policy agenda was not without problems, though. The unfettered nature of what some have called ‘roll-back’ neoliberalism soon began to enter a period of difficulty through the late 1980s and into the 1990s. Specifically, high levels of unemployment, and increasing social inequalities, generated political conflict and social breakdown, resulting in financial costs to the state in terms of welfare, policing, incarceration and so on (Collins et al. 2015). This led to a new era, under Clinton in the USA and Blair in the UK, of ‘roll-out’ neoliberalism where ‘The state looked proactively to regulate the relationships between the state and the market on terms which were ultimately of greatest benefit to the private sector’ (Collins et al. 2015). This ‘neoliberalism with a human face’, while representing a move away somewhat from a neoliberal agenda of minimal state interference (to one of actively producing a market uninhibited by rules and regulations; Grzanka et al. 2016), still maintained a heavy emphasis on the principles of individualism, privatization and decentralization, including, as mentioned above, the continuation of these into healthcare policy and delivery. To this extent, then, as Tickell and Peck (2003: 165) note, more recent incarnations of neoliberalism revolve not so much around the shrinking of the state but on the extension of market rule primarily by means of state power.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THE IMPACT ON HEALTH AND WELLBEING

In thinking through the impact of the above on health and wellbeing, it is important to further consider the nature of neoliberalism. In a recent editorial, Bell and Green (2016) outline the importance of being mindful of how we use the term/concept in respect to public health. In light of their paper, we are particularly interested here in neoliberalism as policy and programme (e.g. policies enacted under the banner of privatization, deregulation and liberalization) and neoliberalism as governmentality (the organized practices and techniques through which subjects are governed at a distance) (see also Ward and England 2007). We will look at these in turn (while recognizing that, in practice, they are interrelated).

Neoliberalism as Policy and Programmes

We have outlined above, mainly using the example of the UK, how neoliberalism influences the legislative and policy structure of health systems. Yet this occurs in a wider context of neoliberal economic policies that extend beyond country borders. The impact on health has therefore been said to be global. While life expectancy has continued to improve for many 'developed' regions of the world since the 1970s, other regions, most notably sub-Saharan Africa and the former USSR, have experienced reduced gains in life expectancy and increasing mortality rates (De Vogli 2011). This has been linked to the inculcation of neoliberal economic policies in international contexts and executed by organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and the subsequent wealth gap experienced by the richest (Organisation for Economic and Co-operative Development) and the poorest (sub-Saharan African) countries, which has grown since the start of the neoliberal period (De Vogli 2011: 317). However, more 'developed' countries have not been immune from the impact of neoliberal policies and programmes, as attested to by the widening of 'within country' health inequalities. Schrecker and Bambra (2015) draw interesting comparisons about the inequalities in health in the UK between the laissez-faire liberalism of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the situation since the neoliberal period from the late 1970s. They suggest that these two periods are strikingly similar 'in terms of income inequalities, poor working conditions, lack of access to services and unequal power distribution' (17). Subsequently, they show that despite significant overall improvements in life expectancy, the patterns of inequality in life expectancy remain. They note that by 2007 (pre-financial crisis and subsequent austerity measures), the likelihood of death before 65 years of age between local authority districts with the highest and lowest 10 % prevalence of poverty was larger than at any point since the Great Depression (87/88). In Scotland, Parkinson et al. (2016) provide evidence of increased suicide among men born between 1960 and 1980, especially for those living in the most deprived locations. They suggest that 'this is consistent with a hypothesis that exposure to neoliberal policies created a delayed negative health impact' (194), especially for these men.

It is often argued by supporters of neoliberal approaches that, through processes of marketization, they improve efficiency and drive up quality through competition, including improving these within health service delivery. However, in addition to adversely affecting health outcomes (e.g. life

expectancy and other health inequalities), the neoliberal principles underlying current policy and programme planning in healthcare have done nothing for, and indeed may have harmed, the quality of care provided, as concluded in an evidence review of this area:

‘the privatization and marketization of health care systems does not improve quality, with most financial and organizational reforms having either inconclusive or negative effects’. (Footman et al. 2014)

In considering the work of health promoters in New Zealand, Lovell et al. (2014) outline how many involved in health promotion have worked to overcome the competitive elements that neoliberal reforms and market ideology have inserted into health services, including public health services. However, the short termism that such ideologies engender continues to exert pressure and constrain the ability of those working in the field to respond to community health needs given the often tight time frames for interventions to achieve outcome targets (which themselves are often linked to market notions of cost reduction and/or improved efficiency). This focus on time-bounded, economically driven outcomes is particularly problematic in health promotion work with men where processes of developing trust in co-developing projects have been shown to take longer, with early results often more focused on process, particularly success in genuine engagement itself, rather than on any ‘hard’ outcome measures (Robertson et al. 2015).

This issue of short termism can be compounded by the tendering and contracting out of services required within a market economy. In the UK, within community health services, there has been an increase in the contracting out of services demonstrated by a tripling of expenditure on independent sector activity (to 18 % of the total) since 2006/2007 (Lafond et al. 2014). Yet fear of ‘market failure’ (Hudson 2015) means that certain ‘difficult to engage’ groups, where men are often placed in health-promotion rhetoric, are likely to be avoided by private contractors, thereby leaving them to the mercy of ever-shrinking and resource-challenged state provision.¹

Neoliberalism, Governmentality and Gender

Having considered the issue of neoliberalism in policy and programming, we also note concerns about neoliberalism as a form of governmentality. Neoliberal principles can clearly be witnessed within the health context of

countries where modes of health (and other welfare) governance have increasingly aimed to create subjects who are obliged to self-manage their health through the individualization of responsibility. As Crawshaw (2012) demonstrates, within neoliberal systems, individuals become abstracted as rational, health-seeking subjects motivated to achieve wellbeing by engaging in appropriate lifestyle choices and, to this extent, they are presented as somewhat disembedded from everyday experiences and the wider socio-economic context. As part of the ‘choice’ rhetoric within the neoliberal project, it becomes only (morally) right that individuals have a diverse range of health-optimizing options to choose from in order to make the ‘correct’ decisions to best sustain (and even improve) their health. As such, being limited to a state health system that presents limited options and opportunity to ‘choose’ becomes unethical. Instead, there is a need to decentralize services and reduce government regulation, or rather increase marketization, in order to encourage private companies to offer these new health consumers a range of ‘products’. Ideas of universal healthcare as an element of equity and social justice are again replaced by the desire to let markets regulate themselves under a thin guise of individual choice (and associated individual responsibility). As Sturgeon (2014) points out, casting health as a ‘commercial opportunity’ requires (indeed demands) that people recognize themselves as active consumers of the services provided, and this necessitates both an acceptance of personal responsibility and an ability to be assertive in relationships with healthcare providers (414). Yet some have more access to the financial and social capital required to take such an active role than others.

Important research on the role that such neoliberal discourses play in women’s experiences of health inequalities (Peacock 2012) shows how one particular discourse—that of ‘no legitimate dependency’—was manifested as self-criticism, self-blame and irresponsibility. In particular, the difficulties of protecting their children from the stigma attached to being unable to purchase ‘appropriate goods’ (e.g. certain designer-labelled clothing) was taken as a personal failure rather than an outcome of structural inequalities. This discourse, in which dependence on others is disavowed and self-reliance valorized and expected, was seen to be a partial internalization of neoliberal notions of individualism and particularly of ideas about ‘individual choice’. Given that hegemonic notions of masculinity strongly promote autonomous practices, it is quite possible that men are equally (or possibly more) likely to feel the negative impact of the internalization of a ‘no legitimate dependency’ discourse. Certainly, when asked directly about

health, men in one study we carried out (Robertson 2006) articulated that responsibility for staying well—mainly operationalized in narratives as ‘healthy lifestyle’ choices—resided firmly with them and not with the health service. Similarly, Sloan, Gough and Conner (2009) found that ‘healthy’ men drew on masculinized notions of self-reliance, independence and (self-) control when accounting for their lifestyle practices relating to smoking, drinking and exercise. Such notions are particularly problematic for those men who have least access to available material and social resources, and are therefore most likely to need to engage in dependency—or to suffer the consequences of resisting dependency. Work by Dolan on working-class men’s health practices and experiences is illustrative in this regard. In considering these men’s experiences of income inequality and material standards (Dolan 2007a), he demonstrates that negative health impacts occur not necessarily as measures of absolute deprivation. Rather, in line with neomaterialist explanations that consider not only material living conditions but how these come about, these health impacts occur through the negative effects of reduced access to the ‘neo-material goods and resources necessary for health in contemporary society’ (726), and the worry, anxiety and stress this inculcates. When considering these men’s perceptions and experiences of social capital and health (Dolan 2007b), he links this also to aspects of masculinity, noting how practices of self-sufficiency and self-control made it difficult for these men to ask for help or support (to engage in dependency) despite their often difficult circumstances.

In addition, there are ongoing concerns about the positioning of certain social groups as posing a ‘threat’ in public health terms (Lupton 2015). We suggest that ‘men’ are often presented as one such public health threat through rhetoric about the taking of unnecessary ‘risks’, male violence, and the damage done to their own health and that of others (Peate 2004; Smith et al. 2016). As Brown et al. (2013) point out, risk discourses (and we would add associated ‘fear’ and ‘threat’ discourses) act as a dividing social practice and link to notions of the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’. Yet ‘risk’ is not a gender-neutral term, with some suggesting that risk itself may be a masculine value (Lyng 1990; Adam 2016). Such discourses become even more significant in times of financial austerity, which act to foster a wider ‘blame’ discourse and lead to situations where certain groups, in this case ‘men’, are seen as those costing the nation through their irresponsibility and risk-taking (Tucker 2012). Furthermore, particular groups of men are discursively presented as more

of a threat than others: gay men (e.g. through the fear attached to HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases); minority ethnic men (e.g. through fear of higher rates of violence and mental health psychosis); and, of course, men from areas of social deprivation (e.g. through higher rates of crime, violence and drug use). These communities are disproportionately construed as generating public health risks and the associated economic expense.

In public health (and other) policy and practice terms then, 'men', especially specific subgroups, become constructed as a particular burden and problem within a neoliberal discourse that forefronts individualism and personal responsibility. However, these men are also simultaneously represented as those least likely to be provided with, or engaged by, the approaches and services required to meet their health needs and address their poorer life expectancy.

NEOLIBERALISM, WORK/LABOUR AND HEALTH

So far we have considered the development of neoliberalism and its impact on health structures, policies and outcomes. We have also started to link these to gender and masculinities, and we continue to develop this aspect further throughout the rest of the chapter. Within this section we begin the process of linking neoliberalism and labour, including formal paid working practices, but also aspects of 'work on the self', which, as mentioned in the previous section, are integral parts of the process/requirements within neoliberal governmentality.

We do not wish here to fully revisit the way that neoliberal policy has influenced employment practices and patterns, as this is well covered elsewhere in this book. We are interested in considering how the implementation of neoliberal policies has impacted on men's employment conditions, self-regulatory practices and, ultimately, their health and wellbeing. In terms of how working practices are influenced within neoliberal environments, and the impact of this on (men's) health practices and outcomes, it is important to consider how structure and agency, or more accurately structure/agency, are at play. We begin the next section, then, by looking at macrolevel studies on neoliberalism, employment and men's health before considering this within studies undertaken in local (micro) contexts.

Understanding the Macrolevel of Neoliberalism, Labour and Men's Health

Understanding work as being good for the human condition and its absence as harmful is nothing new. A decline in manufacturing industries in certain regions of the UK, other areas of Europe and the USA has created situations where whole communities of young working-class men have seen anticipated employment routes disappear. In the UK, for example, the once high rates of manufacturing employment were reduced to just 8% of all employment by 2014 (Tait 2016), having been primarily replaced by finance, banking and service industries. As Pickavance (2016) points out, even when employment is present, within the modern work context of rapidly increasing technology and globalization, working practices that foster 'drudgery' and leave people trapped in in-work poverty can also act to erode a basic sense of self, undermine communities and thereby become 'detrimental to our mental, physical and social wellbeing' (15). The issue, then, is not just one of unemployment but also one of neoliberal working practices that increase dissatisfaction and insecurity in the pursuit of maximised profit, often in the guise of improved efficiency (Neilson 2015).

Despite some of the shifts in masculinities noted since the mid-1990s (discussed further later in this chapter), the importance of being able to provide adequately financially, a working identity, remains an enduring part of personal identity for many men (e.g. Oliffe and Han 2013). As others have stated, 'Being a working man is a symbolic resource' (Butcher and James 2014). This is borne out in other empirical work. In the USA, Mossakowski (2009) showed that the association between being out of the labour force and depressive symptoms was stronger for young men than for young women. Likewise, using data from an area of Spain, Artazcoz et al. (2004) demonstrate how the impact of unemployment is greater on the mental health of men than women. However, they made other specific links showing that, for men with family responsibilities, the impact is significantly greater than for women. These responsibilities seemingly provided a buffering effect for women who were unemployed, but an enhanced negative effect for unemployed men with family responsibilities (there was no significant difference in impact for single men and women). Furthermore, for men with family responsibilities, the impact of unemployment was greatest among those in the manual labour group. The mental health impact of unemployment, then, seems to be linked to both gender and class, with family men from manual labouring backgrounds being those most impacted

by unemployment. Similarly, the work of Antonakakis and Collins (2014) on the impact of neoliberally driven fiscal austerity measures on suicide rates in Greece shows a greater impact on male suicide rates, perhaps also suggesting a link to a perceived failure to perform a provider function under such circumstances.

This is not just about the impact of unemployment, though, because another key component linked to neoliberalism—employability and the tenuous nature of employment in a reduced welfare environment—has also been shown to be important. Bambra (2010) shows how the precarious nature of neoliberal work and related concerns about anticipating times of unemployment (e.g. for those on zero hours contracts) affect health and wellbeing—and particularly so when welfare safety nets are not present or vastly reduced. Nolan (2005) notes something similar but specifically links job insecurity to a threatened male breadwinner identity. Yet this is not the same for all men. Green's (2011) work in Australia demonstrates how positively perceived employability among higher socioeconomic status men moderated the effects of both unemployment and job insecurity on life satisfaction and mental health. This again provides supporting evidence that neoliberal working practices have the greatest negative mental health impacts on men from areas of multiple disadvantage. Having considered some of these patterns from population-based studies linking neoliberalist working practices with health outcomes for men, it is important to consider some more locally based qualitative studies to help to explore more about how and why these patterns occur.

The Local Contexts of Neoliberalism, Labour and Health

In her interview-based study looking at employment change and working-class young men in the UK, McDowell (2003) highlights in detail the shift from industrial manufacturing to finance and service industries, and the sex differences in employment patterns that have accompanied this.² This shift, a suggested feminization of work (see also Scott-Samuel et al. 2014: 57), is dependent on the *social* relationship between the producer (provider) and the consumer of that service rather than on the manufacture of material products. As McDowell goes on to highlight, within such socially interactive service work, employee identities are integral and use is made 'of workers' looks, personalities and emotions, as well as their physical and intellectual capacities' (McDowell 2003: 29). This process is not limited to the low-paid service sector, and Connell and Woods (2005) also demonstrate the

incorporation and internalization of specific identities into the successful work of international businessmen. Important here then is a reflexive work-related self-identity that can be aware of and responsive to the needs of the consumer and able to change accordingly to shifting requirements. Yet the skills required in this service economy—such as caring, empathic communication and flexible workplace identities—are qualities associated with more normatively feminine practices and many men may be less well equipped for work within such contexts. As such, men from within communities that have lost their industrial manufacturing base and have less access to such social capital are often left feeling redundant and unsure of their identity; they are less likely to have the ‘individual portfolio of experiences that both facilitates and demands occupational and residential mobility’ (McDowell 2003: 221).

This work is borne out by Nixon (2006, 2009) in his research with unemployed low-skilled men in the North of England. The men in this study discursively highlighted how ‘good jobs’ were those requiring manual skills and that took place in male-dominated environments where shouting, swearing and having a laugh were the norm (2009: 319). Conversely, service jobs with high levels of customer interaction were constructed to be ‘bad’ (2006: 214). The younger men in this study were explicit about their lack of social skills and requirements, and particularly the emotional labour needed to control their temper, that were expected in customer-facing employment. This left low-skilled, low-paid work, such as manual labour in warehouses or gardening, as the only employment options they could see as being not only desirable but also realistically feasible. This rejection of interactive service work, Nixon (2009) suggests, is because the skills required are ‘antithetical to the male working-class habitus’ (318)—that is, antithetical to how society has structured the ways these men think, feel and act (Wacquant 2005: 316). He is rightly careful to point out, however, that this is not necessarily always a conscious rejection of such employment opportunities but rather that classed and gendered dispositions often mean that such men ‘lack the cultural capital and resources to reflexively play with their identities’ (319) and therefore adapt to the new skills required. The fact that this gender-specific working-class habitus is so deeply embedded is recognized when McDowell (2003) returned to gather information on her participants two years after the study was completed to find that their lives ‘remained remarkably similar to the way they had been two years earlier’ (241). Likewise, in a study looking at working-class masculinities in a deindustrialized area of South Wales, Ward (2015) notes

the often ongoing struggles of these young men to continue or return to education in order to try to prepare for employment within new working environments, with varying degrees of success.

These struggles for employment within this new neoliberal economic era are not only experienced individually. Given that people function within relationships, within different combinations of intersubjective encounters, there is an impact on the wellbeing of families and communities. Dolan's (2007b) work exploring working-class masculinities, social capital and health demonstrates how the context of deindustrialization and economic change, specifically redundancies and insecure working, had shifted social relationships in the community being studied such that 'a general disposition of good will toward others had given way to one of suspicion and mistrust' (492).

Successive government policies in the UK and elsewhere have also implicitly emphasized notions of individual responsibility through policies that tie the receipt of needs-benefits to demonstrations of preparation to make oneself 'work ready'; a morally 'good' self-identity is then one that is always looking to reflexively shape itself to meet the requirements of these increasingly varied work contexts. In doing so, policies place an 'overriding emphasis on the responsibility of individuals to ensure their labour market participation' (McDowell 2003: 39) and thereby link strongly to neoliberal governmentality. Importantly, McDowell (2003: 54) highlights how new neoliberal working practices are also characterized by the growth of non-standard hours, non-standard contracts and an increased need for flexibility. This creates situations where many individuals and families require 'continual productivity' or multiple market participation (rather than a sole male breadwinner) if even a basic standard of living is to be maintained. Caddick et al.'s (2016) study considering the health concerns of UK lorry drivers highlights the contradictions present for these men. Specifically, they demonstrate how, within neoliberal working environments, such men are required to be 'entrepreneurial selves' committed to being 'tireless producers of labour while simultaneously assuming a personal responsibility to improve their health' (15). Ironically, the very system and policies that makes their working context so health diminishing simultaneously places the onus on them to maintain good health and wellbeing (in order to be 'good' producers). Health promotion efforts within such systems, Caddick and colleagues suggest, are wrongly oriented towards the provision of health information that these lorry drivers are expected to consume and act on rather than on making material changes to their

social/work environment and conditions. Within these constraints, then, the men focused on presenting themselves as ‘average’ in terms of their health practices (compared with their peers) and as ‘doing a reasonable job’ of maintaining their health—both of which are discursive strategies intended to deflect potential moral criticism that their efforts are not enough and that they are failing as health consumers.

It is clear then that neoliberal requirements of the tireless producer of labour also mean that ‘risky work practices’ are rooted in the material reality of these men’s lives. The working-class men in Nixon’s (2006, 2009) work and the lorry drivers in Caddick et al.’s (2016) study both desired manual work and recognized their lack of skills, ability and desire for the new flexible, interactive service-sector era. This, of course, is about a gendered habitus of expectation and desire but not without its own attendant health problems. As Stergiou-Kita et al. (2015) show, men are more likely to suffer and die from work-related injuries than women, and they link this to dominant forms of masculinity. Likewise, within the desired ‘male’ manual labouring arena, Dolan (2011) shows how class and gender interact to embody some ‘risky’ working practices, such as enjoying demolition work (with high injury/death statistics), having speed races when doing piece-work in a butchers (resulting in frequent knife wounds) and not wearing regulation safety equipment (to avoid being labelled a ‘sissy’) —all attempts to earn respect and gain ‘masculine capital’ from colleagues. When combined with neoliberal working environments that preface ‘efficiency’—often through the setting of dubiously achievable targets or timelines that thereby increase exposure to occupational hazards—it is no surprise that such statistics remain, and others have noted this link between working-class masculinities, productivity pressures and occupational ill health (Stergiou-Kita et al. 2015: 217).

Yet men are not a homogenous group and some men, even those considered to be working class, have shown themselves able to perform in the new interactive service work environment. Roberts (2012) interviewed men in the South-East of England who were frontline retail employees, the majority from working-class backgrounds. These men demonstrated a more positive, and even enjoyable, approach to such work, including the ‘emotional labour’ it entailed, than is suggested by many of the studies noted above. In addition, Roberts suggests that this is consistent with wider shifts in what constitutes an acceptable male identity and how this has come to incorporate a ‘softened version of masculinity’ (671). While it is clear that the men in his study experienced this work in a positive way, it is possible

that this explanation of a ‘softer’, more inclusive, male identity is only partial. As noted earlier, the new patterns of neoliberal working within the UK have seen something of a north–south split, with more men working in the service sector (with higher paid jobs mainly in finance and banking) being situated in the South-East of England. We suggest then that there may be a greater cultural acceptance of male-oriented service work generally within that region than within northern areas that have historically relied almost wholly on industry and manufacturing for male employment, and where the regional structure has more recently been biased towards sectors employing less well-qualified service economy workers (Erdem and Glyn 2001; McDowell 2003). In addition to this, the narratives of the young men in Roberts’ (2012) study show that they *have to* somehow account for working in what is constructed as the feminized service sector; it cannot just be accepted ‘as is’. This is suggestive of a situation where those experiencing marginalized masculinities—whether through choice or through constraints placed on them—have to legitimate this in relation to wider hegemonic norms (for a fuller discussion of this see Robertson et al. 2016). When thinking about gender, labour and health, then, it is important to understand how masculinities are conceptualized.

NEOLIBERALISM AND THEORIES OF MASCULINITY

So far we have alluded to masculinities without being clear about how they are being understood. In this penultimate section we explore concepts of masculinities and link these back to the notions of neoliberalism and labour discussed earlier in the chapter.

We take as a starting point that while ‘sex’ is about the biologically constituted male and female, ‘gender’ is about the social and cultural constructions of what embodies ‘being a man’ or ‘being a woman’ in given places and times. For many working in the psychology of men and masculinity, particular traits or characteristics associated with being male can be determined and measured by the use of various psychometric measures. The degree to which these are embodied for particular men can then also be measured, and correlations made with a range of practices, including health practices (for a discussion of this, see Gough and Robertson 2017). Early sociological work echoed some of this approach and explored how men internalized (or did not internalize) expectations about these characteristics and traits, and the social roles related to them (e.g. being ‘strong’ to prepare them for physical work or battle; being associated with ‘rationality’,

enabling them to best perform management roles; and being a ‘provider’, creating expectations for full-time employment). However, such trait and role theory explanations of ‘masculinity’ have been criticized for insufficiently taking historical perspective into account (thereby limiting understanding of ‘change’ in social relations), failing to address issues of power in social relations, and not adequately separating sex/gender and thereby falling into binary and essentialist ways of thinking about and describing complex issues (Robertson 2007: 30ff). Connell (1995) proposed a well-known and influential relational model for understanding gender and masculinities. Here there is a focus on sets of relations between men and women but also on relations between men and between women that provide ‘a way of understanding the different dimensions or structures of gender, the relations between bodies and society, and the patterning or configuration of gender’ (Connell 2000: 24). Within this framework, masculinities are understood not as sets of characteristics or traits that men (or women) possess to a greater or lesser degree but as various sets of social practices that men (and women) move within and between in different moments and different contexts as part of a changing structure of relationships. However, as we have highlighted elsewhere (Robertson et al. 2016), these sets of relationships, these gendered configurations of social practice, also become embedded within social structures in ways that then act to facilitate and constrain particular practices, thereby generating acceptable or expected gendered norms: masculinities should therefore be best understood as both the producer and product of both social structures and human agency (64). In this way, configurations of practice may vary—they are diverse and dynamic—but they are also hierarchical in terms of the material and representational benefits they bring, and relatively enduring through their incorporation within social structures.

As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) go on to consider, different configurations of masculinity practices are dynamically interacting at the local, regional and global levels, and these three levels also interact with each other. There is not sufficient space here to rehearse the complex debates about linking masculinities to neoliberalism in a global sense—that is linking it to globalization—but for an excellent review of this, see Connell’s work (2016). However, what is apparent from such work is how the wider neoliberal agenda influences these multiple tiers where different configurations of masculinity come into conflict while simultaneously yielding little ground for democratic projects of change in masculinity (313). Within new managerial business masculinities, for example, Connell and Wood (2005)

note the incorporation of non-hegemonic elements such as increased body awareness and management, emotion management and an endorsement of gender equality. However, these aspects of libertarianism and gender flexibility attached to these masculinity practices often seemed to run alongside traditional aspects of hegemonic configurations of practice among the participants in that study, such as the fierce scrutiny these managers have of each other and how this highly pressured, competitive environment embodies itself as part of ‘both a gender-making process and a strategy of profit making’ (361).

These ideas are important in the context of this chapter. They allow us to situate both the macro- and the microlevel empirical work discussed earlier within a gender relations framework that helps to illuminate the relationship between men’s everyday working lives (their agency) and the social contexts (structures) that both influence and are influenced by these. In addition, work undertaken within what some have termed the ‘third phase’ of research on men and masculinities (Hearn et al. 2012) can help us move beyond ‘the more uniform uptake of hegemonic masculinity theory’ and, in so doing, allow for a more diverse and inclusive type of understanding around gender and masculinity practices (Anderson and McCormack 2016: 10). For example, the work of Roberts (2013), highlighted earlier, draws on notions of ‘inclusive masculinity’ (Anderson 2009) to demonstrate how some young men are able to function well within the new flexible UK service industry, including performing the emotional labour and interpersonal skills that this requires. However, other researchers within this third phase might make a different interpretation of the inclusion of these previously signified feminine attributes. Those who have pursued a notion of ‘hybrid masculinities’ (Bridges and Pascoe 2014) may see this incorporation of ‘softer’ forms of masculinity not as a significant change in gendered inequality, or certainly not only as that, but rather as an important way in which hegemony has shifted in order to maintain historical privilege and particularly to maintain patriarchal systems. As Bridges and Pascoe (2014: 256) state, ‘Privilege works best when it goes unrecognized.’ So, under neoliberal working practices, the incorporation of these ‘softer’ skills that enables the young men in Roberts’ (2013) study to engage well in the low pay service economy do not represent any positive change in challenging social inequalities and related health inequalities. Indeed, such incorporation may feed into a system that promotes income inequalities. A recent report from the UK Institute for Fiscal Studies shows that the amount of part-time work for men among the poorest fifth has risen from around 10 %

to more than 25 % over the last 20 years, and that relative income for this poorest fifth of men has remained flat or even reduced while that for the wealthiest fifth has increased by around 1.5 % (Belfield et al. 2016). Similarly, while flexible and libertarian aspects of gender are undoubtedly incorporated, rhetorically demonstrated and even to some extent practised, within the global business masculinities (Connell and Wood 2005), the overall configurations of practice expected of these business masculinities still act to maintain, and even extend, systems and power relations that create local, regional and global inequality.

We agree with Anderson and McCormack (2016) that the assimilation of previously marginalized or subordinated masculinity practices that blur social and symbolic boundaries is now widespread. However, we would question both how and why these forms of inclusive or hybrid masculinities have arisen at this historical moment and, as mentioned already, the extent to which they challenge existing systems of power and inequality. Within the context of this chapter we would tentatively suggest that the incorporation of the more emotionally expressive forms of masculinities that denote hybrid masculinity is in fact a system requirement for neoliberal working practices in service- (rather than manufacturing-) led economies. As we have described, for both those men seeking employment in lower-paid service sector jobs and those operating at the international business end of the service sector, these new skills of flexibility, communication and a reflexive work-related self-identity are necessary for success. It is perhaps no coincidence that the geographic areas with the most advanced aspects of inclusive masculinity (according to Anderson and McCormack 2016) are also those that have led the neoliberal economic shift.

FINAL REMARKS

In sum, there is growing evidence linking neoliberal policies to precarious labour, low pay, unrewarding (and often feminized) work, stress and ill health—compounded by a health service which itself is subject to neoliberal directives and a concomitant impoverished level of service and reach. There is also evidence that men in general, and disadvantaged men in particular, are disproportionately impacted by the implementation of neoliberal ideology, since masculine identity is traditionally bound up with work, homosocial interaction and breadwinning. While educated, middle-class men may be in a position to embrace service sector jobs and reconstruct their masculinity accordingly, men from working-class and black and minority ethnic

communities, for example, will be constrained by circumstances and local masculinities predicated on meaningful, ‘manly’ work. Hence unemployment, underemployment, and/or employment in unfulfilling jobs, will inevitably create psychological and physical health problems for many men, who in turn may be reluctant to engage with a quasiprivatized health service which reinforces dominant neoliberal messages of self-care, autonomy and (self-)blame. In contrast, more privileged, professional men can more easily align themselves with an individualist, entrepreneurial ethos, evolving a hybrid masculinity which can accommodate feminized notions of service, care and relationship alongside more conventional ideals such as breadwinning, leadership and rationality. Although (some) working-class men can and do practice new versions of masculinity in employment contexts, the capital, mobility and desire required make this transformation difficult for many men from poor communities who have previously relied heavily on industrial and manufacturing employment. Instead of deploying individualist concepts such as ‘inclusive masculinity’ to theorize men’s health and wellbeing within neoliberal economies, it is clear that we must retain a relational model which highlights power differentials and intersubjective encounters predicated on material *and* discursive forces, while also signalling the potential for context-bound flexibility and transitioning highlighted by concepts such as ‘hybrid masculinities’ (Bridges and Pascoe 2014).

As others have previously suggested (Blue et al. 2016), it seems that social theories of practice, as opposed to individualistic theories of behaviour change, or a deterministic model of the impact of social structure, provide a useful way forward for understanding the influence of neoliberalism on the health of low-income men, and also for thinking about public health solutions to improve health outcomes for these men.

NOTES

1. We recognize that the independent sector, which provides health and social care services, is diverse, including charities and non-governmental organizations as well as for-profit companies, and therefore motivation for engagement with ‘difficult to engage’ groups does vary across this sector.
2. These shifts demonstrate a ‘hollowing out’ of the labour market with a demise of middle-tier employment (Tait 2016) and a north–south divide where newer, highly paid service sector work in banking and finance (predominantly ‘male’ work with fewer jobs) has mainly developed in the south, whereas much lower paid service sector work such as hospitality and retail (predominantly ‘female work’ with many more jobs) are geographically more widely dispersed.

REFERENCES

- Adam, B. D. (2016). Neoliberalism, masculinity and HIV risk. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 13, 321–329.
- Anderson, E. (2009). *Inclusive masculinity: The changing nature of masculinities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Anderson, E., & McCormack, M. (2016). Inclusive masculinity theory: Overview, reflection and refinement. *Journal of Gender Studies*. doi:10.1080/09589236.2016.1245605.
- Antonakakis, N., & Collins, A. (2014). The impact of fiscal austerity on suicide: On the empirics of a modern Greek tragedy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 112, 39–50.
- Artazcoz, L., et al. (2004). Unemployment and mental health: Understanding the interactions. *American Journal of Public Health*, 94(1), 82–88.
- Bambra, C. (2010). Yesterday once more? Unemployment and health in the 21st century. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 64(3), 213–215.
- Belfield, C., Blundell, R., Cribb, J., Hood, A., Joyce, R., & Keiller, A. N. (2016). *Two decades of income inequality in Britain: The role of wages, household earnings and redistribution*. London: Institute of Fiscal Studies.
- Bell, D., & Blanchflower, D. G. (2011). Underemployment in the UK in the great recession. *National Institute Economic Review*, 215(1), 23–33.
- Bell, K., & Green, J. (2016). On the perils of invoking neoliberalism in public health critique. *Critical Public Health*, 26(3), 239–243.
- Blue, S., Shove, E., Carmona, C., & Kelly, M. P. (2016). Theories of practice and public health: Understanding (un)healthy practices. *Critical Public Health*, 26(1), 36–50.
- Bridges, T., & Pascoe, C. J. (2014). Hybrid masculinities: New directions in the sociology of men and masculinities. *Sociology Compass*, 8(3), 246–258.
- Brown, S., Shoveller, J., Chabot, C., & LaMontagne, A. D. (2013). Risk, resistance and the neoliberal agenda: Young people, health and well-being in the UK, Canada and Australia. *Health, Risk & Society*, 15(4), 333–346.
- Butcher, T. & James, E. P. (2014, December 3–5). *Fit for work: Understanding the organisational effects of masculinities in transition*. Proceedings of the Australia New Zealand Academy of Management Conference, Sydney, Australia.
- Caddick, N., Varela-Mato, V., Nimmo, M. A., Clemes, S., Yates, T., & King, J. A. (2016). Understanding the health of lorry drivers in context: A critical discourse analysis. *Health*. doi:10.1177/1363459316644492.
- Carter, E. D. (2015). Making the blue zones: Neoliberalism and nudges in public health promotion. *Social Science & Medicine*, 133, 374–382.
- Collins, C., McCartney, G., & Garnham, L. (2015). Neoliberalism and health inequalities. In K. E. Smith, C. Bambara, & S. E. Hill (Eds.), *Health inequalities: Critical perspectives*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Connell, R. W. (1995). *Masculinities*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

- Connell, R. W. (2000). *The men and the boys*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Connell, R. W. (2016). Masculinities in global perspective: Hegemony, contestation, and changing structures of power. *Theory & Society*, 45(4), 303–318.
- Connell, R. W., & Wood, J. (2005). Globalization and business masculinities. *Men and Masculinities*, 7(4), 347–364.
- Connell, R. W., & Messerschmidt, J. W. (2005). Hegemonic masculinity: Rethinking the concept. *Gender & Society*, 19(6), 829–859.
- Crawshaw, P. (2012). Governing at a distance: Social marketing and the (bio) politics of responsibility. *Social Science & Medicine*, 75(1), 200–207.
- De Vogli, R. (2011). Neoliberal globalization and health in a time of crisis. *Social Theory & Health*, 9(4), 311–325.
- Dolan, A. (2007a). “Good luck to them if they can get it”: Exploring working-class men’s understandings and experiences of income inequality and material standards. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 29(5), 711–729.
- Dolan, A. (2007b). “That’s just the cesspool where they dump all the trash”: Exploring working-class men’s perceptions and experiences of social capital and health. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 11(4), 475–495.
- Dolan, A. (2011). ‘You can’t ask for a Dubonnet and lemonade!’: Working-class masculinity and men’s health practices. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 33(4), 586–601.
- Erdem, E., & Glyn, A. (2001). Job deficits in UK regions. In R. W. Dickens, J. Gregg, & P. (Eds.), *The State of Working Britain: Update 2001*. York: Centre for Economic Performance, London School of Economics, York Publishing Services.
- Footman, K., Garthwaite, K., Bamba, C., & McKee, M. (2014). Quality check: Does it matter for quality how you organize and pay for health care? A review of the international evidence. *International Journal of Health Services*, 44(3), 479–505.
- Gough, B., & Robertson, S. (2017). A review of research on men’s physical health. In R. Levant & J. Wong (Eds.), *The psychology of men and masculinities*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Green, F. (2011). Unpacking the misery multiplier: How employability modifies the impacts of unemployment and job insecurity on life satisfaction and mental health. *Journal of Health Economics*, 30(2), 265–276.
- Grzanka, P. R., Mann, E. S., & Elliott, S. (2016). The neoliberalism wars, or notes on the persistence of neoliberalism. *Sexuality Research & Social Policy*, 13, 297–307.
- Gulliford, J., Shannon, D., Taskila, T., Wilkins, D., Tod, M., & Bevan, S. (2014). *Sick of being unemployed: The health issues of out of work men and how support services are failing to address them*. https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/sites/default/files/pdf/mhf-unemployment2014_final_pdf.pdf. Last accessed 17 Mar 2014.

- Hearn, J., et al. (2012). Hegemonic masculinity and beyond: 40 years of research in Sweden. *Men and Masculinities*, 15, 31–55.
- Hudson, B. (2015). Dealing with market failure: A new dilemma in UK health and social care policy? *Critical Social Policy*, 35(2), 281–292.
- Labonté, R., & Stuckler, D. (2016). The rise of neoliberalism: How bad economics imperils health and what to do about it. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 70, 312–318.
- Lafond, S., Arora, S., Charlesworth, A., & McKeon, A. (2014). *Into the red? The state of the NHS' finances*. London: Nuffield Trust.
- Lohan, M. (2007). How might we understand men's health better? Integrating explanations from critical studies on men and inequalities in health. *Social Science and Medicine*, 65(3), 493–504.
- Lovell, S. A., Kearns, R. A., & Prince, R. (2014). Neoliberalism and the contract state: Exploring innovation and resistance among New Zealand health promoters. *Critical Public Health*, 24(3), 308–320.
- Lupton, D. (2015). The pedagogy of disgust: The ethical moral and political implications of using disgust in public health campaigns. *Critical Public Health*, 25(1), 4–14.
- Lyng, S. (1990). Edgework. *American Journal of Sociology*, 95(4), 851–886.
- McDowell, L. (2003). *Redundant masculinities: Employment change and white working-class youth*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- McGregor, S. (2001). Neoliberalism and health care. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 25(2), 82–89.
- Mossakowski, K. N. (2009). The influence of past unemployment duration on symptoms of depression among young women and men in the United States. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99(10), 1826–1832.
- Neilson, D. (2015). Class, precarity, and anxiety under neo liberal global capitalism: From denial to resistance. *Theory & Psychology*, 25(2), 184–201.
- Nixon, D. (2006). “I just like working with my hands”: Employment aspirations and the meaning of work for low-skilled unemployed men in Britain's service economy. *Journal of Education and Work*, 19(2), 201–217.
- Nixon, D. (2009). “I Can't put a smiley face on”: Working-class masculinity, emotional labour and service work in the “new economy”. *Gender, Work and Organization*, 16(3), 300–322.
- Nolan, J. (2005). *Job insecurity, gender and work orientation: An exploratory study of breadwinning and caregiving identity*. GeNet working paper no. 6, ESRC, Gender Equality Network.
- Oliiffe, J., & Han, C. (2013). Beyond workers' compensation: Men's mental health in and out of work. *American Journal of Mens' Health*, 8(1), 45–53.
- Parkinson, J., Minton, J., Lewsey, J., Bouttell, J., & McCartney, G. (2016). Recent cohort effects in suicide in Scotland: A legacy of the 1980s? *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health*. doi:10.1136/jech-2016-207296.

- Peacock, M. (2012). Women's experiences of living in an unequal society: The place of shame, social comparison, and neoliberal discourses in explanation of inequalities in health. *Lancet*, 380(Special Issue), 63.
- Peate, I. (2004). Men's attitudes towards health and the implications for nursing care. *British Journal of Nursing*, 13(9), 540–545.
- Pickavance, N. (2016). The nature of work. In Y. Cooper (Ed.), *Changing work: Progressive ideas for the modern world of work*. London: Fabian Society.
- Roberts, S. (2012). Boys will be boys ... Won't they? Change and continuities in contemporary young working-class masculinities. *Sociology*, 47(4), 671–686.
- Robertson, S. (2006). "Not living life in too much of an excess": Lay men understanding health and well-being. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness and Medicine*, 10(2), 175–189.
- Robertson, S. (2007). *Understanding men and health: Masculinities, identity and wellbeing*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Robertson, S., White, A., Gough, B., Robinson, M., Scims, A., Raine, G., & Hanna, E. (2015). *Promoting mental health and wellbeing with men and boys: What works?* Leeds: Centre for Men's Health, Leeds Beckett University.
- Robertson, S., Williams, B., & Oliffe, J. (2016). The case for retaining a focus on "masculinities" in men's health research. *International Journal of Men's Health*, 15(1), 52–67.
- Schrecker, T., & Bamba, C. (2015). *How politics makes us sick: Neoliberal epidemics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Scott-Samuel, A., Bamba, C., Collins, C., Hunter, D. J., McCartney, G., & Smith, K. (2014). The impact of Thatcherism on health and well-being in Britain. *International Journal of Health Services*, 44(1), 53–71.
- Scott-Samuel, A., Crawshaw, P., & Oakley, A. (2015). "Men behaving badly" – Patriarchy, public policy and health inequalities. *International Journal of Men's Health*, 14(3), 250–258.
- Sloan, C., Gough, B., & Conner, M. T. (2009). Healthy masculinities? How ostensibly healthy men talk about lifestyle, health and gender. *Psychology & Health*, 24(1), 1–11.
- Smith, J., Robertson, S., & Richardson, N. (2016). Applying a genders lens to public health discourses on men's health. In J. Gideon (Ed.), *Handbook on gender and health*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Stanistreet, D., Bamba, C., & Scott-Samuel, A. (2005). Is patriarchy the source of men's higher mortality? *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health*, 59, 873–876.
- Stergiou-Kita, M., Mansfield, E., Bezo, R., Colantonio, A., Garritano, E., Lafrance, M., Lewko, J., Mantis, S., Moody, J., Power, N., & Theberge, N. (2015). Danger zone: Men, masculinity and occupational health and safety in high risk occupations. *Safety Science*, 80, 213–220.

- Sturgeon, D. (2014). The business of the NHS: The rise and rise of consumer culture and commodification in the provision of healthcare services. *Critical Social Policy*, 34(3), 405–416.
- Tait, C. (2016). What's really happening in the world of work? In Y. Cooper (Ed.), *Changing work: Progressive ideas for the modern world of work*. London: Fabian Society.
- Tickell, A., & Peck, J. (2003). Making global rules: Globalization or neoliberalization? In J. Peck & H. Wai-chung Yeung (Eds.), *Remaking the global economy: Economic and geographical perspectives*. London: Sage.
- Tucker, C. (2012). Men's health disparities cost U.S. billions every year. *The Nation's Health*, 41(10), 12.
- Wacquant, L. (2005). Habitus. In J. Beckert & M. Zafirovski (Eds.), *International encyclopedia of economic sociology* (pp. 315–319). London: Routledge.
- Ward, M. R. M. (2015). *From labouring to learning: Working-class masculinities, education and de-industrialisation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Ward, K., & England, K. (2007). Introduction: Reading neoliberalization. In K. England & K. Ward (Eds.), *Neoliberalization*. Hoboken: Blackwell.
- Williams, R., Robertson, S., & Hewison, A. (2009). Masculinity, “men's health” and policy: The contradictions in public health. *Critical Public Health*, 19(3), 475–488.

INDEX

A

abject/abjection, 4, 79–81, 87, 88, 114
academic success/educational
 attainment, 57, 107, 128, 133
adult education, 147–52, 156, 158,
 160–2, 164, 165
aesthetic labour, 53, 63
alcohol and substance abuse, 42
American dream, 255
aspiration, 4, 12, 19, 29, 38, 66, 93, 95,
 105, 107, 118, 132, 140, 150, 182,
 214, 219–38
automobility, 172, 174–7, 184, 187–90
autonomy, 5, 11, 17, 22–4, 56, 158,
 164, 187, 229, 236, 278, 289, 298,
 305, 306, 329

B

back-to-work programmes, 12, 81, 88
bodily capital, 18, 198, 200–4, 212–14
bonding capital, 90
bravery, 10, 35, 38, 59, 301

breadwinner/breadwinning, 2, 9–11,
 16, 18, 29–32, 35, 39, 54, 56, 65,
 69, 101, 106, 116, 173, 183, 186,
 206–8, 213, 231, 252, 271, 272,
 275, 280–2, 293, 311, 321, 323,
 328, 329
Brexit, 4, 95
business masculinities, 8, 112,
 326, 328

C

care of the self/work on the self, 18,
 172, 209, 212, 319
caring masculinity, 13, 121
citizenship, 3, 16, 149, 150, 155, 156,
 163–6, 196, 247, 258
code-shifting, 129
colonialism, 9, 21, 29, 32, 38, 39,
 255, 258
community leadership, 329
complicity/complicit masculinity, 151,
 245, 267

Note: Page number followed by ‘n’ refers to notes.

contextual discontinuity, 13, 102, 103, 109, 114

contextual incongruity, 13, 103

corporeality, 198–202, 207

craftsmanship, 110, 113

creative sector, 220

crime, 12, 39, 77–95, 219, 319

crisis, 2, 22, 94, 102, 125, 126, 140, 148, 173, 197, 199, 315

crisis of masculinity, 2, 14, 125, 126, 140

D

deindustrialization, 53, 61, 65, 66, 70, 77, 78, 94, 105, 128, 323

development paradigm, 35

dignity, 5, 6, 10, 11

DIY. *See* do-it-yourself (DIY)

do-it-yourself (DIY), 171, 172, 177, 181, 187

E

educational underachievement, 14, 127

egalitarianism, 148, 210, 274

embodiment, 107, 176, 243–60

emotion work, 63, 266, 276, 279–83

enterprising self, 14, 111, 119

entrepreneurialization, 252–5

entrepreneurship, 48, 229, 252

extreme sports, 209

F

fatherhood and nurturing, 272

feminization, 54, 57, 102, 148, 321

fragmentation, 20, 87, 252, 256–8

G

gender, 2, 29, 55, 104, 128, 147–66, 173, 196, 222, 244, 266, 289, 312

gender-age positionality, 36

gig economy, 20, 84, 220, 311

H

haulage, 23, 289, 291–4, 296, 298, 303

health, 3, 6, 23, 24, 30, 62, 70, 71, 79, 105, 125, 133, 160, 186, 201–4, 207, 211, 247, 257, 311–29

healthy lifestyle, 318

hegemony/hegemonic masculinity, 8, 9, 18, 20, 21, 132, 151, 174, 196, 198, 205, 210, 213, 223, 232, 245, 246, 249, 252, 258, 265–75, 280, 281, 283, 298, 327

heterosexuality, 49n3, 137, 269

higher education, 31, 42, 103, 107, 121n7, 126, 131, 132, 139, 165, 273

homelessness, 12, 78

homosociality, 21, 177, 187, 189

hybridised masculinity, 140

hybrid masculinities, 327–9

I

I, Daniel Blake (2016), 70

individualization, 7, 82, 110, 119, 317

individualization of failure, 81

interactive service work, 321, 322, 324

intergenerational relationships, 220

intimacy, 265–84

L

lifelong learning, 148–50, 155

M

machinic subjectivation, 176

manhood, 16, 20, 136, 140, 148, 161, 164–6, 244–6, 249, 252

- manual labour, 2, 3, 5, 10, 16, 29, 53, 55, 57, 60, 61, 65, 87, 233, 250, 320
 marginality, 9, 16, 79, 80, 84, 174, 180
 masculinity, 48
The Measure of a Man (2015), 70
 men as 'losers', 3, 19, 196, 212
 migrant masculinities, 226
 mobility, 5, 105, 172, 173, 175, 177, 179, 183, 197, 214, 226, 290, 293, 305, 322, 329
- N**
- neoliberal globalization, 114, 190
 neoliberal governmentality, 3, 14, 16, 17, 22, 24, 200, 202, 204, 211, 249, 319, 323
 neoliberal management techniques, 200
 neopatrimonial state, 33
 neo-taylorist management, 292
 normative masculinity, 183, 195, 196, 198
 nostalgia, 13, 14, 105–10, 114, 120
- O**
- occupational degradation, 23, 301–5
 ontological security, 77, 88
- P**
- parenting, 269–74, 280, 281
 patriarchal dividend, 9, 48, 57
 patriarchy, 21, 35, 49n3, 173, 267, 312
 performativity, 232, 247
 practical knowledge, 201, 289, 296, 302, 303, 305
 precariat, 31, 47–9
 precarity/precarioussness, 16, 67, 68, 80, 83, 93, 112, 225
 protest masculinities, 12, 89, 162, 214, 223
- R**
- reality television, 3, 4, 22
 reciprocity, 88
 respectability, 19, 20, 94, 107, 109, 110, 114, 118, 151, 219, 296
 responsabilization, 1, 20, 252, 256, 257
 right-wing populist political movements, 2
 Russia, 7, 16–18, 24, 162, 171, 174, 175, 177, 178, 182, 187, 188, 190n1, 195
- S**
- self-commodification, 20, 252, 255
 self-employment, 36, 220, 225, 234, 235
 self-help literature, 209
 service economy, 3, 11, 16, 53, 55, 61, 63, 322, 325, 327
 service sector employment, 5, 54–6, 61, 70, 71, 117
 social mobility, 5, 13, 17, 18, 20, 80, 127, 172, 182, 199, 208, 209, 220, 223, 224, 226, 234, 235
 Soviet governmentality, 197, 202, 204, 213
 sporting prowess, 131, 134
 stigma, 11, 69, 230, 270, 301, 306, 317
 street capital, 12, 88–94
 subaltern masculinity, 176, 188, 189
 subordinate masculinity, 259
 subordination/subordinate masculinity, 9, 13, 15, 83, 84, 88, 114, 119, 151, 188, 189, 259, 267

suicide, 23, 125, 247, 312, 315, 321
 surveillance, 23, 24, 249, 295, 298,
 299, 305

T

technological monitoring, 23, 296, 298
 trade unions, 19, 102, 121n3, 197, 200,
 201, 209–11, 214
 truck drivers, 289–306
 Trump, Donald, 4, 95, 175

U

underemployment, 54, 67, 68, 196, 329
 unemployment, 2, 10–13, 16, 24, 30,
 32, 41, 43, 49, 54, 61, 65, 66,
 68–70, 78, 82, 83, 90, 101, 102,
 104, 110, 111, 115, 117, 119, 121,
 133, 196, 270, 272, 312, 314, 320,
 321, 329

V

violence, 8, 10, 31, 35, 37–9, 41, 43–8,
 83, 84, 90, 173, 190, 248, 318,
 319
 virility, 10, 35, 37
 vocational education, 152

W

welfare, 3, 4, 11, 12, 23, 55, 56, 66, 68,
 70, 71, 79, 89, 149, 195, 205, 213,
 258, 265, 270, 282, 290, 313, 314,
 317, 321
 wellbeing, 6, 8, 21–4, 120, 257, 259,
 312, 314, 317, 319–21, 323,
 329
 white victimhood, 2
 workers as ‘backbone’ of economy,
 197
 working-class masculinity as political
 tool, 268