

‘A Man’s Environment’?

**The Petone Workingmen’s Club and Masculinity in New Zealand
after 1945**

By

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	iv
Abstract.....	vi
Table of Contents	v
Chapter One: Introduction	vi
Chapter Two: Historiography and Methodology	5
Historiography	5
Methodology	9
Theory	10
Biographies	17
Chapter Three: The Petone Workingmen’s Club, A Man’s Environment?	23
Chapter Four: Working Men	55
Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications	77
Bibliography	83

Abstract

My thesis, in the broadest terms, looks at New Zealand men's understanding of themselves and their work. My study is based on oral history interviews with male members of the Petone Workingmen's Club in Lower Hutt, Wellington. This thesis has two purposes: to compare men's experiences with wider understandings of class, work and masculinity in New Zealand during the post-World War II period, and to complicate the assumptions about masculinity that have gone somewhat unexplored in historiography.

This study takes a thematic approach to men's experience, but weaves elements of oral history and historiography throughout. Chapter three looks at the Petone Workingmen's Club as a masculine and working-class space; while Chapter four continues to examine men's memories and masculinities, this time in the context of an interview. Finally, Chapter five observes the place of education, leisure, and particularly work, in men's narratives to add greater depth to histories of work, class and masculinity in New Zealand.

My interviews found that studies of New Zealand men have neglected the role that class, gender and historical changes have had in affecting men's understanding of themselves and their lives. This thesis hopes to complicate, as well as add value to, the limited scholarship that exists surrounding masculinity in New Zealand, particularly among working-class men

Chapter One: Introduction

In 1950, the Oxford-educated poet M. K. Joseph wrote of New Zealand men,

*Worship the mean, cultivate the mediocre
Live in a state house, raise forcibly-educated children
Receive family benefits, and standard wages and a pension
And rest in peace in a state crematorium
Saint All Black
Saint Monday Raceday
Saint Stabilisation
Pray for us.¹*

This well-established and continuing perception of the ‘Kiwi Bloke’ reinforces the generalisation that all men belonged to, or still belong to, one uniform, overtly masculine, beer-drinking, rugby-watching group. Perhaps even more problematically, this impression continues to feature in discussions of New Zealand’s ‘national identity’ and historiography surrounding New Zealand males, even beyond the post-World War II era.² In May, 2014 Associate Finance Minister Dr Jonathan Coleman said of Labour’s Finance Spokesperson David Parker

In economic terms, David Parker is the bloke at the rugby club who still showers in his underpants. That is where he is at. He is totally naïve and out of touch. He has got this policy thing that he is calling the ‘big tool’. The problem is that no one out there in the real world can understand what the heck he is talking about...just like David Cunliffe, his leader, who makes out that he has been a guy who has sheared sheep and done all this sort of stuff...in actual fact David Cunliffe hides out in his Herne Bay mansion pretending to be the New Lynn blue-collar man, and it just does not work.³

Aside from the acerbic tones that most of us have come to expect from Parliamentary debate, Coleman’s simile again speaks to everything presumed to be typical of the ‘Kiwi Bloke’ and promotes the ability to shear sheep and rugby club membership as prerequisites for being a ‘real world’ New Zealand man.

¹ M K Joseph, ‘Secular Litany’ in Jane Stafford and Mark Williams (eds.), *The Auckland University Press Anthology of New Zealand Literature*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2012), 393.

² See Caroline Daley, ‘Taking off the Black Singlet’, *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.46, no.2 (2012), 113-128 and Kathy Hood, ‘The Gendered Nature of New Zealand National Identity: From the Pioneering Days to the America’s Cup Parade’, (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1997), p.1 in which Hood claims ‘Not only has New Zealand[s] nationalistic narrative privileged men as direct national participants and designated women to the side line, the prior existence and endorsement of unequal relations between the sexes was necessary for the earliest construction of New Zealand[s] national identity’.

³ Jonathan Coleman, *New Zealand Parliamentary Debates* (NZPD), 2014, vol.698, p.17574.

This study argues that such perceptions are verging on caricature and attempts to explore areas of contestation, difference and plurality among men's experiences and identities. This thesis investigates the ways, and extent to which, social and cultural expectations of masculinity have influenced how a specific oral history cohort construct themselves in autobiographical life narratives. Through the use of oral history interviews, which allow for a specific focus on class, gender and work, this thesis aims to elucidate how working-class men understood men's roles during their lifetime, and evaluates the extent to which these men reflected wider masculine discourses.

My work evolves from historian Jock Phillips' well-established study of masculinity in New Zealand. However, I seek to address some of the gaps in Phillips' work as outlined by Deborah Montgomerie in her review of *A Man's Country*,

Dr Phillips argues eloquently for the acceptance of personal reminiscence as valid historical evidence; this makes the absence of oral history a striking feature of the later chapters. Had oral history been used it might have been possible to flesh out the written record and look more closely at men who chose to deviate from the norm, thereby producing a more subtle analysis.⁴

Partly due to the limited use of oral sources in the study of New Zealand masculinity, historians have not yet presented sufficient histories of New Zealand men who embraced *various* masculinities or indeed, how they embraced them. This thesis aims to begin the process of addressing this imbalance, and utilises oral history to reveal these 'untold' stories.

As Worth, Paris and Allen rightly point out, the relative lack of academic inquiry into the study of 'the masculine' is the result of a history that regards the experiences and behaviours of males as fixed and static'.⁵ New Zealand 'masculinity' is not universal, and instead, is best characterised a set of ideals 'specific to a certain geographics[sic]/demographics and time in modern history'.⁶ On top of this, scholars now recognise the term 'masculinity' should really be understood as 'masculinities', for 'there has never been just one way to 'be a man', rather, at any one time there may be several'.⁷ With this in mind, this study acknowledges that there are multiple masculinities which can be contested and/or overlap 'at any one time'. Due to the limited academic inquiry into masculinities in existing New Zealand historiography, I have drawn on international studies to investigate how other scholars' findings are reflected in a New Zealand setting and in my cohort's memories.

⁴ Deborah Montgomerie, review of *A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakehā Male*, 189.

⁵ Heather Worth, Anna Paris and Louis Allen, *The Life of Brian: Masculinities, Sexualities and Health in New Zealand*, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2002), 12.

⁶ Ibid, 13.

⁷ Sonya O Rose, *What is Gender History?*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010), 57.

My interviews are intended to inject the perspective of memory and real life experiences into the study of changing masculinities. In pursuit of this, my thesis explores how men constructed themselves in terms of wider public rhetoric surrounding masculinity. By looking at how interviewees dealt with masculinity in their narratives, and in the face of a female interviewer, I hoped to further understand the complexities that underlay the traditional label of the 'Kiwi Bloke'.

In an interview with *Radio New Zealand* many years after his publication of *A Man's Country*, Phillips testified to the changing nature of masculinity in New Zealand and hinted at the different context in which his seminal work was produced almost thirty years ago.

New Zealand is a far, far more diverse society than it was then...we've developed an urban culture in a way that we hadn't in the fifties and sixties, and it isn't a shame for men now to go off to jazz concerts, art galleries.

A few seconds later Phillips concedes,

Obviously there are areas where the traditional male stereotypes still exist but there are large areas where it doesn't exist and where there are many, many different types of men and I think that is one of the great changes that has happened in my life time.⁸

The challenge for a historian of modern masculinity then, is to explore these changes to masculine stereotypes by locating and understanding 'the cultural ingredients that go into accounts of a remembered and interpreted past'.⁹ As such, my thesis looks to locate the cultural languages, images and expectations out of which these men construct their memories. My aim was not to represent all New Zealand men in the post-1945 era, as that would be an impossible endeavour. Instead, I sought to explore what I could within the limited scope of this project by looking at a working-class cohort from a certain generation.

Chapter three of this thesis looks at the Petone Workingmen's Club itself, placing it in a historical and social context and exploring what the club means to men in terms of a masculine space and a working-class community.

Chapter four looks at the presentation of masculinities in men's memories and in the interview setting. This chapter uses debates around gender in the interview process to tease out the ways in which my presence may have influenced men and their responses. It also seeks to

⁸ Jock Phillips (Historian), interviewed by Wallace Chapman for Radio New Zealand, June 8, 2014.

⁹ Penny Summerfield, 'Culture and Composure: Creating Narratives of the Gendered Self in Oral History Interviews', *Cultural and Social History*, vol.1 (2004), 67.

draw links between men's generational space and what this meant for their navigation of, and allegiance to, 'Hard Man' and 'New Man' discourses.

Finally, Chapter five explores the place of work and struggle in men's narratives and observes the extent to which men's memories reflect the changing nature of work, education and working-class communities in post-1945 New Zealand. It also looks to how my cohort's memories interacted with ideas of masculinity, together with the role that struggle and working-class values played in their identities.

Overall, this thesis aimed to re-establish the value of oral history for understanding the complexity of masculinity in the post-war period. It approaches post-war men from several angles and looks at men as agents of their own memory, as club members, as workers and as individuals who lived through changes in community, industry and gender in New Zealand after 1945.

Chapter Two: Historiography and Methodology

In many respects, Jock Phillips himself represents the changes in the historiography surrounding masculinity in New Zealand. While the author's contribution, and in many ways founding of the subject cannot be ignored, the turn of the 21st century has allowed for a reassessment of the 'Kiwi Bloke' and the concept's place in historical scholarship. In light of the developments and cultural shifts that New Zealand men have experienced since the publication of Phillips' *A Man's Country's* in 1987, historiography now needs to reflect constructions of masculinity that continued to develop after 1980s as well as the theory that accompanied such shifts.

Historiography

In terms of its historiographical positioning, my study is located after the period concerned with the origins of Pākehā masculinity, traditionally located in colonial encounters or experiences at war or on the rugby field. While an understanding of the masculine 'ideals' experienced during these times remains important, there are still changes affecting men in the latter 20th century that need to be explored. As such, I have taken Bronwyn Labrum's approach of deliberately bringing 'our gaze forward in time' and focusing on the Twentieth Century in order to shift 'from the colonial and post-colonial period [to the] context of nation rather than empire'.¹

While New Zealand histories do acknowledge certain versions of masculinity and the gendered role men played, these mentions tend to be in keeping with ideas of the 'bloke', rather than challenging and expanding them. Belich and King discuss men, but maintain that the 'Kiwi Bloke' survived the 'recolonisation' of New Zealand in the 1950s via the 'citadels of blokedom'.² Even scholarly explorations that seek to disentangle New Zealand masculinity, in its ideological, practical and personal forms, have been mostly limited to topics readily associated with 'masculine' ideals (ie. histories of the pioneer, sport (particularly rugby), nationhood and the rural New Zealand man).³ Not only do these studies uphold a perception that men's roles and

¹ Bronwyn Labrum, '“Not on Our Street”: New Urban Spaces of Interracial Intimacy in 1950s and 1960s New Zealand', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, vol.13 (2013), 68. For further studies relating to 19th century masculinities in New Zealand see Dean Wilson, 'Community and Gender in Victorian Auckland', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol. 30, no.1 (1996): 24-42, Angela Wanhalla, 'Interracial Sexual Violence in 1860s New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.45, no.1 (2011): 71-84, and Greg Ryan, 'Rural Myth and Urban Actuality: the Anatomy of All Black and New Zealand Rugby, 1884-1938', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.35, no.1 (2001): 45-69.

² James Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of the New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 2001), 354-356.

³ See for instance Steven Loveridge, '“Soldiers and Shirkers”: Modernity and new Zealand Masculinity during the Great War', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.47, no.1 (2013), 59-79. There exists several works regarding men and masculinity in relation to sport: see Greg Ryan (ed.), *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society, 1854-2004*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2005), Brendon Tagg, 'Imagine, a Man Playing Netball!: Masculinities and Sport in New Zealand', *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, vol.43, no.4 (2008): 117-135, Trevor Richards, 'Thou

identities have remained unchanged, they offer very little exploration of the shifts in these identities. Few historical studies of men critically engage with theories of masculinity, which seems ironic for a country whose national myth seemingly espouses a singular founder: the pioneer male.⁴ Not to explore what this male represents, and the changes that affected men in the 20th century seems to leave a historiographical void.⁵ As previously mentioned, *A Man's Country* remains the most significant historical exploration of New Zealand masculinity to date. However, Phillips' work is concerned with assessing, rather than deconstructing, the origin and history of the male stereotype in New Zealand. The author provides evidence to argue that stereotypes surrounding the New Zealand male grew out of the pioneer experience, but acknowledges that 'readers should not assume that the whole story has been told' and that such stereotypes have 'not suited all men'.⁶

In a similar vein, Montgomerie called for a more in depth exploration of 'the experience of New Zealand men and the myths enshrined in stereotypes of the New Zealand male'.⁷ Phillips himself, in retrospect, has also critiqued his work for failing to 'look at competing models of masculinity in society' and for neglecting the differences between working-class and middle-class perspectives.⁸

In terms of the specific interests of this thesis, Worth, Paris and Allen devote significant attention in their book *The Life of Brian* to the concept of 'what it is to be a man' in different cultural, historical and social moments. The authors emphasise that 'notions of masculinity in [New Zealand] impact on every area of public and private life' and see the quest to embody the

Shalt Play: What 60 Years of Controversy over New Zealand's Sporting Contacts with South Africa Tells us about Ourselves', *Journal of New Zealand Studies*, vol.6, no.2 (1996): 26-32, Richard Pringle, 'A Social-History of the Articulations between Rugby Union and Masculinities within Aotearoa/New Zealand', *New Zealand Sociology*, vol.19, no.1 (2004): 102-128., Sarah Gee and Steve J Jackson, 'The Southern Man City as Cultural Place and Speights Space: Locating the Masculinity-Sport-Beer 'Holy Trinity' in New Zealand', *Sport in Society*, vol.13, no.10 (2010): 1516-1531., Chris Collins and Steve Jackson (eds.), *Sport in Aotearoa/New Zealand Society*, (Albany: Dunmore Press, 2007). Caroline Daley, 'The Ref's Turned a Blind Ear: The Cultural Paradigm in New Zealand's Sports History', *Sporting Traditions*, vol.27, no.2 (2010): 15-27, John Nauright, 'Sustaining Masculine Hegemony: Rugby and Nostalgia of Masculinity', in ed. John Nauright and Timothy J. Chandler (eds.), *Making Men: Rugby and Masculine Identity*, (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1996), Frazer Andrewes, 'Demonstrable Virility: Images of Masculinity in the 1956 Springbok Rugby Tour of New Zealand', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol.15, no.2 (1998): 119-136., Richard Pringle, 'Living the Contradictions: A Foucauldian Examination of my Youthful Rugby Experience', in Heather Worth, Anna Paris and Louisa Allen (eds.), *The Life of Brian: Masculinities, Sexualities and Health in New Zealand*, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2002).

⁴ Caroline Daley argues, 'by the late twentieth century, though, the black singlet had become shorthand for a particular interpretation of New Zealand's past: rural, hard-working and a bit of a hard case' see Daley, 'Taking Off the Black Singlet', 113.

⁵ Jock Phillips, *A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1987), viii, 289.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ruth Schick and John Dolan, 'Masculinity and *A Man's Country* in 1988: An Interview with Jock Phillips', in Robin Law, Hugh Campbell and John Dolan (eds.), *Masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999), 53.

‘Kiwi Bloke’ mythology as having had ‘definite consequences for men in terms of poor levels of health and high rates of imprisonment, domestic violence, suicide and divorce’.⁹

Other works have addressed masculinity in New Zealand, but often fail to include significant academic analysis or lack working-class and Māori perspectives.¹⁰ However, Robin Law, Hugh Campbell and John Dolan present a multidisciplinary attempt to ‘go beyond blokes’ and deconstruct the mythologised male in New Zealand’s national identity and, unlike other authors, critically approach discourses surrounding masculinity as reflected in media, literature and sporting practices.¹¹ Frazer Andrewes has also looked the reconfiguration of white-collar masculinity and breadwinning in New Zealand’s post-war labour market.¹² Andrewes found that while white-collar masculinity did not supplant traditional masculinity, it did allow for new versions of the ‘New Zealand male’.¹³ Scholarly work devoted to understanding male sexual identities and homosexuality in New Zealand have also been completed.¹⁴ Although male stereotypes have been challenged by Chris Brickell in his exploration of gay men in New Zealand, the traditional ‘Kiwi Bloke’ remains invariably heterosexual.¹⁵

Explorations of an essentialised ‘New Zealand’ masculinity are obviously problematic. Not only has recent work shown that a multitude of *masculinities* exists, but pre-existing understandings of ‘New Zealand’ masculinity is drawn almost entirely from Pākehā experiences and/or

⁹ Heather Worth, Anna Paris and Louisa Allen, ‘Introduction’, in Heather Worth, Anna Paris and Louisa Allen (eds.), *The Life of Brian: Masculinities, Sexualities and Health in New Zealand*, (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2002), 13-14.

¹⁰ See Michael King’s edited collection: *One of the Boys? Changing Views of Masculinity*, (Auckland: Heinemann, 1988) which presents a survey of autobiographical excerpts and Gwendoline Smith, *Will the Real Mr New Zealand Please Stand Up?*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1990), 11, 21 which boasts an exploration of a ‘wide cross-section of men’ but only includes an interview with ‘one manual worker’. While both works include Māori men, very little attention is paid to the relationship between race and gender.

¹¹ Robin Law, Hugh Campbell and John Dolan (eds.), *Masculinities in Aotearoa/New Zealand*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1999), 7, 14. It is also worth noting here Bill Latimer’s work which looks at the contestation of the ‘New Man’ and traditional masculinities surrounding rugby union. For a focus on the construction and regeneration of masculinities in 1990s New Zealand see Bill Latimer, ‘Masculinity, Place and Sport: Rugby Union and the Articulation of the ‘New Man’ in Aotearoa/New Zealand’, (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 1998). See also Benjamin Gilmore for an exploration of alcohol consumption among men’s groups and the role of drinking in conceptions of masculinity in Benjamin Gilmore, ‘Under the Influence: Alcohol and Masculinity in New Zealand’, (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 2011), 31.

¹² Frazer Andrewes, ‘The Man in the Grey Flannel Suit: White-Collar Masculinity in Post-war New Zealand’ in Caroline Daley and Deborah Montgomerie (eds.), *The Gendered Kiwi*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1999), 191-193.

¹³ Ibid, 210.

¹⁴ Chris Brickell, ‘Sexuality, Morality and Society’, in *The New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (ed.) Giselle Byrnes, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), Tiina Vares, ‘Men’s Talk About Viagra’, in Pat Moloney and Allison Kirkman (eds.), *Sexuality Down Under: Social and Historical Perspectives*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2005).

¹⁵ See Chris Brickell, *Mates and Lovers: A History of Gay New Zealand*, (Auckland: Random House, 2008), Chris Brickell, ‘Moral Panic or Critical Mass?: The Queer contradictions of 1950s New Zealand’ in H Bauer and M Cook (eds.), *Queer 1950s: Rethinking Sexuality in the Postwar Years*, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012) and Chris Brickell, ‘Queens Gardens, 1949: The Anxious Spaces of Post-war New Zealand Masculinity’, *New Zealand Geographer*, vol.68. no.2 (2012): 81-91.

understandings. In terms of masculinity specific to Māori, Brendan Hokowhitu argues there are no ‘true’ or ‘authentic’ embodiments of Māori men and argues that the tropes surrounding them (Hokowhitu lists sportsmen, manual labourers, violent criminals or warriors) are a ‘hybridized colonial invention’ of Māori culture.¹⁶ Hokowhitu calls into question the base assumptions surrounding Māori men and argues that there remains ‘an absence’ of equivalent discussions surrounding *white* masculinity.¹⁷ Alternatively, Danny Reweti Hona identifies a Māori masculinity that stands in active contrast to white masculinity. In his analysis of tribal masculinities of Ngatiawa men, Hona identifies a distinct Māori masculinity that emerged from interpretations of ‘tribal stories and activities’ and was located, and entrenched in practices of the marae, the whanau, home practices (tikanga tane) and the provision of support (tautoko).¹⁸ With these considerations in mind, and my dependence on Pākehā-based scholarship, I have sought to avoid depending on definitions of a specific ‘Māori’ or ‘New Zealand’ masculinity.

While existing work surrounding masculinities remains important, the historical record seems to have homogenised ideas of New Zealand masculinity in line with prevalent and conventional stereotypes, allowing for little exploration of men who did not embrace masculine norms or did not experience masculinity in the same, neat way. As Mark Easterbrook rightly points out, ‘in a way the literature *about* Kiwi Blokes has helped *build* the entrenched view of who the Kiwi Bloke is’, arguing that the ‘Kiwi Bloke’ model itself ‘moves to accommodate and subsume change in order to keep ahead of developing alternative masculinities’.¹⁹

Oral History and Work

A large collection of oral histories in New Zealand have surrounded a particular labour-based cohort or revolve around a certain event or movement, for instance the Waterfront strikes or the depression.²⁰ It is possible to draw on histories from both the 20th and 21st Century which, while dedicated to labour or a specific working cohort, effectively deal with discourses surrounding

¹⁶ Brendan Hokowhitu, ‘The Death of Koro Paka: ‘Traditional’ Māori Patriarchy’, *The Contemporary Pacific*, vol.20, no.1 (2008), 115-116.

¹⁷ Ibid, 134.

¹⁸ Danny Reweti Hona, ‘So What Does the Ordinary Bloke Say about his Tribal Masculinity? /He whakaaro a wetahi tane o te hau kainga’, (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 2004), 87, 123. See also Alice Te Punga Somerville, ‘Māori Cowboys, Māori Indians’, *American Quarterly*, vol.62, no.3 (2010):663-685 for a brief discussion of the contested relationship between Māori as ‘indigenous’ and ‘masculine’.

¹⁹ Mark Easterbrook, ‘Rugby, Masculinity and National Identity: The Use of Rugby as a Signifier in New Zealand Television Advertising’, (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 2001), 8, 6.

²⁰ See Anna Green, ‘The Double-Edged Sword’: Nicknames on, the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951’, *Oral History*, vol.19, no.1 (1991):53-55, Grace Millar, ‘Families of the 1951 Waterfront Lockout’, (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2013), Jane Moodie, ‘Pioneers and Helpmates: Composure and Gender Identity in the Oral Narratives of men and Women in the Waikite Valley’, (MA Thesis, University of Waikato, 1998), Tony Simpson, *The Sugarbag Years: A People’s History of the 1930s Depression in New Zealand*, (Auckland: Random House, 1990)

masculinity and work. As Melanie Nolan argues, ‘the writing of labour history in New Zealand has been overwhelmingly masculine in its subject matter and periodization’ thus many labour histories are inadvertently dealing with discourses and gendered expectations due to their very nature.²¹ A good example be seen in Anna Green’s exploration of waterside workers’ use of nicknames which reinforces the findings of this study regarding the significance of hard work to men’s perceptions of themselves. Through the combined use of historiography and oral sources, this study seeks to extend pre-existing histories and join other work that intends to ‘complicate rather than simplify the past experience of New Zealand and its peoples’.²²

Methodology

My interviewees were chosen from a group of men who sit around the same bar leaner at the Petone Workingmen’s Club in Lower Hutt, Wellington. The men came from different areas around New Zealand and overseas but all consider themselves to have a working-class background. In embracing men’s cultural variants, I hoped to give a more nuanced picture of the New Zealand man— one full of variation and overlapping identities, men who were not simply ‘blokes’, and not necessarily Pākehā.

All of my cohort were divorced at the time of interviewing, and as they were not selected according to their marital status, I treated the topic of divorce on a case-by-case basis. At times, men’s divorces were described as significant life events, while at other times, divorce was only mentioned in answer to one of my questions.²³ Although my cohort were not selected because they were divorced, it is possible that they were identified together having bonded over being single in the past, and/or the Workingmen’s Club provided an appealing space for divorced men.

I took my lead from British historian Tony Blackshaw, who selected the participants of his work from locations at which individuals came together in a form of community and friendship. This is founded on the premise that leisure, in this case spending time together at the

²¹ Melanie Nolan, ‘Marx and Hormones: The Importance of Theory to Engendering New Zealand Labour History’ in Pat Walsh (ed.), *Pioneering New Zealand Labour History*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1994), 69. See also Melanie Nolan, ‘Gender and the Politics of Keeping Left: Wellington Labour Women and their Community, 1912-1949’ in Barbara Brookes and Dorothy Page (eds.), *Communities of Women: Historical Perspectives*, (Dunedin: Otago University Press, 2002).

²² Giselle Byrnes, ‘Introduction: Reframing New Zealand History’, in Giselle Byrnes (ed.) *New Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 2009), 1.

²³ For more thorough discussions of divorce being discussed in an oral history setting, or divorcees as an oral history cohort, see Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 41., Mary Patrice Erdmans, ‘The Problems of Articulating Beingness in Women’s Oral Histories’ in Marta Kurkowska-Budzan and Krzysztof Zamorski (eds.), *Oral History: The Challenges of Dialogue* (Amsterdam: John Benjamin Publishing Company, 2009), 93-94., and Shaheeda Hosein, ‘Until Death Do Us Part? Marriage, Divorce and the Indian Women in Trinidad’, *Oral History*, vol.30, no.1 (2002): 63-72.

club, is capable of creating a community.²⁴ My interviewees were introduced to me by my father, and stand as a group of friends outside of this thesis. My cohort were aged between and 60-69 years old at the time of interviewing, but only one of my interviewees was retired. All of the men I interviewed had separated from their former wives and were single at the time of interviewing.

As members of the post-war generation, these men grew up in the so-called 'golden era' of New Zealand family life.²⁵ Their age sees them at a point in life from which they are willing to reminisce, and gives them a valuable perspective on post-war New Zealand.²⁶ With one exception, my interviews were conducted at the Petone Workingmen's Club itself. My interviews took the form of semi-structured recorded life histories, which allowed for follow up questions. Interestingly all but one of my interviewees were happy to have their interviews archived, and this thesis should acknowledge that their recollections may have been influenced by what they felt able to record for prosperity.

Theory

It became obvious at the start of my endeavours that in studying memory, identity and historical context my thesis would sit somewhat uncomfortably between the disciplines of history, sociology, linguistics, anthropology and even geography. I have thus sought to engage with theorists regarding masculinity, gender, the use of language in an interview setting, oral history theory, and theories of memory. While I cannot claim to be well-versed in all of the above, I have engaged with a great deal of relevant scholarship, regardless of its disciplinary origins, while endeavouring to make this thesis as much of a *history* as possible.

The study of oral history naturally calls for an engagement with studies of memory and subjectivity. Literary theorist Alessandro Portelli valued the subjectivity of individual memory, championing it as a resource despite the criticism oral sources originally received from traditional empiricist scholars. The author argued for a narrative approach to oral history on the basis that 'subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible "facts"'. What the informant believes is indeed a fact...just as much as what really happened'.²⁷ Oral historians have, for the most part, embraced and utilised Portelli's assertions, with Ron Grele, Luisa Passerini and

²⁴ Tony Blackshaw, *Leisure Life: Myth, Masculinity and Modernity*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 11-13.

²⁵ Deborah Montgomerie, review of *A Man's Country: The Image of the Pakeha Male* by Jock Phillips, *The New Zealand Journal of History* vol. 22, no.2 (1988), 189.

²⁶ Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam and Janet Sceats, *The New Zealand Family from 1840*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007), 167.

²⁷ Alessandro Portelli, 'The Peculiarities of Oral History', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.12 (1981), 100. Luisa Passerini too calls for the writing of history in general to take subjectivity into account. See Luisa Passerini, 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.8 (1979): 82-108.

Michael Frisch also seeking to celebrate the subjectivity of individual memory, and the oral interview for the purpose of analysis. Most significantly, in recognising the place and value of memory, historians have in the process questioned the so-called 'objective standards' of traditional historical sources.²⁸

In the wake of scholarly advances surrounding memory and narrative, debate emerged regarding the role of individual memory and collective memory in oral testimonies.²⁹ There remain several definitions of collective memory, but theorists drawing from sociological and anthropological backgrounds emphasise the social context in which memories are created and the role of the collective.³⁰ As such, this study looks at how participants drew on cultural norms and, at times, socially constructed their memories, while at the same time following Michael Roper's call to focus on the 'underlay' of personal narratives that can display the use of dominant cultural forms as well as individual subjectivity.³¹

Narrative

Several historians have sought to utilise memory and its supposed lack of reliability to their advantage and have supplemented an analysis of lived experience with an analysis of the 'narrative structures or central plots in which individual memories and discrete bits of evidence were placed'.³² Katherine Borlard subscribes to the notion that narratives are inherently important to recollections, noting:

We can view the performance of a personal narrative as a meaning—constructing activity on two levels simultaneously. It constitutes both a dynamic interaction between the thinking subject and the narrated

²⁸ Alistair Thomson, 'Four Paradigm Transformations in Oral History', *Oral History Review*, vol.34, no1 (2007), 61. See also Ron Grele, *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, 2nd ed., (New York: Greenwood Publishing, 1991), Luisa Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory: The Cultural Experience of the Turin Working-class*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) and Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

²⁹ For examples of works that engage with nostalgia debates see Elizabeth Tokin, *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992) and Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, (New York: International Publishers, 1971).

³⁰ Gedi and Elam define collective memory as 'a fabricated version of that same personal memory adjusted to what the individual mind considers, rightly or not, as suitable in a social environment, conflating personal memory formation with myth', whereas Zenlizer points to the texture of collective memories in that they seemingly exist 'in the world rather than in a person's head' or what Terdiman describes as the material, rather than the perceived consciousness. For these sources see Noa Gedi and Yidal Elam, 'Collective Memory – What Is It?', *History and Memory*, vol.8, no.1 (1996), 47., Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, (Chicago University of Chicago Press, 1998), 4 and Richard Terdiman, *Present Past: Modernity and the Memory of Crisis*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993), 34.

³¹ Michael Roper, 'Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: the Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War', *History workshop Journal*, vol.50 (2000), 184.

³² John Bodnar, 'Power and Memory in Oral History: Workers and Managers at Studebaker', *The Journal of American History*, vol.75, no.4 (1989), 1201.

event (her own life experience) and between the thinking subject and the narrative event (her 'assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence').³³

Anna Green also highlights elements of story-telling that are often utilised by interviewees in an attempt to meaningfully connect their past to their present. She notes, 'popular forms of storytelling provide the narrative structures that frame the story...we draw upon the vocabulary and metaphors in our time and culture'.³⁴ Because my interviews were based on self-directed autobiographical life narratives, I sought to understand my cohort's memories through elements of narrative such as chronology, metaphor and genre. In his study of 19th century working-class autobiographies Mark Traugott established five underlying narrative genres in autobiographical recollections including, 'the legacy to prosperity', 'the picaresque adventure', 'the success story', 'the plea for defence (*plaidoyer*)' and 'the conversion experience'.³⁵ Traugott describes the 'success story' as 'detailing the [narrator's] climb within the social hierarchy and his or her conquest of social respectability 'often signifying the acceptance by, or even ascension into, the middle class'.³⁶ As Lynn Abrams argues, the person who survives 'against the odds' is more sympathetic and more likely to achieve composure than he or she who wallows in self-pity'.³⁷ All of the men I interviewed without exception demonstrated elements of the 'success story' and presented their life story as a trajectory towards social and financial success, so it is essential to consider narrative theory and tropes in this study.

Rhetoric and Composure

In as much as oral history methodologies are used to explore what is said, they are also used to explore what is not said, what is altered and what is concealed by a narrator. Lenore Layman's study of West Australian workers provides a template for understanding the silences, hesitations and topic changes experienced when an interviewee is said to be uncomfortable due to their purpose, their narrative's lack of correlation with the bounds of social discourse, and/or when memories are painful to recount.³⁸ Although Layman chiefly discusses her theory of reticence in a question and answer setting, the same methods of analysis can be used to explore the telling of life histories.

³³ Katherine Borland, 'That's Not What I Said', in *The Oral History Reader*, (eds.) Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, (London: Routledge, 1998), 320.

³⁴ Anna Green, 'Unpacking the Stories', in Anna Green and Megan Hutching (eds.), *Remembering: Writing Oral History*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2004), 110.

³⁵ Mark Traugott, *The French Worker: Autobiographies From the Early Industrial Era*, (Berkley: University of California Press, 1993), 27-28. See also George Stienmetz, 'Reflections on the Role of Social Narratives in Working-Class Formation: Narrative Theory in the Social Sciences', *Social Science History*, vol.16, no.3 (1992): 489-516.

³⁶ Traugott, *The French Worker: Autobiographies From the Early Industrial Era*, 28.

³⁷ Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), 68.

³⁸ Lenore Layman, 'Reticence in Oral History Interviews', *The Oral History Review*, vol.36, no.2 (2009), 207.

In a similar vein, Alistair Thomson established the concept of composure in his work on ANZAC memories arguing that memories are constructed not only in accordance with public language and cultural meanings, but in a way that makes interviewees feel ‘relatively comfortable with [their] lives’.³⁹ Graham Dawson however, approaches the concept of composure as a practice that ‘fundamentally depends on social recognition’ and sees composure as having the power to ‘confirm that the versions of self and world figured in a narrative correspond to those of other people’.⁴⁰ While it is important to explore moments of composure, Michael Roper acknowledges that some memories may elude the narrative and some narrators may never be capable of achieving composure, regardless of the setting.⁴¹

These scholars demonstrate the value of moments in which memories do not ‘fit’ nicely within a life history. It was important then, in my interviews to acknowledge moments where memories seemed incongruous to the rest of my cohort’s life histories and where men remembered their pasts in a certain way to at least appear, if not feel, comfortable with the lives they were recalling.

Authority in the Interview

As this thesis is based on sources that were recorded in an interview setting, it must include analysis that accurately reflects a narrator’s voice and intentions as they were recorded. That is, although the purpose of this study is to explore and analyse, the men in my cohort should be able to recognise the memories featured as their own. The importance of interviewees to the oral history process has been recognised by several scholars, including most notably Michael Frisch. In his work, *A Shared Authority*, the author outlines a collaborative approach to ‘history-making’ as a means by which to ensure the interviewee and the interviewer feel a form of ownership over the project.⁴² For this thesis, I sought to utilise Linda Shopes’ approach to understand and uphold a shared authority ‘in the talk itself’, rather than through collaborative efforts, in the actual writing of this thesis.⁴³

³⁹ Alistair Thomson, ‘Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia’ in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (eds.), *The Oral History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 300-301.

⁴⁰ Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes: British Adventure, Empire and the Imagining of Masculinity*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 23.

⁴¹ Roper, ‘Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero; the Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War’, 184.

⁴² Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990).

⁴³ Linda Shopes, ‘Sharing Authority’, *The Oral History Review*, vol.30, no.1 (2013): 104.

It should be noted, of course, that seeking to understand how my cohort interpreted their experiences does not imply simply taking their narratives at face value, but rather, understanding what they said through the application of theoretical debates and concepts. What's more in recognising the shared authority at work during my interviews, it became easier to recognise points at which interviewees displayed their 'own take' and/or pointed to events and people they saw as important to their life stories. Overall, I hoped that in not seeking to elicit certain 'results' from my interviewees, participants were empowered to use our interviews as a space dedicated to *their* story and not necessarily my thesis.

Intersubjectivity

It is also important to consider the role of intersubjectivity in the interview, the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. In her exploration of masculinity in 20th Century Glasgow, Hilary Young employs intersubjectivity as a device 'to bring contemporary feminism [herself] and its implied parallel construction (the 'New Man')' to an interview with older men.⁴⁴ Young's use of intersubjectivity allows for an exploration into how masculine discourses shaped her interviewees' perception of changing masculinities and men's roles. While Young's work offers a significant insight, the author largely ignores the discrepancies between narrators and wider discourses and overlooks the paradoxical, hesitant nature of life narratives.⁴⁵ Although I do not seek to replicate Young's methods, my study is certainly influenced by her work and her exploration of changing masculinities. Having identified the intersubjective nature of an interview, and the way in which subjectivities can shape an interviewee's narration (through composure and/or reticence for example), it was necessary that I remained aware of my place in the interview process. Furthermore, as I, like Young, represented different expectations of gender discourse, language, and education in the face of my cohort, the place of intersubjectivity in my interviews provided a rich source of analysis.

Interview Setting

If we are to acknowledge the significant factors influencing an interview, we must also consider the interview setting. Oral historians have recognised that the physical environment in which an interview takes place can affect an exchange and may 'evoke important memories for narrators

⁴⁴ Hilary Young, 'Hard Man, New Man: Re/Composing Masculinities in Glasgow, c.1950-2000', *Oral History*, vol.35, no.1 (2007), 71.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 80. Thomson similarly pays attention to his role in the interview setting, acknowledging that he may have inadvertently encouraged the veterans he spoke to respond in certain ways see Alistair Thomson, 'Anzac Memories: Putting Popular Memory Theory into Practice in Australia', 27.

and contribute to the depth of their recollections and responses'.⁴⁶ The ANZAC room upstairs in the Petone Workingmen's Club, where all but one of my interviews were conducted, was certainly embedded with an ambience and history.⁴⁷ The room, like the club itself, provided a space for members to gather and interact with others. More than that, the room was dedicated to New Zealand war heroes which meant our interview took place among historical objects championing men, and a certain impression of New Zealand's history. Thus, it would be false to think of the room as a neutral space, without influences or a pre-established purpose, but it certainly provided a level of comfort for these men in telling their stories.

Māori Tradition and Oral History

Scholars continue to debate the distinction between Māori oral tradition and oral history, with some seeing the two as binary practices, irreconcilable in one work and others seeing the two as indistinct.⁴⁸ However, oral narratives are often used by Māori scholars of masculinity to 'illuminate the nuances of tribal and whanau engagement with national colonising processes' and to engage with varying methodologies, both Māori and traditionally European.⁴⁹ Interviewing Māori participants allows for some of the theoretical considerations and practices I have outlined, but also presents interesting challenges to pre-existing theory.⁵⁰ While I do not have the space here to discuss the complicated relationship between Kaupapa Māori tradition and existing oral history methodology, I would point to Te Rangimarie Mahuika's work as an introduction to using oral history methodology in the context of Māori history.⁵¹ Additionally, Melissa Metutina Williams' work *Panguru in the City* fully embraces the use of oral history despite

⁴⁶ Mary K Quinlan, 'The Dynamics of Interviewing', in Donald A. Ritchie (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Oral History*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 28. See also Dan Sipe, 'The Future of Oral History and Moving Images' in Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson (ed.), *The Oral History Reader*, (London: Routledge, 1998), 382 where Sipe acknowledges that 'the spoken word is embedded in a setting' and that narrators often 'respond to and refer to their setting and to objects' during an interview.

⁴⁷ Joe Serici, one of my interviewees, was the only participant to be interviewed outside of the club and requested to be interviewed at my home as it was the best fit for his schedule at the time.

⁴⁸ See for instance Peter Clayworth, *Recording Tangata whenua Oral Histories and Traditions: Techniques and Lessons from the Ruapekapeka Pā Oral History Project*, (Wellington: Department of Conservation, 2013), 7-9 and David James Murphy, 'Māori Orality and Extended Cognition: A Cognitive Approach to Memory and Oral Tradition in the Pacific', (PhD Thesis, Victoria University, 2015).

⁴⁹ Melissa Matutina Williams, *Panguru and the City, Kainga Tabi, Kainga Rua: An Urban Migration History*, (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2015), 35. For examples of the approaches Williams cites see Hirini Kaa, "'Te Wiwi Nati': The Cultural Economy of Ngati Porou 1929-1939", (Master's Thesis, Victoria University, 2000), Monty Soutar, *Nga Tamatoa: The Price of Citizenship, C Company 28 (Māori) Battalion 1939-1945*, (Auckland: David Bateman, 2008) and Angela Wanhalla, *In/Visible Sight: The Mixed Descent Families of Southern New Zealand*, (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2009).

⁵⁰ Judith Binney, 'Māori Oral Narratives, Pākehā Written Texts: Two Forms of Telling History', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.21, no.1 (1987), 16.

⁵¹ Te Rangimarie Mahuika, 'The Value of Oral History in a Kaupapa Māori Framework', *Te Pouhere Korero*, vol. 3, (2014), p.91.

research methods colliding with ‘culturally appropriate methodology’ and succeeds in presenting a fusing of the two.⁵²

With these considerations in mind, Māori oral histories may call for a different set of analytical tools, or should least be subjected to different considerations in addition to the more euro-centric methods I have outlined.⁵³ Narrative form in Māori oral history differs greatly from that of traditional European life histories; the whanau is said to ‘give identity to the individual, and the tipuna’, thus, a person’s history can be articulated in terms of family and whakapapa, or within an alternative chronology.⁵⁴ While a focus on individual agency remains imperative to this study, a consideration of Māori understandings of history, chronology and ancestry and what this means for conceptions of the individual and his/her personal life narrative, was maintained throughout this thesis. Having said that, I avoided assigning individual memories as simply reflections of a collective ‘Māori understanding’. Māori participants did not always adhere to all, or any, traditional Māori methods of understanding (if we can call them that) in their personal histories (and it would be wrong for me to impose assumptions of any of my participants, regardless of their cultural background). Instead, I looked to understand the way in which a participant’s narrative was, at some points, influenced two-fold, by dominant cultural forms, and traditional Māori understandings.

The methodological approaches I have suggested in this thesis ensured a fuller exploration of the narratives provided by my interviewees, what men did and how they remembered. In investigating elements of intersubjectivity, orality, memory and narrative this thesis can join other oral histories in New Zealand that have begun to embrace methodologies as a means of delivering a more theoretically nuanced study. A more concerted understanding of the elements in play during memory-making will provide a perspective not yet seen in historical studies of New Zealand men.

⁵² Matutina Williams, *Panguru and the City, Kāinga Taui, Kāinga Rua: An Urban Migration History*, 26.

⁵³ Oral Historian Jan Vansina also identifies the role of alternative timespans in traditional histories. See Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, (Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1984), 54, 12-13

⁵⁴ Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, 18.

Biographies

This section includes short biographies of the men I interviewed. They are included here to introduce the reader to my cohort and provide some context for their stories.

Dennis Powell

Born in 1946 to a Māori mother and a father of Welsh descent, Dennis was raised in the small rural town of Haparapara in the Bay of Plenty. His father worked for the Māori Affairs Board establishing farms that would provide families their own land.⁵⁵ Raised in a self-described 'Māori world', after the death of his mother at the age of seven Dennis moved in with his maternal aunt and uncle in Wairata.

Dennis made the decision to join the navy when recruiters came to Hamilton City and was asked to enlist at the age of 16.⁵⁶ After training at several locations around the Auckland region, Dennis joined the Communications Unit of the Navy, and spent time at sea mapping geographical areas of New Zealand before being sent on international projects.

Following his work at sea for at least fifteen years, Dennis returned to New Zealand. He worked at a laundry company, as a foreman for a wine company and a fuel delivery driver before returning to his work in communications. On his return he met his then wife, a fellow member of the armed services, and had two children before they divorced over 20 years ago.

Dennis first became a member of the Petone Workingmen's Club in the 1990s.

⁵⁵ 'Department of Maori Affairs Annual Report', *Appendices to the Journals of the House of Representatives* (AHJR), 1949, Session I, G-09 Pg. 1.

Wayne Cooper

Wayne was born in Mosgeil in 1953 where he and his family would remain before moving to Christchurch ten years later. Wayne's father, a World War II veteran, worked in the local Post Office while his mother stayed home to raise him and his brother until they attended high school, after which she found work at a local grocery store.

Wayne made the decision to join the clerkship programme at the Post Office, on the advice of his father, after attending High School for three years. In 1974, Wayne joined his uncle in Perth working for an Australian mining company. It was at the mine that Wayne met his first wife. The couple married in Christchurch in 1977 and had two children. During this period Wayne was relocated several times with his work and soon became personnel manager at the New Zealand Post Office Savings Bank and his family later moved to Wellington.

Wayne met his second wife in 1992. The couple had two sons together. In 2004, Wayne's second marriage ended, as did his then-work as a commercial sandblaster. He has spent the last ten years at various jobs, including a printing and a lawn mowing business.

Wayne has been a member of workingmen's clubs since he was 16 years old.

Gordon McAbney

Gordon was born in 1955 in Glasgow, Scotland. Despite his father's Catholic origins, and his mother's Protestant background the two were married and raised their family in a tenement. His father and uncle worked as bookmakers 'before it was legal'.

After leaving school at 16, Gordon played semi-professional football for teams in Scotland and England. While most of the friends he grew up with went to work at the local shipyards, Gordon found work for a local newspaper and post office. At 18 he had a son with his high school sweetheart.

After meeting a New Zealand woman living in Glasgow, later to be his wife, Gordon moved to New Zealand at the age of 23. On his arrival he continued to play semi-professional football for teams around the Wellington region. Today, Gordon works as a business consultant in Petone.

Gordon joined the Petone Workingmen's Club not long after arriving in New Zealand and played in the football adjunct.

Giuseppe (Joe) Serci

Joe was born in 1950 in Rome to a Sicilian father and a Roman mother and he and his family immigrated to New Zealand in 1953. His father has been a messenger for the Italian navy and worked as a fisherman when the family moved to New Zealand.

Joe was mostly raised by his older sister in Lower Hutt, Wellington, while his father worked.

Joe completed his secondary school education at St Bernard's College in Lower Hutt, with the intention of becoming a civil engineer. After gaining his engineering qualifications Joe worked as a consultant for projects in Lower Hutt before he became a site engineer at Kawerau Mill.

During his career, Joe has worked in several capacities: as a site engineer (in New Zealand and overseas), a business owner and now as a taxi driver in Lower Hutt.

He was married in the 1980s after having two sons with his wife; the couple would later divorce after 16 years of marriage.

*Tipene*⁵⁷

Born in Taranaki in 1946, Tipene descends from the eight Taranaki tribes both in and outside of the Taranaki rohe. Tipene's parents worked on community projects and raised him and his siblings in a marae context. Although his parents were Anglican, Tipene cites his tribe's experiences at Parihaka and the beliefs of Te Whiti-O-Rongomai and Tohu Kakahi as the major ideological influences on him and his family.

Tipene attended a local Pākehā primary school and during his school years worked in a local factory to pay for his boarding school fees.

After attending Teacher's College and teaching at a primary school level for several years, Tipene attended university to study sociology. During his early twenties he travelled to Europe and also spent time completing his compulsory national service in the armed forces.

Since this time, Tipene has worked in various capacities as a public figure for the betterment of Māori.

⁵⁷ Tipene wished to made anonymous for the purposes of this project so any details of his life that may identify him to a reader, including his name, have been changed.

Jack Pollock

Jack was born in Petone, Lower Hutt, in 1953, and has lived there ever since.

At the age of 14 Jack made the decision to leave high school and got a job working full time at Odmins Timber Factory. Jack then went on to work at the Petone Gear Meat Works, where he became the youngest cattle slaughterer the company had seen at the time.

Jack attended Petone West Primary School, and as a child enjoyed hunting and fishing with friends and family. Jack married his now ex-wife at the age of 21 after she became pregnant and the couple would have two sons before getting divorced. Jack later worked servicing fishing boats and then as a long-haul truck driver, which he still does today.

Jack began attending the Petone Workingmen's Club with his parents as a boy and became an official member when he was 21 in 1974.

Chapter Three: The Petone Workingmen's Club, A Man's Environment?

There is something unquestionably distinct about walking into the Petone Workingmen's Club—the patterned carpet and the ‘dings’ from the nearby pokie machines foster a certain nostalgia for a 1950s New Zealand. Staff at reception know regulars by name, men and women are greeted as they walk in—perhaps to play bowls next door, attend the quiz night, or simply to have their nightly pint. Members sign in their guests and produce their membership card before crossing the foyer, often picking up their numbers for the meat raffle on their way to the bar. Around the corner from reception sits the library, where members select their week's reading, usually carried to the bar in a plastic bag, and their names are taken down in the hand-written record book. Upstairs sits the conference lounge, the ANZAC room and a billiards hall, but it is the main bar and restaurant that dominates the club. The wide space holds the electronic TAB betting machine, and its walls stand adorned with sporting prizes won by club members. Here members, mostly men, take their stools at one of the many leaners, and give an often gruff ‘g'day’ to their mates across the table before settling in for the night.

The clubrooms were where my interviews took place and where I first met my cohort. My interviewees regularly gather at the same table, often to drink jugs of Lion Brown and ‘chew the fat’. Sometimes there is a match being shown, while at other times members bring a ‘good, hot salami’ they were hoping to share over a couple of pints. Most of the men gather several times a week, and can often be found there on a Friday night, work permitting.

Leisure and socialising have long been understood as activities that contribute to identity formation and facilitate collective experiences. As such, a closer look at the Petone Workingmen's Club as a site of leisure, as well as a site instilled with the traditional values of a working-class community, allows for a more complex understanding of my cohort and their identities. This chapter will explore the Petone Workingmen's club as a masculine space and a site that facilitated leisure and upheld a communal identity. It will consider the workingmen's club as a meeting place, distinct from a regular pub, and one that reflected a working-class, and often gendered, sense of belonging and what this represented in my cohort's lives.

Historiography

Most research surrounding Workingmen's clubs (WMCs) tends to be located in the chartered club movement and its origins in late 1800s Britain.¹ British scholar Ruth Cherrington offers 'the first comprehensive social history' of workingmen's clubs as a unique venue for drinking, socialising and expressing shared cultural identities, while Richard Hall explores clubs as a 'barometer' for the working-classes.² Cherrington admonishes the reductionist perspective of workingmen's clubs as mere facilitators of 'beer and bingo', instead claiming that the institutions provided a 'key element of working-class leisure for almost a century and a half'.³ Despite the author's work being solely based in a British context, her exploration of the social space and 'club life' that the WMCs represent in a working-class context, provides helpful insights for a New Zealand setting. With the exception of Jack Rolfe's *In the Club*, which is described as 'a draught-ale drinking, raucous history', and some entries in *Te Ara: The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, no literature exists studying the multitude of workingmen's clubs in New Zealand.⁴

Historical Background

The Working Men's Club and Institute Union was first established on June 14th, 1862 and saw to the widespread establishment of working men's club around industrial Britain. As their name suggests, working men's clubs were founded in the hope of providing local working men with a place fit for recreation and education. Founded during the height of Victorian social reform, workingmen's clubs were soon established in New Zealand and the country saw at least 12 WMCs by 1896.⁵

¹ See Richard N Price, 'The Workingmen's Club Movement and Victorian Social Reform', *Victorian Studies*, vol.15, no.2 (1971): 117-147, Henry Solly, *Working Men's Social Clubs and Educational Institutes*, (London: Working Men's Club and Institute Union, 1867) and J. Vaughan Merrick, *Workingmen's Clubs and Institutes: How to Organize and How to Conduct Them*, (Philadelphia: Unnamed Publisher, 1878).

² Ruth Cherrington, *Not Just Beer and Bingo! A Social History of the Workingmen's Club*, (Bloomington: Author House, 2012), xviii and Ruth Cherrington, 'The Development of Working Men's Clubs: A Case Study in Implicit Cultural Policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, vol.15.no.2 (2009), 187. See also Richard Hall, 'Barometers of Working-Class Life: Change and Continuity in Britain's Working Men's Clubs 1945-1960', (MA Thesis, University of Sussex, 2013).

³Cherrington, 'The Development of Working Men's Clubs: A Case Study in Implicit Cultural Policy', *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, 187.

⁴ Jack Rolfe, *In the Club: A History of the Chartered Club Movement in New Zealand*, (Auckland: Celebrity Books, 1999), 7. The Petone Workingmen's Club could be likened to other social spaces such as a rugby clubs, which van Campenhout and van Hoven claim are 'co-dependent' and 'co-produced' with masculine performances and identities. See Gijs van Campenhout and Bettina van Hoven, "'It's Where Blokes Can Be Blokes": Making Places in a New Zealand Rugby Club', *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*, (2013), p.1103.

⁵ According to historian Jock Phillips, 'the first New Zealand club was set up in Dunedin in 1874, and three years later clubs were founded in Wellington, Napier and Greytown' see Jock Phillips, 'Men's Clubs- Workingmen's Clubs', *Te Ara the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, accessed 14th November 2014. <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/mens-clubs/page-3>.

Fifteen years after the movement's founding, the Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute (PWMC) was established in Lower Hutt, Wellington. In 1947, when the club celebrated its sixtieth year, a life member at the time, Mr T J Ryan, dubbed the founding members of the club 'men of courage, enterprise and vision' for creating an institution which would provide for 'the social and recreational needs of men with much in common'.⁶

It is not surprising with such a longstanding history, that club members are inclined towards tradition, with the continued elevation of 'life members' and resistance to change. In recent renovations to the local clubrooms, the then-President Barry Priest acknowledged opposition from members who preferred the clubrooms' smaller size. He noted, 'people tend to resist change but this place has a 122-year history and change is going to happen'.⁷

Membership today stands as 13,000 (in conjunction with the Lower Hutt Returned Services Association) making it the largest chartered club in New Zealand.⁸ Even in adverse times, the club has considered itself a welcoming environment, particularly for its elderly members, with 2006 club president Grant Oehlich noting 'they really haven't got anywhere else to go in terms of an establishment in town which is suitable for the needs of that generation—a place to sit down and chat'.⁹ In terms of leisure, the club offers participation in numerous sports, and, like many clubs in the 1980s, introduced a TAB outlet and a game room for playing the 'pokies'.¹⁰ Seen as maintaining an 'old world jug-and-Formica charm', the PWMC remains reminiscent of most male-dominated urban pubs but also provides somewhat of a second home, particularly for its older members, or as one member put it, 'it's a community'.¹¹

Women and the Club

It would be easy to take the workingmen's club at its name, as a place for only men, and it was an environment that fostered traditionally masculine modes of socialising and 'Hard Man' masculine identity. Scholarship, certainly, has argued that homosocial spaces and leisure practices

⁶ Mr T J Ryan and Mr R H Jones (eds.), *Our Sixtieth Year: Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute*, (Wellington: Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute, 1947), 9.

⁷ Simon Edwards, 'Accommodating Growth at Petone Working Men's Club', *Hutt News*, 13th April, 2010.

⁸ Simon Edwards, 'Most Progressive Club' marks a Milestone', *Hutt News*, 21st August, 2012. Chartered clubs are currently represented by the overarching association, Clubs New Zealand. Founded in 1912, today Clubs New Zealand describes 'club culture' as 'one of care and protection of our members' and notes that 'chartered clubs are often at the centre of the community: they provide a social focal point, and a safe and secure environment/venue in which members can enjoy social camaraderie, food, gaming, sports and alcohol'. See: 'Our History', *Clubs New Zealand*, accessed 17th November, 2014 <http://www.clubsnz.org.nz/about-clubs-nz/our-history.html>, and *Clubs New Zealand*, 'Submission to Justice and Electoral Select Committee on the Alcohol Reform Bill 2011', p.2.

⁹ Rebecca Palmer, 'Workingmen's Club Closes', *Dominion Post*, 6th March 2006, A4.

¹⁰ Jock Phillips, 'Men's Clubs –Workingmen's Clubs' *Te Ara- The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, accessed 14th November 2014, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/mens-clubs/page-3>.

¹¹ Michelle Quirke, 'Working Men's Club Saved', *Dominion Post*, 24th December 2004, A8.

provide a means by which collective masculinity is practised and entrenched. British scholar Tony Blackshaw focuses on this ‘world of the lads’ and explores the extent to which ‘leisure is capable of creating its own ‘communities’.¹² The author understands ‘lad culture’ (what we might think of as ‘Kiwi Bloke culture’) as a ‘resistance to liquid modern transformations’ and the coming together of individuals who share a ‘common reflective narrative’, not simply ‘collective stubbornness’.¹³ An emphasis on common interests and backgrounds are featured in official and unofficial descriptions of the club.

The club’s *Official Journal* for instance, one of the only archival records that remains of the institution, depicts an organisation that revolves around drinking, sport, camaraderie and community. The journals themselves—the ones that have been archived at least—were printed in the 1970s and contain mostly annual reports from the club’s sporting adjuncts and public notices. Advertisements featured in the journals tend to be those we might associate with ‘blokish culture’ such as vacancies at local manufacturers where members were employed and messages from New Zealand breweries. Other pages included a directory of services offered by fellow club members including building, carpentry, carpet laying, plaster fitting, painting, photography, printing, tailoring, tool-making—to name just a few.¹⁴ Other journal pages are dedicated to the darts adjunct’s Saturday night that ‘nobody wanted to remember’ or reports of ‘pimply-faced pommy[*sic*] queers’ and ‘loud cat calls, jeers, whistles and stamping feet’.¹⁵ Authors described trips to other Workingmen’s Clubs and social events, where men were led ‘gently, but firmly, towards the door by [their] understanding wife’ after a big night.¹⁶ The pages of the journal, like the club itself, give us an indication of who members were, how they behaved, and what they valued. By interpreting the journal we begin to see the club as a space that facilitated a certain identity for its members and upheld traditional understandings of working-class masculinity.

However, while the club encouraged and facilitated certain behaviours for its members, its associated cultural values were not wholly exclusive or unchanging. British Historian Richard Halls stresses that workingmen’s clubs were ‘more complex’ than just a straightforward masculine environment, with the club often seen by British members as being a ‘home away

¹² Tony Blackshaw, *Leisure Life: Myth, Masculinity and Modernity*, (London: Routledge, 2003), 13.

¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁴ *Petone Workingmen’s Club and Literary Institute Annual Report*, vol.1, no.12 (December, 1971), 40. Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

¹⁵ *Petone Workingmen’s Club and Literary Institute Annual Report*, vol.4, no.1 (March, 1975), 30-31. Held at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL). *Petone Workingmen’s Club and Literary Institute Annual Report*, vol.1, no.1 (February, 1971), 33. Held at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

¹⁶ *Petone Workingmen’s Club and Literary Institute Annual Report*, vol.3, no.1 (January, 1974), 17. Held at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

from home'. He points to the later integration of women and children as countering the straightforward 'masculine' label for these spaces.¹⁷ Similarly, while the Petone Workingmen's club might still be considered a largely homosocial and masculine space, the impression of the club is complicated by the presence of women and the changing impact that public gender dynamics have had on its quasi-private existence over the last 40-50 years.

Female membership has risen significantly in the last 30 years and women are now permitted as full members. For the most part of the 20th century membership rules that excluded women were seen as 'the way it was' due to women's place in the public/private division of gender and drinking spaces in post-war New Zealand.¹⁸ Men I interviewed used phrases like '*just the way it was*' and '*I never really thought about it*' when discussing the club's former all-male membership, which points to the central place *men* still occupy in memories of the Workingmen's Club environment.

However, most interviewees mentioned females attending in the present day. Joe mentioned that his elderly sister regularly attended social events at the club and Wayne was married to his second wife in the club's ANZAC lounge (the room where my interviews were held). When the topic of women in the club was raised, however, some men struggled to reconcile aspects of what they remembered as happening with what they thought had happened, and what they believed now. In our discussion of women in the workingmen's club, Wayne made efforts to insist that women did participate in some ways, to such an extent that he directly contradicted himself:

N: *Was your then-wife a member of the club as well?*

W: *Nah, Nah.*

N: *So she didn't come down with you from time to time?*

W: *Nah, man's environment- I guess. They weren't too interested- and I mean women weren't allowed in those days anyway.*

N: *Oh really?*

W: *Women weren't allowed in Workingmen's clubs, but the worm turns as time goes by, like I know from experience, there were a lot of men that flittered out of this place when they let women in.*

N: *Oh really?*

W: *Mmm*

N: *Do you think they just—they preferred it to be an all-man, kind of environment?*

W: *Yeah, they just kind of like drinking with blokes*

N: *I wonder why? Do you think it just kind of, changes the dynamic or the behaviour of men or something like that?*

¹⁷ Hall, 'Barometers of Working-Class Life: Change and Continuity in Britain's Working Men's Clubs 1945-1960', 47.

¹⁸ Diane Kirkby makes similar observations regarding the relationship between Australian national identity, sexual exclusivity and pub culture. See Diane Kirkby, *Barmaids: A History of Women's Work in Pubs*, (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

W: *Umm, well I guess they can just get out with themselves and talk about what they want without their missus' knowing what they've been getting up to, I'm not really too sure- I've never really thought about it but, like, Kiera used to come in here and have a beer.*¹⁹

While Wayne may simply have been backtracking because he thought it was the answer that a female interviewer wanted to hear, his recollections seem to present something more complicated. In that moment, he seemed to occupy the space of someone who was raised according to the unspoken rules of a 'man's environment', while possessing a more modern view of gender equality. He states '*some men*' had a problem with female membership, inferring he is not one of them.

My cohort readily acknowledged that female membership was a controversial issue among club members and the experience of other workingmen's clubs supports their memory. The Whangamata Workingmen's Club, for example, saw heated debate over the issue in 1974, with members claiming 'men only clubs [were] the last bastion of man's independence', and 3238 members voted against women being admitted.²⁰ The contentious nature of the issue could be summed by one of Rolfe's anecdotal recollections: '...a little ex-miner named George Sparks interjected [the debate] "We've had a women's club on the coast for years... a bit of four-by-two with nails in it"'.²¹

Because female membership was introduced in the lifetime of my interviewees, along with the pre-existing female-only adjuncts and female-specific spaces, I am hesitant to assign the Workingmen's Club the label of an *exclusively* gendered or masculine space. While masculine standards of behaviour and activities were certainly upheld and celebrated in the club's environment, women were not entirely absent.²² Rules surrounding female membership differed from place to place. Many clubs had a 'model rule' for its 'lady' attendees which specified a certain amount of times per year that women were permitted to attend the club.²³ Other clubs permitted women on a Saturday night if they were accompanied by a male escort.²⁴ Women also took up positions as housekeepers, housemaids and waitresses at the club, but the employment of female stewards did not become common practice until the 1970s.²⁵

¹⁹ Wayne Cooper, interviewed by Nicola Braid at the Petone Workingmen's Club, 24th January 2015.

²⁰ Rolfe, *In the Club: A History of the Chartered Club Movement in New Zealand*, 182.

²¹ Ibid, 184.

²² This is in keeping with discussions of gender and codes of respectability in Australian pubs, see Clare Wright, *Beyond the Ladies Lounge: Australia's Female Publicans*, (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 2003), 190.

²³ Ibid, 171.

²⁴ Ibid, 182.

²⁵ Jack Rolfe, *In the Club: A History of the Chartered Club Movement in New Zealand*, (Auckland: Celebrity Books, 1999), 270. Legally, barmaids could be employed in New Zealand from 1961 but bars remained exclusively male until

While Hall's study reflects a British context, the archives also support the authors more nuanced reading of what could be considered *prima facie* a masculine space. There is no denying that women have only recently been accepted as members of the club, in fact there is no record of the exact year in which women were admitted. All the same, women's indirect involvement in the club has been long-lasting.²⁶ The club's Ladies Rifle Shooting Adjunct for instance, was established in 1947, and continued to run for at least the next twenty five years.²⁷ While the membership to the adjunct remained at only 12 in 1972, the existence of this and other adjuncts like the Ladies Evening Bowls Team implies that women were in some ways involved, or at least associated, with the club and its community through their husbands, fathers and brothers.²⁸

Excerpts from my interviewees support this 'association', Jack recalled his mother's involvement:

N: *So was that your mum's involvement in the club then through the adjunct? Because like you said women weren't allowed in the club?*

J: *Well yeah women weren't allowed to be members in those days, but they were allowed in the shooting adjunct they had their own adjunct.*²⁹

Jack made an effort here to acknowledge women's involvement in the club and the spaces put aside *specifically* for women, even if they were not permitted to become formal members. He explained,

*They were allowed to—at the old club—they were allowed to come into the club on a Friday and Saturday night only, and they weren't allowed in the main bar, they had what they call the blue room and they were allowed in there and that was all, they weren't allowed in the main bar.*³⁰

Jack highlights the club's physical spaces that women could participate in. His emphasis on the main bar in the above excerpt, which he twice confirms as having barred women, suggests that the main bar was a significant, if not the ultimate, focal point of the club's activities and membership.

1967. See Susan Upton, *Wanted, A Beautiful Barmaid: Women behind the Bar in New Zealand, 1830-1976*, (Wellington: Victoria University Press, 2013), 157, 162.

²⁶ The men I interviewed and sources I could access give no clear indication of when women were admitted into the Petone Workingmen's Club. Modell and Hinshaw found in their study of Pennsylvania steelworkers that 'generally, men did not remember the arrival of women as a result of federal legislation with any tolerance' and characterised women 'as being obstructionist, blocking the formation of the dialect and the interactions that were crucial to being a man on the shop-floor'. My interviewees also attest to the experience of women being admitted as being more memorable than a 'timeline' as such. See Judith Modell and John Hinshaw, 'Male Work and Mill Work: Memory and Gender in Homestead, Pennsylvania', in Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini & Paul Thompson (eds.), *Gender & Memory*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 136.

²⁷ *Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute Annual Report*, vol.2, no.1 (1972), 17-20. Held at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL).

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jack Pollock, interviewed by Nicola Braid at the Petone Workingmen's Club, 8th March 2015.

³⁰ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

It follows that an organisation with this all-male focal point was most likely upholding the assumption that a women belonged to a more 'private sphere'.³¹ Indeed, the gendered separation of drinking establishments in New Zealand was commonplace during the period my cohort were remembering. Public bars often had a 'lounge bar' for women who were not allowed in the less expensive main bars. In the 1970s the exclusivity of these men's spaces would come into question with the 'pub liberations' in which women and gay men protested their being banned from exclusively heterosexual 'men's spaces'.³²

The traditions and values associated with the workingmen's club undoubtedly fostered a sort of masculine community— what Wayne dubbed as 'a man's environment'. Similar to institutions in Britain, the club's 'spatial position shifted overtime as games, drinking and gambling became supplemented by large-scale concerts', but throughout, the clubs remained 'facilitators of agency for working-class men, via the influence and control that membership afforded them'.³³ While the club's purpose changed over time, its membership also changed and the introduction of female members continued to challenge the taken for granted masculine, working-class values embedded in the institution. The pace of change among clubs mirrored changes that were being made more generally to gendered social environments in a period of growing employment and stability.³⁴

Men's memories of female membership indicated that the formal and informal exclusivity of the institution remained in place until at least the 1980s.³⁵ More than this, the collective identity championed by the club and its reputation as a 'man's environment' upheld certain behaviours and personal qualities among its membership, and indeed, among my interviewees.

³¹ Jack said that he started attending the rifle adjunct with his mother at the age of eleven, which would place his recollections around 1963. For studies of a public/private split in New Zealand spaces and rhetoric at this time see Chris Brickell, 'Heroes and Invaders: Gay and Lesbian Pride Parades and Public/Private Distinction in New Zealand Media Accounts', *Gender, Place and Culture*, vol.7, no.2 (2000): 163-178., and Bronwyn Dalley and Bronwyn Labrum, *Fragments: New Zealand Social and Cultural History*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2000).

³² Caroline Daley, 'Men and Women in the City- Men's and Inclusive Spaces', *Te Ara - The Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, accessed 15th May 2015, <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/men-and-women-in-the-city/page-4>. While this chapter focuses on the existence of a gendered space and masculinity in an all-male environment, it does not look at the ways in which the club acts as exclusively heterosexual space as well. See Carey-Ann Morrison, 'Home and Heterosexuality in Aotearoa New Zealand: The Spaces and Practices of DIY and Home Renovation', *New Zealand Geographer*, vol.68, no.2 (2012):121-129, which is devoted to exploring this relationship.

³³ Hall, 'Barometers for Working-Class Life: Change and Continuity in Britain's Working Men's Clubs 1945-1960', 6.

³⁴ Stefan Ramsden, 'Remaking Working-Class Community: Sociability, Belonging and Affluence in a Small Town, 1930-1980', *Contemporary British History*, vol.29, no.1 (2015), 9.

³⁵ Rolfe, *In the Club: A History of the Chartered Club Movement in New Zealand*, 171-184.

What Membership Meant

When discussing club membership, my interviewees made a strong distinction between the club and a pub, and tended to characterise the workingmen's environment as one of maturity and respectability. The club openly upholds certain expectations of dress and conduct, with the institute's bylaws requiring members and their visitors to 'maintain a standard of behaviour, within and without club premises, that is not detrimental to other members...and ensures that the membership of the club is in no way brought into disrepute'.³⁶ More than that, on a functional level, the club was not just a space for the consumption of alcohol. Wayne was first introduced to a workingmen's club environment as a young man by his father and recalled the activities he partook in:

W: *I've always been a member of workingmen's clubs, yeah well my father introduced me to them as soon as I started work*

N: *Oh yeah?*

W: *Oh yeah him and I used to go down on a Saturday morning and take some raffles, and you know he taught me how to grow up...always been a member of a club somewhere.*³⁷

When Wayne was asked to discuss his understanding of the club and what it meant for him. Wayne described the club as a distinct environment:

N: *Do you think it was important for you to be part of one of the clubs?, at some times throughout your life*

W: *I guess it was through dad...I'd be drinking with guys that were his age, they seemed old to me then, but I learnt a lot...oh yeah I enjoyed talking to the older folks*

N: *What kind of things did you learn?*

W: *Oh just how to behave in social environments, cos' those- like a workingmen's club just does not have lots of violence or anything like they and they all liked a beer and a smoke and whatever so you know, yeah just educated into a man's environment as opposed to going out to a teenage pub.*³⁸

For Wayne, the club was a *man's* environment. An environment not just exclusive from females, but one that promoted the membership of a certain type of man—one that was mature, and respectable. He remembers being 'educated in a man's environment' and learning to behave according to the standards of the club.

Jack had similar things to say when I asked him whether he saw a difference between the club and a pub:

³⁶ 'Standard of Behaviour/Dress Rule 12(a)' in 'Rules of the Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute', *Petone Workingmen's Club and Literary Institute*, 2014, 3., accessed 12th November 2014, <http://petoneclub.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/PWMC-Rule-Book.pdf>.

³⁷ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

³⁸ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

*Yeah, [the clubroom was] probably more friendly. Some of the pubs were a bit rough round here in those years. There was a lot of fights and everything else but you couldn't do it in the Workingmen's club...they had rules, and you got kicked out. Which I had a few of those over the years!*³⁹

Interestingly, both Wayne and Jack equate the club with the membership of older men and a masculinity characterised by peaceful respectability, with members abiding by the rules. Significantly, as Wayne alluded to, members of my cohort were drinking with men their father's age. As Wayne joined after he began his first job this would make him not much older than sixteen at the time.

Jack tells a similar story of his own membership:

*I know I was drinking there for years, and when it was time to join, I had to go see the—well you fronted up to the committee in those days, and I went up there and a couple of them looked at me and they said 'Jack we thought you'd been a member here for years!!' well I drunk there for years.*⁴⁰

Men's perception of members as mature and upright men is in keeping with notions surrounding working-class respectability. As early as the 1880s, respectability was enforced by the separated gender roles among working-class British communities, where men acted as the breadwinner in opposition to 'elite, bourgeois masculinity'.⁴¹ These distinctions may have been a way for the men to align themselves with certain masculine qualities rather than others. Brewer asserts that 'seeking out those with similar interests, dilemmas and ambitions can assist in the maintenance of a preferred identity, and that the collective 'gives expression and conformation to the 'we' of self-identity'.⁴² Membership in the working club was characterised as the preferable and commendable means of socialising. Men's recollections also suggest that the club provided a space for *mature* masculinity. As Wayne says it was 'a man's environment', not a 'teenage pub', and it is likely that associated 'Hard Man' masculinity was upheld by those who socialised there. Their membership, like work, was seen as a 'rite of passage' and part of becoming a man, as well as a means by which men could align themselves with the 'right kind' of collective identity. By aligning themselves as workingmen's club members, rather than simply pub goers, my interviewees could identify with the values espoused by other members and upheld by the club's

³⁹ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Allon J Uhlmann, *Family, Gender and Kinship in Australia: The Social and Cultural Logic of Practice and Subjectivity*, (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2006), 154. However, Sonya O Rose provides the most comprehensive work on 'working-class respectability', see Sonya O Rose, *Limited Livelihoods: Gender and Class in Nineteenth Century England*, (London: Routledge, 1992).

⁴² Marilyn B Brewer and Wendi Gardner, 'Who is this "We"? Levels of Collective Identity and Self Representations', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol.71, no.1 (1996), 90 cited in Stephen J. Hunt, 'But We're Men Aren't We! Living History as a Site of Masculine Identity Construction', *Men and Masculinities*, vol.10, no.4 (2008), 465.

management—such as respectability and community-mindedness—and see themselves as part of a sort of congenial fraternity.

The club community

While the club may have been characterised by most as a masculine environment, it was also remembered by all of my cohort as a community-based association. The implication that the club served as a sort of familial, or collegial institution was supported by Dennis' recollections:

N: *Tell me about when you first joined the Petone Workingmen's Club*

D: *Ok, OK, I really haven't been here that long compared to some people who've been here...I've been in here maybe 20 odd years.*

N: *Why do you think you joined? Just because it was close by or...?*

D: *It was close by yeah, I've sorta' never really taken to the pub scene very much.*

N: *Why is that?*

D: *I don't know, It's—, Just didn't really—When you're with a group of people and you go to a pub that's different, but when you're on your own and you don't know anybody there then that's different again too—and to be able to know someone in those places you've gotta' go all the time. I came here instead and got to know people here instead. That's where I got to know the current President of the club now ...I kinda' became part of their family really, go round there for Christmas most years.⁴³*

Dennis sought to emphasise that he had not been a club member as long as 'some people', and places himself in opposition to the 'pub scene'. These statements echo earlier claims made by Wayne and Jack who suggested that the club is a distinct environment, but Dennis also differentiates himself from a full sense of membership ('some people') presumably occupied by the likes of Jack and Wayne (who have now been members of a club for around 43 and 47 years respectively). More than that, Dennis mentioned the family-like connections that he made with other club members, he valued his membership for the connections it allowed him to make and the sense of comfort and community the institution fostered.

Events in the club's history also testify to the sense of community its members upheld. The institution was founded for the purpose of 'bringing people together...organising recreation and arousing literary enthusiasm', and distress funds were established to help club members experiencing hardship.⁴⁴ An emphasis on self-improvement and members' wellbeing was continuously upheld, with executive members even taking on the role of bar staff to dispense to members' needs during a Petone by-election in 1967.⁴⁵ The perception of the club as a community and a unique environment is supported by the few scholars who have studied

⁴³ Dennis Powell interviewed by Nicola Braid, 6th January 2015.

⁴⁴ 'After Fifty Years: Club Jubilee Function', *Evening Post*, 21st August, 1936, and 'Golden Jubilee: Petone Workingmen's Club', *Evening Post*, 13th August 1937, Evening Post Clippings Collection Wellington Central Library, Workingmen's Club File.

⁴⁵ 'Petone Members to Man the Hoses', *Evening Post*, 14th April, 1967. Evening Post Clippings Collection Wellington Central Library, Workingmen's Club File.

workingmen's clubs. Ruth Cherrington and Richard Hall have been cited throughout this chapter, while Brian Jackson who was writing at the time insisted that 'pubs are a 'society', where you might mix with strangers...but the club has an atmosphere of home'.⁴⁶ Jackson claims that British Workingmen's clubs were founded on an understanding of 'mutual helpfulness' and camaraderie, and argues 'the fact that clubs can flourish, whilst imposing 'old-fashioned' patterns of behaviour on their members' testified to the power clubs had to draw 'upon a large and stable community'.⁴⁷

In its origins and values, the club also provided a specifically working-class community, where men could socialise after work with fellow colleagues, friends and men of a similar socio-economic background. In the same way that leisure is inextricably linked with work, the club was tied to the occupations held by its members and championed as a place exclusive 'to men who earn their living by the labour of their hands'.⁴⁸ More than this, the work ethos that existed among my cohort and the value they placed on workplace camaraderie facilitated a bond that was practised at the workingmen's club as well. Leisure remained tightly intertwined with work, as Blackshaw noted,

Work meant we had money to spend, and leisure meant the pub, the club and the night club, like the rest of the 'lads', I longed each working week for Friday night and dreaded each end-of-the-weekend Monday morning.⁴⁹

The club's working-class origins and community were often alluded to by members of my cohort. When asked about the club's working-class origins, Tipene claimed:

*Look, the Labour Party had its origins in a bloody pub in West Coast...that's where the bloody Labour Party support came from, from the working-classes of New Zealand. Not your bloody educated, academic classes my friend. So, I find it far more relaxing to do that, and a spade is spade, if you don't like it well- there's no fisticuffs, there just develops over time a kind of camaraderie by orientation, I enjoy it. It's not strictly a men's working club, there are women in here, so I enjoy that atmosphere, I enjoy some of the conversations.*⁵⁰

Club members were valued for being straight-talking, for lacking pretensions and being part of a working-class community.

T: *I've always enjoyed the company and while every person's expressed view doesn't match mine, you can tell 'em. So you get a particular type of person, not less than or more than, that likes to drink and the kind of conviviality, because often in there you get a few salts of the earth. Keep you grounded, enjoy the company. There's no pretence, no pretence. So I came here, and walked in here and asked to become a*

⁴⁶ Brian Jackson, *Working-class Communities*, (Oxon: Routledge, 1968), 44.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ 'Evening Post Old News Stories: Working Man's Club' 5th July 1877, published in the *Evening Post*, 23rd October 1971. Evening Post Clippings Collection Wellington Central Library, Workingmen's Club File.

⁴⁹ Blackshaw, *Leisure Life: Myth, Masculinity and Modernity*, 13.

⁵⁰ Tipene interviewed by Nicola Braid, 9th February 2015.

member. I've always been a member of a club somewhere.

N: *Oh have you?*

T- *Yeah, and if I haven't I've always been one of the best-paying non-members,*

N: *Do you think you went to clubs kind of throughout your life because you valued the environment?*

T- *I valued the ethos, that doesn't mean to say I haven't been to some of the best pubs in the world. I can go from one to the other, but I prefer, in terms of my relaxing, to be part of that kind of exchange because sometimes it's quite raw- I don't mind, and sometimes it's quite non-politically correct. They can spit out what they think.⁵¹*

The club's membership then, was not simply comprised by its members, but was formed according to certain values and unspoken social rules for how to be and how to behave. The perception of *who* made up the club says much about *what* the club was seen to be.

Conclusion

Through a multi-tiered exploration of the club, from its historical origins to its members, it is possible to see how socialising in the workingmen's club contributed to my cohort's masculine identity and their sense of community. For the men in my cohort, the club was an institution that reflected and encouraged ideals of maturity, respectability and working-class camaraderie both inside *and* outside of work. Often the club fostered unspoken rules for behaving and socialising with other men, and implicitly and explicitly, set standards of who men, as *members*, should be.

For the most part, the club provided a stable, and almost exclusive site of gendered leisure, despite changes that were taking place in terms of gender roles, economic prosperity and the availability of work. The recollections of my cohort both undermine and reinforce existing theories surrounding homosocial leisure. Despite the fact that the Petone Workingmen's Club is no longer an exclusively men's space, it maintains many of the values and practices associated with nineteenth and twentieth century masculinity.

On another level, the club's history reflects the changing nature of gendered leisure practices in New Zealand. In the same way that this thesis utilises men's memories, it also focuses on the site of the workingmen's club and the practices associated with it. By looking at memories based on a focal point, or site, it is possible to interpret the different experiences men had with the institution, and the way leisure sites can uphold certain identities. Additionally, this study has found that by maintaining the public/private binary, and maintaining the club as a man's space, women were excluded socially and prevented from enjoying the world of work-associated leisure and identifying with this working-class community.

⁵¹ Ibid.

This chapter has looked to men's memories and experience with the Petone Workingmen's Club itself and what that meant for my cohort's identities and understanding of leisure and class. Chapter four will build upon men's understandings of *who* they were as men in the face of changing discourses, and in an interview setting that facilitated a gendered shaping of self.

Chapter Four: Gender in the Interview

The Workingmen's Club ANZAC lounge is not unlike rooms found in rural pubs around New Zealand. Dedicated to the club's RSA membership, its walls are lined with club members' war medals which hang alongside a portrait of Willie Apiata and an honour roll of veterans. The room is quiet and reserved for ceremonies and dinners, quite separate from the hubbub of the downstairs bar. It was in this somewhat darker, more subdued room that I pulled up carpeted-chairs with the members of my cohort. Some had weathered tattoos and others had a pint in their hand, but all but one would sit here with me for the next hour or so as they told their stories. Stories much like those imbued in the wall decorations that surrounded us.

This chapter will explore instances of intersubjectivity between my interviewees and I, and how our conversational relationship may have influenced the ways in which men expressed their sense of masculinity. Additionally, it will look at the competing discourses of 'Hard Man' and 'New Man' masculinities and how men drew on these cultural discourses to present their version of self.

In all of my interviews I attempted to create an empathetic environment that allowed men to steer their narratives themselves. I was guided by Glen Jeanson's notion that the oral historian should 'not place him or herself in an adversary relationship if it is avoidable' and I tended to allow interviewees to go on their own tangents while giving an impression of understanding, if not agreement.¹

Oral historians have suggested that the relationship between personal memory and discourse is dialogical. As such, intersubjectivity, or the way an interviewer and interviewee interact, is now recognised as having a significant role in an oral interview setting and the responses generated by interviewees. Many scholars accept that an interviewee's sense of self (a sense 'informed and shaped by experience, perception, language and culture') will be influenced by the narrator, and vice versa.²

Having touched on the place of intersubjectivity in the interview, it is necessary to explore the influence that my own gender may have had on men's interactions with me. Terry Arendell found in her study of divorced men that her gender played a large role in shaping her interviewees' responses and that participants tended to disclose 'their experiences and feelings' in

¹ Glen Jeanson, 'Oral History, Biography, and Political Demagoguery', *Oral History Review*, vol.11, no.1 (1983), 93.

² Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 54.

an in-depth and emotional manner seemingly *because* she was a woman.³ In her interviews, Arendell became ‘the token, nurturing caretaking woman, carefully listening to and prompting their stories and encouraging the expression of feelings’.⁴ Of course, an interviewer affecting her interviewees is not unexpected. As Hertz claims, ‘from the moment of initial contact [the interview] becomes a socially constructed matrix of shifting multiple identities [for] both the researchers and respondents’.⁵ However Arendell’s findings are significant in that the identity ascribed to her is evidently based on her gender and the resulting interaction of implied male/female characteristics.

At times, my own interviews mirrored Arendell’s findings. More sensitive topics, such as divorces (which all of my interviewees had experienced) and hardship placed me in an emotionally supportive role, while at other times, I was positioned as an ‘honorary male’. My identity was seemingly interchangeable, depending on the nature of the anecdote being recalled or the topic we had reached. The change in my position was hinted at via vocal cues, body language and stories that were more fitting with preconceived notions of what was ‘masculine’ or ‘less emotional’. While it might be tempting to disregard the veracity or meaning of these men’s testimonies due to their apparent willingness to ‘change their stories’ because of my gender, it is important to embrace this subjectivity. Such changes revealed important facets of the male identity that might not have been elicited without my presence as a female and the assumed discourses and values that I represented.⁶

My position undoubtedly had some effect on Dennis, for instance, when he recalled the end of his 25-year-long marriage. Having come from a humble background in the Bay of Plenty, Dennis’ embrace of the navy and the consequences that his commitment had on his family were remarked upon throughout our discussions. Dennis bought up the dissolution of his marriage quite naturally while recollecting his life after the navy,

Unfortunately during that time, was when my marriage kind of broke up, it wasn’t a, um, a disfac— it wasn’t sort of a disputed break up, or nasty break up it was uh- the wife wanted to change the direction of her lifestyle, and um, which didn’t include being married. She became a stargazer so, c’est cela.⁷

³ Terry Arendell, ‘Reflections of the Researcher-Researched Relationship: A Women Interviewing Men’, *Qualitative Sociology*, vol.20, no.3 (1997), 348.

⁴ Ibid, 347.

⁵ R Hertz, ‘Separate but Simultaneous Interviewing of Husbands and Wives: Making Sense of their Stories’, *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol.1, no.4 (1995), 432.

⁶ Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 62.

⁷ Dennis Powell, interview by Nicola Braid

Dennis maintained an element of composure when outlining his divorce as a significant event in his life in recalling his break up as ‘amicable’. However, a few minutes later when I asked him a question unrelated to his break-up his response is noticeably emotional and tearful,

N: *Was it hard to adjust, or did you find it difficult when you stopped that navy lifestyle and sort of started your family and things?*

D: *Um, not really. You do miss the camaraderie- that’s why I still belong to the RSA, this is why I still belong to clubs like this, um, and people they don’t disappear, you know not all of them disappear [mentions friends who he still sees from the navy]. I found it hard not having a wife actually, took me ages. But what, it’s been- I was married just under 25 years, I’ve been divorced longer than that now.*⁸

My presence allowed Dennis to feel more comfortable expressing so-called ‘feminine’ emotions and compose a sense of self, despite this ‘disruption’ to ‘the masculine stance of cool rationality’.⁹ More than this, Dennis’ statements suggest that he might buck the mould of the ‘un-emotional’ and ‘stoic’ New Zealand male stereotype and that the traditionally gendered power dynamic was not important to his marriage. By attributing his divorce as his wife’s decision, Dennis becomes the ‘victim’ of his own story. While it is impossible for an interviewer to know if it was Dennis’ ex-wife’s decision to end their marriage, throughout my interview Dennis maintained a diplomatic and non-biased view towards the women in his life. Although women were only touched upon briefly due to his mother’s early death and his divorce from his wife over 20 years ago, Dennis did not embody what might be expected from a typically hegemonic masculine account. This is supported by references he makes to ‘team efforts’ that he and his sisters performed when looking after the family, and that he and his wife embarked on while raising their two sons.

The candid nature of some of my interviewees’ responses suggests that my presence fostered an environment that allowed for, and welcomed in some ways, a different presentation of self. While Dennis stands as a good example of this, there were several instances with other interviewees where the men were not afraid to divulge their feelings and/or appear emotionally vulnerable.

Playing ‘the honorary male’

However, I also experienced contrasting instances where I was treated as the ‘honorary male’. Similar to Arendell’s experience of dual identities, stories that tended to be ‘less savoury’, or told

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Brendan Gough, ‘Psychoanalysis as a Resource for Understanding Emotional Ruptures in the Text: The Case of Defensive Masculinities’, *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol.43 (2004), 249.

via rougher language, assigned me a role not based on my gender, as seen above, but as an audience to whom stories were told. In some ways, I became part of the story and it was presumed that I appreciated their recollections of hard living, hyper-masculine and even violent behaviour.

From the outset of my interview with Gordon, it was clear that his career in football gave him an immense amount of personal pride and football proved to be a theme around which he shaped much of his narrative. When asking about the physicality of the football he played, Gordon took my question as an opportunity to recall his experiences with physical violence on and off the pitch:

...As the game goes on, well they ended up, we're down 4-2, and Bunsey went like that- 'Come on Gordy, let's get the fuck out of here' and I went 'ok, let's go'. So we walked past, and we're going past the ground and it's still humming' and I says 'Bunsey I need a wee, I need the toilet', so we go underneath the Jungle which has a heavy division of Celtic supporters right? And I'm in the toilet and Bunsey says to me... 'Gordy, how bad do you feel?' and I says 'I feel bad' and he says 'How bad?' and I said, 'bad', and he says well lets go then 'fuckin' [smacks hand] and he smacks one of the Celtic supporters next minute, he smacks the other one and we're in, I kid you not.¹⁰

In the above anecdote Gordon speaks to the nature of the Celtics/Rangers rivalry among Glaswegian football fans. While he does take some responsibility for his actions at other points in his interview, that being the unprovoked violence against another spectator, *'I done it myself ye know what I mean'*, he also implies that there was a rationale behind his behaviour *'you don't know until you're in that situation'*. Additionally, the use of questions like *'you know what I mean?'* while an ordinary conversational technique, implied that Gordon sought my understanding on issues.

Later I asked Gordon about his experiences living in Glasgow and England in response to his discussion about the rigidity of social norms in the 1970s:

Well we had the odd scrap, and stuff like that, but it was only because you're in an environment with people, and it might not be your fault, but you canny' back down so you stand up for yourself and you win some, you lose some. That was it. We didn't go out to look for any aggravation but when you're in that environment in the 70s it was like that.¹¹

The significant point to investigate here, is not Gordon's violent behaviour, but rather, how he remembers violence as an unquestioned feature of his boyhood. He insists he could not 'back down' and later remarks *'boys will be boys like, so we stuck up for each other'*. Gordon was clear in his view that 'boys will be boys' and his use of language was telling of the points at which I became an honorary male, as he began to discuss more aggressive behaviour, our interview became more akin to a chat between two men at a pub.

¹⁰ Gordon McAbney interviewed by Nicola Braid, 31st January.

¹¹ Ibid.

Gordon was by no means my only interviewee to use rough and evocative language. After Tipene had discussed his time at university, and his position as one of the few Māori men who attended teachers college, he demonstrated his changing perspective towards race as follows:

*So if you're a bastard, you're a fucking bastard it doesn't matter what colour you are I'll go for you, but it's not based on for example because you happen to be white, or green or yellow, it's because you're a bastard and I know many bastards; some of them are my relations.*¹²

Granted, Tipene's fiercely proud Māori background, and the implications that had for his position as a Māori man in the 70s, may speak to the aggression in his sentiment. That Tipene peppered his point with informal expletives and evoked violent language ('I'll go for you') suggests he did not feel the need to temper his recollections or make them less forceful due to my presence. Interestingly Tipene hints at the use of humour as well with his follow up comment 'some of them are my relations', which, while easing him back into our conversation, did not completely diminish the aggressive feeling in his rhetorical warning.

The fact that men did not always feel the need to construct their memories in a way that might be socially acceptable to me in an interview context, or to moderate recollections of excessively violent or masculine behaviour, says two things. Firstly, it shows that while I may have had some effect on the way men remembered, or at least expressed their memories due to my gender, this was not all-pervasive. Secondly, it was possible for men to maintain multiple masculinities, or exhibit seemingly non-masculine traits, depending on their memories and instances or feelings that they were recalling.

While gender cannot be taken as a neutral factor within an interview setting, my experience interviewing these men attests to the fact that the effect of gender is not necessarily all pervasive, nor does it encompass all memories.¹³ Men's ability to share 'typically masculine' stories with me despite who I represented as a younger, educated female speaks to men's abilities to downplay gender differences when necessary.¹⁴

¹² Tipene, interview by Nicola Braid.

¹³ See for instance, Trevor Lummis, *Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence*, (Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield, 1988), Lorraine Sitzia, 'Telling Arthur's Story: Oral History Relationships and Shared Authority', *Oral History*, vol.27, no.2 (1999):558-567, Valerie Yow, "'Do I Like Them Too Much?': Effects of the Oral History Interview on the Interviewer and Vice-Versa", *Oral History Review*, vol.24, no.1 (1997): 55-79.

¹⁴ Angela Davis, Andrea Hajek and Laura King, 'Gender, Subjectivity and Oral History', *History Workshop Journal*, vol.73 (2012), 316.

All but two of my participants were born after 1950. They therefore sit on an interesting generational border in terms of experience and masculine discourse. Some of my interviewees had fathers who had fought in World War II, and all had mothers whose chief responsibilities remained in the home. This would suggest that the members of my cohort were raised according to traditional understandings of 'Hard Man' masculinity, for the 1950s saw 'a distinct and historically specific value...attached to the valorisation of traditional gender stereotypes within the working-classes'.¹⁵ More than this, when men identified as being working-class or masculine, both implicitly and explicitly, they were drawing on 'a position inherited from their parents and grandparents'.¹⁶

The 1970s in New Zealand, a period during which the men I interviewed were in their teenage years/early twenties, saw significant shifts in the public rhetoric surrounding gender roles and what it meant to be a 'feminine' and 'masculine', and a questioning of values that had previously been taken for granted. Men were undoubtedly subjected to changes with the rise of second-wave feminism. In their social history of post-1945 New Zealand Carylson and Morrow conclude that, regardless of men's view of the women's movement, 'few New Zealand men in the 1970s remained oblivious to its indictment of chauvinism and sexist stereotyping' and while feminists criticised the 'rugby, racing and beer' culture, 'by the late 1970s so too did Kiwi men'.¹⁷

To support their claim, the authors cite the work of Gordon McLaughlan and Auckland University's New Zealand Men's Conference in 1978. While they are right in identifying the academic and elite circles in which New Zealand masculinity was beginning to be explored, it is important to note that the exposure to feminist discourse and similar discussions among more suburban, working-class men may have been more limited. Heron suggests, in his study of working-class Canadian masculinities, that 'working men had learned and practiced how to be 'masculine' in the home, school, street, workplace and pleasure site', resulting in unfixed and changing masculinities 'shaped in specific ways in different contexts'.¹⁸ In the same way, my

¹⁵ Stephen Brooke, 'Gender and Working-class Identity in Britain during the 1950s', *Journal of Social History*, vol.4, no.34 (2001), 775.

¹⁶ Joanna Bourke, *Working-class Cultures in Britain, 1890-1960: Gender, Class and Ethnicity*, (London: Routledge, 1994), 21.

¹⁷ Jenny Carylson and Diana Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand Since 1945*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013), 239. See also Barbara Brookes and Catherine Smith, 'Technology and Gender: Barbers and Hairdressers in New Zealand, 1900-1970', *History and Technology*, vol.25, no.4 (2009): 365-386 for a perspective of the growing number of women participating in the aspects of the New Zealand labour market by the 1970s.

¹⁸ Craig Heron, 'Boys Will Be Boys: Working-Class Masculinities in the Age of Mass Production', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, vol.69 (2006), 6-7.

interviewees presented an ongoing negotiation between two competing, and at many times contradictory, conceptions of masculinity and inherited ideas of masculinity from several sites.

Stephen Brooke found in his study of 1950s and 60s Britain that although understandings of masculinity and femininity fluctuated in working-class communities, working-class Britons tended to valorise the male breadwinner and ideals surrounding working-class femininity.¹⁹ This is supported by Martin Francis who argued ‘codes of manliness’ were intertwined with generational differences and that the post-war setting saw a reassertion of masculinity due to the ‘apparent blurring of gender roles’ that took place during the war.²⁰ However, the existence of contested understandings of gender roles and masculinity in my interviewees’ recollections point to the generational separation of ‘Hard Man’ and ‘New Man’ ideals. This finding follows Gough’s study of masculinity in contemporary Britain which argued that men in an interview setting tended to relate to both traditional *and* contemporary constructions of masculinity. Despite his participants’ attempts to resist macho discourses of masculine excess, Gough found that old discourses still found their way into discussions and associations between ‘men’, ‘drink’ and ‘aggression’ remained.²¹

My study, like Gough’s, saw interviewees choose between different discourses available to them in order to illustrate different masculinities at different times. The men I interviewed sought to bridge the gap between ‘Hard Man’ discourses and ‘New Man’ understandings. When questioned on matters of gender relations, sports and ‘toughness’, many of them acknowledged the perceived understanding of the ‘Kiwi Bloke’ and some actively critiqued it. Of course, as outlined above, it would be naïve to ignore the effect that my presence as an interviewer had on these men and their answers. However, if they were aiming to simply appease my assumed feminist views and status as an educated female born in the 1990s, all instances of them being hard men would likely be tempered, if not removed completely. Yet all of my interviews included overt presentations of masculinity, and what ‘being a man’ meant to my interviewees. As Kimmel wrote, ‘new models for men have not replaced older ones, but have grown alongside them, creating dynamic tension...we live in an era of transition in the definition of masculinity’.²² The age of my cohort placed them between the Second World War period and the present day and

¹⁹ Brooke, ‘Gender and Working-class Identity in Britain during the 1950s’, 774-795. Similarly, interviews of men in the 80s saw widespread mention of the ‘Kiwi Bloke’, gender roles and the traditional themes of ‘Rugby, racing and beer’ particularly among working-class participants, see Gray, *The Jones Men: 100 New Zealand Men Talk about Their Lives*, 145-160.

²⁰ Martin Francis, ‘Tears, Tantrums and Bared Teeth: The Emotional Economy of Three Conservative Prime Ministers. 1951-1963’, *Journal of British Studies*, vol.41, no.3 (2002), 358.

²¹ Gough, ‘Biting Your Tongue: Negotiating Masculinities in Contemporary Britain’, 181.

²² Michael Kimmel, *Changing Men*, (Beverly Hills: Sage Publishers, 1987), 9.

meant they were likely influenced ‘both [in] their perceptions and behaviour’ by the expectations established in WWII of what New Zealand men should be.²³ As such, they could be influenced by masculinities associated with the Second World War *and* masculinities we recognise as more modern, or belonging to the 21st century.

Due to their inherited class identities and notions of gender roles, interviewees had the ability to recall elements of gender and masculinity in various ways. Recollecting memories in a present day setting already magnifies changes over time and technology, social mores and expectations that may have become defunct. Masculine discourses and expectations of manhood change between generations, and in making differentiations between the ‘old days’ or themselves as ‘young men’, men recognised this. In acknowledging generational shifts men were aware of the different expectations that were placed on them in the past, and today, and chose to fulfil both, as necessary.

Cultural Discourses

While men assigned me dual identities during their interviews, they also utilised elements of the ‘Hard Man’ and ‘New Man’ discourses to express their experiences. Depending on the topic of discussion, members of my cohort utilised *both* a traditionally masculine response as well as the more modern, ‘New Man’ approach.²⁴

In the broadest sense, discourses represent ‘a conglomeration of linguistic and non-linguistic social practices and ideological assumptions that together reinforce power’.²⁵ ‘Hard Man’ and ‘New Man’ discourses will be explored below according to the social practices (such as sport and drinking) and/or non-linguistic characteristics (e.g. stoic, pragmatic) that they represented. Through an understanding of the discourses surrounding New Zealand men, it is possible to more thoroughly explore the context in which men ‘negotiate common ways of being a man’ often in accordance with popular imaginings or media images, and how those ‘ways of being’ are manifested.²⁶

²³ Phillips, *A Man's Country: The Image of the Pākehā Male*, 199.

²⁴ Due to the size of this thesis I am unable to devote space to an in-depth explanation of discourses and their place in historical studies. Instead, I hope to provide a working definition of ‘discourse’ and an explanation of the ‘Hard Man’ and ‘new man’ masculine discourses that will be utilised throughout this chapter.

²⁵ Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton and Deborah Schiffrin, ‘Introduction to the First Edition’ in Deborah Tannen, Heidi E. Hamilton and Deborah Schiffrin (eds.), *The Handbook of Discourse Analysis*, (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 2015).

²⁶ Darrin Hodgetts, ‘What Does it Mean to be a Man Today?: Bloke Culture and the Media’, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol.45, no.1 (2010), 157.

As Mark Easterbrook argued, the ‘Kiwi Bloke’ model ‘moves to accommodate and subsume change in order to keep ahead of developing alternative masculinities’.²⁷ The ‘Kiwi Bloke’ discourse, or as I have referred to it in this thesis, the ‘Hard Man’ discourse, characterises masculinity as anti-academic/intellectual, stoic and/or unemotional, physical in terms of sport and work and pragmatic and is typically associated with the consumption of alcohol.²⁸

Johnson and McIvor similarly describe ‘Hard Man’ masculinity,

Historically, the ‘essence’ of masculinity has been variously located with reference to notions of the man as provider; physical prowess; toughness; homophobia; risk taking; aggression and violent behaviour...a competitive spirit; a lack of emotional display, dispassionate instrumentalism.²⁹

‘New Man’/‘Hard Man’

Conversely, the ‘New Man’ discourse stands in direct opposition to the ‘Hard Man’ and is more often than not associated with the notion that men in the late 20th and early 21st century are struggling from a so-called ‘crisis of masculinity’. Latimer identifies the ‘New Man’ in New Zealand as occupying a different ‘spatial situation’ to that of the ‘Kiwi Bloke’.³⁰ This ‘new’ form of masculinity is articulated as urban and emotional in direct opposition to the previously valorised rural and rational. He attributes the rise of this new discourse in New Zealand to the urban-influenced economic drive that followed World War II.³¹

If we take the characteristics inherent in the ‘Hard Man’, there were several instances where my interviewees borrowed or drew on facets of the discourse as means of explaining themselves and their lives. While it would be inaccurate to say the men in my cohort only recalled their experiences in a way that reflected wider understandings of the stereotypical ‘Kiwi Bloke’, some of the ‘black-singlet’ vestiges certainly remained present in their attitudes and recollections.

Among the ‘Hard Man’ or traditionally masculine themes that featured in my interviews, was the ability to ‘pick up women’ and discussions of larrikinism. Wayne, for instance, took great pleasure in recalling his behaviour as that of the ‘young scoundrel’, or in his words, a ‘hoodlum’ growing up in Christchurch. Having been given a job as a post office clerk at the age of sixteen,

²⁷ Easterbrook, ‘Rugby, Masculinity and National Identity the Use of Rugby as a Signifier in New Zealand Television Advertising’, 6-8.

²⁸ See Sarah Gee and Steve J. Jackson, ‘The Southern Man City as Cultural Space and Speight’s Space: Locating the Masculinity-sport-beer ‘holy trinity’ in New Zealand’, *Sport in Society*, vol.13, no.10 (2010), 1517.

²⁹ Ronnie Johnson and Arthur McIvor, ‘Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydesdale Heavy Industries, c.1930-1970s’, *Labour History Review*, vol.69, no.2 (2004), 136.

³⁰ Latimer, ‘Masculinity, Place and Sport: Rugby Union and the ‘New man’ in Aotearoa/New Zealand’, 53.

³¹ Ibid.

Wayne recalled the novelty of earning a disposable income and how work facilitated underage drinking, smoking, ‘chasing chicks’ and general hard-living.

N: *Do you remember what you did for fun or leisure when you were growing up?*

W: *Oh just uh, playing bloody, the normal old games just building carts and stuff when we were younger, um rock fights, climbing trees- just the normal boys things- cowboys and Indians and um, later on just cruising round looking for chicks I suppose’...and going to the pub and just the normal things that you do as a teenager [laughs].*

W: *I’ve always been a bit mischievous [laughter] not in a bad way, but you know I like socialising and I like a whole diverse range of people. So the weekends, I normally just- like every Saturday I’m normally here having a drink, like it’s like a religion, as with most of us blokes you know? It’s just been that way for so long, even through the marriages—Saturday Afternoon, my time. Then Sunday look after the kids, and mum can go and do what she wanted to do, and we caught up in the afternoons.³²*

Interestingly, in these passages Wayne defines his experience growing up, and socialising explicitly in terms of drinking, an activity readily associated with ‘Hard Man’ tropes. His use of the phrases ‘normal boy things’ and ‘most of us blokes’ demonstrate an uncritical understanding of gender normative behaviour and the assumption that there are certain traits that New Zealand men were inclined, and expected, to possess. Clearly, Wayne maintains a masculine notion of the past similar to what Daley has described— one ‘full of adventure, bravado, a larrikin world where men were firmly in control’.³³

Sometimes interviewees maintained a competitive, almost boastful account of their ability to attract partners. Although it is possible that interviewees used the example of attracting females ‘to claim mature heterosexual identity outside the institution of marriage’, the frankness with which they discussed some elements of courting suggest a certain reassertion of their masculinity.³⁴ When I asked Joe about what he did for leisure, He claimed he ‘socialised a lot’,

I’ve had a few relationships you know but they’ve never worked out. Just finished off with a lady friend, and I keep going for the younger ones though- get my bloody arse kicked.³⁵

In recalling his relationships, Joe was remarkably candid and this was possibly part of his wider narrative which sought to prove that he had been successful in all areas of his life, including romantically successful, despite his divorce.

When telling stories for dramatic or comic effect, men tended to evoke stories that ‘valued masculine attributes’ such as ‘cunning, cleverness, trickery, [and] courage’.³⁶ At some

³² Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

³³ Daley, ‘He Would Know, but I Just Have a Feeling’: Gender and Oral History, 345.

³⁴ Beth A Eck, ‘Compromising Positions: Unmarried Men, Heterosexuality and Two-Phase Masculinity’, *Men and Masculinities*, vol.17, no.2 (2014), 147.

³⁵ Joe Serci interviewed by Nicola Braid 2nd February 2015.

points, these stories went as far as to signal physical strength, outward bravado and perseverance. Dennis, for instance, took great pleasure in recalling his daring and ‘common sense’ nature when talking about his admission into the navy:

I snuck along there [Navy recruiting centre] one day to see if I could get an interview and I did, and apparently I did so well and I passed everything so, you had to go through a psycho test, and they had basic-type tests to see if you had common sense I think it was, common dog as we used to call it then, and I passed it all...³⁷

Many of the men also championed pragmatism, and tended to compose their life stories using images of hard-living and stoicism. This construction of the ‘can-do’ Hard Man is in keeping with Phillips’ argument that 1960s New Zealand championed Barry Crump tales of ‘good keen men’ who were incredibly tough physically, crude in their language and behaviour; a bit of a dag and respected for their hardness.³⁸ Dennis, who stood as the eldest of my cohort, identified as having lived a ‘basic life’ growing up and upheld a positive view of physical toughness, know-how and survival skills. When describing his extensive work career on fishing boats and in industry, Jack too, tended to shape his memories of work according to the masculine ‘provider’ ideal and emphasised his commitment to hard work:

I think because we were hunting, fishing and all that you sort of didn’t worry about it. You’ve got to eat. You’ve got to look at it the other way...you’re feeding the country and everyone else. A lot of it was exported and it was a living.³⁹

Violent and physical behaviour was mentioned by the majority of my interviews, and even Wayne, who labelled himself a ‘pacifist’ admitted to getting into the ‘odd fight’. Gordon attributed the violent behaviour he practiced as a young man to his background growing up in working-class Glasgow. His ‘boyhood’ status allows for unjustified violence; a time where ‘Hard Man’ bravado could go untethered. Tipene also attributed his so-called ‘hostile’ behaviour to being young and socially radical,

I wasn’t above going into a public bar somewhere and bumping someone just to have a go. Angry, hostile and you can’t go and do that in a public bar in New Zealand when I was young cos’ you get what you want. But it was never a Māori person, I wanted it more to be a Pākehā person just to give them a smacking’ that sort of stuff...⁴⁰

³⁶ Adriana Piscitelli, ‘Love and Ambition: Gender, Memory and Stories from Brazilian Coffee Plantation Families’ in Selma Leydesdorff, Luisa Passerini and Paul Thompson (eds.), *Gender & Memory*, (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 96.

³⁷ Dennis Powell, interview by Nicola Braid.

³⁸ Jock Phillips, *A Man’s Country?: The Image of the Pākehā Male*, (Auckland: Penguin Books, 1987), 266.

³⁹ Jack Pollock, interview, by Nicola Braid.

⁴⁰ Tipene, interview by Nicola Braid.

While objectively the violent stories told fit the ‘Hard Man’ model of physical bravado, these excerpts can hardly be seen as straightforward adoptions of masculine discourse. For Gordon, and especially for Tipene, their use of violence, and their recollections of aggression, were as much a testament to their feelings of powerlessness than anything else. As a working-class Glaswegian with very few prospects, and a Māori male struggling with what Tipene saw as a ‘raupatu of the mind’ in a New Zealand that was overwhelmingly dominated by Pākehā-culture, it is almost unsurprising that physical aggression was remembered as an outlet in their lives.

Throughout their interviews, men used ‘Hard Man’ discourses in order to ‘negotiate common ways of being a man’ and tell stories that might be in line with our understandings of a New Zealand male.⁴¹ Narrators referenced widely held characteristics associated with New Zealand masculinity including physical toughness, daring, hard work and instances of the female-chasing ‘larrikin’. However, while my cohort were clearly using some of the language and ideas available to them to describe themselves, it was not simply discourse that was shaping their responses. For instance, Dennis may have emphasised his survival skills and cunning through his recollections, but his lived experience having been raised in bush and farmland in rural Haparapara, also made these attributes a necessity. While it is tempting to think of Jack and Dennis as simply using the constructs of masculinity they know to be popular and accepted in a New Zealand context, having sat across from them at separate times while Dennis described his seven siblings and their lack of access to running water, and Jack strained to hear me due to his work-site related partial deafness, words like ‘survival’ and ‘hard work’ hardly seem like mere constructs.

Interestingly, interviewees also drew upon discourses of the ‘New Man’, the antithesis to the ‘Hard Man’, at different points in their recollections. When the topic, tone and emotion of the interview changed men seemed to more willingly adopt an alternative, and sometimes ‘milder’, version of masculinity available to them. Hodgetts identifies images of ‘New’ men in contemporary New Zealand media, as ‘sensitive and domesticated social actors’ that now exist alongside, and often in combination with, the more traditional understandings of ‘Hard Man’ masculinity.⁴²

It is likely that much of the men’s ‘blokishness’ was tempered by my presence as a younger, educated female, as previously discussed, and by the fact that these men knew my father. Additionally, there is every likelihood that I represented the ‘New Man’

⁴¹ Hodgetts, ‘What Does it Mean to be a Man Today?: Bloke Culture and the Media’, 157.

⁴² Ibid, 156.

discourse/alternative that Hilary Young refers to, and that this subconsciously caused men to align themselves and their identity with 'New Man' values. It is also possible that, due to my gender and age, men presumed I held feminist values, and, when questioned with regards to women in their lives, or women in the Workingmen's Club, they shaped their responses in a way they believed would be more acceptable to me. If that were so, it follows Williams and Heikes' understanding of *social desirability bias*, i.e. the 'tendency of people to adjust the truth so that they sound nicer, richer and more desirable to the researcher'.⁴³ Due perhaps to a mix of my position as a female interviewee and 'New Man' cultural discourses the men I interviewed were as forthcoming when it came to discussing their relationships and emotional experiences as they were in discussing traditional masculine subjects i.e. work, alcohol and physical violence.

Additionally, men actively acknowledged instances where their actions in the past were misguided and hinted at a critical reassessment of their outwardly masculine behaviour. Gordon insisted that he 'grew out of' his more 'volatile' behaviour and acknowledged that the fights that he had in the 'heat of the moment' would not be as common today.

*Nowadays, I think nowadays young people aren't as brainwashed or anything like that ...they make their own decisions, because that's how education's gone...when we were growing up that was the way it was, that's what you did, everyone was rigid so you had to be rigid, and if you stepped outside of the square you were a rebel and it's unfortunate. I mean some people could say you're a rebel because you do different things, it's different.*⁴⁴

Gordon also made efforts to differentiate himself from traditional understandings of gendered roles and behaviour and to discuss how society has 'evolved' when it came to gendered understandings of men and women. He identified gendered roles as 'the old scenario', again implying that public understandings and perhaps his own, have progressed past traditional understandings of masculinity.

Gordon also critically reflected on aspects of 'Hard Man' masculinity when asked about differences between 'Kiwi' and Scottish men, and identified what he saw as a more placid New Zealand masculinity. Gordon went as far as saying Glaswegian men '*need to look at themselves*', offering a judgement against the overtly violent and aggressive masculinity that he identified with as a young man.

Some men also made an effort to maintain quite openly feminist and anti-homophobic stances which stand in direct contrast to the 'Hard Man' discourse and its characteristics and

⁴³ Christine L Williams and E Joel Heikes, 'The importance of Researcher's gender in the In-Depth Interview: Evidence from Two Case Studies of Male Nurses', *Gender and Society*, vol.7, no.2 (1993), 285.

⁴⁴ Gordon McAbney, interview by Nicola Braid.

more in line with the sensitivity associated with 'New Man' masculinity. Gordon sought to emphasise, on several occasions, his commitment to his then-wife Annie, and their life together. He recalled being asked by friends to spend more time socialising with his Wellington Workingmen's Club Football team during his 30s,

I said, 'listen, this is a lot of Scottish boys—nice', I said, 'listen—I'm not coming 12, 000 miles to come here on a Saturday to be with you guys', I said 'I made a move to change.'⁴⁵

He implies that at this stage in his life he made an effort to leave the hyper-masculine behaviour associated with drinking with his team on a Saturday in pursuit of other activities and goals, in this case spending time with his wife. Later in the interview Gordon again underlines a feminist perspective with regards to the equal/respectful treatment of women:

N: *At what point did you join the Petone Workingmen's Club?*

G: *Well, I actually came to join here in the early eighties, I'll tell you what happened. Because I was playing football, a couple of boys in the club wanted me to play for their team, so that would mean would have to get a membership to play for the team... So I brought Annie in, and we were sitting there, and I had to go into a room to sign my membership, so I left here and when I came out Annie looked at me and said, 'Can we go?' I went like, 'what happened' she says 'I'll tell you later' so I went 'Ok'. So, we got in the car she says 'when you were in there that guy was chatting me up and giving me all that' and I says 'what one was it?'- well I didn't know the guys because I'd never been there—She says, 'I don't really want you to join that club Gordon 'I said, 'Well I've joined, but I'm not going to play for them' So I don't know if she saw that as a danger for me that I was going to join the club and she would see less of me or whatever, so I don't know the semantics there, but I totally believe her. Because in they[sic] days it was a generally male-orientated place, nowadays it's different., but that upset me quite a bit and Gus and AJ says to me 'why aren't you going?' and I says 'Nah, my missus had that altercation with that prick' ...and I thought well, is that the place that I want to be?'⁴⁶*

While this could be taken as chivalrous act with Gordon playing the role of the provider/protector, his closing sentence gives us his value judgment on what he saw as an environment that did not treat women, in this case his wife, with the respect that they deserved. Judgements of this kind directly contrast with masculine hegemonic norms that see women as 'less than', and align more directly with 'New Man' expectations of gender equality.

There also remained times where my interviewees recognised that their private feelings sat at odds with the masculine ideals expected of them in certain situations. At one point for instance, Tipene went as far as to prove his alignment to New Man ideals with his embrace of peoples' various sexualities,

⁴⁵ Gordon McAbney, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

*I may have children, grandchildren who might be gay, I don't know, I definitely have a niece who is, they're no less human being than I am, so on the basis that they should be treated as a human being in spite of their orientation was the key point for me.*⁴⁷

Wayne also sought to identify instances where he broke from the wider collective memory of New Zealand 'Hard Man' masculinity:

W: *Of course at school you had to play rugby and do the normal PE stuff, and I guess I got sick of it, I've never really been super sporty.*

N: *Did they make you play rugby at school?*

W: *Am, well you had a choice between rugby and soccer, no you can choose sort of heaps of things that you can do, so yeah it was either that or soccer and soccer was sissy wasn't it? So you end up playing rugby, I was never any good.*⁴⁸

Wayne openly acknowledged that his experience playing rugby was not out of choice, and that he didn't enjoy the sport, quite the opposite to the dominant cultural narrative that surrounded, and still surrounds, New Zealand's 'national game'. Wayne acknowledged a tension between the expectation placed on him to not only be sporty, but play rugby or be seen as 'sissy'. Wayne's responses show that the cultural myth surrounding rugby in New Zealand remains so all pervasive, that even I a female who had never played rugby, would automatically understand the tropes that surrounded the sport ('*wasn't it?*'). Although he does not outwardly state that this understanding of soccer is unfair, or wrong, the latter sentence was delivered with an air of sarcasm indicating that he felt limited by the very little choice he had in the sports he could play as a schoolboy. Wayne effectively exposed his sense of self as being somewhat more vulnerable and apart from culturally accepted notions of masculinity. In other words, to admit one was not sporty or to admit to feeling little inkling towards our 'national sport' is not in keeping with the more readily-recognised stoic, unemotional 'Hard Man' stereotype.

However, just as it was acknowledged that these men were not simply willing blank slates who curated their memories according to a particular 'Hard Man' discourse, my interviewees did not fully embrace the 'New Man' discourse either. My cohort expressed critical understandings of 'Hard Man' tropes, and constructed some of their memories according to 'New Man'. In saying that, simply because a respect for gender equality, gay rights and nonviolence is associated with 'New Man' discourses should not take away from men's ability to believe in certain principles on their own volition. Additionally, the existence of these dual identities, both 'Hard Man' and 'New Man', within interviewees' responses is a tribute to the agency men had in picking and choosing from existing cultural discourses as to how they would present their lives.

⁴⁷ Tipene, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁴⁸ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

The ability to utilise several elements of the discourse and at times, critique them, supports Green's notion that individuals have the capacity to 'contest and critique cultural scripts of discourses' and do not simply seek to 'fit oral narratives to pre-existing cultural representations or psychoanalytic templates'.⁴⁹

Conclusion

Undoubtedly my interviewees shaped their responses, to some extent, according to the cultural discourses available to them. However, one must be aware that memory is not simply produced 'through the 'overlay' of social codes on experience', rather, there remains an 'underlay' of the 'here-and-now narrations'.⁵⁰ Narrators may take up different identities/discourses at various points during their life stories in order to gain a sense of composure. The ability to pick and choose between varying masculinities throughout their interviews follows oral history scholarship that suggests that most respondents are capable of agency, or what Ortner calls 'critical subjectivity' when it comes to the interview process.⁵¹ My cohort proves the ability of interviewees to reflect critically on wider discourse that influence their memories and understandings.

What is evidenced by the instances of intersubjectivity and the place of 'Hard Man' and 'New Man' discourses in each of my respondents' life narratives is that the dialogical process of memory making is influenced by several factors alongside personal experience. It points to the partly, individual nature of the memory-making process. Not only did the subjectivities in my interviews offer more opportunities for analysis, but they presented memories that may not have been as accessible, or readily expressed by my interviewees in the presence of a male.

In extricating the various forces and processes that are at play during an oral history interview, we are able to explore the truly fascinating and complicated nature of memory. My interviewees' recollections prove that as historian Rob Light put it, 'individuals have the capacity to reflect upon...collective discourse', in this case being a 'Hard Man' or 'Kiwi Bloke', 'in a critical manner or offer new perspectives...and alternative narratives'.⁵²

⁴⁹ Anna Green, 'Individual Remembering and 'Collective Memory': Theoretical Presuppositions and Contemporary Debates', *Oral History*, vol.32, no.2 (2004), 42.

⁵⁰ Roper, 'Re-Remembering the Soldier Hero: The Psychic and Social Construction of Memory in Personal Narratives of the Great War', 184.

⁵¹ Sherry Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject*, (London: Duke University Press, 2006), 105-107 as cited in Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, 70.

⁵² Rob Light, 'Ordinary Working men...Transformed into Giants on the Rugby Field: 'Collective' and 'Individual' Memory in Oral Histories of Rugby League', *The International Journal of the History of Sport*, vol.30, no.1 (2013), 78.

This chapter has drawn on the varying discourses surrounding New Zealand men with an aim of complicating the understandings and assumptions surrounding the experience and memories of 'Kiwi Blokes'. It has also sought to extricate the subjectivities that were in play during my interview process. Chapter three will discuss the role of work in my cohort's narrative in order to explore the relationship between work, masculinity and class consciousness

Chapter Five: Working Men



Odlin's Timber and Hardware Company, where Jack got a job at 14 years old in 1966.¹

Right, where should I start?

You can start with when you were born if you want

*Well I've lived in Petone all my life, went to school here, and college, **but I left college at fourteen and started working.***²

When I asked one of my cohort Jack to tell me his life story I suggested he start with his birthdate. Instead, Jack began not with his birth or his ancestral origin, but when he left school in 1966 to get a job at the local lumber mill at the age of fourteen. Obviously to Jack, this was when he started, where his memories started and where he felt there were significant memories to share—he saw himself *as* his work.

The men I interviewed brought up their working lives naturally in their narratives, and for many, work was a point of pride and an important facet of their identity. This chapter will

¹ Anonymous. 'C & A Odlin Timber and Hardware Company inside company store at Petone, c.1966', Photograph, item#6252P/14, Series #6256P Odlin's Petone Timber Yard, The Fletcher Trust Archive, accessed at <http://www.fclarchives.co.nz/item.php?id=28812>.

² Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

explore the role that work played in my interviewees' testimonies and how interviewees presented their experiences of working life. This chapter argues that by recalling their working lives, men were able to identify with a working-class community and express a sense of their masculinity. More than this, I will look to the way men's memories interacted with the nature of work, education and leisure in the post-war labour market.

Post-war work in New Zealand

The post-war period, although less acknowledged in studies of New Zealand history, remains a nuanced arena of social history. Some historians characterise 1950s New Zealand as experiencing 'unsurpassed prosperity and social tranquillity characterised by the two decades from 1945'.³ While others claim the period was characterised by a combination of post-war security and 'irrevocable change'.⁴ While not incongruous findings, it remains clear that during this time New Zealand saw the nuclear family ideal being ingrained in both political and social spheres and a demographic rise in the number of children being born. These cultural shifts peaked in the 1949 election, a campaign which was 'fought on images of homes and families...both Labour and National presented themselves as the protectors of the family and the friend of the housewife'.⁵ In such a climate it is hardly surprising that the notion of the male as the traditional head of the house or 'breadwinner' was routinely reinforced in public narratives and was often reflected in the memories of my interviewees.⁶

After the Second World War, the 'breadwinner' model was still encouraged among working-class families despite slow changes being made towards limited economic citizenship for women in New Zealand.⁷ However as Cybèle Locke notes, New Zealand in the 50s and 60s saw an economic boom which 'ensured full employment for the core labour force in New Zealand

³ Graeme Dunstall, 'The Social Pattern', in W. H. Oliver (ed.), *The Oxford History of New Zealand*, (Wellington: Oxford University Press, 1981), 397. Carlyon and Morrow describe the period as a 'realisation' of 'the New Zealand Government's vision of a post-war suburban idyll' and a 'long spell of 'golden weather', see Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand Since 1945*, 3.

⁴ Belich, *Paradise Reforged: A History of New Zealanders from the 1880s to the Year 2000*, 297.

⁵ Grace Millar, 'Families and the 1951 New Zealand Waterfront Lockout', PhD Thesis (Wellington: Victoria University, 2013), 16.

⁶ It should be mentioned that the separation between domesticity and work does not necessarily apply to the post-war working lives of Māori women, for more information on this see Melissa Matutina Williams, 'Factory'-ing Workplaces into Māori History', *Te Pouhere Korero, Māori People*, vol.6 (2012):5-26.

⁷ Melanie Nolan, 'Politics Swept Under a Domestic Carpet?: Fracturing Domesticity and the Male Breadwinner Wage: Women's Economic Citizenship, 1920s-1940s', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.27, no.2 (1997), 200., Deborah Montgomerie, 'The Limitations of Wartime Change: Women War Workers in New Zealand', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.23, no.1 (1989): 68-86 and Ben Schrader, 'A Brave New World? Ideal versus reality in Post war Naenae', *New Zealand Journal of History*, vol.30, no.1 (1996): 61-79.

(primarily male breadwinners), [and] was the catalyst for the entry of ‘new workers’—Māori, women and Pacific Islanders—into low-paid segments of the labour market’.⁸

Work in the Narrative

All of my interviewees alluded to experiences of hardship and work growing up and living in post-war New Zealand. One striking feature of all of their recollections was the prevalence that each gave to their working lives and the common experience of work and work successes. Piscitelli and others have established the importance of work and the professional trajectory to men’s narratives in a Brazilian context, but the testimonies of my cohort emphasised work in a particular way; to them, work was gendered. Work and manliness were importantly linked, and the involvement of women was restricted.

In discussing the localised knowledge required for the day-to-day workings of their jobs, members of my cohort took steps to recall their working conditions and the lifestyle associated with their employment. As Bruce Lott found in men’s recollection of their work in the United States, ‘despite their perceptions of [workplace] dangers, workers also often expressed nonchalance or stoicism about them that are consistent with the construction of working-class masculinity’.⁹ An acceptance of difficult working conditions, be it due to long hours, difficult physical labour or a lack of time for non-work activities, was displayed by all of my interviewees. Interviewees often claimed that leisure was limited or non-existent and, if leisure did exist outside the workplace, it was often occupied by stereotypically masculine pastimes such as drinking, sports, and hunting or tramping. For instance, Dennis recalled his time in the navy and coming to terms with the scarcity of leisure,

*It was what you called a hot bed routine, one was in bed, one was up and you just 12 hours each you just swap, swap, you jumped in the bed of the guy who replaced you, and that’s how it was. You couldn’t wash, you couldn’t shower, the water was only used for cooking- nothing else.*¹⁰

Not only did Dennis seemingly take pride in explaining the intense nature of working on a naval ship, but when asked about leisure he was quick to emphasise its absence: ‘*you really couldn’t do much, you were just too tired when you got off your shift*’.¹¹

Another of my interviewees—Jack—recalled the pressures placed on those employed at the Petone Gear Meat Works due to long hours and difficult physical conditions,

⁸ Locke, *Workers in the Margins: Union Radicals in Post-War New Zealand*, 11.

⁹ Bruce Raymond Lott, ‘Men of Steel: A Study of Working-Class Masculinity’, (PhD Thesis Brigham Young University, 2007), 64.

¹⁰ Dennis Powell, interview by Nicola Braid.

¹¹ Ibid.

*We done big hours there, well, especially at the stockyard, we'd start at five o'clock in the morning and probably didn't finish til' 5 o'clock sometimes, you know you'd be 12 hour days.*¹²

Interestingly, not only did Jack use the phrase 'we' to refer to his workmates, but he went on to specify his group further in contrast to the 'piecemeal'[sic] workers that were on the chain. Jack's selection of pronouns created a division between him and I, and between workers at the meat works:

*Where I was working we sorta' did longer hours but like the other guys on the chain and that they were on piecemeal[sic] they'd just do the chain and go, they'd do, they'd never do the hours we done, they'd do about eight hours at the most and they'd be gone.*¹³

In Jack's testimony, not only does he emphasise the difficulty of his work, but he mentions how much more he worked when compared to others. In Jack's memory, an eight hour work day is equated with easier work. Hard work, resilience and the implied need to work, were all taken for granted, as a natural part of his life.

Work was understood as difficult by all my interviewees, but my participants never suggested that *they* had found it difficult—instead, they conceded work was just 'what you did'. Jack, who was the youngest of my cohort to enter the workforce, performed a number of jobs, in a number of industries, including, timber milling, factory work, the freezing works, as well as commercial fishing and transport. While Jack's work was varied, all of his jobs featured long hours and intense physical work. He recalled sleeping on the wharf during his time as a fisherman: '*used to sleep on the bloody wharf at times, there was no—it was a waste of time going home*'.¹⁴ When I questioned Jack about his attraction to physically difficult work, I was assured that '*you just took it as a job*'.¹⁵

The fact that my interviewees were determined to present the difficulty of their work in contained terms, that is, they acknowledged it was difficult but actively played down the *physical* conditions of their jobs is significant. Jack, for instance, casually described his time at Gear Meats as '*reasonably hard work*'.¹⁶ This is remarkable tame when compared to the way scholar J. H. K. Inkson described his experience in the works in 1977:

¹² Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

The inside of the freezing works is like a premonition of hell. Machines clank and shouts echo eerily from the metal rafters; steam hisses and melts into the damp air; blood spurts and splatters across clinically white garments...¹⁷

Joe also saw work as an unquestioned part of life, but made efforts to assure me that he had always been able to support himself financially. He noted '*I was motivated from a very young age to look after myself*', in line with other men's narratives of self-sufficiency and his background as an immigrant to New Zealand. Gordon also described his work at a newspaper, one of the most white-collar jobs featured in the memories of my cohort, in terms of being a 'worker'—'*I was a worker, I was always what's next? What's next? But I soon got into a routine, I fit in well*'.¹⁸ It was important to Joe and Gordon to champion their work ethic and make it clear to me that they had to 'fend for themselves'.

Despite the ubiquity of work stories in my cohort's narratives, interestingly, they did not present elements of rebellion or resistance to authority figures. Tales of standing up to authority, where mentioned, were attributed to fellow colleagues or as occurring in spaces of leisure. This differs from oral histories of work completed by Anna Green and Alison Gray for instance, both of whom found that 'notable themes of intense labour were accompanied by informal, collective resistance to the job' and that themes of work featured as 'necessary but unsatisfactory'.¹⁹ While the age of my cohort may speak to the manner in which they recall their work, my interviewees were between 30 and 37 years old when Gray's work was published, and their commitment to work, and its untainted recollection is significant.

My interviewees also made efforts to highlight their successes at work. Work successes might take the form of a promotion to the youngest cattle slaughterer at the Meat Works as was the case with Jack, financial success in their own business as with Joe, or simply being the office 'fix it man' as Wayne described himself. However, even these successes were mentioned somewhat offhandedly. Jack rather modestly mentioned his position as the youngest cattle slaughterer at the works and it was not until I conducted my own research that the significance of this achievement became clear; at the time the Gear Meat Works in Petone was the biggest frozen meat operation in New Zealand.²⁰

¹⁷ J. H. K Inkson, 'The Man on the Dis-Assembly Line: New Zealand Freezing Workers', *The Australia and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, vol. 13, no.1 (1977), 2. See also Ross Webb, "'Your Livelihood is on the Line": Working in the Auckland Hawkes Bay Freezing Works, 1973-1994', (MA Thesis, University of Auckland, 2014- 2015).

¹⁸ Gordon McAbney, interview by Nicola Braid.

¹⁹ Anna Green, *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951*, 12 and Gray, *The Jones Men: 100 New Zealand men talk about their Lives*, 101-104.

²⁰ Simon Edwards, 'Geared to go on Key Petone Story', *Hutt News*, 31st July, 2012.

Attributing men's reflections of work as simply a means of expressing their masculinity would be to overlook their actual experiences and the very physical, and sometimes dangerous, environments that many of my interviewees worked in. In this case, it is possible that the physical hardship these men experienced actually *prompted* images and tropes surrounding working New Zealand men at this time. What is certain however, is that despite men recalling their working experience through 'the prisms of discourse' it was undoubtedly their biographical experience as well.²¹

Phrases such as 'that's how it was', and the implication that 'it was a waste of time' to go home at the end of a working day, attest to the pragmatic and stoic attitude towards work that working-class men have tended to personify. David Grant found that staunchly working-class men were 'sustained by the dignity of their labour to make the world a better place for their families to live in'.²² As Jack stated, making 'a living' was the primary concern for many of these men rather than careers that they were necessarily passionate about or sought to pursue. Furthermore, the task of 'making a living' and providing was worth the harsh conditions and long hours. Not only was the nature of work recalled, but work was explicitly portrayed as part of men's identities and their purpose.

Work and Masculinity

Jussi Turtiainen and Ari Vaananen argued in their history of Finnish steel workers after the Second World War that although male workers have often been the object of labour histories, 'workers have rarely been examined as *men*'.²³ Of course, Petone is a long way from Finland, but the point remains just as valuable: not only was work important to my interviewees, it was also strongly linked to their masculine identity. When members of my cohort narrated their work they also mentioned leisure activities that took place outside the workplace—that for them, went part in parcel with 'fitting in' with their workmates. My interviewees constructed their initiations at work as rites of passage into mature masculinity and associated work with maleness in their discussion of women and work.

Historians writing elsewhere have argued that masculinity is 'a central, albeit unstable and contested, feature of labour politics' and the workplace stands as a 'key site for the construction

²¹ The phrase 'prisms of discourse' was coined by Abrams in *Oral History Theory*, 57.

²² David Grant, *Man for All Seasons: The Life and Times of Ken Douglas*, (Auckland: Random House, 2010), 18.

²³ Jussi Turtiainen and Ari Vaananen, 'Men of Steel? The Masculinity of metal Industry Workers in Finland after World War II', *Journal of Social History*, vol.46, no.2 (2012), 450. This is also supported by Yeo, who claims 'even though the workplace is such a key site for the construction of masculinity, labour history has been curiously quiet about labour and male identity', see Eileen Janes Yeo, 'Taking it Like a Man', *Labour History Review*, vol.69, no.1 (2004), 129.

of masculinity and male identity'.²⁴ Turtiainen and Vaananen found that workers' narratives often 'entangle and negotiate between the idea of a 'hard-working man' and the real circumstance of industrial work'.²⁵ According to Modell and Hinshaw, in Pennsylvania 'men constructed a masculine identity around the pervasive persistence of steel' and saw work and maleness as intertwined with their place of work, the tasks they carried out and recreational activities like sport.²⁶

One of the ways in which my interviewees conflated work and masculinity was via a 'coming of age' story or memory.²⁷ Wayne directly equated working with his maturing into manhood and at several times referred to experiences in which he was forced to '*hit the straps*' and work hard. Wayne presented his work at a West Australian mine in terms of its physical nature and as a key part of his maturation into adulthood—'*It was super-hot, but it was interesting—It was a good—good step towards manhood I guess*'.²⁸ For Wayne, hard work was a sort of initiation—if he put in the hours he would become a man, and entering the paid workforce, for him, was a sign of maturity. Importantly, Wayne's 'rite of passage' construction was self-directed: He explicitly talked about his first experiences of 'feeling like a man' without being prompted and he recalled his experience of work as '*an education*'.²⁹

Not only was work described alongside a narrative of 'growing up', but work for my interviewees meant entering a masculine world and the unspoken rules that were a part of workplace culture. Work, for these men, ushered in the 'gendered norms of the machismo workplace' and marked the period in which members of my cohort were introduced to drinking with colleagues after work and an accompanying sense of camaraderie.³⁰

For men, 'coming of age' was not just about what happened at work, but the type of leisure workmates facilitated 'after hours'. Wayne and Jack conflate the act of working with

²⁴ Ava Baron, 'Masculinity, the Embodied Male Worker and the Historian's Gaze', *International Labor and Working-Class History*, vol.69 (2006), 143. This can be seen, for instance, in the memories of Pennsylvania steelworkers, 'for them, their families and their neighbours mill work was *male* work', see Modell and Hinshaw, 'Male Work and Mill Work: Memory and Gender in Homestead, Pennsylvania', 133.

²⁵ Turtiainen and Vaananen, 'Men of Steel? The Masculinity of metal Industry Workers in Finland after World War II', 450.

²⁶ Modell and Hinshaw, 'Male Work and Mill Work: Memory and Gender in Homestead Pennsylvania' 133.

²⁷ This follows existing research on apprenticeships and transitions into heavy industry work which represented a stage between childhood and full manhood in the interviews conducted of 20th Century workers in Clydesdale. See Johnson and McIvor, 'Dangerous Work, Hard Men and Broken Bodies: Masculinity in the Clydesdale Heavy Industries', 139.

²⁸ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Johnson and McIvor, 139.

workplace culture (in these examples the consumption of alcohol) with growing up and with community—Jack was 14 and Wayne was 16-years-old at the time.

J: *When I started [at] Odmins, the first day I started there the boys said, right, the guys I was working with said 'Right come on then, we're off now, you coming with us?' Over the Grand Nash for a beer! [laughs] and that started that.*³¹

W: *I spent my teenage years in Christchurch, and did all the usual things growing up. I started work at 16 in a post office as a clerk. I guess then, you sort of hit your straps and find a little bit about yourself. So, of course, getting out to work and earning money the smoking started, the drinking, going out, knocking around with women and stuff like that.*³²

Wayne and Jack understood their introduction to workplace socialising as ushering in the adoption of traditionally masculine social values, in this case the championing of drinking, smoking and courting women.³³

Additionally, interviewees were inclined to discuss the nature of their own working lives as the 'breadwinner' for themselves and their family— women's work was assigned to the domestic sphere. As John Murphy argues, the 'breadwinner' model of labour relations points to both the culture of work and gendered relationships: 'for the other half of the breadwinner was a model of motherhood and family'.³⁴ Interviewees maintained this binary understanding of labour relations framed by what Claire Langhamer refers to as 'retrospective notions of appropriate female [and male] behavior'.³⁵ That is, their understandings of what was 'appropriate' for women was framed and recollected according to the social norms of them and their parents' generation which in this case, saw women chiefly as wives and mothers.

In the same way that men composed/performed different identities at different points in their interview, and became nostalgic when recalling their working lives, so too did they use retroactive notions of what *was* acceptable in terms of gendered work and household labour. In almost identical responses, interviewees used the caveat 'those days' when discussing their mothers. When questioned about his mother's work Wayne insisted, '*nah, well she did later on, after us boys sort of—In those days the women stayed at home and did all the chores and stuff like that while the old*

³¹ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

³² Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

³³ As mentioned in Chapter three, Wayne and Jack would not have been legally allowed to drink yet due to their ages, see Christoffel, 'Removing Temptation: New Zealand's Alcohol Restrictions 1881-2005', 1., in which the author states 'the drinking age [in New Zealand] stayed at 21 from 1910 until 1969' and notes that 6'oclock closing times for licenced outlets existed until 1977.

³⁴ John Murphy, 'Breadwinning: Accounts of Work and Family Life in the 1950s', *Labour & Industry*, vol.12, no.3 (2002), 59.

³⁵ Claire Langhamer, "'A Public House is for all Classes, Men and Women Alike": Women, Leisure and Drink in Second World War England', *Women's History Review*, vol.12, no.3 (2003), 425.

man worked.³⁶ Similarly, when asked the same question Gordon acknowledged his mother worked later when he was a teenager, but claimed, ‘...but like—so women in them days didn’t work. It was a no go. The man provided, the woman looked after the house’.³⁷

Men’s memories of work and domestic roles reflected the post-war New Zealand environment. As Carlyon and Morrow note, at the close of the war, ‘social pressure, family expectations and public policy, combined with an acceptance that ‘home duties’ should take priority over paid work’.³⁸ In 1959, for instance only 29% of working-age women participated in the job market.³⁹ It is not the veracity of my interviewees’ claims that is most significant here, but the way in which they were constructed; the way in which the men contextualise their explanation according to historical cultural narratives/standards. Men often used the phrase ‘in those days’ when setting out and affirming, at least partially, the gendered norms that saw the place of women in the home and men at work. While it is possible that my cohort’s memories of their mothers simply reflected the historical reality, the exclusivity of women’s roles in their definitions of domesticity indicates more ideological understandings. In delineating between the present and the past with the use of the phrase ‘in those days’, or referencing ‘back then’, speakers can separate themselves from their understandings of the past/memories and ostensibly separate their own beliefs from a temporally fixed wider discourse regarding women’s gender roles.

The Breadwinner?

My interviewees also maintained a temporally fixed understanding of the expectations placed on them as men. When discussing his own child rearing experiences, Wayne identified himself as part of a larger group of ‘*typical fathers in those times*’ in that he continued to work while his then wife stayed home to raise his children.⁴⁰ In a similar vein, Jack acknowledged the expectation placed on him due to his gender when he became a father,

*I had three boys and I was only 21. [laughs]. Yeah it was a shotgun wedding, met a girl, got her pregnant and that was it. But I did the right thing and married her and we had three good, lovely boys. I used to call them my ‘front row’.*⁴¹

Jack’s use of moral language and the acknowledgement that he did the ‘right thing’ is in keeping with 1950s and 60s ideals surrounding marriage and the family. In 1963, 43.7% of New Zealand

³⁶ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

³⁷ Gordon McAbney, interview by Nicola Braid.

³⁸ Carlyon and Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand Since 1945*, 38-39.

³⁹ Department of Labour, ‘Working Towards Pay and Employment Equity for Women’, (Wellington, 2006), 7.

⁴⁰ Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁴¹ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

males between the age of 21 and 24 were married.⁴² Furthermore, 46% of households in 1966 were described as a ‘two parent’ households.⁴³ Alternatively, 80.1% of households surveyed in Petone’s urban renewal area in 1978, where Jack has lived all of his life, saw male breadwinners as the main providers.⁴⁴

Jack’s use of language hints at an underlying, or at least previously established, belief in the institution of marriage as a provider of social stability for children.⁴⁵ His statement also hints at the limited support available for single mothers in New Zealand during this time—Jack’s partner became pregnant the same year the Domestic Purposes Benefit, the first benefit for *all* solo parents, was introduced in New Zealand in 1973.⁴⁶ Thus, in marrying his partner he was likely to be doing the ‘right thing’ objectively as well in terms of supporting a vulnerable mother and child.

Nostalgia

A nostalgia for the ‘old days’, a time that saw gendered work and a ‘golden age’ of employment, was a feature throughout my interviews.⁴⁷ Men’s personal histories were informed and shaped by symbolic notions of the past, as Samuel and Thompson point out, the past can function as the reverse image of the present, where ‘the good old days’ and a narrative of hard times become a record of courage and endurance.⁴⁸ My cohort referenced the past in terms of gendered work practices and the primacy of a post-war work ethic, which they saw as mostly eroded. Having all started work in some form or another at a young age, and having all continued to work throughout their lives, the changing labour market in New Zealand was experienced, and was remembered, as a significant change in my cohort’s lifetime.

⁴² *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1965*, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbook Collection.

⁴³ Arunachalam Dharmalingam, Ian Pool and Janet Sceats, ‘A Demographic History of the New Zealand Family from 1840: Tables’, p.17 as cited in Ian Pool, Arunachalam Dharmalingam and Janet Sceats (eds.), *The New Zealand Family From 1840: A Demographic History*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2007), 17 accessed at <https://cdn.auckland.ac.nz/assets/press/all-books/pdfs/2007/nz-family-tables.pdf>.

⁴⁴ Alison Gray, ‘The Petone Borough: A Report of a Survey Carried Out in June 1978 by Staff and Students of the Department of Sociology and Social Work’, (Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 1978).

⁴⁵ For examples of this see the *Report of the Special Committee on Moral Delinquency in Children and Adolescents*. Wellington: Government Printer, 1954 also known as the ‘Mazengarb Enquiry’ in which teenage delinquency was directly correlated with abnormal family environments such as those arising out of a divorce.

⁴⁶ Bronwyn Dalley, *Family Matters: Child Welfare in Twentieth Century New Zealand*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998), 165. Dalley argues that although single mothers officially received no state aid until the introduction of the Domestic Purposes benefit, ‘the state may have had a more flexible approach to supporting a variety of family structures than historians have allowed’ and that ‘women giving birth out of wedlock may not have been treated with as much disdain and condemnation as historians have assumed’.

⁴⁷ For further discussions of nostalgia see Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*, (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) and Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, (New York: Basic Books, 2001).

⁴⁸ Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson, *The Myths We Live By*, (London: Routledge, 1990), 8.

A fondness for a lost era of work is also recognised as an aspect of working-class identity in the deindustrialised world.⁴⁹ Memories of deindustrialisation affect more than those (generations) immediately displaced by factory closures etc., and thus we must also consider how the changes are remembered.⁵⁰ Despite its younger industry, New Zealand experienced deindustrialisation and a loss of employment alongside North America and Europe. Memories of shifting industry were reflected in my cohort's recollections and a delineation was made between the once thriving time of industry and today.

Jack, in particular, made several overt references to a 'better' time. For Jack, the period in which he was a young man saw both growing employment opportunities and freedom in terms of hunting and fishing.

Well we made our own pocket money in those days, we'd go up to Mill stream and pick mint and sell it, walk around the houses and sell them to the people, go and catch herrings and sell them to the Islanders, anyone that wanted them, you know the little fish and that's how we made our pocket money.

I was quite a big lad, but there was so much work around and they couldn't get workers. I think there was five motor body- you know, car plans, around here in those days, because you know there were the meat works, there was Odlins, God even Woollen mills were still going too, there was a Gadsen's, Unilever, Colgate, you know it was really industrial around here- in those days. Coca-Cola factory, I even worked there while I was still at school...they had a night shift going they were so busy and they employed bloody young fellas', kids and that.⁵¹

Jack's statements regarding the plentiful employment opportunities that existed when he was a young man in Petone are also evidenced in the various advertisements for vacancies at the Gear Meat Works and Wellington Woollen Mills advertised in local papers.⁵² More than this, Jack hints that his generation—through the use of the collective 'we'—were willing to work in and out of formal employment in order to support themselves, and were willing to do so from a very young age. Working from a young age was not uncommon among my cohort, and when it was referred to it was taken for granted as what was expected. For Dennis, that meant completing chores and work on the farm for his family, and for Tipene paying his boarding school fees off by working at a local factory.

⁴⁹ Tim Strangleman, James Rhodes and Sherry Linkon, 'Introduction to Crumbling Cultures: Deindustrialisation, Class and Memory', *International Labour and Working-class History*, vol.84 (2013), 8.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 9.

⁵¹ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid. Unilever, originally known as Lever Brothers opened its factory in Jackson Street Petone in 1919, see Jim Chipp, 'Unilever to Leave Petone', *The Hutt News*, 24th December, 2013.

⁵² 'Situations Vacant', *Upper Hutt Leader*, 11th December, 1952., 'Situations Vacant', *Upper Hutt Leader*, 4th December, 1952., and 'Opportunities for Permanent Workers: Good Wages and Conditions', *Upper Hutt Leader*, 15th February, 1951.

Elements of nostalgia were also present in Jack's narrative when towards the end of his interview he was asked if he thought New Zealand had changed since his youth:

'I think I grew up in the best time that New Zealand's ever seen, and I don't think we'll see it again- you could- there was everything...jobs, and it was different. Things have changed so much and there's so many rules now'.⁵³

Jack went on to state that *'it's harder for the kids to do what I sorta' done, they'd never do it'*. Jack clearly identifies with a 'golden age' of New Zealand in which employment was high and opportunities were less restricted.⁵⁴ He did not hold back his contempt for regulations surrounding hunting and fishing which would stop children recreating his childhood in a 21st century environment. In highlighting employment and jobs as a measure of society's success, Jack remained overwhelmingly positive about his past, and New Zealand's past, despite the difficulties he experienced. He made efforts during his interview to point out that *'it was really industrial around here'* [in Petone] and his nostalgia for a plentiful era of work and industry is not wholly without reason.⁵⁵ Due to the very real experience of industry decline we can hardly ignore Jack's memory as rosy-eyed nostalgia.⁵⁶ Jack's memories are also important in presenting an alternative view of 'hard work', post-war industry and urban working-class environments as positive, in contrast to what an onlooker might assume was a monotonous, work-based environment that men might resent.⁵⁷

More than simply reflecting the wider social changes that were taking place in New Zealand industry, my cohort's testimonies explicitly tie their identity to their work ethic. Men's identities as workers allowed for critical reflections on the 'collapse of work ethic' and industry that was supposedly ushered in during the second half of the twentieth century and into the early twenty first century.⁵⁸

⁵³ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁵⁴ These findings are in keeping with Australian men during the post-war period whose 'recollection of security and prosperity is today merged into a nostalgic recollection of the post war years' see John Murphy, 'Work in a Time of Plenty: Narratives of Men's Work in Post-war Australia', *Labour History*, vol.88 (2005), 219.

⁵⁵ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁵⁶ The Gear Freezing Works closed in 1981 and according to Locke 'freezing workers struck nationally for nine days to gain a redundancy agreement for Gear workers, and 800 Petone unemployed joined the dole cue' see Locke, *Workers at the Margins: Union Radicals in Post War New Zealand*, 82.

⁵⁷ It should be noted that it was possible for men to feel negatively towards their work, and perhaps it is possible for men to harbour both feelings. For an example of changing feelings towards work and the workplace after World War II see: Paul Thompson, 'Playing at Being Skilled Men: Factory Culture and Pride in Working Skills Among Coventry Car Workers', *Social History*, vol.13, no.1 (1988): 45-69.

⁵⁸ Arthur McIvor, *Working Lives: Work in Britain Since 1945*, (London: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2013), 46.

Working-class Identity

Not only were my interviewees' recollections of work gendered, they also reflected class identities. The Petone Working Men's Club was, and remains, an institution for working-class men and although my interviewees had varied careers, they all identified as working-class. Class position is notoriously complicated, but an occupational breakdown of my interviewees' fathers gives *some* indication of their socio-economic origins. Certainly, none of my interviewees grew up affluent, and most of the men I interviewed identified hardship as an important aspect of their early lives. Tipene and Dennis were raised in farming and marae-based rural settlements which were recognised as being materially lacking, while both men's fathers worked off the land in a farming capacity for the community. Similarly, Gordon remembered growing up in a '*rough area*' of Glasgow in a tenement stating '*it was a hard life*' with his father working as a bookmaker. Joe's father, who previously worked as a messenger in the Italian navy became a fisherman when the family migrated to New Zealand. However, Joe made an effort to assure me that his family were not '*poverty-stricken*', and that they '*managed*' under his father's income. Wayne's father worked in the post office in the supply branch, while Jack's father was an overseer on construction projects for the Ministry of Works.

As Melissa Walker observed in her study of Southern farmers in the United States, 'though most oral history narrators did not articulate their sense of belonging to a community of memory...the recurring stories in their oral narratives reveal the experiences that shaped and bounded that community'.⁵⁹ In the same way, the stories my cohort told illustrated a class identity of sorts—a belonging to a working-class community in their shared memories, and articulation, of struggle. Dennis, for instance, was overt in recognising the humble or, in his words, 'basic' living and working conditions in which he was raised in around the rural Bay of Plenty area:

*My life as a youngster started off pretty basic, we had no electricity for a start. Everything was candles and wooden stoves- cook everything up on a wooden stove, hence as kids we got a lot of responsibilities for making sure the wood box was full and making sure things were all prepared, everybody threw in their weight to get the family ready for the day.*⁶⁰

The emphasis Dennis placed on his rural upbringing, characterised by hard work and very little personal comforts was alluded to at several points during his narrative. Dennis championed his humble origins and the work that he and his family did in order to support themselves:

⁵⁹ Melissa Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories: Memory and Meaning in Oral History*, (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 2006), 77.

⁶⁰ Dennis Powell interview, by Nicola Braid.

It was rural community then, they had the freezing works, the Horotiu freezing works out there, and my uncle used to—my sister's husband, worked there at the freezing works and they lived in a little house in the middle of a paddock away from the main road and we had to get out water from the Waikato River, there was no running water and all that, we had long drops then, in those days, and so it was still basic living, even then, even just before I went to college.⁶¹

Dennis' identification with his rural community in Haparapara, and elements of what might now be considered substandard living conditions, were mentioned throughout his interview, and while he acknowledged his living and background as being 'basic', his background was never referred to in a negative sense. While Dennis saw joining the navy as his key to gaining 'independence in life', the prospect that he may have grown up to work the land like his father was never positioned as an unfavourable alternative.⁶²

Having said this, men also made differentiations between personal and common experiences. Some events were identified directly as occurring to an interviewee, and others that occurred to their community (which might be defined in various ways). Dennis tended to follow recollections of 'basic' living with statements like 'ask any farmer today and they'll tell you' or by referring to a collective 'Māori world'. In doing so he identified his own struggles in some ways along with rural farmers and his whanau.⁶³

As an immigrant, Joe mentions the extreme difficulty his family had adjusting to New Zealand life in terms of financial strain, language barriers and racial discrimination:

When we came here it wasn't the big American dream because my mother never coped, coming from Rome and being stuck in...and my father didn't really cope that well, so it was a bit of a, I suppose, what do they call it now? A disjointed family or whatever.

Being an Italian in the fifties wasn't very kosher, so I was quite subject to a lot of discrimination, there were a lot of R.S.A guys living around there [Taita] and they'd been in prisoner of war camps in Italy.⁶⁴

Although Joe's struggle was not economic (at least as he related it), he still identified as having faced significant hardship. Status for Joe is not necessarily remembered along the lines of the work, but along the lines of race.⁶⁵ It would be hard to doubt that there were significant difficulties faced in Joe's childhood, being raised by his sister and generally living the life of an

⁶¹ Ibid

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Joe Serici, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁶⁵ I have used the term 'race' here rather than ethnicity as it was term Tipene used during his interview. For a sample of the large body of work devoted to theoretical discussions surrounding the use of 'race' versus the use of 'ethnicity' as a descriptive label please see Stephen Spence, *Race and Ethnicity: Culture, Identity and Representation*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2006), Karim Murji and John Solomos (eds.), *Theories of Race and Ethnicity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), Brackette F Williams, 'A Class Act: Anthropology and the Race to Nation Across Ethnic Terrain', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, vol.18 (1989): 401-444 and Raymond Scupin (ed.), *Race and Ethnicity: The United States and the World 2nd ed*, (New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc., 2012).

Italian immigrant in the midst of ongoing ‘misperceptions of Italy as a backward, underdeveloped country’, a prejudice which remained among Pākehā in New Zealand until at least the 1970s.⁶⁶ Of course, similar observations have also been made about Tipene’s experiences growing up Māori in 1950s New Zealand.

In recalling times of hardship and struggle, it was possible ‘to discern elements of [my cohort’s] common experiences that created a sense of belonging to a distinctive community’.⁶⁷ As an interviewer, it was possible to note instances in which interviewees may have consciously or subconsciously remarked upon their social positioning in their narrative. By discussing ‘struggle’ and identifying ‘basic’ or ‘difficult’ backgrounds, the men in my study aligned themselves with the working-class in New Zealand. As Melissa Matutina Williams found in her study of Panguru migrants, while participants acknowledged ‘having experienced a tough and poor upbringing, it is also remembered as a childhood that instilled important lifetime values and practices’.⁶⁸ In the same way, working-class backgrounds provided the stories of their origins and a facet of their identities. One of the most striking examples of men’s subtle recognition of class was seen when Jack discussed work he had completed at Odlin’s Timber Mill:

*I remember one order I done was the beehive, out of rimu, it’s all come up from the South Island and you had to pick all the hard timber out and that, all selected lengths, and that’s made up the walls in the beehive. I’ve never been in to see it.*⁶⁹

In this moment Jack whether purposefully or not, recognises his class position, as the worker rather than the Parliamentarian. More than that, he shows that although he has lived in Wellington all of his life, he has never had the time, or the inclination to visit the Beehive, which he was indirectly involved in building. Jack emphasised not the importance of the building but rather, the work and careful selection process that went on ‘behind the scenes’ and his own role as a worker in the building’s construction.

Education

In their recollections of education, my participants also reflected on aspects of a working-class identity. Turtiainen and Vaananen claim that in Finland ‘contradictory attitudes towards

⁶⁶ Sarah Patricia Hill, ‘Italiani Agli Antipodi: Italian Immigration Identities in New Zealand’, in Graziella Parati and Anthony Julian Tamburri (eds.) *The Culture of Italian Migration*, (Maryland: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2011), 134.

⁶⁷ Walker, *Southern Farmers and Their Stories: Memory and Meaning in Oral History*, 78. Frisch also asserts that the oral interview should be studied for the ‘self-reflective voice, the social grounding and location of that voice, and the self-conscious engagement of an implied presumptive audience’ in order to locate expressions of class consciousness, see Frisch, *A Shared Authority Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*, 71.

⁶⁸ Matutina Williams, *Panguru in the City, Kāinga Tabi, Kāinga Rua: An Urban Migration History*, 56.

⁶⁹ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

education were common in lower-class agrarian families', although they conceded that education was the path to social advancement.⁷⁰ The authors note that working-class communities tended to view education most importantly as a means of cultivating physical skills'.⁷¹ Varying attitudes towards education were certainly present among my cohort, who tended to view education in one of two ways—as either a means of social advancement or an unnecessary diversion.

In some cases, education was seen as an unnecessary step towards the ultimate goal of paid employment:

*I went right through to 68' cos there were only eleven kids in our school because everyone left school at 15 or 16, I went right through school til' I was 18, which was probably a mistake. Because I was bright, you know, but I was never built to be an academic I was more built to be a worker.*⁷²

Joe clearly saw a binary between worker and academic, and claims staying in secondary school until he was finished was a 'mistake' rather than an admirable choice. Not only does Joe preclude himself from being 'an academic', but he attests to 'being a worker' and ties his own, personal identity with his ability to participate in work.

Significantly, many men in New Zealand took advantage of the post-war context that allowed them to leave school and gain employment straight away. Throughout the 1950s approximately 30% of all male school leavers expected to enter a skilled trade via an apprenticeship.⁷³ Along with economic prosperity, post-war New Zealand saw a boom in the construction and production industries and job availability was high—between 53.3% and 64.5% of school leavers planned to enter the labour market without any further training and/or education between 1970 and 1980.⁷⁴ Indeed, in 1955, only a decade before these men reached high school age, the average duration students spent at secondary school in New Zealand was 2.8 years.⁷⁵ The figures are even more pronounced among Māori students, with 56% having left high school within their first two years by 1960.⁷⁶

⁷⁰ Turtiainen and Vaananen, 'Men of Steel? The Masculinity of metal Industry Workers in Finland after World War II', 455.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Joe Serci, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁷³ Jeremy Baker, 'Apprenticeships and Trade Training - The Post-War Years', *Te Ara- the Encyclopaedia of New Zealand*, accessed 16th April 2015, updated 13-Jul-12, accessed at <http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/apprenticeships-and-trade-training/page-2>.

⁷⁴ Department of Education, *Discussion paper- Transition from School to Working Life*, (Wellington: National Advisory Committee on Transition from School to Working Life, 1982), 1. AAOC, W3473, 3-7-8, NA, Wellington, cited in Nicky Murray, 'A History of Apprenticeship in New Zealand', (MA Thesis, Lincoln University, 2001), 142.

⁷⁵ Gregory Lee and Howard Lee, 'Schooling in New Zealand', in Craig Campbell and Geoffrey Sherrington (eds.) *Going to School in Oceania*, (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 2007), 159.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

As mentioned previously, Jack was the youngest of my cohort to leave high school at the age of fourteen, and he openly recognised his negative experience at school as having shaped his opinion of education as an unnecessary step towards employment. When he was asked if he liked school Jack replied,

I didn't really get on. I had one teacher there that used to pick on me a bit and that sorta' put me off school and as I said I left school when I was fourteen, I started getting mixed in with a bad crowd and I said to the head master 'well I can have a job tomorrow and he said 'show me you've got a job and I'll let you go...and that's, yeah he did.'⁷⁷

Dennis, who also left school early, remembers his decision to leave school as one of practicality too,

I guess it had a profound effect on me learning...because I really couldn't concentrate—so many people round. So I managed to do three years of secondary school except the third year I didn't bother going for school because I knew I would never get it.⁷⁸

Dennis' decision to join the navy was of his own volition, rather than under the advice of family or teachers. He depicts the most pragmatic version of himself, a student who was not going to struggle through high school to achieve something he '*would never get*'.⁷⁹ In casting their decisions to leave school in a positive light, students who stayed on in high school become 'the other' and education is given the impression of being an unnecessary path to the ultimate goal of paid employment.⁸⁰

For other members of my cohort, education was recognised as a means by which to straddle a working and middle-class environment. For Wayne and Tipene, although education was recognised as a worthy goal, they differed when it came to their life decisions.⁸¹ Wayne for

⁷⁷ Jack Pollock, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁷⁸ Dennis Powell, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ For a discussion of options for school leavers during this period see Murray, 'A History of Apprenticeship in New Zealand', 241. Dianne Snow's study of children's labour in Southern Australia which saw narrators draw boundaries that 'divided work and school into separate spheres, or into activities that were distinct from each other. See Dianne Snow 'Transforming Children's Labour through Schooling', in John E. Martin and Kerry Taylor (eds.), *Culture and the Labour Movement*, (Palmerston North: Dunmore Press, 1991), 262.

⁸¹ Elizabeth Roberts, for instance claimed 'working-class people did not regard 'schooling' as help in time of need...some valued it and saw it as an insurance against future need; rather more tolerated it; while some regarded it as a nuisance which prevented children from earning much-needed wages', see Elizabeth Roberts, 'The Recipients' View of Welfare', in *Oral History, Health and Welfare*, eds. Joanna Bornat, Robert Perks, Paul Thompson and Jan Walmsley, (London: Routledge, 2000), 206. For further scholarship outlining divergent attitudes to education among working-classes see D G. Paz, *The Politics of Working-Class Education in Britain 1830-50*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1980), John Russo and Sherry Lee Linkon (eds.), *New Working-class Studies*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005), Michael Zweig (ed.) *What's Class Got to do with it?: American Society in the Twenty-First Century*,

instance, attributed his decision not to attend university to his father's advice, rather than due to what he personally valued.

*Then I went to Riccarton High school, just for three years and got school cert, and Dad coerced me into leaving. I did actually want to go to varsity.*⁸²

When I asked why his father did not want him to attend university Wayne replied,

*Oh cos in those days jobs were—like that was 1970, yeah I left school in 69' in 1970 there were jobs galore and the post office and stuff he knew lots of people there and they used to take on young people leaving school as a cadet and so he sort' talked me into—instead of spending 3 or 4 years at varsity not earning any money to get out and work and do me' own thing sorta' thing—so I did.*⁸³

Wayne displayed an awareness of what was expected from him as a young man leaving high school in the 1960s, and critically reflects on the career path laid out for him at the time. According to Government statistics from 1967, only 15.6% of male students and 6.6% of female students intended to proceed to full-time university studies.⁸⁴ These figures attest to the fact that university attendance remained a luxury for most people, with tertiary students occupying a small minority. It follows that the small amount of university attendees would have supported a public perception that university was only for a select few, rather than a wise career choice.

In recalling his own educational history, Tipene spoke to the expectations placed on Māori men during his adolescence. Tipene related his own personal triumphs to the wider achievements of Māori who achieved beyond 'what was expected' during the 1960s. This period saw the growth in manufacturing sectors that pushed rural Māori to migrate to urban areas where they could fill unskilled and semi-skilled jobs. By 1966 for instance, approximately 70% of Māori men were working blue-collar jobs 'on the production line, in transport, on construction sites and in market gardens'.⁸⁵

T: *I suppose, the stereotypic view of Māori that was commonly accepted among Pākehā would be something like hues of wood, labourers, best suited for manual tasks. Certainly not for anything more than that, factory workers, freezing workers, and because of where we were sitting in society that's where we went— it was almost preordained and there was only the very rare exception to that, and for Taranaki, I suppose, there would be the Te Rangi Hiroa's- Sir Peter Buck and Mani Pomare who for*

(Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004), and Sally R Munt (ed.), *Cultural Studies and the Working-class: Subject to Change*, (New York: Cassel Press, 2000).

⁸² Wayne Cooper, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ *New Zealand Official Yearbook*, 1969, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbook Collection.

⁸⁵ Locke, *Workers in the Margins: Union Radicals in Post-war New Zealand*, 36.

*whatever reason were able to participate in both worlds and be extraordinarily successful in terms of what was considered to be definitely, a 'non-Māori playground' if I may put it in such crude terms.*⁸⁶

Tipene's reflections are in keeping with the projections for Māori youth, with the Department of Statistics citing a dismal 0.009% of Māori boys were predicted to attend university in 1963, with 329 boys out of 1,665 expected to gain employment in skilled trades or factory work.⁸⁷ As Carlyon and Morrow point out, at a tertiary level 'Māori enrolment was only one eighth of what it should have been given their population'.⁸⁸

Tipene referred to universities as a 'non-Māori playground' at other times in his narrative and acknowledges that his experience attending university allowed him to '*go through other social gatherings that I probably wouldn't have gone through, because as you know, one of the truisms of education, well it was when I was around was that it gave you some social mobility*'.⁸⁹ Tipene directly alluded to education as his 'escape' from borstal after a local minister used his influence to have Tipene enrolled in a boarding school. He claimed that if it were not for his 'escape' via education he would '*be the oldest patched member in some gang in Aotearoa presently*'.⁹⁰

Tipene identifies and reaffirms, through his own experiences, education as a means of social advancement, and in his case, a means of bridging what he saw as Māori and Pākehā cultural arenas. The presentation of education in Tipene's narrative can also be analysed against the tropes surrounding education as 'an escape', with schooling presenting a means of being 'educated out' of traditionally working-class backgrounds.⁹¹ Kirk states that,

Being on the cusp of two cultures – as a man or woman educated out of her or his class may find themselves – raises a whole range of questions central to ideas of identity and identification, questions which the current fashion for notions of classlessness largely ignores.⁹²

This is certainly true of Tipene, who unlike others of my cohort presents his narrative as crossing boundaries of both class and race via education.⁹³

⁸⁶ Tipene, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁸⁷ *New Zealand Official Yearbook 1963*, Statistics New Zealand Digitised Yearbook Collection.

⁸⁸ Jack K Hunn, 'Report on the Department of Maori Affairs: With Statistical Supplement', *Appendices of the Journals of the House of Representatives*, 1961, vol.2, G-10: p.25 cited in Jenny Carlyon and Diana Morrow, *Changing Times: New Zealand Since 1945*, (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2013), 249.

⁸⁹ Tipene, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ John Kirk, 'Crossing the Border: Class and the Narrative of Transition', *Minnesota Review*, vol.61-62 (2004), 137.

⁹² Ibid, 136.

⁹³ It is worth noting that referring to University and Teacher's College as a 'Pākehā world' was also featured in the oral histories compiled by Matutina Williams, as Williams too saw Māori men recalling their entry into teachers

Another indicator of working-class identity, or class consciousness, was illustrated when men referred to the expectations placed on them as a result of their socio-economic position. Gordon discussed what being working-class meant for his career prospects in Glasgow, '*the 70s was hard times yeah, a lot of my friends working in the shipyards, you came out of school and worked in the shipyards*'.⁹⁴ In presenting the future careers of his class mates in motto form ('you came out of school and worked in the shipyards') Gordon recognised the widely accepted move from school to work, and a prescribed type of work, that was expected from his generation.

In recognising the prescriptive expectations placed on them due to their backgrounds, men aligned themselves, either consciously or subconsciously, with a disadvantaged working-class. All of the men in my cohort seemed to use the expectations placed upon them as a measure by which to prove themselves, another challenge or struggle that they managed to overcome in their success story—whether it be by social advancement, education or their own hard work.

Because all of the men I interviewed characterised their lives as triumphs over adversity, it is important to acknowledge the effect that their present, successful selves had on the way they constructed their past. For narrators tend to compose their life story in a way that makes them feel comfortable with the path they have taken, and justify it according to what these decisions meant at the time. In order to support what Tipene openly referred to as his 'road to Damascus journey', or the notion that interviewees 'started from the bottom', members of my cohort had to see themselves, or at least project themselves, as occupying a successful present. As Emily Honig's study of Chicana garment workers notes, 'the content of the women's stories, as well as sometimes the language used to relate them, must be seen as products of the moment they were told – in this case a moment of fierce pride in their battles against political injustice'.⁹⁵ Honig continues, 'women's post-strike present may have mandated, or at least provided an occasion to honor childhood stories of rebellion and determination' and thus their histories tended to call attention to a childhood version of their adult selves.⁹⁶ While my cohort were not recalling their history in line with a specific event (such as a strike), nor were they women, it was clear to see instances throughout my interviews where men had embellished, emphasised and called attention to certain stories or experiences that reflected their current values of hard-work versus education,

college as entering a 'different world'. Matutina Williams, *Panguru and the City, Kainga Tabi, Kainga Rua: An Urban Migration History*, 206.

⁹⁴ Gordon McAbney, interview by Nicola Braid.

⁹⁵ Emily Honig, 'Getting to the Source, Striking Lives: Oral History and the Politics of Memory', *Journal of Women's History*, vol.9, no.1 (1997), 148.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, 155.

or a fusing of the two. A championing of earlier professional successes may also highlight men's active construction of their own triumphs. If we are to take Thomson's notion of composure, as we have in earlier chapters, interviewees may have made efforts to emphasise the high points of their careers and the instances in which they 'overcame the odds' as a means of helping them feel comfortable with both their current state and their pasts.

Conclusion

The way my cohort used work to shape their narratives and employed work as a lens by which to reflect on their pasts, is a testament to the place that work has in their identities. As Hall and Kirk point out, a 'commitment to work and the workplace is not a 'natural' response for all people', and the emphasis placed on work in my cohort's narrative is significant in itself.⁹⁷ Men directly equated their sense of self with their working lives or according to their work ethic. In doing so the men distinguished themselves as being part of a past working-class community, a community that, in their eyes, no longer existed in the present.

For my interviewees, being working-class was a positive attribute to possess, as for them, it represented deeper values of community, loyalty and hard work. Struggle was mentioned by interviewees not to elicit sympathy from their audience, but rather, as experiences worth reflecting on and a source of pride acknowledged in their own community.⁹⁸ While none of my cohort overtly boasted about their lives, they were clearly aware of the obstacles they had overcome to achieve their successes.

My cohort constructed their memories according to traditional working-class masculine discourses and presented the experiences that such discourse arose from. Interviewees did not simply remember according to an image they have been fed, but they had *experienced* the physically challenging and long working lives that we associate with working-class men at this time. These men were clearly part of a wider generation who faced growing job opportunities, but they were also members of a community—men who had no choice but to work to support themselves and for whom education was a luxury, rather than a necessity.

However, in harnessing their working lives and championing the values that they saw as developing out of work, interviewees presented work as something they chose to do, not necessarily something they had to do—even if it was. According to their pasts, hard work was

⁹⁷ John Kirk and Christine Wall, *Work and Identity: Historical and Cultural Contexts*, (London: Palgrave and Macmillan, 2011), 218.

⁹⁸ This is in line with the waterside workers studied by Anna Green, see *British Capital, Antipodean Labour: Working the New Zealand Waterfront, 1915-1951*, 77-79.

highly prized in working class culture and pride could be found in physicality, long hours and workplace bonding. In presenting an agency in their decisions regarding education and work, interviewees could take full credit for their success and fully embrace their triumphs.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Implications

Oral history adds two particularly valuable dimensions to the study of masculinity in New Zealand: the experiences and perspectives of the historical actors themselves.

Before all else, this thesis told men's stories. Above any analysis, it elevated the men of the Petone Workingmen's Club to the status of legitimate historical actors, with agency, experience and a story to tell. Time and the inevitability of aging gives the collection of these life narratives an added impetus. Oral histories like this need to be gathered sooner rather than later to understand the impact of economic and social changes upon working-class men's understanding of masculinity. Of course, this thesis also has significance for the study of masculinity and oral history in New Zealand.

For the study of masculinity, the addition of lived experience adds a valuable personalism to existing studies of New Zealand men. The men in this thesis occupied a significant inter-generational space; their agency in choosing between discursive modes relating to masculinity were complicated and nuanced—the men were more than simple nodes in a grid of discourse or stereotypes of the 'Kiwi Bloke'.¹ Further, in shifting the historical focus from masculinities based in a colonial or wartime context to working-class men born in the 1940s and 50s, this thesis adds alternative understandings and findings to the history of New Zealand men.

In its engagement with oral history theory, this thesis both reinforced and extended existing understandings of intersubjectivity in the interview. Specifically, the men of the Petone Workingmen's Club placed me alternatively as an 'honorary male' and a 'nurturing female' in a similar way to participants in Terry Arendell's work on female/male interviews.² My place as a female interviewer also helped men to tell stories rich with emotional vulnerability.

Chapter three of the thesis outlined the history of the Petone Workingmen's Club and positioned the club as a working-class institution. It explored what it meant for members to be part of the club and how the club's space facilitated a particular masculine identity. In doing so, it contributed to the scarce research that currently exists surrounding workingmen's clubs in New Zealand.

¹ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, (London: Routledge, 2002), 25-26.

² Arendell, 'Reflections of the Researcher-Researched Relationship: A Women Interviewing Men', 341-368.

The fourth chapter of this study explored discourses surrounding the ‘Hard Man’ and the ‘New Man’ and how these concepts were embraced and/or rejected by members of my cohort in the face of a female interviewer. It showed that members of my cohort occupied a generational and discursive space, allowing them to choose from masculine expectations belonging to a post-war world and those from the present day.

Finally, Chapter five discussed the place of work in men’s narratives and what work meant for men’s identities. It found that memories of work were not only important to men’s self-perception, but that my cohort had inherited working-class perspectives on industry, education and leisure.

Intersubjectivity

This thesis has important implications for oral historians’ use of intersubjectivity in the study of masculinity. My place as a young, educated female interviewer allowed me to elicit responses from interviewees that men, or older interviewers may not have. Intersubjectivity was important in two main ways. This thesis reinforced theoretical understandings of intersubjectivity and gender dynamics at play in the interview setting; and secondly, it *utilised* intersubjectivity to tell me more about the men themselves.

The men in my interviews framed me in various ways and as such, demonstrated the importance of what Ortner described as ‘critical subjectivity’ within the oral history interview.³ My interviewees placed me at times as a nurturing female and others as an honorary male in ways similar to men in interviews conducted by Hilary Young and Terry Arendell. Chapter four demonstrated the non-gendered responses that men gave me—especially when their stories became emotionally charged. At other times, my interviewees placed me as an ‘honorary male’—treating me as if I belonged. The fact that I was an ‘honorary male’ at times, and a nurturing female at others speaks to men’s agency in the telling of their stories. My interviewees were not always shaping their reflections according to the implied rules of a male/female interaction or to fit in with familiar discourses. Men framed me in ways that were convenient or comfortable to them; they made choices.

The men in my interviews framed themselves in various ways, too. My interviews proved that a young female interviewer can ‘bring past and present discourses of gender together in conversation’ with older males.⁴ The men in my cohort were able to illustrate traits of the ‘New

³ Sherry Ortner, *Anthropology and Social Theory: Culture, Power and the Acting Subject*, 105-107.

⁴ Young, ‘Hard Man, New Man: Re/composing Masculinities in Glasgow c.1950-2000’, 80.

Man' masculinity through a presentation of feminist views, an openness to sexuality, and via critical reflections of 'Hard Man' masculinity in my presence. Simultaneously, men could at times align themselves with 'Hard Man' discourses when discussing instances of their romantic conquests, and recounting stoicism, daring and physical prowess/violence. The presence of both discourses in the interview suggests that 'Hard Man' and 'New Man' masculinities are not necessarily binary classifications, and use of one 'model' does not necessarily preclude the other. Most significantly, my study looked beyond the 'construction' of masculinities in the interview and looked at masculine identities as plural, moveable discourses that men could chose to engage with or not, once again testifying to the agency men had in the interviewer-interviewee exchanges.

This thesis also spoke to the role of community in the formation of memories and shared perspectives. Significantly, my findings aligned with those of sociologist Maurice Halbwachs who argued that collective memory is socially constructed and that 'while the collective memory endures and draws strength from its base in a coherent body of people, it is the individuals as group members who remember'.⁵ That is, while the experiences of each of the men in my cohort were different—they had different jobs and came from different cultural backgrounds, for example—they also shared a great deal in the way that they narrated their lives. They remembered as individuals but within the context of being members of the Petone Workingmen's Club. This stands as a testament to the context that the workingmen's club provided for interviewing men and its place in shaping the telling of their stories. When it comes to memory, 'individuals being located in a specific group context, draw on that context to remember and recreate the past'.⁶ It was clear that the group context of the Petone Workingmen's club, whether as a physical site where memories were made and men were interviewed or the psychological group context that being a member bestowed upon them, had a great influence on my cohort's recollections

Overall, my interviewees were complicated. They were sometimes brash and sometimes reserved. Sometimes the men I spoke to could speak for long stretches of time unprompted and sometimes they did not want to speak any longer. Oral history theory allows the interviewer to make human complication meaningful. By focussing on the way men framed themselves and me in their stories, this thesis has embraced the complexities involved in remembering the past.

⁵ Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

⁶ Lewis A. Coser, 'Introduction', in Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, trans. Lewis A. Coser (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 22.

Historiography

This thesis adds to existing work on New Zealand masculinity—most prominently Jock Phillips’ *A Man’s Country*—by inserting lived experience into the narrative. Deborah Montgomerie called for the use of oral history in the study of New Zealand masculinity to ‘flesh out the written record’ and look to men ‘who chose to deviate from the norm’.⁷ This thesis is such an oral history.

This project has brought twentieth-century working-class New Zealand men into the spotlight. Previous histories have placed men in a Grand Narrative of New Zealand history, starting with pioneering explorers and ending with beer-drinking rugby players. Oral histories and other studies that focus on lived experience have the capacity to pick up those overlooked when we focus on a Grand Narrative. By looking on working-class men in particular, this thesis has also shown that not all men experienced the world in the same way, and that working-class men exhibited a masculinity that was particular to them. A masculinity that drew on inherited and contemporary discourses of gender, and saw a direct link between masculinity and work (similar to the findings in earlier studies in Labour history).

This thesis also showed that my interviewees occupied an important inter-generational space. The men in my interviews were born after World War II, but before 1960—they were caught between WWII masculinity and today’s ‘sensitive new age guy’. This intergenerational space allows us to observe how expectations of men have changed over time and how those changes were understood. Generational space is often thought of as discrete—people are either ‘baby-boomers’ or ‘generation Xers’. My interviewees occupied a space in between categories, borrowing both inherited ideas of masculinity and the ideas of both younger and older generations when they told their stories.

Implications

While my study focused on men, studies that also include women’s memories would enrich studies of masculinity greatly. The inclusion of women would facilitate comparison between men and women’s experiences, revealing more about their shared experiences and/or differences in understanding. Such oral histories would also provide an understanding of masculinity from a female perspective. Lastly, of course women and men are not isolated in reality—they exist together. It makes sense, therefore, for oral historians in the future to work with them together.

⁷ Deborah Montgomerie, review of *A Man’s Country: The Image of the Pākehā Male*, 189.

Oral histories with an inter-generational approach would also be valuable. Exploring the expectations placed on men over several generations, despite how arbitrarily those ‘generations’ might be delineated, draws attention to changes over time and how those changes have been understood. If such oral histories were conducted *within families*, we might also gain an understanding of how masculinities are inherited. As we have seen in this thesis, men were not only impacted by models of masculinity they lived with, but those that they are continuing live alongside and those inherited from their parents.

More work is also required on Workingmen’s clubs, especially by oral historians. Workingmen’s clubs have a different history from that of pubs, and are embedded with cultural meanings and unwritten social codes that should be more deeply explored. This thesis focused on workingmen’s clubs as a site of working-class, masculine community. More specifically, workingmen’s clubs are, in their very nature, a bridge between work and leisure, and support a certain communal identity. In terms of oral histories, workingmen’s clubs facilitate community, conversation, and recollection while being devoted to a working-class. In this sense, these sites provide rich locations for oral history interviews and an exciting cohort of interviewees. If oral historians are concerned with locating working-class culture—what Paul Willis called ‘the bricks and mortar of our most commonplace understandings, feelings and responses’—and telling untold histories, workingmen’s clubs must surely feature in historical studies.⁸ For club members, story-telling is a day-to-day occurrence around a bar leaner with friends. It is up to historians to make sure these stories are incorporated in our understanding of the past.

At the beginning of my research for this thesis, my interviewees were somewhat reluctant when they were asked to give their life story. Most men quipped that their history might not be very interesting to me, or might not be much help to my studies, but they were good enough to sit down and give it to me anyway. In the event, they emerged as skilful and engaging narrators, whose stories provided an insight and richness just as worthy of adding to the historical record as any other. What emerges most strongly from the oral histories presented in this thesis is the way interviewees could reflect upon the past and present in their own lives and identify changes in their own perspectives.

⁸ Paul Willis, ‘Shop-Floor Culture, Masculinity and the Wage Form’, in *Working-Class Culture: Studies in History and Theory*, (eds.) John Clarke, Charles Critcher and Richard Johnson (London: Hutchison & Co., 1979), 185-186.

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