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Risky masculinities: young men, risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity

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Thesis Certification

I, Adam James Rogan, declare that this thesis, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Humanities and Social Inquiry, University of Wollongong, is wholly my own work unless otherwise referenced of acknowledged. The document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Abstract

Young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is now recognised as a significant public health issue for communities and societies throughout the world. These two practices often lead to a range of serious negative outcomes not only for the participants themselves, but also other individuals and wider society. Drawing on a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with young Australian men, this research examines the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as a display of hegemonic masculinity. The concept of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there exists a legitimate form of masculinity within a given social and historical context that is positioned as dominant over all women, and all other forms of lesser masculinity. The aim of this research is to explore young men's understandings of risky drinking and public violence and how these practices may be drawn on to construct and perform legitimate and empowered masculine identities. Through their engagement in risky drinking and public violence, young men are able to enact culturally legitimate masculinities and distance themselves from subordinate and marginalised masculinities. The engagement of young men in these practices also sustains and reproduces gendered power inequalities that see men positioned as dominant over women, and some men positioned as dominant over others. This critical examination of the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity illuminates the importance of acknowledging the gendered nature of risk and risky practice, and the ways in which young men's engagement in risky practice is informed by dominant ideologies of masculinity.

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This thesis is dedicated to the life and memory of Thomas Kelly.

1. Risky Masculinities

The widespread engagement of young men in risky drinking and public violence has emerged as a prominent concern for many within the contemporary social order. In many of the advanced democracies of the early twenty-first century there is a great deal of public interest and debate surrounding young men's engagement in excessive alcohol consumption and acts of public violence, and the adverse consequences that arise as a direct result of their participation in these practices. Young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is now widely acknowledged as leading to a range of serious short-term and long-term harms for individuals, and as a significant contributing factor for a broad range of public health issues that have serious impacts within societies in general, including road accidents, alcohol-related violence, and trauma-related hospital admissions (Kelly et al. 2011). In Australia, research consistently indicates that the overwhelming majority of those who engage in these practices are young men, with young males participating in disproportionately greater levels of risky drinking and public violence more frequently and to a greater extent than all other demographics in society, and suffering more negative outcomes as a result (ABS 2008; 2009; 2012; 2014; AIHW 2007; 2008; 2011a; 2011b; 2014). The same patterns are also true for most other developed and developing societies across the globe (Belknap 2014; Heidensohn & Gelsthorpe 2012; Krug et al. 2002; Leigh 1999; Ray 2011; Wechsler et al. 1994). Young men, it appears, have a distinct and direct relationship with risky drinking and with public violence. The consistent over-representation of young men in such practices suggests that gender is an important factor that must be considered, and that notions of masculinity may play a significant role in contributing to the widespread engagement of young men in these risky practices.

In recent years, there has been a sharp increase in interest and concern with the problem of risky drinking and public violence among young men. In particular, there has been significant increase in interest regarding the apparent rise of 'alcohol-fuelled violence'[1] and the seemingly overarching increase in excessive drinking and physical assaults among young men, especially in and around the public domain. As a result, there has emerged an obvious and palpable moral panic (Cohen 2002; Tomsen 1997) in regards to risky drinking and public violence among young men, and the serious negative outcomes that come as a result of young men's engagement in these practices. At the national level, a number of high profile incidents have contributed to this increased interest in the problem of risky drinking and public violence among young men. The most notable and poignant of these is the case of Thomas Kelly. At just after 10pm on Saturday 7 July 2012, Thomas Kelly, 18 years of age, was walking with his girlfriend down the main street of Kings Cross, Sydney, New South Wales, a popular drinking precinct, when in an apparently unprovoked attack he was king-hit in the face as he talked on his mobile phone. He fell to the ground, hitting his head on the footpath, and as a result received serious head injuries. Thomas Kelly never regained consciousness and died on Monday evening, 9 July 2012, at St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst. The perpetrator, Kieran Loveridge, also 18 years of age, reported being highly intoxicated at the time of the attack and was subsequently charged with murder and four other counts of assault for similar unrelated violent incidences on the same evening. He is currently serving 7 years and 2 months for the combined manslaughter of Thomas Kelly and the four other unrelated assaults (Quilter 2012; 2014). Whilst this case was not the first, and most certainly will not be the last, it brought to attention the pervasive problems of excessive drinking and public violence among young men, and painfully highlighted the serious and often severe consequences that come as a direct result of young men's engagement in these practices.

[1] The phrase 'alcohol-fuelled violence' is one that has been taken up widely within social discourses on risky drinking and public violence, especially within the mass media. It attributes acts of violence that occur in public primarily to alcohol use and intoxication, and as such locates risky drinking as the main contributing factor underlying incidences of public violence (see Vumbaca 2013)

Extensive education strategies have been devised by governments across the world to target risky drinking and public violence among young people. In Australia, initiatives such as the *Don't Turn A Night Out Into A Nightmare* campaign (NSW Department of Health 2009) and the *What Are You Doing To Yourself* campaign (Australian Government 2009) have targeted risky drinking amongst young people. Others have targeted young men's engagement in public violence, such as the *One Punch* campaign (NSW Government 2012) and the *Stop Before It Gets Ugly* campaign (NSW Government 2014). These strategies have taken a particular approach to the problem of risk-taking among young people, aiming to educate risk-takers about the negative consequences of risk in order to effect behaviour change. However, the effectiveness of these risk-reduction education strategies has recently come under question, with research indicating they are having only a modest impact (Ipsos-Eureka 2009: 9-11), with some improvements but also some deteriorations. Furthermore, there have also been a range of changes implemented to existing legislation and policy in order to address the problems associated with risky drinking and public violence amongst young people, especially young men. Most recently, the NSW Government has controversially introduced a range of new laws in relation to alcohol consumption and acts of public violence, including a new 20 year maximum sentence for anyone who physically assaults another who dies as a result of the assault, the implementation of lockout laws that restrict the service of alcohol after certain times, increased police powers in regards to drug and alcohol testing, earlier closing times for bottle shops and liquor stores, and the power to issue precinct bans for troublemakers for up to 48 hours. These education and legislative strategies are part of a broad pattern of governmental action regarding risky drinking and public violence, one that recognises the serious costs and consequences of young men's engagement in these practices, not only for young men themselves, but also for other individuals and across wider society.

There is no doubt that these strategies make up an important part of addressing the problems associated with risky drinking and public violence amongst young men. Yet we know little about

how and why young men choose to engage in risky drinking and public violence, the meanings and understandings young men attribute to these practices, nor about how their notions and beliefs regarding gender and masculinity inform their engagement in such practices. Over the past three decades, existing research on both risky drinking and public violence as social practices has demonstrated clear evidence to suggest these practices are in fact gendered; practices that are engaged in by men and women in differing ways to different extents. Furthermore, the research also indicates that it is *young* men who are the most predominant force in regards to excessive alcohol use and acts of public violence. Whilst it is imperative to implement strategies that aim to address the significant damage caused by young men's engagement in these practices, the fact that risky drinking and public violence continue to permeate night-time economies both here and abroad suggests that it is crucial that research which aims to reduce the negative impact of these practices at both the individual and societal level be further strengthened by critical analyses that aim to provide deeper insight into young men's continued engagement in risky drinking and public violence despite the persistence of advertising campaigns that seeks to encourage them otherwise.

The relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the expression of hegemonic masculinity is one that has received little attention in the existing research into these practices. The central aim of this research is to bridge this lacuna in the literature by conducting a qualitative analysis of the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity amongst young men. It aims primarily to address the need for in-depth critical analysis of the gendered nature of risky drinking and public violence among young men. Drawing on a theoretical framework based on the critical study of men and masculinities, and also sociocultural understandings of risk, this research will argue that hegemonic masculinity plays a significant role in young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and that there exists an important relationship between young men, hegemonic masculinity, and risky practice that must be critically examined in order to come to a greater

understanding of young men's widespread engagement in these practices. It proposes that risky drinking and public violence can be understood as gendered practices; practices that can be drawn on in the symbolic construction and performance of hegemonic masculinity. In this sense, young men's engagement in these practices can be understood as a 'doing' of masculinity, where young men participate in risky drinking and public violence in order to construct legitimate masculine identities that align with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and which distance them from subordinate and marginalised masculinities.

Theoretical Framework

In order to critically examine young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the relationship between these practices and masculinity, this research is inspired and informed by the theory of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is widely acknowledged as being essential to the critical study of men and masculinities, and to the broader understanding of gender and gendered power. The concept suggests that there exists a legitimate form of masculinity within a given gender order that is positioned as dominant over all women, and all other forms of lesser masculinities. The concept emerged largely from the work of Raewyn (formerly R.W or Robert) Connell (1987; 1995) and has become the theoretical cornerstone upon which the discursive framework now known as the critical study of men[2] has been built. However, over the past thirty years as the research on hegemonic masculinity has expanded the concept has attracted serious criticism for being used in ways which are often confused and contradictory, slipping between various meanings and interpretations (Beasley 2008; Demetriou 2001; Flood 2002; Hearn 2004; 2012; Jefferson 2002; Schippers 2007). These criticisms have pointed to the problems of essentialism, reification, and ambiguity within the literature, and have argued that the concept itself has had too limited a focus. In an important re-thinking of the concept, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) acknowledge the problems with

[2] The study of men and masculinity has been developed under a variety of differing names, which have recently been identified as being too limited and ambiguous (see Hearn 1996; 2004). As such, a more accurate title for the discursive framework was proposed, 'Critical Studies on Men' (Hearn 2004). It is this title that this thesis will henceforth give to the discourse that aims to critically address the study of men and masculinities.

some usages of the concept yet maintain that a sophisticated and clear grasp of the central aspects of hegemonic masculinity is still crucial in conducting critical analyses of gender and gendered power relations. In light of this re-thinking, it has become apparent that a clearer definition of what hegemonic masculinity actually refers to is needed. As Hearn (2012: 590) asks, 'does it refer to cultural aspirations, representations, everyday practices, or institutional structures'? In other words, is it a process, an action, an ideal, a value, or all of the above? The time has come to be more precise and specific when it comes to defining what hegemonic masculinity refers to, and how it should be used within subsequent theorisation. With this in mind, this research has defined hegemonic masculinity as having two distinct yet theoretically interconnected components; a cultural component; and a political component. Together, these two mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity act to ensure the continued legitimisation and authorisation of inequalities within the gender order that see the overall dominance of men over women in society, and some men positioned as dominant over other men. Whilst these two mechanisms of hegemonic masculinity will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two, it is useful to briefly introduce these interrelated components here at the outset of this research.

As a cultural mechanism, hegemonic masculinity acts as a cultural ideal, a model of masculinity that is ideologically acknowledged and approved as being the most legitimate and authentic form of masculinity within a given society. As Connell (1987: 110) indicates, at any given time one form of masculinity is culturally exalted and positioned as dominant over all others. This form of masculinity sits over and above subordinate, complicit, marginalised and protest masculinities, and also all women, as the most acceptable and desirable form of manhood within a particular society. Central to the workings of hegemonic masculinity as a cultural mechanism is the idea of legitimacy (Hearn 2012: 594). In order for specific configurations of masculinity to become widely acknowledged as the most acceptable and desirable they must first be culturally endorsed as being the most legitimate form of masculine practice within a specific social setting. Within hegemonic gender systems, men who desire to be seen as enacting legitimate

masculinities must express particular forms of masculine practice that align with the culturally accepted hegemonic masculine ideal. In turn, the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is achieved through generating aspiration and desire within men to align themselves with this ideal, with any deviations or departures from the desired hegemonic characteristics perceived as a failure and a lack of legitimate masculinity.

Whilst it is certainly cultural, hegemonic masculinity is ultimately and most importantly political; a way of obtaining and maintaining control of systems of gender and exercising power and domination over subordinate factions (Donaldson 1993; Howson 2006). As Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985: 592) observe, hegemonic masculinity is centrally concerned with the institutionalisation of male dominance and female subordination, and involves a specific strategy for the subordination of women. According to Connell's (1995: 77) original definition, hegemonic masculinity can be understood as the configuration of gender practice that ensures the 'legitimacy of patriarchy' and the continued domination of men and the subordination of women in society. Hegemonic masculinity therefore describes a gender system in which a particular configuration of masculinity is politically positioned as dominant, and therefore exercises power and authority over women and all other forms of masculinity in society. It is a form of masculinity that gains its legitimacy and authority through the ideological persuasion of the greater part of the population, through social institutions, social practices, cultural values and norms, convincing the wider society that hegemonic masculinity represents the authentic and legitimate masculine ideal. This hegemonic pattern of masculinity asserts a gender order in which men are dominant over women, and through which patriarchal principles are made to appear normal and natural, and are reinforced and maintained.

One further point that must be acknowledged is that whilst hegemonic masculinity certainly involves cultural legitimacy and political authority, it also always refers back to the social; the actual configurations of practice embodied and enacted by men. As Hearn (2004: 59) rightly

argues, a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of hegemonic masculinity requires a shift from a focus on masculinity to a focus on the practices and understandings of men themselves. It has been established that the defining characteristics of hegemonic masculinity are not always the most common or the most comfortable for men to identify with at the everyday level (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 832). In fact, hegemonic masculinity may not actually exist in any pure form found empirically in the here and now but rather sit above men as some form of aspiration goal or 'empty signifier' that only a small number of men, if any, actually fulfil (Hearn 2012: 594; Howson 2009: 18). So whilst it is undoubtedly important to examine the broader macro nature of hegemonic masculinity as it plays out within existing gender systems, it is imperative to do so in ways that acknowledge the actual configurations of social practice as expressed in the lives of actual men. With these things in mind, this research will draw on the theoretical understandings of hegemonic masculinity to examine the ways in which young men's engagement in two social practices, risky drinking and public violence, is shaped and informed by hegemonic masculinity. That is, the ways in which risky drinking and public violence are used by young men to express culturally legitimate masculine identities, and to reinforce and maintain a gender system that ensures the overall subordination of women and the domination of certain configurations of masculinity over all other masculinities.

In line with social constructivist perspectives, this research takes the position that gender is always a 'doing'; something that is produced, performed, and constructed in everyday social practice and interaction (Butler 1990; West & Zimmerman 1987). Masculinity, in this sense, is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon embedded in social practice; a process that involves presenting or signifying particular behaviours or actions that are seen as expressions of masculinity. This research will argue that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as ways of 'doing' masculinity; configurations of practice that can be drawn on to enact and perform specific masculine identities. In line with Messerschmidt's (1997: 2005; 2013) theory of structured action, this research will argue also

that the meanings young men ascribe to their gender practices are formed under specific social and structural constraints. Thus, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as the outcome of the meanings young men attach to these social practices, which themselves are shaped and informed by broader hegemonic ideologies. Ultimately, this research will take the position that masculinity is a situated social and interactional accomplishment, where men are constantly held 'accountable' (West & Zimmerman 1987) for their masculine practice and as a result engage in these practices differently in different socio-structural situations and contexts.

This research also draws on theoretical understandings of risk, and argues that risk can be understood as gendered practice. Sociocultural understandings of risk argue that risks play a significant role in the understanding of self and selfhood in the social and material worlds (Lupton 1999a: 14). According to these perspectives, risk participation and the ways in which individuals negotiate risk and risky practice is central to the creation and formation of self-identity. As Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) have noted, the self is now seen as a reflexive project in late modernity, with individuals constructing their own 'reflexive biographies' within a global social climate that has become increasingly individualised and that emphasizes human agency. It is in this context that risk and risky practice become important resources for the creation of individual identities. Similarly, if gender can be identified as being socially constructed through social practice and interaction (West & Zimmerman 1987), risk and risky practices can be identified as being gendered practice; practices through which gendered identities are formed and performed. Risk, in this sense, can be understood as a way of 'doing' gender. To recognise the importance of social, cultural, and political influences in regards to risk opens up the possibility of beginning to unpack the gendered nature of risk, to acknowledge that notions of gender may play a significant role in individual and broader conceptualisations of risk. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to examine the socio-political relationship between risk and gender; in particular, the ways in which risk and risky practice relates to

notions of hegemony and hegemonic masculinity within existing gender systems. Ultimately, the conceptualisation of risk as gendered practice in this research will allow for an analysis of the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a display of hegemonic masculinity.

Researching Risky Drinking and Public Violence

There are existing bodies of research that examine both risky drinking and public violence as specific social practices. In regards to risky drinking, the existing research indicates that patterns of excessive alcohol use are highly gendered, and that risky drinking is particularly prevalent amongst young men. In almost every society, young men are consistently found to consume alcohol more frequently and in greater volumes than all other groups in society, including their female counterparts and all other male demographics (Ahlström et al. 2007; Clements 1999; Kuntsche et al. 2004; O'Malley & Johnston 2002; Read et al. 2002; Valliant & Scanlan 1996; Wilsnack et al. 2000). Whilst there is evidence of a recent convergence in drinking patterns among young men and women in some regions, with young women now consuming alcohol at greater levels than previous generations (Demant 2007; Lindsay 2006; Roche et al. 2007; Roche & Deehan 2002), young men remain the predominant force in regards to excessive alcohol consumption (Christie-Mizell & Peralta 2009). As Mullen et al. (2007: 151) note, risky drinking remains a male-dominated activity with men out-numbering women in almost every category of drinking behaviour. Recent overviews of the existing research reiterate that young males continue to drink on average a significantly higher number of drinks per drinking session than young females and all other social groups, and do so more frequently (Ahlström et al. 2007; Babor et al. 2010; Kelly et al. 2011).

A substantial body of research has examined risky drinking and excessive alcohol consumption patterns among young people. This research has investigated young people's engagement in risky drinking in societies and communities across the world; in America (Peralta 2007;

Wechsler et al. 1994; Wechsler & Nelson 2001; Wechsler & Kuo 2000); the United Kingdom (Brain 2000; Measham 2006; Martinic & Measham 2008; Murgraff et al. 1999; Szmigin et al. 2008); Europe (Ahlström et al. 2001; Demant & Järvinen 2006; Järvinen & Room 2007; Kolind 2011; Mäkelä et al. 2006; Room & Bullock 2002; Tryggvesson 2004; Tryggvesson & Bullock 2006); Australia (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Chikritzhs et al. 2003; Lindsay 2006; 2009; 2012; Roche et al. 2007); New Zealand (Campbell 2000; Kypri et al. 2004; Penwarden 2010); and in various other locations including Canada and Africa (Leatherdale et al. 2008; Kaminer & Dixon 1995; Obot 2006; 2007).

Within this literature, a small number of studies have focused on the relationship between risky drinking and gender. The most notable of these is the work of Robert Peralta (2007; 2008) and colleagues (Peralta & Cruz 2006; Peralta & Jauk 2011; Peralta et al. 2011; Peralta et al. 2010; Peralta et al. 2010), which has explored the influence of gender in American drinking subcultures and the ways in which legitimate forms of masculinity can be constructed through alcohol consumption practices. There is also a small body of research that has examined the gendered nature of risky drinking amongst European youth (Ahlström et al. 2007; Ahlström et al. 2001; Mäkelä et al. 2006), and young men in the United Kingdom (De Visser & Smith 2007a; 2007b; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Harnett et al. 2000; Mullen et al. 2007), and New Zealand (Campbell 2000; Penwarden 2010). In Australia, there are a surprisingly limited number of studies that take the relationship between alcohol and gender as a primary focus of interest. Whilst there are numerous studies that examine the overall alcohol consumption practices of Australians, a relative few view such practices through the lens of gender. That being said, there are a few notable exceptions, including the work of Lindsay (2006; 2009; 2012) and other mainly government funded studies (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Kelly et al. 2011; Roche et al. 2007).

In regards to public violence, the gendered nature of violence has also been well established. Whilst many who examine patterns of violence in society acknowledge that some women

commit acts of violence, and that clearly not all men are violent (Hearn 1998), most recognise that violence is an overwhelmingly masculine activity. As Hall (2002:36) states, 'the claim that men commit most acts of physical violence is possibly the nearest that criminology has come to producing an indisputable fact'. Men are the experts and the specialists when it comes to the doing of violence (Hearn 1996), and are statistically over-represented in all major violent crime categories across most societies (Flood 2011; 2014; Ray 2011). Violence has also been widely recognised as being disproportionately committed by young people (Krug et al. 2002). As Ward (2014: 27) observes, young people make up the overwhelming majority of perpetrators and victims of violence. Research demonstrates that young men commit the overwhelming majority of violent acts, and are also the most likely victims of violent crimes. Although the peak age for violence varies across times and locations, rates of homicide, arrests for violent crime, and self-reported violence typically peak in the late teens and early twenties (Farrington 1986).

There is a substantial body of research that has established a relationship between violence and masculinity. For example, the important work of James Messerschmidt (1993; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2004; 2005; 2013) has established that violence serves as an important resource for doing gender, a practice through which masculinity can be performed and constructed. Another important body of work is that of Ken Polk (1994; 1995; 1999) who claims that there exists a subculture of violence among young men, where violence becomes understood as a part of the lifestyle and a tool for problem solving in tense circumstances. In regards to public violence more specifically, there are a number of studies that have examined the relationship between gender and acts of public violence. The most notable of these is those of Stephen Tomsen (1997a; 1997b; 2005) and colleagues (Homel et al. 1992; Mason & Tomsen 1997; Tomsen et al. 1991). These pioneering studies document the dynamic forces at play in regards to young men's engagement in public violence, the contextual factors that contribute to such violence, and the carnivalesque qualities that such incidences offer to young men's social experiences. Other studies such as those by Canaan (1996) and Baron et al. (2001) have

suggested that the engagement in public violence by young men from lower socioeconomic and marginal racial groups may be a means of affirming their place in the broader social order. More recently, a number of studies have explored the nature of public violence in regards to the shifting landscapes of night-time economies (Ray 2011; Winlow 2001; Winlow & Hall 2006).

Overall, these studies have undoubtedly made important contributions to the greater understanding of risky drinking and public violence as social practice, with some explicitly exploring the relationship between these practices and notions of gender. However, there remains a need to examine in greater detail the nature of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and the ways in which young men's participation in these practices can be understood as a display of hegemonic masculinity. Whilst there are many studies that examine the role of alcohol consumption among young people, there is limited research that explores risky or excessive drinking patterns in particular, nor the relationship between risky drinking and hegemonic masculinity. Similarly, the research into masculinity and violence is quite substantial, yet studies that examine acts of public violence are in fact quite rare, let alone those that focus on the ways in which acts of public violence can be understood as acts of hegemonic masculinity. Whilst it is important to acknowledge the value of the existing research into risky drinking among young men, young men's engagement in public violence, and the relationship between these practices and gender, it is crucial to continue to critically examine the role of hegemonic masculinity in the everyday lives and practices of young men, especially in relation to practices that continue to have obvious adverse consequences not only for young men, but for wider society.

The research conducted in this study marks an important contribution to these existing discourses in that it addresses the need to examine more closely the dual problems of risky drinking and public violence among young men, and the associations between these practices and young men's construction of masculine identities, particularly hegemonic masculinity. In a

socio-political climate of increased concern and apprehension regarding the continued prevalence of young men's engagement in these practices, and the various negative impacts of such practices not only for young men but for other individuals and for wider society, this study will provide an important and timely analysis of young men's engagement in both risky drinking and public violence, and the relationship between these practices and masculinity. Whilst the existing research tends to focus on either risky drinking or public violence as individual practices, this study will examine young men's engagement in both risky drinking and public violence and the intersections between these practices in regards to the construction of masculine identities. To my knowledge, this research will be the first to look at risky drinking and public violence specifically, and to examine the relationship between these two risky practices and hegemonic masculinity. This research will also be one of the first Australian studies to examine the important relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity among young men. It offers an important contribution to both national and international research that examines the influence of hegemonic masculinity in the everyday lives and practices of men. Furthermore, it provides important data that will give greater insight into the nature of risky drinking and public violence among young men, the meanings and understandings they attribute to these practices, and the ways in which notions of gender and masculinity influence their engagement in these practices. In so doing, the central aim of this research is to provide a more comprehensive understanding of why young men are the predominant force when it comes to risky drinking and public violence, why they continue to engage in these practices, and the underlying factors that contribute to the prevalence of these practices among young men.

Risky Masculinities: A Qualitative Analysis

The principal aim of this research is to critically examine the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a performance or construction of hegemonic masculinity. Its key objective is to explore the relationship between hegemonic

masculinity and risky practice among young men, with the aim of coming to a greater understanding of the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as a way in which to align themselves with hegemonic masculinity and distance themselves from subordinate and marginalised masculinities. At its core, this research is guided by a number of key research questions. Primarily, this research asks 'in what ways can young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as a display of hegemonic masculinity'? In relation to this question, this research is interested in the ways in which young men draw on risky drinking and public violence to construct culturally legitimate masculinities. It is also interested in the ways in which young men's engagement in these practices contributes to the subordination of some men in relation to other men, and the overall domination of men and subordination of women.

In order to explore the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity among young men, this research has employed a dual-method qualitative approach. Drawing on a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with young Australian men, this research presents a qualitative analysis of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and the ways in which young men draw on these practices to lay claim to legitimate and dominant masculine identities. In order to attain a greater understanding of why young men engage in these risky practices, and the impact of these practices within broader gender systems, it is important to begin to explore the underlying meanings, beliefs, and understandings young men attribute to such practices, and the ways in which young men attribute masculinity to risky practices. The emphasis on meaning and interpretation found in qualitative methods provides the appropriate methodological means through which to achieve this objective. Furthermore, it also provides a way in which to document the patterns and social organisation of risky drinking and public violence among young men, drawing on the subjective experiences of young men to offer significant insights into these configurations of risky practice in contemporary social contexts.

For the sake of clarity, it is necessary to explicitly outline a number of key concepts and terminologies that will be used commonly throughout this research. Firstly, the term 'risk' or 'risky practice' will be used to refer to any practice that can be objectively defined as risky, that is, likely to cause harm or increase the likelihood of harm for an individual or individuals. In line with this understanding, both risky drinking and public violence are objectively defined in this research as risky practices. The term 'risky drinking' will be used to refer to a pattern of alcohol consumption that leads to high levels of intoxication over a short period of time and increases the likelihood of alcohol-related harm or injury. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, it is related to a number of other well-known terms used to describe excessive alcohol use, including 'binge drinking', 'heavy episodic drinking', 'high-risk drinking' and other variations (National Health and Medical Research Council 2009; Murgraff et al. 1999). The term 'public violence' refers to an act of violence that takes place within a public space. In this research, public violence is defined as the intentional use of physical force or power by an individual or group of individuals against another person or persons that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury or death, and that takes place in the public domain.

The structure of this research is as follows. Chapter Two, 'Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity', introduces the sophisticated yet complex theory of hegemonic masculinity. The chapter begins by tracing the historical development of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, outlining its key theoretical claims and the impact these claims have for broad understandings of masculinity, gender, and gendered power. It presents a critical analysis of the recent rethinking and reformulation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, examining the critiques and criticisms directed at the concept and evaluating its usefulness in light of these criticisms. The chapter also presents a model of hegemonic masculinity based on two distinct yet theoretically interconnected components; a cultural component and a political component. The chapter concludes by exploring the research that examines the relationship between young men and

hegemonic masculinity, looking in particular at the ways in which young men draw on risk and risky practice to construct legitimate masculinities.

Chapter Three, 'Theorising Risk', presents a systematic examination of the theoretical understandings of risk. It begins by exploring the historical origins of the concept of risk and the various shifts in meaning and definition of the concept over time. The chapter then conducts an analysis of the theoretical understanding of risk, outlining the key ways in which it has been understood within existing risk discourses. Most significantly, the chapter begins to unpack the gendered nature of risk. It draws attention to the ways in which risk and risky practices can be identified as forms of gender practice which play a significant role in the construction of gendered identities, in particular the construction of hegemonic masculinities among young men.

In Chapter Four, 'Risky Drinking and Public Violence', the aim is to conduct a sociological analysis of the two specific risky practices that are the focus of this research, risky drinking and public violence, and to examine the ways in which these practices are drawn on by young men in the construction of masculine identities. It explores the existing research on risky drinking and public violence, the relationship between these practices and gender, and the ways in which young men's engagement in these practices is shaped and informed by hegemonic masculinity. The chapter also explores the intersections between risky drinking and public violence, focusing on existing theories regarding the relationship between these two practices and the complex correlations between alcohol use and violence.

Chapter Five, 'Young Masculinities: A Methodological Approach' sets out the specific methodological framework of this study. It explores the ways in which the study of men and masculinities has been approached within the existing scholarship, with a particular focus on the use of in-depth interviewing, focus groups, and the integration of the two methods. The

chapter then outlines the ways in which young men's accounts of their engagement in risky drinking and public violence provides valuable insight into the influence of hegemonic masculinity at the individual level, and more importantly, the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity within gender systems as a whole. Lastly, the chapter provides detail on the particular research design and methods used in this study. In effect, this chapter shifts the focus from theoretical and conceptual understandings of hegemonic masculinity, risk, and risky practices to the analysis of these concepts as they play out within the everyday lives and lived experiences of young men.

Chapter Six, 'Young Men, Risky Drinking, and Public Violence', presents a sociological mapping of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence. Firstly, the chapter provides a detailed account of the practice of risky drinking as reported by the young men in this study. It explores the particular modes and patterns of alcohol consumption described by the participants in this study, and examines the meanings and understandings young men attribute to this practice. Secondly, the chapter explores young men's engagement in public violence, examining the practice of public violence among young men and documenting the social organisation of young men's engagement in such practice. Lastly, this chapter examines the relationship between risky drinking and public violence, focusing on the intersections and associations between these practices and the ways in which they co-occur in the lives and social practice of the young men in this study.

Chapter Seven, 'Risk and Masculine Legitimacy', explores the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a way in which to construct culturally legitimate masculinities. The chapter begins by re-examining the cultural forces of hegemonic masculinity and the importance of the hegemonic processes of legitimacy, complicity, and consent. It then explores the dominant cultural ideals of masculinity reported by the young men in this study. The chapter then moves toward an examination of the

sociocultural ideals of masculinity in regards to risky drinking, and the ways in which young men's claim to masculine legitimacy is contingent upon the ways in which they engage in this practice. Lastly, this chapter examines the cultural ideals surrounding young men's engagement in public violence and the ways in which such practices can be used to construct and perform legitimate masculine identities.

Chapter Eight, 'Risk and the Masculine Hierarchy', examines the dynamic forces of power at play within the masculine hierarchy, and the ways in which young men's overall positioning within this hierarchy is contingent upon the ways in which they engage in risky drinking and public violence. The chapter begins by exploring the patterns of domination, subordination, and alliance between men within the gender order. It then examines young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the ways in which their participation in these practices contributes to the positioning of some masculinities as dominant and others as subordinate and inferior. Furthermore, the chapter offers a comparison of the two practices, exploring the similarities and differences between risky drinking and public violence in relation to young men's positioning in masculine hierarchies.

In Chapter Nine, 'Risk and the Legitimacy of Patriarchy', the aim is to examine the relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the reproduction of patriarchy in contemporary systems of gender. Firstly, the chapter re-examines the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and the legitimacy of patriarchy, exploring the relations of power and domination between men and women in society and the ways in which men's power over women is established, reproduced, and legitimated. Secondly, the chapter provides a detailed analysis of young men's engagement in risky drinking and the ways in which this practice is organised in ways that sustain and uphold broad patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant and women as subordinate. Lastly, this chapter examines the ways in

which young men's engagement in public violence acts to ensure the domination of men and the overall oppression and subordination of women in society.

In Chapter Ten, 'The Empty Signifier', the aim is to draw together the key findings of the research and present an overall analysis of the relationship between young men, risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity. It outlines the key findings of the study and the way in which these findings contribute to the greater understanding of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and more importantly, the relationship between these practices and hegemonic masculinity. Furthermore, the chapter reflects of the significance of these findings for research and policy regarding young men, risky drinking, and public violence, and outlines directions for future research.

2. Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity

The theory of hegemonic masculinity is widely acknowledged as being imperative to the critical study of men and masculinities, and to the broader understanding of gender and gendered power. The concept in many ways revolutionised the theoretical approach to the study of masculinity and gender, providing a comprehensive framework for the analysis of the relations of power and authority between men and women and between masculinities and femininities within the gender system. This chapter will introduce the theory of hegemonic masculinity, presenting a critical examination of its central concepts and evaluating the usefulness of the concept in light of recent critiques and criticisms. The chapter begins by tracing the historical development of the concept, outlining its key theoretical claims and the impact these claims have upon understandings of masculinity and gender. The chapter then moves towards an examination of the various critiques and criticisms that have been directed at the concept and the subsequent rethinking of the hegemonic masculinity within the broader critical studies on men discourse. In so doing, it presents a model of hegemonic masculinity based on two distinct yet theoretically and practically interconnected components; a cultural component and a political component. Together, these components of hegemonic masculinity act to ensure the overall legitimacy of patriarchy and the authorisation of gendered inequalities that see men collectively positioned as dominant over women in society, and a specific configuration of masculinity positioned as dominant over all other masculinities. The chapter concludes by exploring the influence of hegemonic masculinity in the lives of young men, examining the ways in which young men draw on specific social practices to construct and perform legitimate masculine identities that align with a dominant hegemonic ideal.

The Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity

The concept of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there exists a legitimate form of masculinity within a given gender order that is positioned as dominant over all women, and all other lesser masculinities. The concept emerged largely from the work of Raewyn (formerly R.W or Robert) Connell and colleagues (Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 1983; 1987; 1995) and has become the theoretical cornerstone upon which the discursive framework now known as the critical study of men has been built. The concept takes the relations of power, authority and domination between and among men and women within systems of gender as its central focus, and opens up ways in which to critically analyse the power dynamics at play within the gender order. According to Connell's original definition:

> Hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and the subordination of women (Connell 1995: 77).

The theoretical model of hegemonic masculinity presented by Connell outlines a gender order in which a particular configuration of masculine practice is positioned as dominant within the gender hierarchy and exercises power and authority over all women and all other forms of subordinated masculinity. It is a form of masculinity that sits in contrast to other less dominant forms of masculinity and which embodies the characteristics widely accepted as representative of legitimate masculinity. Drawing on the Gramscian notion of hegemony (Gramsci 1971), Connell argues that through the hegemonic processes of consent and coercion and the ideological persuasion of the greater part of the population, hegemonic masculinity is established as the answer to the 'problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy'; that is, the justification and protection of historically established unequal power relations between men and women. Furthermore, within this gender system hegemonic masculinity is positioned as the dominant and culturally idealised form of masculinity in a given society; a model of masculinity that sits over and above men as a largely unattainable ideal. Those who are in the position to

lay claim to such masculinities are ultimately positioned at the top of the masculine hierarchy, with any deviations or departures from the hegemonic ideal deemed a failure and inevitably positioned as subordinate.

It is important to acknowledge here at the outset that the theory of hegemonic masculinity is undoubtedly complex and multi-faceted. Whilst the concept has been widely recognised as one of the most important theoretical developments in contemporary understandings of gender and gendered power, the theory itself is one that requires sophisticated and careful analysis. In recent years, numerous theorists have drawn attention to the various problems found within the theory of hegemonic masculinity and the ways in which it has been applied in subsequent research across a vast array of disciplines. In light of these criticisms, the aim of the following section of the chapter is to present a detailed account of the key theoretical claims found in the theory of hegemonic masculinity, and outline the way in which these key claims help to illuminate the dynamic forces of power and domination within the gender system as a whole.

Hegemonic Masculinity: The Key Concepts

The concept of hegemonic masculinity emerged out of the critique of sex-role theory and conceptual discussions of gender inequalities of the early 1980s. The foundations for hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical concept were laid in Carrigan, Connell and Lee's (1985) *Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity*, which heavily critiqued 'sex role theory' and proposed a new model for understanding gendered power relations. Whilst the authors approved of the shift away from sociobiological notions of gender, this critique ultimately rejected the deterministic understanding of gender as an enactment of a basic sex-role based on the subject being male or female and argued that more attention must be paid to the influence of social institutions and social structure. These beginnings were further solidified in Connell's (1987) *Gender and Power*, which developed more thoroughly the idea of hegemonic masculinity, in particular the way in which the gender system is based upon inequalities between different groups of men, and also

between men and women. These early works on hegemonic masculinity were synthesised in Connell's (1995) preeminent text *Masculinities*, in which a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding gendered power relations and the implications of these across gender systems as a whole was fully realised. The theory of hegemonic masculinity presented by Connell opened up new possibilities for understanding masculinities and femininities, and laid out a firm theoretical platform upon which a new analysis of gender and gendered power could be built.

The cornerstone of the hegemonic masculinity thesis centres on the notion that there is not one form of masculinity in society, but multiple. According to this theory, there is no one pattern of masculinity that is common to all men everywhere, but rather, in order to come to a more sophisticated understanding of the dynamics of the gender system we must speak of masculinities, not masculinity. As Connell (1995: 36; 1996: 208) highlights, it is possible for many different masculinities to be produced and constructed across different cultures, across different periods of history, and within a given social and cultural setting, and that 'within any workplace, neighbourhood, or peer group, there are likely to be different understandings of masculinity and different ways of 'doing' masculinity'. This recognition of diversity in masculinities can also be transferred to femininities, to recognise that within the gender order there are also various forms of femininity. Inherent to these understandings of gender are the concepts of social constructionism and gender performativity. The emphasis in Connell's theory of masculinity is that gender is not something that is fixed and that precedes social interaction, but rather that it is constructed through social practice and interaction, a 'configuration of practice' that is constantly produced and reproduced in social action. In this sense, the theory of hegemonic masculinity aligns itself with social constructionist perspectives on gender (see West & Zimmerman 1987), where gender is a socially constructed phenomenon embedded in both everyday social interactions between men and women and in wider collective processes and structures. Furthermore, in alignment with Butler's (1990) theoretical work regarding gender

performativity, Connell maintains that we should think of gender as a verb, something that is performed and enacted in everyday social interaction, rather than an identity that stems from innate biological qualities. Gender, in this sense, is always a 'doing'.

The recognition of masculinity as a socially constructed multiplicity is an important conceptual distinction that provides a framework for seeing the gender order as a system based on hierarchies of power. According to the theory of hegemonic masculinity, the gender order is organised around a set of relations of hierarchy and power between the multiple forms of masculinity in society, and between masculinities and femininities. In order to come to a greater understanding of the dynamic forces of power at play within systems of gender, Connell argues it is necessary to examine the various relations of alliance, domination, and subordination between the differing forms of masculinity and femininity in society. As Connell states:

> Hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities as well as in relation to women. The interplay between different forms of masculinity is an important part of how patriarchal social order works (Connell 1987: 183).

The notion of hegemonic masculinity suggests that at any given time, a specific configuration of masculine practice is culturally exalted and idealised as the most legitimate form of masculinity in society. This configuration of masculinity, hegemonic masculinity, occupies the hegemonic position in the gender order, residing at the top of the masculine hierarchy, which is a hierarchy of power (Connell 1987: 110). It is a form of masculine practice that is widely accepted as the most authentic form of masculinity in a given social and historical context. This form of masculinity acts as a kind of cultural benchmark that represents and embodies the configuration of masculinity to which all men are measured and held accountable (Howson 2009: 8). In the cultural sense, hegemonic masculinity refers to widely accepted social norms and cultural ideals regarding masculinity, the 'common-sense' or taken-for-granted ideologies of masculinity that not only establish and uphold male patriarchy and the overall domination of

men over women, and domination of some men over others, but present these ideologies as natural, and normal, and ordinary (Donaldson 1993: 645; Hearn 2012: 590).

Hegemonic masculinity also refers to the way in which a particular configuration of masculinity is able to establish and reproduce power, control, and domination over all women and over lesser masculinities. An important concept to examine here is the concept of hegemony. The term 'hegemony' finds its theoretical roots in the work of Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1971). Derived from the Ancient Greek etymon hegemonia, which meant 'to lead', the theory of hegemony formulated by Gramsci employed the use of this term to describe the processes of building and maintaining political power and authority, and the formation (and destruction) of social alliances in that process (Donaldson 1993). Gramsci's theory of hegemony originated in his analysis of class relations and the socio-cultural dynamics involved in the claiming and sustaining of a leading position in social life (Connell 1995: 77). In the *Prison Notebooks*, Gramsci (1971) argues that social authority can be understood as the product of both legitimacy and power, which are themselves understood in relation to the fundamental contradiction of hegemonic authority; consensus and coercion. It is this balance of legitimacy and power, that is, consensus and coercion, which enables true hegemony to be established. As Gramsci (1971) notes, '[a] class is dominant in two ways, i.e., 'leading' and 'dominant'. It leads the classes which are its allies, and dominates those which are its enemies'. The objective of hegemonic leadership according to Gramsci is to establish a 'hegemonic bloc' that brings together all the allied groups into alignment with the group seeking hegemony through making their understandings of society homogenous and consistent with the project of domination, a systematic process that ultimately involves subordinating some of the interests of the groups that are led (Demetriou 2001: 345). The concept of hegemony developed by Gramsci is significant in that not only does it present a model for understanding cultural control and the ways in which the fundamental principles for a dominant group become the fundamental principles across wider society, but

more importantly, it illuminates strategies for its breakdown through the mobilisation and demobilisation of whole classes (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 831; Howson 2006: 4)

In regards to the hegemony of hegemonic masculinity, Connell's central claim is that the gender order in fundamentally organised around an active struggle for dominance and power. Drawing on the theory of hegemony presented in the work of Gramsci, Connell argues that in much the same way as a ruling class is able to establish and exert ideological power and domination over subordinate factions, there is also a ruling configuration of gender practice, hegemonic masculinity, which through the hegemonic processes of consent and coercion is able to establish and reproduce its power and domination over subordinate masculinities and all femininities. Hegemonic masculinity ultimately refers to the way in which a culturally legitimate configuration of masculinity is able to establish and reproduce a gender order in which men are dominant over women and some men dominant over other men, and through which patriarchal ideologies are made to appear normal and natural, and reinforced and maintained (Hearn 2004: 54; 2012: 591). This is what Connell (1987: 184) refers to as 'ascendency achieved within a balance of forces', that is, a state of play. Here, alternative configurations and understandings of gender are subordinated rather than eliminated. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity is always centrally concerned with the ways in which men obtain and maintain social and ideological power. The gains that all men yield from the overall domination of men over women, known as the patriarchal dividend, often take the form of honour, prestige, and authority along with material gains in terms of finance and promotion. These act as a safeguard that ensures the upholding of hegemonic ideals and the institutionalisation of ideologies that guarantee the subordination of women and the dominance of men in society.

The theory of gender presented by Connell clearly locates hegemonic masculinity at the pinnacle of a gendered hierarchy of power. Beneath hegemonic masculinity, Connell argues there are four main configurations of masculinity: subordinate, marginalised, complicit and

protest masculinities. Each of these subgroups of masculinity has a specific relationship to the workings of hegemonic masculinity as a whole. Subordinate masculinity is defined by and in opposition to hegemonic masculinity in society, encompassing beliefs, values, behaviours and attitudes that do not align with the prevailing meaning of what it means to be masculine in a given society (Torres 2007). The failure of subordinate masculinities to come into alignment with the desired requirements of the hegemonic ideal positions such configurations of practice as inferior models of masculinity. Subordinate masculinities are seen as lacking in legitimate masculinity altogether, and as such are often perceived as forms of effeminacy. As Connell (1987: 186) notes, the most important feature of contemporary hegemonic masculinity is that it is heterosexual. Consequently, the main forms of subordinated masculinity are those presented by gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, and queer masculinities. To deviate in any way from the heteronormative model of gender relations presented and upheld by hegemonic masculinity is to be positioned as a subordinate minority. The masculinities presented by these men are the antithesis of hegemonic masculinity and represent all that is rejected from dominant perceptions of manliness. This is because male same-sex attraction is considered unnatural, effeminate, and non-masculine, and overtly sexual characteristics such as expressiveness, emotiveness, passivity, and domesticity are perceived as contradictory to popular conceptions of normative masculinity (Connell 1995: 78). As a result, such masculinities are denied masculine legitimacy as they contradict hegemonic conceptions of masculinity, and problematize the relationships formed between men within the confines of heteronormative masculinity (see Sedgwick 1985; 1990). However, it must be noted that these masculinities are not necessarily always subordinated, nor are they the only form of subordinated masculinity. Subordination can be a product of a range of differing social characteristics, including age or social position, such as that experienced by young male apprentices working in London (Cockburn 1986). Furthermore, it is common for men who fail to live up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity to descend into the realms of subordination and be expelled from the

'circle of legitimacy' on the basis of this failure (Connell 1995: 79), though this subordination may be less permanent.

Complicit masculinities can be defined as masculinities that do not embody hegemonic masculinity, yet are complicit in sustaining and upholding the hegemonic model. This configuration of masculinity is expressed by the vast majority of men and plays a crucial role in maintaining the hegemonic project, as it is through the alliances formed between complicit and hegemonic masculinities that the legitimacy and overall consensus needed for true hegemony to be established is achieved. As Howson (2006: 65) observes, the overwhelming majority of men have little or no connection to hegemonic masculinity in that they cannot or do not actively seek to enact the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in their gender practice. However, the success of the hegemonic masculine project does not require the male majority to be practicing the hegemonic pattern and the number of men who actually meet the hegemonic ideal may in fact be quite small (Carrigan et al. 1985: 592; Connell 1987: 185; Connell 1995: 79) or perhaps even non-existent (Hearn 2012: 594; Howson 2014: 21). The legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is achieved through creating the aspiration and desire within these men to support the dominative masculine ideal. In aspiring towards and being complicit with the hegemonic ideal, the majority of men gain what is known as the patriarchal dividend, the advantages and benefits men in general receive from the overall subordination of women (Carrigan et al. 1985: 592; Connell 1995: 79). More recently, the work of Howson (2009: 8) and Hearn (2012: 594) has put forward the notion of hegemonic masculinity as being an 'empty signifier' of gender, in that it may act more as an unattainable aspirational goal that sits over and above men as a masculine *ideal* rather than an actual achievable configuration of masculine practice. This idea is important in that it challenges the perception of male hegemony as natural and therefore unchangeable, and suggests that challenging male complicity is the key to overcoming dominant ideologies of patriarchy.

In addition to the relations of hegemony, subordination, and complicity between masculinities within the gender hierarchy, Connell argues that the interplay of gender with other social structures such as class and race creates further relationships of power between masculinities (Connell 1995: 80). According to Connell, marginalised masculinities represent those masculinities that are subordinated on the basis of differences in structures external to gender including age, race, ethnicity, class and religion. Men who lie outside the currently accepted normative ideal in terms of these characteristics find themselves marginalised and excluded from full membership of the hegemonic group. Connell argues that marginalisation of these outlying forms of masculinity is always relative to the *authorisation* of the hegemonic masculinity of the dominant group in that whatever form of masculinity occupies the hegemonic position in the gender order is able to authorise or de-authorise the legitimacy of masculinities in terms of race, class, religion and ethnicity. The marginalisation of some configurations of masculinity within these structures is always a product of their relation to those men (or at least the symbolic representation of those men) who operate in close proximity to the hegemonic ideal (Howson 2006: 63). From time to time however members of marginalised groups may rise to be exemplars of hegemonic masculinity due to excelling in other hegemonic characteristics (black athletes, hip-hop performers), but this status does not yield social status to marginalised groups in general, but rather these individuals are authorised as being legitimate members of the hegemonic group.

A further configuration of masculinity to consider is protest masculinities. Protest masculinities have been identified as being expressed as an exaggerated and over-emphasised performance of masculinity, albeit one where there is a distinct lack of any actual power and authority. Here, men who are restricted from achieving the ideals of hegemonic masculinity attempt to compensate for this by expressing an overly masculine persona, with protest masculinity emerging as an attempt to claim hegemonic power where there exist no real resources to claim that power (Connell 1995: 109-119). Men who express protest masculinities, often operating in

working-class or ethnically marginalised settings, pick up the themes of hegemonic masculinity but re-work them in a context of economic and cultural poverty. This reworking of hegemonic masculinity is an attempt to create a situation in which they can make a successful claim to legitimacy and hegemony, in a context in which they would otherwise have no claim to hegemonic power. Protest masculinity however is not just an over-exaggerated masculinity, it can also be expressed as a form of masculinity that, whilst complicit at the personal level, challenges and rejects the defining aspects of hegemonic masculinity by engaging in gendered practices that are compatible with masculinities that do not align with the hegemonic ideal, including child care, egalitarian attitudes towards women, and a tolerance towards homosexual and queer sexualities (Connell 1995: 112; Howson 2006: 65).

The concept of hegemonic masculinity also presents a model for the role of women within systems of gender. Within such systems, the complicity and compliance of women is crucial to the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies and an overall gender regime that positions men as superior and women as subordinate. As Connell (1987: 186) notes, hegemonic masculinity must embody a successful collective strategy in relation to women. In order for true hegemony to be established within a system of gender, there must some kind of 'fit' between masculinities and femininities that allows for its reproduction. Expressions of femininity are recognised as playing a fundamental role in upholding and maintaining hegemonic masculinity, the most important being what Connell calls 'emphasised femininity'. Emphasised femininity refers to femininities that express a complete compliance and accommodation of the hegemonic principles and those which are oriented towards serving the interests and desires of men. Like hegemonic masculinity, this model of femininity is given the most cultural and ideological support, and draws on historical conceptions based on beauty, fragility, sexual receptivity, domesticity, childrearing, and motherhood (Howson 2006: 67). Whilst these ideological representations may not necessarily correspond to actual lived femininities, they clearly define the dominant cultural expectations of womanhood. Emphasised femininity, in this sense, is a performance of

legitimate femininity, one performed especially to men (Connell 1987: 186). However, Connell is careful to note that the hegemonic gender order does not hold a place for 'hegemonic femininity' per se, as any femininity organised around complicity with male power is in no state to establish hegemony over other femininities (Connell 1987: 188). Nonetheless, expressions of femininity are recognised as playing a fundamental role in the gendered matrix of power.

Like masculinities, there are however a multiplicity of femininities within the gender hierarchy. Ambivalent femininities, like complicit masculinities, represent the vast majority of women who neither fully accept nor reject the current dominant hegemonic principles and the position they construct for women. As such, they incorporate a complex combination of strategic compliance, resistance, and cooperation towards male hegemonic domination (Connell 1987: 184). Protest femininities are defined in contradistinction to emphasised and ambivalent femininities in that they demonstrate forms of resistance and non-compliance with the hegemonic project (Connell 1987: 183-184; Howson 2006: 68-71). These alternative femininities ultimately must position themselves in relation to emphasised femininity, either in partial support or complete rejection respectively. However, what is paramount within the hegemonic gender order is that women are always positioned as subordinate and inferior to men. The ideals of emphasised femininity ultimately position women as complicit to hegemonic rule, with dominant conceptions of femininity oriented towards full support of hegemonic masculinity and providing a firm platform from which patriarchal power can be established, sustained, and reproduced.

Rethinking Hegemonic Masculinity

In the years since its conception, hegemonic masculinity has emerged as the central feature of the critical study of men discourse and has been widely recognised as imperative to the understanding of gender and gendered power. Nevertheless, as the concept has been incorporated into increasingly expanding research on the topic across multiple disciplines, hegemonic masculinity has been the subject of serious critique. In this section of the chapter I

explore the numerous criticisms that have been articulated regarding the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and discuss the recent re-thinking and reformulation of the theory within the scholarship. The aim here is not to present a critical examination of Connell's original formulation of hegemonic masculinity, though there are certainly significant ambiguities and difficulties to be found, but rather to discuss the criticisms of the subsequent usage of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and the various inconsistencies and flaws that are apparent in these usages. Through this process, it is hoped that a greater understanding of what must be discarded and what can be retained from the existing scholarship on hegemonic masculinity can be attained.

The Critique of Hegemonic Masculinity

The substantial criticisms and critiques which have been directed at the concept of hegemonic masculinity in recent years have outlined numerous problems and inconsistencies within the usages of the concept within the scholarship. One of the most prominent of these criticisms is the critique of the underlying concept of masculinity, which has been identified by numerous theorists as being theoretically problematic and flawed. The important work of Jeff Hearn and colleagues (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Hearn 1996; 1998; 2004; 2012) has drawn attention to a number of problems with the concept of masculinity. For Hearn, the concept is often blurred, employed in vague and imprecise ways, and tends to divert attention away from women and gendered power relations. Hearn argues that masculinity is too often used as a generalised label to refer to a wide variety of social phenomena related to men and males but which appear to be located in the individual. Similar to the theories of sex and gender roles that the initial concept of hegemonic masculinity set out to negate, these conceptions often use the concept to refer to essentialist notions of masculinity that are fixed and reductive, and produce a static typology (Hearn 1996: 203). According to Petersen (1998; 2003) these essentialist notions of masculinity found within the literature reduce the concept to a set of definable characteristics and masculine attributes. Rather than recognising the differences among men and among women,

these conceptions present masculinity as a fixed identity that produces fixed, uniform outcomes. One strategy to address these inconsistencies has been proposed by Hearn (1996: 214; 2004: 59), who argues that the focus on masculinity is in itself too narrow, and that it would be more appropriate to shift from the study of 'masculinity' to the study of 'men'; to focus less on the concept of masculinity and more on what men think, feel, and do in their everyday material practice; to move from the study of hegemonic masculinity to the hegemony of men.

Hegemonic masculinity has also been widely criticised for being too ambiguous, slipping between various meanings and interpretations and being used in ways that are confused and contradictory (Beasley 2008; Demetriou 2001; Donaldson 1993; Flood 2002; Hearn 2004; 2012; Lorber 1998; Martin 1998; Schippers 2007; Whitehead 1999; Wetherell & Edley 1999). This slippage in meaning has led to great confusion within the literature, so much so that there is often little understanding and agreement as to what hegemonic masculinity refers to and who exactly can claim membership of the hegemonic group. To reiterate Hearn:

> There are also persistent question marks around what is actually to count as hegemonic masculinity. Is it a cultural ideal, cultural images, even fantasy? Is it summed up in the stuff of heroes? Is it toughness, aggressiveness, violence? Or is it corporate respectability? Is it simply heterosexist homophobia? Is it the rather general persistence of patriarchal gender arrangements? (Hearn 2004: 58).

As Levy (2007) notes, the term hegemonic masculinity has been used simultaneously to refer to either a position in the gender system, the system itself, or the current ideology that serves to reproduce masculine domination. At times these differing usages appear even within the same text, where hegemonic masculinity can refer to a culturally honoured form of masculinity, a concept that explains the strategy for the reproduction of patriarchal power relations in gender systems, or a collective noun that refers directly to the male bearers of that power themselves (Flood 2002: 207).

The problem of 'slippage' in meaning in regards to hegemonic masculinity has been addressed directly by a number of scholars within the critical studies on men discourse. In her reflections regarding the use of the concept by Connell and others, Martin (1998: 473) raises the issue of inconsistent applications of hegemonic masculinity, in particular the tendency of some scholars to equate the concept with a fixed (negative) 'type' of masculinity or with whatever type of masculinity is dominant at a particular time and place. Others such as Flood (2002: 207) and Beasley (2008: 88) have argued that 'dominant' forms of masculinity – such as those most culturally celebrated or most common in a certain setting – are not necessarily the same as those that do not work to legitimate men's power over women and therefore should not be labelled hegemonic masculinities. Further, Schippers (2007: 87) maintains that it is imperative that hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical concept is able to distinguish masculinities that perpetuate and legitimate male dominance from those that do not. What such criticisms highlight is that the complex nature of hegemonic masculinity as a theoretical concept has undoubtedly led to imprecision and a lack of clarity when it comes to its usage within the literature, which places it in danger of being employed in ways that are overly deterministic. In order for the concept to remain an important theoretical tool in the analysis of gender and gendered power relations, more careful and precise definitions of hegemonic masculinity are needed.

The problem of reification and the actuality of hegemonic masculinity as material practice have also come into question and have been demonstrated to be problematic within the existing literature. Alan Petersen (1998: 6) argues that in adopting masculinities as a central analytic category, Connell's framework faces a similar problem of that of the earlier writings on men and masculinity that tend to reify that which is in need of critical deconstruction; masculinity itself. He draws attention to the irony of a scholarly discipline that rejects the idea of an essential male self so frequently falling victim to reification and essentialism itself, where 'the tendency has been to use 'masculinity', or 'masculinities', as the basis analytic category… rather than to view

this category as a specific social and historical construction; as a product of power and knowledge'. For McMahon (1993: 690-691), the idealism and reification in the existing literature undermine the usefulness of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, where masculinity itself is seen as the key problem and where wrestling with the meaning of masculinity becomes more important than men's practices themselves. To do so, McMahon argues, is to risk seeing masculinity as a reified entity that describes only popular ideologies about the actual characteristics of men, where 'masculinity' becomes that explanation or excuse for men's practices and behaviours. Furthermore, others have maintained that such reification has resulted in hegemonic masculinity becoming mistaken as logically continuous with the patriarchal subordination of women (Holter 1997; 2003), and solely associated with negative male characteristics, rather than acknowledging positive aspects that may also make up men's gendered actions, such as breadwinning, fatherhood, and male sexuality (Collier 1998: 21).

There has been some criticism directed also at the ways in which the theory of hegemonic masculinity addresses the masculine subject. Wetherell and Edley (1999: 337) raise various questions regarding the supposed ways in which hegemonic masculinity is experienced and enacted by men in everyday lived experiences, drawing attention in particular to the impossible or 'fantastic' nature of hegemonic expression. They argue that the presentation of hegemonic masculinity as a masculine ideal rather than a lived reality for most, if not all ordinary men, raises significant questions regarding the appropriateness of a definition of dominant masculinity 'which no man may ever actually embody', and what complicit and resistant masculinities actually look like in practice. Others, such as Whitehead (2002) have argued that hegemonic masculinity as a concept fails to specify how and why some men are able to legitimate, reproduce, and generate their dominance. Such criticisms highlight the need for 'fine-grain work' that explores how men negotiate hegemonic conceptions of masculinity in their everyday practices. Further criticisms have questioned the model of hegemonic masculinity as a self-producing system of gender dominance. Demetriou (2001: 355) argues

that the theory of hegemonic masculinity fails to consider the way in which hegemonic masculinity, as the configuration of practice that guarantees the reproduction of male patriarchy, is constantly in a process of negotiation and re-negotiation in order to adapt itself to new historical conjunctures. Demetriou argues that hegemonic masculinity continually reconfigures itself through hybridisation with other masculinities in order to maintain its dominant position within the gender hierarchy. Still others (Beasley 2008; Jefferson 2002) have criticised the inadequacy of the concept to cater for a plurality of hegemonic masculinities, arguing that a failure to recognise a globalised and localised multiplicity in regards to hegemonic masculinity lacks nuance and risks reducing the concept to a singular monolith.

The Reformulation of Hegemonic Masculinity

The strength and scope of these critiques of hegemonic masculinity has drawn attention to the many contradictions and inconsistencies found within the expanding literature on the topic, and has called for a thorough rethinking and re-examination of the concept. In order for hegemonic masculinity to retain its usefulness to the critical study of men and masculinities, the disparities and ambiguities regarding the concept and its usage within the scholarship must be properly addressed. In an important rethinking of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) seek to address the numerous criticisms directed at the concept by re-outlining the original formulation and intended theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity, and re-evaluating its usefulness for contemporary and future analysis of men and masculinities, broader gender politics, and systemic gender inequalities. Here I briefly outline the central aspects of this response and the subsequent reformation of the concept.

The first point of address for Connell and Messerschmidt is the criticisms of hegemonic masculinity that focus on its inherent ambiguities, the tendency toward theoretical overlap, and the existence of a reification of hegemonic masculinity within the literature. Connell and Messerschmidt acknowledge that some of the literature finds hegemonic masculinity reduced to

a fixed character type with fixed attributes and behaviours. However, they argue that to do so is to overlook the complexities at play among men and to over-simplify the expression of hegemonic masculinity. They argue that what is considered 'hegemonic' in one context may not be hegemonic in another, and therefore it is ultimately desirable to eliminate any usage of hegemonic masculinity as a fixed, trans-historical model' (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005: 838). However, the authors are careful to point out that ambiguity itself may be an important aspect of hegemony, where a degree of blurring and overlap between what is considered hegemonic, subordinate, or complicit is extremely effective in regards to sustaining hegemony. They argue that there are hegemonic masculinities that do not correspond in any way to the actual lives of everyday men, that there is a circulation of 'models of admired masculine conduct' within society that are often more related to widespread ideals, fantasies, and desires, which in reality are highly unattainable for everyday men, but nevertheless contribute to establishing hegemony across the gender system as a whole. For Connell and Messerschmidt, the underlying concept of hegemonic masculinity has been successful precisely due to the fact that it is neither reified or essentialist. They point to the vast research that documents a tremendous multiplicity of social constructions of masculinities, both globally and historically, and maintain that hegemonic masculinity was never intended as a causal label or catchphrase, but rather a means of gaining insight into the social processes of gendered power.

The critique of hegemonic masculinity has also rightly highlighted the tendency within the literature to focus only on the practices of men and relations between men, whilst ignoring the importance of understanding femininities and the practices of women. As the concept of hegemonic masculinity has been incorporated so widely across multiple disciplines and discourses, its focus on men and masculinities and its obfuscation of femininities has been to its own detriment. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 848) note, 'gender is always relational, and patterns of masculinity are socially defined in contradistinction from some model (whether real or imaginary) of femininity'. To come to an understanding of gender is to acknowledge the

asymmetrical position of men and women, of masculinities and femininities within gender systems. According to Connell and Messerschmidt, in order to gain greater insight into the dynamics of gender hierarchies, future explorations into hegemonic masculinity must give closer attention to the reciprocal role of women and other subordinated groups in sustaining hegemony within the gender order. In their rethinking of hegemonic masculinity, Connell and Messerschmidt also suggest that future research into the topic will need to be more cognisant of the geography of masculinities. Drawing attention to a small but important literature on transnational masculinities (Connell 1998; Hooper 1998; 2000; Pease & Pringle 2001), they argue that the growing attention to globalisation and transnational arenas means that such areas are unavoidable for future studies of men and masculinities. They propose that we must begin to examine the relationships between local, regional, and global masculinities, with the interactions between these geographic disparate masculinities being a key arena for future research on hegemony. Such explorations will also assist in addressing some of the problems raised (Beasley 2008; Demetriou 2001; Jefferson 2002) concerning multiple hegemonic masculinities.

The need for a more sophisticated understanding of the importance of the body and body practices in the social embodiment of masculinity is also re-emphasised. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 851) contend that the embodiment of hegemonic masculinity has been under-theorised in the existing scholarship, and that bodies are more intricately involved in social processes than theory has typically allowed. As Connell (2002) notes, to come to a greater understanding of embodiment and hegemony, we need to understand that bodies are both objects of social practice and agents in social practice. Connell and Messerschmidt argue that future analyses of hegemonic masculinity should recognise the importance of masculine embodiment, and also the ways in which the social embodiment of masculinity and social context are interconnected. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 852) also argue that there has been a tendency to overlook the historical nature of hegemonic masculinity, that it is historically

constructed and located, and thus subject to change over time. To overlook this key point is to demobilise the opportunity for change in contemporary and future systems of gender, and exclude the possibility of moving towards gender equality. Furthermore, we must also begin to recognise the fact that individual expressions of masculinity are themselves open to change, and often involve internal contradictions, emotional conflict, and a layering of masculine identity. As such, we should not read any enactment of masculinity as an expression of a unitary masculinity, but rather as a specific masculinity that is expressed in a specific social, cultural, and historical moment.

The recent rethinking of hegemonic masculinity has acknowledged and addressed the significant criticisms directed at the concept in the years since its conception. Ultimately, this rethinking maintains that a renewed grasp of the theoretical concept is still crucial in conducting critical analyses of gender power relations and the making and contestation of hegemony. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 854) observe, theoretical frameworks such as the concept of hegemonic masculinity often find application in other disciplines and environments, in other hands, resulting in mutations and variations that often lack some of the substance or sophistication of the original theoretical formulation. This is not a new process; therefore, it is important to be vigilant in critically assessing the conceptual developments and subsequent usages of such theories.

Reformulation of the Reformulation

Recognising the need to continually assess and re-assess the development of theoretical concepts as they are employed within and across multiple disciplines to generate knowledge, the most recent work on hegemonic masculinity has assessed the academic appropriation of the reformulated concept of hegemonic masculinity. For example, recent analyses by Messerschmidt (2012; 2016) argue that theoretical reformulations such as those presented by Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) have significantly influenced gendered knowledge on

hegemonic masculinity and subsequent usages of the concept. In presenting a summary of Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) key conclusions, Messerschmidt (2012; 2016) concludes that there are four key points that must be considered when evaluating the theoretical use of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. First, Connell and Messerschmidt outline the key aspects of the original formulation that should be retained. These include the relational and hierarchical nature of hegemonic masculinity; that these patterns of relation are not a pattern of simple domination but rather a pattern of hegemony involving the processes of cultural consent and discursive legitimation; that hegemonic masculinity need not be the most powerful or most common configuration of masculinity in a specific setting; and that any formulation of the concept as simply constituting an assemblage of fixed masculine character traits should be thoroughly transcended. Second, the authors suggest that a reformulated understanding of hegemonic masculinity must include a more holistic understanding of gender hierarchy that acknowledges the agency of subordinated groups as much as the power of dominant groups, including the intersectionalilty of gender with other social inequalities such as class, race, age, and sexuality. Third, the authors state the importance of considering the ways in which hegemonic masculinity may be challenged and contested to bring about change within the gender order. Finally, the authors emphasise the need to recognise the existence of multiple hegemonic masculinities across three key levels: (1) the *local* (constructed in the face-to-face arenas of families, organisations, and immediate communities); (2) the *regional* (constructed at the level of culture and nation-state); and (3) the global (constructed in transnational arenas such as world politics, business, and the media).

Drawing on a study of the ways in which hegemonic masculinity has been used and cited in scholarly refereed academic journal articles in the years since the 2005 paper by Connell and Messerschmidt, Messerschmidt (2012; 2016) found that hegemonic masculinity has been appropriated in a number of different ways to varied effect. Firstly, the vast majority of core articles examined the ways in which hegemonic masculinity is legitimated at the local, regional,

and global levels thus confirming the reformulated model of the concept. For example, fifty-five percent of articles examined hegemonic masculinity specifically at the *local* level, such as Morris (2008) who studied gender difference in academic perceptions and outcomes at a rural high school in Kentucky. A much smaller percentage (ten percent) of the core articles examined the construction of *regional* hegemonic masculinities, such as the study by Weitzer and Kurbin (2009) that explored the ideological subordination of women to men as presented in platinum selling rap albums. Analyses of hegemonic masculinities at the *global* level accounted for seven percent of the core articles, including the work of Hatfield (2010) who examined the ways in which gender is constructed in the popular US-based television program *Two and a Half Men*. Secondly, a small minority (eighteen percent) of the core articles appropriated the concept of hegemonic masculinity as exclusively constituting 'masculine' character traits consequently reverting to earlier conceptions of hegemonic masculinity that were based on trait terminology (see Logan 2010; Smith et. al. 2007; Gage 2008). Lastly, a small proportion (thirteen percent) of core articles presented research on hegemonic masculinity that takes the concept in new directions. These articles include work exploring how women contribute to the *cultivation* of hegemonic masculinity (see Irvine & Vermilya 2010; Talbot & Quayle 2010); how hegemonic masculinity may be *contested* and challenged (see Duncanson 2009; Light 2007); and how neoliberal globalisation influences the orchestration of hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities in *periphery* countries such as Asia, Africa, and Central and Latin America (see Broughton 2008; Groes-Green 2009).

The result of this most recent work on hegemonic masculinity has been a 'reformulation of the reformulation' (see Messerschmidt 2010; 2012; 2014; 2016). In addition to assessing the theoretical development and application of hegemonic masculinity as a concept, Messerschmidt has presented a more detailed and sophisticated reading of hegemonic masculinity that includes not only the acceptance of hegemonic masculinities as a plurality at the local, regional, and global level; but also a variety of other non-hegemonic masculinities – what he calls 'dominant',

'dominating', and 'positive' masculinities. To clarify, Messerschmidt (2016: 34) defines hegemonic masculinity as 'those masculinities that legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities'. Hegemonic masculinity must be culturally ascendant (locally, regionally, and globally) to provide a rationale for social action through the processes of consent and compliance rather than direct control or commands. *Dominant* masculinities refer to those masculinities (locally, regionally, and globally) that are the most powerful or the most widespread in the sense of being the most celebrated and common forms of masculinity in a specific social setting. *Dominating* masculinities refer to those masculinities (locally, regionally, and globally) that involve commanding and controlling specific interactions and exercising power and control over people and events. Whist it is possible for dominant and dominating masculinities to also be hegemonic, these forms of masculinity cannot be labelled hegemonic if they fail to culturally legitimate unequal gender relations. *Positive* masculinities are those that (locally, regionally, and globally) help legitimate an egalitarian relationship between men and women, masculinities and femininities, and among men. Messerschmidt argues that making a clear distinction between hegemonic and other masculinities will allow scholars to identify and research various hegemonic and non-hegemonic masculinities and how they differ among themselves. In so doing, such research will provide increased insight into the dynamics of gender and gendered power and expand our understanding of how hegemonic masculinity and patriarchal gender relations are legitimised and solidified at the local, regional, and global level.

Hegemonic Masculinity: A Reformulated Model

In light of this rethinking, the need to be more clear and precise when it comes to defining hegemonic masculinity, its multiple usages, and the intersections between them has become apparent. The need to be more explicit in what it is that hegemonic masculinity actually refers to and how it is defined can now not be negated. The time has come to be more careful and specific when it comes to defining what hegemonic masculinity refers to, and how it should be

used within subsequent theorisation. With this in mind, this research has defined hegemonic masculinity as having two theoretically interconnected components; a cultural component and a political component. Together, these components of hegemonic masculinity act to ensure the overall legitimacy of patriarchy and the authorisation of gendered inequalities that see men collectively positioned as dominant over women in society, and some masculinities positioned as subordinate to others.

In the cultural sense, hegemonic masculinity acts as a cultural model or benchmark that represents and embodies the configuration of masculine practice to which all men are measured and held accountable. It is a form of masculinity that is culturally accepted as the most legitimate form of masculinity within a given social and historical context. Central to the understandings of hegemonic masculinity as a cultural force are the processes of legitimacy and consent (Hearn 2012: 594). In order for a specific configuration of masculinity to become widely acknowledged as the most acceptable and desirable it must first establish cultural consent and be endorsed as the most legitimate form of masculine practice within that culture. Culturally speaking, hegemonic masculinity refers then to the way in which a dominant configuration of masculinity is able to establish and reproduce broad cultural consent and social legitimacy. Through the dissemination of hegemonic ideologies, by way of social norms, social institutions, cultural ideals, and the taken-for-granted common understandings, the positioning of hegemonic masculinity as the culturally dominant form of gender practice is made to appear natural, normal and reasonable, and thus ensures its reproduction. In turn, the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is achieved through generating and re-generating the aspiration and desire within men to align themselves with this ideal, with any deviations or departures from the desired hegemonic ideal perceived as a failure and a lack of authentic masculinity. Within a gender system based on hegemonic masculinity, men who desire to be seen as enacting legitimate masculinity must express particular forms of masculine practice that are in line with the culturally accepted hegemonic masculine ideal. Although this cultural ideal may not be

realistically attainable for many, if any men (Connell 1995: 79; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; 849; Hearn 2012: 594; Howson 2009: 18), it nevertheless remains an aspirational goal toward which men must orient themselves and be complicit with, or face subordination within the masculine hierarchy.

Whilst it is certainly cultural, hegemonic masculinity is ultimately and most importantly political; a way of obtaining and maintaining control of systems of gender and exercising power and domination over subordinate factions (Donaldson 1993: 645; Howson 2006: 4). The recognition of hegemonic masculinity as political is crucial to the understanding of how a specific configuration of masculinity can establish dominance within a given gender order, over women and over other men, and also the processes by which it maintains and reproduces this power. Imperative to these understandings of hegemonic masculinity is Gramsci's notion of hegemony. According to Gramsci, it is the dual processes of legitimacy and power, that is, cultural consent and political force, which enable true hegemonic authority to be established. For Connell (1987: 183), the gender order is fundamentally organised around gendered inequalities and hierarchies of power between men and women, and among men and among women. As a theory of gendered power, hegemonic masculinity is therefore primarily concerned with how men come to inhabit positions of domination within the gender order, and the processes by which they legitimate and reproduce social relationships and alliances that generate this dominance and power over women and lesser masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity, whilst incorporating a cultural ideal of masculinity and the ideological processes through which broad cultural authorisation and legitimacy is achieved, ultimately refers to the ways in which a dominant configuration of masculinity draws on its resources of power and legitimacy to form (and negate) alliances with subordinate groups and ensure the overall benefit of men in relation to women, and of some men in relation to other men.

It is clear then that hegemonic masculinity fundamentally involves the establishment and reproduction of both cultural legitimacy and political power. However, it is important to understand that it also always refers back to the social; the actual configurations of practice embodied and enacted by men in their everyday lives. If we return to the essence of Connell's original theorisation, we see that the body has always been central to ideas regarding hegemonic masculinity. In line with social constructivist perspectives (Butler 1990; West & Zimmerman 1987), masculinity is presented in the theory of hegemonic masculinity as something that is always produced, performed, and enacted in everyday social interactions. The recent rethinking of hegemonic masculinity has re-emphasised the importance of the body and argued that the significance of masculine embodiment has been lost in much of the existing work on the topic. It is imperative then to reiterate here that 'gender is social practice that constantly refers to bodies and what bodies do', though it is not social practice reduced to the body (Connell 1995: 71). In line with a recent shift towards recognising bodies as both objects of social practice and agents in social practice, this research acknowledges that a more sophisticated and nuanced understanding of hegemonic masculinity requires a shift away from a focus on masculinity per se to a focus on the doing of power and dominance in men's practices (Connell 2002; Hearn 2004; 2012; Howson 2009; Schrock & Schwalbe 2009; Schwalbe 2014). It is important to note also that hegemonic masculinity may not actually exist in any pure form found empirically in the here and now but rather sit above men as some form of aspiration goal or 'empty signifier' that only a small number of men, if any, actually fulfil (Hearn 2012, 594; Howson 2009, 18). So whilst it is undoubtedly important to examine the broader macro nature of hegemonic masculinity as it plays out within existing gender systems, it is imperative to do so in ways that acknowledge the actual configurations of social practice as expressed in the lives of actual men.

Young Men and Hegemonic Masculinity

It has been over three decades since the concept of hegemonic masculinity was introduced to theoretical discussions of gender. In that time, a significant body of empirical research has developed that focuses on the links between hegemonic masculinity and the construction of masculine identities among men. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 833) note, the research into hegemonic masculinity has been quite considerable, with numerous papers, edited volumes, journals, encyclopaedias, and bibliographies published on the field, and continued interest for international and interdisciplinary conferences on the topic. Within this vast body of knowledge, the concept has been used to examine the influence of hegemonic masculine ideologies across a vast array of arenas and contexts; schooling and education (Martino 1999; Stoudt 2006), criminology (Messerschmidt 1993; 1998; Newburn & Stanko 1994), violence towards women (Hearn 1994; 1998; 2012; DeKeseredy & Schwartz 2005; Peralta et al. 2010), violence towards other men (Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1998; 2001; 2003; 2006; 2009; Tomsen & Mason 1997; 2001), sports and the media (Messner 1990; Messner & Sabo 1990; Wedgwood 2003), the workplace (Cockburn 1986; Collinson & Hearn 1994: Donaldson 1991), war and the military (Barrett 1996; Higate 2003; Higate & Hopton 2005), sexual practices (Flood 2000; 2008; Mac an Ghaill 2000), men's health (Courtenay 1998; 1999; 2000a; 2000b; 2002; 2003; 2004), and the family (Donaldson 1991; Howson 2006). A smaller body of research has also examined the relationship between hegemonic masculinity, race, and ethnicities, and the influence of hegemonic masculinity on regional and localised gender hierarchies across various cultures and disparate geographic locations, including Latin America (Crossley & Pease 2009; Gutmann 2006), Japan (Dasgupta 2000; Taga 2003), Ireland (Ferguson 2001; Johnston & Morrison 2007); New Zealand (Campbell 2000; Penwarden 2010) and across Australasia (Donaldson et al. 2009; Hibbins 2005; Nilan et al. 2009). Overall, what the research into hegemonic masculinity has established is that dominant ideologies of masculinity infiltrate a great deal of men's lived experiences, manifesting in multiple ways, through various social practices, across local, regional, and global settings.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity has found particular use in the understanding of young men and young masculinities, providing significant insight into the ways in which boys and young men construct legitimate masculine identities in reference to hegemonic masculinity. A common starting point for many of these analyses is the recognition that young men now operate within gender landscapes that are significantly different to those of previous generations. The subtle yet significant changes that followed second-wave feminism brought about what some have referred to, albeit hyperbolically, as a 'crisis of masculinity' (Kimmel 1987), where established modes of masculinity that had existed for generations had come under question, creating tensions within the lives of young men who were now required to negotiate and manage their own masculinities within a shifting gender context. Hearn (1987: 5) notes that as the rise of modern feminism has brought about a deep questioning of what it is to be a woman, so too has it directed attention at what it is to be a man, especially in an environment of significant socio-cultural and structural changes in regards to gender.

Young masculinities have also been established as being distinct from other masculinities, with the construction of legitimate masculine identities being recognised as a significantly different process for young men as compared to adult men. The life-history work of Connell (1991; 1995) for example indicates that young men are often marginalised within the gender order, finding themselves in positions of powerlessness where the resources for socio-cultural power are scarce. As such, young men often express forms of protest masculinity, making a claim to gendered positions of power in a 'context of poverty' where there exists no actual power or authority. These exaggerated and over-emphasised performances of masculinity, which often take the form of violence, school resistance, crime, heavy alcohol consumption, drug use, cars and motorbikes, sexual practices, are an attempt by young men to compensate for an absence of actual tangible power (Connell 1995: 110). Young men often also display complicit masculinities, distancing themselves from direct displays of masculine power but accepting the broader patriarchal benefits of their gender. What is clear in most research on young

masculinities is that young men find themselves in a state of flux, what Victor Seidler (2006: 111) calls an 'incomplete state', where the construction of masculinities becomes highly important in the processes of transition to adulthood.

The importance of a legitimate claim to power is a significant feature of many studies that examine the nature and influence of hegemonic masculinity among young men. As highlighted in the early work on young masculinities by Connell, young men's claim to masculine legitimacy is often achieved through enacting a set of signifying practices that relate to risk-taking and dangerous behaviours. As Seidler (2006: 152) notes, young men often feel they must demonstrate their masculinity through taking risks that affirm their masculinity, constantly testing themselves against their environment and those around them. Furthermore, as Kimmel (1994: 128) notes, masculinity is practice that is performed for and validated by other men. Young men's engagement in a wide range of risky practices therefore becomes particularly important for establishing masculine identities that are seen as authentic and legitimate. In the existing literature, various studies have examined the relationship between young men and hegemonic masculinity and the specific configurations of practice they draw on in the performance and construction of legitimate masculine identities. These studies indicate that young men's engagement in a broad range of risky practices can be seen as functions of hegemonic masculinity.

A significant body of research has examined the use of alcohol and risky drinking by young men in the construction of legitimate masculinities. This research indicates that young men often draw on the consumption of alcohol as a way in which to construct and enact appropriate masculine identities (Campbell 2000; Capraro 2000; Demant 2007; De Visser & Smith 2007a; 2007b; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Lindsay 2006; Mullen et al. 2007; Penwarden 2010; Peralta 2007; 2008; West 2001). For example, West (2001) found that young men consume alcohol to avoid subordination and to conform to specific gender norms. Other research has

found that hegemonic masculinity is enacted by many young men through consuming large amounts of alcohol and demonstrating alcohol tolerance (Peralta 2007; Peralta et al. 2010) with the intersections of alcohol use and hegemonic ideologies often having an impact on subordinate and marginalised groups (Peralta 2008) and the up-take of other risky practices such as violence (Peralta & Cruz 2006; Peralta & Jauk 2011). Studies have also shown that retrospective accounts of drunken behaviour are an important part of identity construction, especially for masculinities (Giles 1999; Moore 1990).

The participation of young men in crime and acts of violence has also been examined in relation to hegemonic masculinity. A broad discourse has drawn on the concept of hegemonic masculinity to theorise about significant gender imbalances when it comes to victimisation and participation in criminal activities (Messerschmidt: 1993; Newburn & Stanko 1994; Polk 1994). In particular, much research has indicated that dominant hegemonic ideologies contribute to young men's overwhelming engagement in violence, towards other men (Messerschmidt 1993; 1998; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Mason & Tomsen 1997; Tomsen 2001; 2003; 2009; Tomsen & Mason 2001) and violence towards women (Hearn 1994; 1998; 2012; DeKeseredy & Schwartz 2005; Peralta et al. 2010). As Messerschmidt (1998: 132) notes, some situations present themselves as more important for demonstrating and affirming masculinity, where masculinity is put on the line and as such requires extra effort. Under such conditions, violence is often invoked as a way for doing masculinity and distinguishing masculinities from each another.

The sexual practices of young men have also been linked to their notions of masculinity. Research has shown that young men draw on sexual practices to achieve masculine status amongst their peers and within homosocial relationships (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Prohaksa & Gailey 2010; Thurnell-Read 2012). Other research has indicated that dominant masculine ideologies encourage young men to be sexually assertive, have multiple sex partners, be always ready to have sex, to perceive penetration as the goal of sex, and to control all aspects of sexual

activity (Bowleg 2004; Campbell 1995; Holland et al. 1994; Ku et al. 1993). Unfortunately, these beliefs may be a contributing factor to the reason why young men engage in unsafe sex practices, where hegemonic ideals influence young men's negative attitudes towards condoms, less belief in male responsibility for contraception, and being more likely to have more sexual partners (Noar & Morokoff 2002; Pleck et al. 1993; Smith et al. 1996). Young men also construct masculine identities through the domain of sport. Research has shown that sporting domains teach young men certain ideas about their masculinity and are contexts where hegemonic masculine values and expectations are constructed, learned, and disseminated (Messner 1990; Messner & Sabo 1990; Wedgwood 2003). Male dominated sporting cultures promote heterosexuality and homophobia among young men, and endorse ideologies based on sexual objectification and violence towards women (Brackenridge 1997; Miller 1990; Rowe 1997). Young men's construction of legitimate masculine identities can also involve direct risk-taking activities, such as those that involve motor vehicles. Various studies have demonstrated that young men often construct masculine identities through car and motorbike cultures, where motor vehicles become tools through which young men compete against other men for masculine status, and where young men demonstrate that they have what it takes to be a man (Collins et al. 2000; Connell 1991; 1995; Poynting et al. 1999; Walker 1998; Walker et al. 2000).

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a critical and theoretical analysis of the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Whilst there have been serious critiques and criticisms directed at the concept in recent years, the subsequent rethinking and reformulation of hegemonic masculinity indicates that a renewed grasp of the theoretical concept is still crucial in conducting critical analyses of gender and gendered power relations. As such, a new model for the understanding of hegemonic masculinity has been presented. This model draws attention to the two central components of hegemonic masculinity, the cultural component and the political component, and argues that these two components act in concert to ensure the continued maintenance and

reproduction of a gender system fundamentally based on gender inequalities that see men collectively positioned as dominant over women in society, and some men positioned as dominant over other men. Furthermore, this chapter has outlined some of the ways in which young men's engagement in risky practices is understood to be related to hegemonic masculinity, a theme that will be explored in greater detail in Chapter Four. Having now established hegemonic masculinity as imperative to the critical study of men and masculinities, the following chapter will present an analysis of the theoretical understanding of risk, outlining the key ways in which it has been understood within existing risk discourses, and unpacking the gendered nature of risk.

3. Theorising Risk

The concept of risk has emerged in recent years as one of the most vigorous areas of theoretical debate and research. Whilst the concept of risk itself is not new, the past three decades have seen a substantial body of theoretical and empirical research materialise around the topic and the establishment of a critical discourse that takes the phenomenon of risk and risky practice as its central focus. Within such risk discourses, the theoretical understanding of risk has been approached from multiple perspectives in differing ways. These understandings each take a distinctive theoretical approach to risk, emphasising different aspects of the concept and attributing its function within contemporary society to a number of differing macro and micro social forces. The aim of this chapter is to present a systematic account of these theoretical understandings of risk, and to demonstrate how such understandings contribute to the greater understanding of the relationship between risk, risky practice and gender. The chapter begins by introducing the concept of risk, outlining the historical origins of the concept and examining the various ways in which its definition and usage has changed over time. The chapter then conducts a critical analysis of the theoretical understanding of risk, outlining the key ways in which it has been understood within existing risk discourses and the ways in which risk and risky practices are influenced by broader social, cultural, and political factors. Most importantly, this chapter begins to unpack the gendered nature of risk. It draws attention to the ways in which risk and risky practices can be identified as forms of gender practice which play a significant role in the construction of gendered identities, in particular the construction of hegemonic masculinities among young men. This process will emphasise the important relationship between risky practice and gender performativity, and present an understanding of risk that illuminates the socio-cultural factors that underpin the continued prevalence of risky practice in contemporary risk societies.

The Meaning of Risk

The concept of risk has been widely recognised as notoriously abstract and difficult to define. The term conjures up a vast array of ideas and images that in many ways relate to notions of danger, injury, uncertainty, anxiety, and harm. When used as a noun, the term 'risk' can refer to any event or activity that is considered dangerous or potentially harmful to an individual or individuals; from climbing the rock face of a mountain, to engaging in drink driving, or participating in unprotected sexual activity. When used as an adjective, something is identified as 'risky' if it involves a significant degree of danger and uncertainty, and can potentially result in negative or undesirable outcomes; for example, placing a bet or making a significant financial investment. Risks appear all around us, in many forms; technological risks, medicinal risks, lifestyle risks, relationship risks, occupational risks, and more; they can have immediate or delayed effects, and can effect lives in direct or indirect ways; some are material, some psychological; some effect individuals, or social groups, and others the environments in which we live (Fischhoff & Kadvany 2011: 4). As such, many theorists within existing risk discourses acknowledge that the concept of risk is one that is inherently ambiguous and continually subject to change over time (Denney 2005; Furedi 2006; Luhmann 1993; Lupton 1999a; 1999b). As Ulrich Beck (1992) observes, in the last part of the twentieth century and continuing into the early twenty-first century, risks have become more globalised, less identifiable, and more serious in their effects, resulting in a preoccupation, or what Lupton (1999a: 10) calls a 'contemporary obsession', with risk. An examination of the development and transformation of the term from pre-modernity to modernity, and then post-modernity, reveals that the complex notion of risk is one that has changed significantly throughout the course of history.

According to Franklin (1998: 1), risk is not new. There has always been a contingent edge to human existence. What has changed however is the nature and understanding of risk. Risk is a concept that has altered in meaning in the centuries since it was first introduced, and its use has become far more common and applied to a plethora of situations and circumstances (Lupton

1999a: 5). A brief exploration of the semantic history of the term 'risk' reveals that it first appeared in the transitional period between the late Middle Ages and the early modern era; in German in the mid sixteenth century, and then in English in the second half of the seventeenth century (Luhmann 1993: 9). The etymology of the term is inconclusive, but ultimately it may be derived from the Arabic word *risq*, which means riches or good fortune, the Greek word *rhiza*, meaning cliff, or the Latin term *resegare*, meaning to cut off short (Wilkinson 2001: 91). Interestingly, Luhmann (1993: 10) notes that the existing language of that time had words for danger, venture, chance, luck, courage, fear and adventure, and as such we can assume that this new term came into use to indicate a problem situation that could not be expressed precisely enough with these existing terminologies. Thus, the term 'risk' was born.

The majority of commentators link the emergence of the concept of risk with the early maritime ventures in the pre-modern period. John Ayto (1990) suggests that risk may be understood to have its semantic roots in classical maritime vocabulary as a term referring to the dangers of sailing too close to coastal rocks. The term is thought to have been assimilated into the English language through its usage in Spanish and Portuguese, where it was used to refer to sailing in uncharted waters (Denney 2005: 9). The application of the term risk to the fields of navigation and trade is itself related to the introduction of maritime insurance that sought to account for the dangers that would compromise a maritime voyage. As Ewald notes;

> At that time, risk designated the possibility of an objective danger, an act of God, a force majeure, a tempest or other peril of the sea that could not be imputed to wrongful conduct (Ewald 1993: 226).

In these early usages of risk, the term excluded the idea of human fault and responsibility and emphasised the role of natural events and uncontrollable external factors including storms, floods, fires, or other epidemics. Here, a risk was perceived to be attributable to nature, something beyond human control and intervention where the role of humans was to estimate the likelihood of such events taking place and introducing measures to reduce their impact.

These notions of risk were also linked to the idea of fate, of sin, and the divine, where negative outcomes were thought to be acts of God or other divine powers (Douglas 1992: 25; Luhmann 1993: 8).

In the eighteenth century, the term shifted in meaning to incorporate notions of probability and chance. Risks were not only dangerous events that were outside of human control, but came to be understood as being in some ways predictable and quantifiable. As Giddens (1991) suggests, the concept of risk began to be thought of as scientific and more closely associated with business and commerce. This change in meaning and definition can be linked to the emergence of modernity and the Industrial Revolution. In post-feudal society, modernity depended upon the notion that the key to human progress and social order is objective knowledge of the world through scientific exploration and rational thinking (Lupton 1999a: 5-6). During this period, the concept of risk began to be explained through mathematical advances relating to probabilities and statistical calculations of risk. Thus, risk began to be understood as being systematically caused, statistically describable, and predictable (Beck 1992: 99). Tied in with these notions of risk was the concept of the 'gamble', and the realisation that certain advantages are to be gained only if something is at stake (Luhmann 1993: 11). Here, the costs of a certain risk can be calculated beforehand and traded off against the advantages. These understanding of risk dominated until the beginning of the nineteenth century (Ewald 1991).

By the nineteenth century, the notion of risk was extended to be no longer exclusively attributable to the overarching forces of nature, but also to human action and interaction. As Ewald (1993: 226) notes, risk began to be understood as not only in the natural, but 'also in human beings, in their conduct, in their liberty, in the relations between them, in the fact of their association, in society'. This conception of risk represented new ways of viewing the world and its chaotic manifestations and uncertainties, assuming that unanticipated negative outcomes may in fact be the consequence of human action rather than the act of some powerful God or

deity (Lupton 1999a: 6), largely replacing the earlier emphasis on fate or 'fortuna' (Giddens 1990: 30). In this sense, the Modernists had eliminated notions of uncertainty and insecurity by inventing the concept of risk, transforming a chaotic and indeterminate cosmos into one that is manageable, calculable, and which incorporates human accountability (Reddy, 1996: 237). Through recognising its inherent human element, these developments further solidified the 'knowability' of risk, and would later lead to the institutionalisation of risk management and risk assessment and the understanding of risk as an individualised phenomenon (Denney 2005; 19).

As the meaning and definition of risk has evolved over time, it has come to be understood as having both positive and negative elements. As Douglas (1992: 23) argues, the concept of risk is in itself neutral, taking into account the probability of an event occurring combined with the magnitude of losses and gains that would be entailed. Rather than referring only to notions of danger and hazard, risk should be identified as being more closely associated with chance and probability on one hand, and loss and damage on the other (Ewald 1991). According to positivist understandings of risk, the dangers and potential losses that come with risk are counterbalanced by the potential for great gain and reward. Within the contexts of capitalism and commerce, risk can be identified as being linked not only with loss and damage, but also more importantly with the positive notions of chance, probability and gain. In such contexts, a risk is as much a chance for significant gain and reward as it is for loss. As Douglas (1992: 24) observes, risk is ultimately a game of chance; where any process or activity has its probabilities of success or failure; where an accident comes up like a roulette number, like a card pulled out of a pack. Risk can also be recognised as playing a significant role in human progress and evolution (Giddens 1998). Denney (2005: 10) argues that the driving force behind the majority of social change and development in western society has been largely based on risk, and that the great advancements in global knowledge and understanding over time would not have occurred without a propensity for risk. According to Zey (1998: 313), the propensity to take risks

underwrote the majority of scientific endeavour in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and that risk is alive today in the work of quantum physicists, genetic engineers, and other frontiers of technological and scientific development. It is clear then that any understandings that aspire to capture the essence of risk must take into account the potentiality for positive outcomes.

Although risk can be recognised as having positive aspects, in contemporary parlance the term is most commonly associated with negative and undesirable outcomes. As Lupton (1999a: 8) notes, in most modern usages the term risk tends to refer almost exclusively to a threat, a danger, a hazard, or harm. As Fox argues:

> Before the era of modernity, risk was a neutral term, concerned merely with probabilities, with losses and gains. A gamble or an endeavour that was associated with high risk meant simply that there was great potential for significant loss or significant reward. However, in the modern period, *risk* has been co-opted as a term reserved for a negative or undesirable outcome, and as such, is synonymous with the terms *danger* or *hazard* (Fox 1999: 12, original emphases)

According to Douglas (1992: 24) the word risk has now come to mean danger, with high-risk meaning a high degree of danger. The discourse on risk that represented it as having both positive and negative elements has now been superseded by that which portrays it almost exclusively as negative (Lupton 1999a: 15). This contemporary understanding of risk as a solely negative phenomenon was highlighted in recent empirical studies conducted by Lupton and Tulloch (2002) and Tulloch and Lupton (2003). These studies aimed to investigate the ways in which people conceptualise risk and its influence in their everyday lives. The findings indicate that when asked to define the concept of 'risk', the overwhelming majority of individuals tend to categorise risk in negative terms, where 'the emotions of fear and dread were associated with interpretations of risk as danger and the unknown' (Lupton and Tulloch 2002: 325). The participants' conception of risk was centred on the notion of risk as negative, using words such as 'bad', 'dangerous', 'frightening' or evoking 'fear'. The concept of risk also involved the unknown and the loss of control over outcomes, and a sense of fatalism about what may or may

not happen (Lupton 2003: 37). The tendency then within contemporary understandings of risk has been to emphasise the negative nature of risk in society, associating it primarily with adverse events and outcomes. However, this tendency to over-emphasise the negative nature of risk discounts the potential positive elements of risk.

As this brief analysis has shown, the concept of risk is not as straightforward as one might believe. Risk is a complex concept that has significantly developed and evolved over time; a concept that involves both natural and human elements, the weighing up of potential gains and rewards with possible adverse outcomes, and one that can be identified as having both positive and negative aspects in association with the potential for significant loss or gain. The continuing ambiguities and uncertainties about what are to be seen as risks, the discrepancies between the differing interpretations of risk within risk discourses, and the search to understand more deeply how risks influence the ways in which individuals conduct their daily lives are precisely the issues to which a number of major critical risk theorists have recently turned their attention. This chapter will now turn towards an analysis of the ways in which risk has been theorised in contemporary risk discourses.

Theorising Risk

There are a number of different ways in which the theoretical understanding of risk has been addressed within existing risk discourses. These contrasting theoretical understandings of risk have each taken a different approach to the way in which they conceptualise risk, risk perception, and the risk actor (Lupton 1999a: 17). This section of the chapter will systematically examine each of these major approaches to the theoretical understanding of risk. It will begin by exploring the cognitive science approach to risk, examining the understandings of risk based in psychology and health discourses. This is followed by an exploration of the major theoretical perspectives presented in sociological and cultural analyses of risk, which emphasise the sociocultural aspects of risk and risky practice and examine the role risk plays in broader

contemporary social life. Critiques and criticisms of each theory are presented and evaluated, and a model for understanding the function of risk in the everyday production of self-identities is discussed. This exploration will identify the key ways in which risk has been explained and theorised within the existing literature, and highlight the importance of understanding risk and risky practice as playing a significant role in the lives of individuals and within society as a whole.

To reiterate, the aim of this research is to examine young men's engagement in two objectively defined risky practices, risky drinking and public violence, and the ways in which young men's engagement in these practices can be understood as a display of hegemonic masculinity. The discussion presented here is valuable as it outlines the key models presented in the literature for the understanding of risk and risky practice, and begins to unpack the ways in which risk and risky practices are influenced by broader social, cultural, political, and historical factors. In order to facilitate clear links between the various theoretical conceptions of risk and the focus of this research, it will be useful to draw on a hypothetical example of a group of young men who engage in risky drinking and public violence whilst socialising on a weekend. Therefore, throughout this discussion of risk and risk theories, I will refer back to this example to highlight the explanations each perspective would offer for such practice.

The Cognitive Science Perspective

Cognitive science approaches to risk emerging from such fields as engineering, statistics, economics, health, medicine, and psychology tend to emphasise the relationship between risk and calculations of probability (Lupton 1999a: 17). According to these perspectives, risk is defined as the 'product of the probability and consequences (magnitude and severity) of an adverse event' (Bradbury 1989: 382). Within these fields, risk is perceived as being identifiable and calculable, a phenomenon that can be measured and predicted using statistical analysis and mathematical probabilities. Those who take this approach to risk are primarily interested in

using various psychological measures of human behaviour to identify the ways in which individuals respond cognitively and behaviourally to risk. As Denney (2005: 18) notes, it is through the incorporation of this individualistic approach to risk analysis that it becomes possible to assess risks in a manner that is based upon measurable science and probabilities. Thus, the focus in this approach is the identification of risks, mapping their causal factors, developing predictive models of risk and individual's responses to risks, and proposing ways of limiting the effects of risk (Lupton 1999b: 2).

These analyses are said to adopt an 'objective' or 'realist' approach to risk (Beck 1999; Lupton 1999a: 33), in that they take the position that risks are pre-existing in nature and are able to be identified through expert scientific measurement and calculation and controlled using this knowledge. An important distinction that is made in this approach is that of 'objective' and 'subjective' risks. According to Bradbury (1989: 382), research conducted using such methods tends to view risks as 'objective facts' or 'absolute truths', rather than being subjective and open to interpretation. Here, risks are 'objective facts' that are calculated by experts and are in contrast to the subjective understandings of lay people, which are rated as more or less accurate compared to these 'facts' (Lupton 1999a: 19). Such understandings of risk position those who take risks as responding in an irrational, inefficient and uncalculated manner to the challenges placed before them, due to a lack of adequate and correct knowledge about risk. The argument presented is that if the individual had a more comprehensive understanding of the particular risk they were facing, they could better assess the consequences and probabilities of a negative outcome. Risk perception and perceived risk then becomes integral to these understandings of risk, and many in this field have examined the methods and strategies, or 'heuristics', used by individuals when making judgments about risk, which are often presented as leading to 'large and persistent biases' on the part of lay people (Slovic 1987: 281).

This understanding of risk and risk perception is notably adopted within health discourses, which take the position that the prevalence of risk taking in society can be reduced through promoting better education and knowledge regarding behaviours that may have negative effects upon health and well-being. As Bloor (1995) notes, this model of risk perception perceives human action as volitional and rational, and invariably categorises risk avoidance as rational and risk-taking as irrational. According to this model, a number of perceptions must be in place before an individual will take action in order to prevent a health threat. An individual must identify themselves as being vulnerable to a threat, they must recognise that the threat has serious negative consequences; they must believe that taking preventative action will be effective and they must believe the positive benefits of that action will outweigh the negatives (Lupton 1999a: 20). The cognitive science approach therefore perceives individuals as emotion-free calculating actors, who despite being risk aversive are so inefficient in handling risk information that they become unintentional risk-takers (Douglas 1992: 13). Drawing on the example of the young men who engage in risky drinking and public violence whilst socialising on a weekend, under this model the two practices of risky drinking and public violence are defined as 'objective' risks, with the young men's engagement in these practices seen as the result of a lack of complete understanding or awareness of the negative outcomes and consequences of these practices.

The extensive work of Marvin Zuckerman (1979a; 1979b; 1984; 1990; 1991; 1994a; 1994b; 2007) has explored the psychological nature of risk-taking, and the reasons why individuals take risks despite the potential for harm or undesirable outcomes. Zuckerman's theory of sensation seeking, a theory that perceives risk-taking as associated with the neurological desire or need for increased stimulation or 'sensation', is an important feature of cognitive scientific understandings of risk. For Zuckerman:

> Sensation seeking is a trait defined by the seeking of varied, novel, complex, and intense sensations and experiences, and the willingness to take physical, social, legal, and financial risks for the sake of such experience (Zuckerman 1994a: 27).

Zuckerman argues that individuals seek risky situations and circumstances in order to reap the physiological benefits of such experiences. According to this understanding, a risk is a means through which to generate physiological stimulation and to reach what Zuckerman calls the 'optimal level of arousal'. The premise of Zuckerman's theory of sensation seeking is that individuals differ in their need and desire for stimulation and arousal, and that engagement in risk-taking behaviour is a direct result of such differences. Sensation seekers engage in a great deal of behaviour that is not risky at all, but where risk is involved, high sensation seekers perceive the experiences as worth the risk, whereas low sensation seekers either do not value the sensations of the activity or do not think they are worth the risk (Zuckerman 1994a: 124). Risk-taking in this understanding is an opportunity for sensation arousal where an individual must weigh up the potential positive sensations and the possible negative outcomes. Again, integral to such understandings is the notion of risk perception and risk appraisal, where the individual must decide whether the potential gain justifies the risk. Zuckerman's research has found that high sensation seekers tend to appraise many situations as less risky than low sensation seekers, and that this seems to be a function of their behavioural experience (Zuckerman 1994a: 154). According to this theory, sensation seekers are attracted to activities that offer novel or intense experiences, and are willing to accept the risks involved. Low sensation seekers are less attracted to these experiences, perceive them as more risky, and anticipate more undesirable outcomes if they engage in such activities. According to Zuckerman's theory of sensation seeking, the young men in our example engage in risky drinking and public violence in order to increase cognitive stimulation and arousal, and perceive the experiences offered by these practices as worth the risks involved in engagement.

The cognitive science approach to risk is one that has attracted a number of key critiques and criticisms. The most significant of these is that it overlooks the importance of broader social, cultural, and historical factors, and subjective understandings of risk and risk-taking. As Lupton (1999a: 22) notes, cognitive science perspectives do not adequately take into account the symbolic meanings that individuals give to things and events in the world, which are created in social, cultural, and historical contexts. The cognitive science approach tends also to view risk as objective realities rather than subjective interpretations. As Beck (1999: 23) points out, this perspective does not entertain the social production or cultural cognition of risk, but rather presents risks as extraneous entities of an immutable and absolute truth. From this objectivist point of view, lay people's perceptions of risk are portrayed as 'biased' and 'illogical' compared to experts more 'accurate' and 'scientific' assessments (Lupton 1999b: 2). Individuals are presented as irrational risk actors whose engagement in various risks is the result of misinformed decision-making, rather than a synthesis of social, cultural, and historical meanings and understandings. Douglas (1985: 3) argues that this view of rational action that is too limited and narrow, 'so instead of a sociological, cultural, and ethical theory of human judgment, there is an unintended emphasis on perceptual pathology'. As Denney (2005: 18) notes, the understandings of risk and risk engagement presented in the cognitive science approach can lead to a 'blame-laden culture', where the presentation of risks as universal 'truths' defined by 'experts' therefore dictates human action as either rational (risk aversive) or irrational (risk engagement), where the latter can be apportioned blame and become scapegoats for negative consequences and outcomes (see Douglas 1995). Hence, young men who engage in risky drinking and public violence are often presented in broader social discourse as irrational and illogical risk actors whose engagement in risky practices is the result of poor decision making, and who are themselves to blame for any negative outcomes related to their engagement in these practices.

Sociocultural Perspectives

Sociocultural approaches to the theoretical understanding of risk stand in clear contrast to cognitive scientific perspectives, taking into account the very aspects that cognitive science and other technico-scientific approaches have been criticised for neglecting: the broader social and cultural contexts in which risk as a concept derives its meaning and resonance (Lupton 1999a: 24). Ultimately, the cognitive approach to risk pays little attention to the understanding of broader social, cultural and historical contexts in which risk is understood and negotiated. The sociocultural understandings of risk however argue that those events that are understood as 'risks' cannot be simply accepted as objective 'facts' that are isolated from social, cultural and historical contexts, but rather risks must be understood as inevitably the outcome of sociocultural processes, and furthermore, that 'such risks tend to serve social, cultural and political functions' (Lupton 1999b: 2). In recent years, the focus within the existing risk discourses has shifted from being one centred on psychological or cognitive understandings of risk perception to one that emphasises the role of sociocultural factors. A review of these emerging theoretical approaches reveals that sociocultural perspectives on risk can be loosely categorised into two major groups based upon the epistemological perspective adopted. The first is the theoretical perspective developed by Mary Douglas and her colleagues known as the 'cultural/symbolic' approach. The second is the theory of 'risk society' found in the work of macro sociologists Ulrich Beck and Anthony Giddens. Further theoretical perspectives include the 'governmentality' perspectives offered by those who draw on the work of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, and Stephen Lyng's concept of 'edgework'.

The theoretical work on risk developed by Mary Douglas began in the early 1980s and established an influential perspective on risk that adopted a cultural anthropological approach to the understanding of risk and risk perception (Douglas & Wildavsky 1982; Douglas 1985; 1990; 1992). This 'cultural/symbolic' perspective emphasised the importance of acknowledging social and cultural factors in the construction of risk, and presented a strong critique of the

individualistic approach to risk found in the cognitive science and other technico-scientific understandings of risk. Douglas contends that:

> The professional discussion of cognition and choice has no sustained theorising about the social influences which select particular risks for attention. Yet it is hard to maintain seriously that perception of risk is private (Douglas 1985: 3)

According to Douglas' theory, it is not enough to say that individuals' engagement in risky practices can be reduced to cognitive functioning and insufficient knowledge about risk probabilities, but rather we must begin to understand that there are other social, political, and cultural factors that affect such decisions. Risk is not an objective, measurable concept, but is socially, culturally, and politically constructed where individuals come already primed with culturally learned assumptions and weightings (Douglas 1992: 58). The choice of an individual to engage in activities labelled as 'risky' is not attributable to a weakness in understanding, it is a preference based in social and cultural interpretations (Douglas 1992: 103). According to this view, individual responses to risk need to be acknowledged as being made and having use and value within particular social and cultural contexts. As Lupton (1999a: 38) argues, risks should be identified as 'shared conventions, expectations and cultural categories that are founded on clear social functions and responsibilities'. Risks are engaged in or not engaged in on the basis of social, cultural and political understandings about what is desirable and acceptable behaviour and what is not.

These ideas emerged out of Douglas's earlier work on notions of purity, danger, and the body (Douglas 1966; 1969), which explored the ways in which cultural taboos and offences in terms of purity and contamination act to protect societies from behaviours that threaten to destabilise them. Douglas's theorising on purity and danger maintained that these notions serve to construct cultural boundaries; between individuals, between social groups within a community, and between communities, where what is considered to be contaminating or polluting is perceived as a danger and threat to broad social order. Furthermore, notions of purity and

danger are culturally specific, working to establish and maintain ideas about the self and the other (Lupton 1999b: 3). According to this understanding, those that engage in activities that contaminate or pollute social order are seen as dysfunctional in that they have transgressed cultural norms and have placed others in danger and 'at risk'. In this sense, risk can be understood as the outcome of breaking a cultural taboo, crossing a cultural boundary, and committing a social sin. These notions are derived from cultural concepts regarding the classification and categorisation of risks, where engagements in culturally determined risks are perceived as violations of sociocultural values and expectations (Lupton 1999a: 45).

For Douglas, the concept of risk is also always political as it relates to the establishment and maintenance of cultural boundaries, which themselves relate to notions of accountability, responsibility and blame. The early work of Douglas, which demonstrated the importance of cultural understandings of risk, underpins her subsequent work on the inevitable link between risk and blame in contemporary societies. Douglas believes that the concept of risk in contemporary secularised societies has become an important tool because of its use as a 'forensic resource' (Douglas 1992: 24), providing explanations for unfortunate events that previously may have been attributed to the retribution of gods or deities due to some sin, taboo or misconduct. Risk then becomes an important concept used in the blame and marginalisation of an individual or individuals who are perceived as posing a threat or risk to the integrity of self or society (Lupton 1999a: 39-40). As Douglas observes:

> In all places at all times the universe is moralized and politicized. Disasters that befoul the air and soil and poison the water are generally turned to political account: someone already unpopular is going to be blamed for it (Douglas 1992: 5).

Furthermore, in contexts where potential risks and dangers are omnipresent, the risks that receive the most attention and are most clearly classified in a particular culture are those connected with legitimating central moral principles (Douglas 1985: 60). Referring back to our example, the theoretical perspective on risk presented by Douglas would argue that young men

come to their engagement in risky drinking and public violence with pre-existing understandings of these practices, with their engagement in these practices seen as a preference based on broader sociocultural influences. Interestingly, risky drinking and public violence would qualify as 'taboo' practices in most contemporary societies; as dysfunctional practices that break various social and cultural expectations. However, in an important inversion of Douglas's model, it is my theory that risky drinking and public violence have in fact become legitimate masculine practices; practices that align with the legitimating moral principles (hegemonic masculinity) and which are used by young men to perform useful sociocultural functions.

The theory of 'risk society' developed in the work of Ulrich Beck, and to a lesser extent Anthony Giddens, has also had a substantial influence on contemporary understandings of risk. Beck's *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (1992) generated a great deal of interest from both academic and non-academic audiences regarding the concept of risk and its implications upon modern societies. In this and later developments (Beck 1994; 1995; 1997; 1999), Beck outlines a grand theory about the role of risk in contemporary social life, drawing attention the increased intensification of concern in late or post-modern societies about risks. He argues that societies are moving toward 'risk society', where the emphasis in contemporary social life has shifted from being focused upon attaining social 'goods' to avoiding increasingly prevalent social 'bads'. As Beck (1992: 49) states, 'one is no longer concerned with attaining something 'good' but rather preventing the worst'. The central problem for post-modern societies is now the prevention and minimisation of social 'bads', where both individual lives and global arenas are dominated by concerns about risk (Lupton 2006: 12).

Central to Beck and Giddens's work on risk society is the concept of 'reflexive modernisation'; the questioning of the outcomes of modernity in terms of their production of risks (Lupton & Tulloch 2002: 318). Beck (1994: 5) contends that the term 'reflexive' in his concept of reflexive

modernisation does not refer to mere 'reflection', but rather to 'self-confrontation', the process of modernity coming to examine and critique itself. For Beck, the promise of progress found in modernity has turned into self-destruction, where the domains of science and technology once regarded as the pinnacles of human advancement are now recognised as being potentially responsible for large-scale harm. As Lupton (1999a: 67) notes, lay people have become sceptical about science as they are aware that science produces many of the risks about which they are concerned, and that scientific knowledge about risk is often incomplete and contradictory, failing to solve the problems it has created. For Beck and Giddens, an emphasis on risk is an integral feature of a society that has come to reflect upon itself, to critique itself. With the shift into risk society comes a rise in 'individualisation', assisted by the progressive weakening and loss of traditions and social bonds that once shaped key aspects the life-course such as marriage, the nuclear family and long-term employment (Lupton 1999b: 4). A key difference between the ways in which we conceptualise risk as compared to earlier societies is the extent to which individuals are positioned as choosing agents. In risk society, risk is primarily understood as the product of human action and responsibility rather than the outcome of destiny or fate as it was in pre-modernity. Individuals are now forced to negotiate risks largely on their own, away from the safety of traditional securities found in the family, employment and relationships. Thus, the everyday experience of risk in contemporary western society has become increasingly individualised (Mythen 2004: 28).

The perspectives on risk developed by Beck have in many ways been echoed in the work of Anthony Giddens. Like Beck, Giddens has written at length on risk and the uncertainty with which individuals approach life in contemporary social life (Lupton 1999a: 72), and supports Beck's claim that contemporary society can be defined as risk society, or what he calls a 'risk culture' (Giddens 1991: 3). Both Giddens and Beck identify risk as being central to post-modernity, where transformations regarding traditional customs and habits have had a radical effect of the conduct and meaning of everyday life. Furthermore, both are interested in the

global and political aspects of risk, emphasising the macro nature of risk in contemporary society, and identifying reflexivity as a primary response to insecurity and uncertainty in the modern age (Lupton 1999a: 81). There are a number of differences, however, between the two theorists. Unlike Beck, Giddens does not believe that the present age is in any way more risky or dangerous than previous periods of history. Rather it is simply that individuals are for more sensitive to the possibility of risk (Lupton 1999a: 81; Denney 2005: 34). Giddens also pays more attention to self-reflexivity and reflexivity directed towards the body and the self. From Giddens' (1991: 3) perspective, 'the self, like the broader institutional contexts in which it exists, has to be reflexively made. Yet this task has to be accomplished amid a puzzling diversity of options and possibilities'. This is what Giddens refers to as 'reflexive biography', where the reflexive project of self-identity and selfhood requires individuals to consider risks as filtered through expert knowledge. This sits in contrast to Beck who places greater emphasis on individuals' reflexive critique of macro social forces. Overall, both theorists would argue that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is the result of individualised processes of reflexive identity construction in a global context of risk management.

A further theoretical perspective of risk worth noting is the 'governmentality' perspective which draws on the work of Michel Foucault in regards to how modern societies are controlled and organised in ways that invite voluntary participation from their citizens. Although Foucault did not specifically confront the issue of risk in his own work, exponents of the governmentality perspective (Castel 1991; Dean 2010; Ewald 1991; Kelly 2000) have drawn on his insights regarding social control and discipline and applied them to the understanding of risk regulation in post-modern societies. As with the risk society theorists, this perspective acknowledges risk as a central feature emerging from modernisation, yet they are more interested in particular modes of thinking or discourses that surround and construct risk, and the understandings of risk that are shared within social groups. Foucault and colleagues (Foucault 1983; 1991; Foucault et al. 1991; Foucault & Pearson 2001) argue that in modern societies the state and its

apparatuses do not overtly regulate citizens, but rather individuals are encouraged to adopt certain practices voluntarily as 'good citizens', in pursuit of their own interests, so that the external government of citizens is internalised to become self-governing (Lupton 2006: 14). According to this perspective, nothing is a risk in and of itself, there is no risk in reality, but rather certain events and practices are constructed as risks through discourse (Ewald 1991: 199). Of particular interest to those within this perspective is the ways in which specific practices are labelled as 'risky' whilst other practices are not, and the processes involved in creating and disseminating such discourses of risk. According to such perspectives, risky drinking and public violence are not risks in reality, but rather are constructed as risks through social discourse. The role of the state is to encourage individuals, including young men, to be self-regulating functional citizens.

A final theoretical approach to the understanding of risk that must be considered here relates to the concept of edgework. The term 'edgework' was introduced to discussions of risk and risk-taking in the work of Stephen Lyng (1990; 1993; 2005), who took the term from the writings of Hunter S. Thompson and used it to refer to dangerous risky practices that are engaged in by individuals, and which are done so voluntarily. As in the work of Douglas, the 'edge' in the concept of edgework takes place around cultural boundaries: those between life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness, sanity and insanity, an ordered sense of self and environment versus a disordered self and environment (Lyng 1990: 857). Though originally developed to describe obvious risky practices including skydiving, rock climbing, illicit drug use, and motor vehicle racing, the concept has since been expanded in the literature to refer to a more general range of risk practices that ultimately require negotiation of these dialectic boundaries (Anderson 2006; Lois 2001; Lupton 2013; Lyng 2005). According to Lyng (1990: 859), edgework involves an emphasis on skilled performance and the effective management of risky practice, where the ability to maintain control over a situation that borders on high risk and serious injury, and to do so whilst displaying mental toughness and an absence of fear is of

paramount importance. Importantly, edgework also relates to notions of reflexivity and selfhood, where engagement in risky practices produces a sense of self-realization, and where successful and skilled negotiation of dangerous activities is associated with personal achievement and the display of courage, strength, and agency. According to this theory, risky drinking and public violence are perceived as practices that require skilled engagement, with successful engagements and performances in these practices seen as valuable in the construction of legitimate self-identities.

In summary, each of the major theoretical perspectives of risk discussed here presents a unique approach to the understanding risk. Whilst early conceptualisations of risk focused primarily on individualistic cognitive processing, where risks were perceived to be objective truths in reality defined and measured by experts and participated in by lay people as a function of irrational decision-making, subsequent theorisations of risk have taken into account the importance of social, cultural, and historical factors. These perspectives emphasise the sociocultural nature of risk, arguing that risks are never fully objective or knowable outside of the social and that what we identify as risks are always constituted through pre-existing knowledges and discourses (Lupton 1999a: 29). However, each of these perspectives takes a distinctive approach to understanding risk as a socially constructed phenomenon. The risk society perspective presented by Beck and Giddens tends to waver between a realist approach and a social constructionist position, moving between the two positions by suggesting at times that 'real' risks exist in society and that risks are objective phenomena, yet drawing attention to their mediation through social and cultural processes. The cultural/symbolic perspective presented by Douglas offers a more strongly social constructionist approach that emphasises to a greater extent the role of social and cultural processes in understandings of risk. The governmentality perspective offers the strongest social constructionist approach, where nothing is seen as a risk in itself, but rather events are socially constructed as risks through discourse (Lupton 2006: 14). Furthermore, the concept of edgework demonstrates that risk can be understood as being

important to notions of selfhood and reflexivity and the construction of positive self-identities. Whilst there are significant differences to be found between these theories of risk, the central theme for each is that risk should ultimately be understood as intricately intertwined with social and cultural processes.

Gendering Risk

The overall theorisation of risk has revealed the importance of considering the social, cultural, and political influences that contribute to individual and broader understandings of risk and risky practice. The understanding of risk as a purely objective reality and risk-taking as irrational behaviour caused by cognitive processing and (mis)calculated responses has been superseded by the knowledge that understandings of risk are inevitably the outcome of social and cultural processes, and that risky practices are used by individuals to serve social, cultural, and political functions. A failure to recognise the importance of social and cultural influences reduces risk to the individualistic level, rather than taking into account the symbolic meanings and interpretations individuals assign to risk within sociocultural contexts. With this in mind, this research aims to demonstrate the significant relationship between risk, risky practice, and gender. In particular, it aims to explore the gendered nature of risk; that is, the ways in which risk and risky practice can be drawn on to construct gendered identities. Drawing on these notions, the primary focus of this research is to elucidate the ways in which young men draw on risky practices to construct a form of hegemonic masculinity that positions them in alignment with a legitimate hegemonic masculine ideal.

In order to conduct an analysis of risk and risky practices, this study has identified two key ways in which risk is to be defined. First, this research objectively defined risk as any activity or practice that can be identified as likely to cause harm or increase the likelihood of harm for an individual or individuals. Secondly, in line with sociocultural perspectives this research defined risk as having a distinct subjective component. It acknowledges that there is a potential for

great difference between what is perceived to be objectively risky and what individuals subjectively define as 'risky'. For this reason, this study paid close attention to sociocultural understandings of risk, and the influence of broader social, cultural, and political forces on individual understandings of risk. With these definitions in mind, this chapter now turns to an examination of the ways in which risk can be understood as being gendered, as a means through which gendered identities can be constructed and performed.

Risk as Sociocultural Practice

Sociocultural understandings of risk argue that those phenomena that can be identified as risks play a significant role in the understanding of self and selfhood in the social and material worlds (Lupton 1999a: 14). According to these perspectives, risk participation and the ways in which individuals negotiate risk and risky practice is central to the creation and formation of self-identity. As Beck (1992) and Giddens (1991) have pointed out, the self has become seen as a reflexive project in late modernity, where individuals must construct their own 'reflexive biographies' within a global social climate that has become increasingly individualised and emphasises human agency. Where once it was considered that an individual's life course was in many ways pre-determined, the increased individualisation of the self in modernity now sees life outcomes as more flexible and open, where the self is to be shaped and made. It is in this context that risk and risky practice become important for the creation of individual identities. As Lupton (2006: 20) notes, risk-taking is an integral feature of life, and indeed, of selfhood. Risk-taking is also understood by individuals to be a means of achieving self-actualisation and accomplishment, a chance to demonstrate the mastering of a challenge (Lyng 1990; 1993; 2005). Risk also provides a means of engaging in heightened emotional states, experiencing the thrill of excitement, the opportunity to push the boundaries, and to exert control over the body and self. Individuals in post-modern societies can therefore be seen as 'risk actors', as individuals whose engagement and participation (or non-participation) in risk is crucial to their sense of self-identity.

This research will claim that risky practices can be identified as a form of gendered performance. It argues that within social and cultural contexts, risk engagement plays a critical role in the formation and construction of particular gender identities, with configurations of practice that are either objectively or subjectively considered risky being engaged in by individuals in order to construct particular forms of social and cultural identity. In order to fully comprehend this line of argument, we must first be clear in the ways in which gender is understood as socially constructed. As established in Chapter Two, gender is not a set of traits or roles but rather the product of social doings, a socially constructed phenomenon embedded in the everyday social interaction between men and women (see West & Zimmerman 1987). Women and men organise their various activities and actions in interaction with others in order to reflect or express particular forms of gender, and they are disposed to perceive the behaviour of others in a similar light. To reiterate West and Zimmerman (1987: 140), gender is 'not simply an aspect of what one is, but more fundamentally, it is something that one does, and does recurrently, in interaction with others'. Gender is therefore always a 'doing'; a process that involves presenting or signifying particular configurations of practice as expressions of masculinity, femininity, or other alternative. For Butler (1990), gender is always performative. Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir's (1952) claim that 'one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman', Butler contends that gender is not a pre-discursive anatomical facticity, but rather it is constructed and performed through social and cultural action. This important contribution recognises that there is in fact no gender identity behind the expressions of gender, but rather gendered identities are 'performatively constituted by the very 'expressions' that are said to be its results' (Butler 1990: 25).

If gender can be identified as being socially constructed through social practice and interaction, risk and risky practices can be identified as being gendered practice, practices through which gendered identities are formed and performed. Risk, in this sense, can be understood as a way of 'doing' gender. To recognise the importance of social, cultural, and political influences in

regards to risk opens up the possibility of beginning to understand the gendered nature of risk, to acknowledge that notions of gender may play a significant role in individual and broader conceptualisations of risk. Furthermore, it provides the opportunity to examine the socio-political relationship between risk and gender, in particular, the ways in which risk relates to notions of hegemony and hegemonic masculinity within existing gender systems. Ultimately, the conceptualisation of risk as gendered practice will allow for an analysis of the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a display of hegemonic masculinity.

Risk as Gendered Practice

The gendered nature of risk has been examined in a number of empirical research projects that have acknowledged risk and risky practices as having a significantly gendered component. For example, many studies have found significant gender differences in the ways in which females and males conceptualise risk. As Slovic (2000: 396) notes, almost all studies of risk perception have indicated that men seem to be less concerned about risks than women (Gutteling & Wiegman 1993; Finucane et al. 2000; Slovic et al. 1989). A significant study by Flynn et al. (1994) found that of the 1500 participants surveyed, the perception of risk by males was significantly smaller than that of females for all 25 risks studied. In Green's (1997) study of children's understandings of risk, girls were more likely to stress the importance of safety, care-taking, and risk avoidance, whereas boys were more likely to emphasise the courageous, thrilling, and dangerous aspects of risk and the physical skills required in its successful negotiation. Crawford et al. (1992) found that from a young age women and men are socialised to think of risk differently, where boys' engagement in risk tends to invoke feelings of pride and courage in dealing with danger, whereas girls risk-taking is more likely to invoke feelings of shame and guilt for having behaved irresponsibly or incompetently. As Mythen (2004: 103) notes, women have historically been socialised into risk awareness in the areas of personal safety, health, and hygiene (Weaver et al. 2000: 172), whereas men are more likely to have been

encouraged to be more fearless and to actively engage in risk-taking practices (Douglas 1985: 70).

In regards to masculinities, it is not surprising that many studies indicate that various practices that can objectively be regarded as risks are highly related to the construction of masculine identities. Collison (1996) found that young men are likely to engage in practices that are objectively deemed 'risky', such as drug taking and other criminal activities, as a means of performing dominant masculinities. Engagement in risks is seen as an opportunity to demonstrate courage, body control, to display control over emotions such as fear and anxiety, and to demonstrate mastery to the self and others. Various researchers have also explored risky drinking and the use of alcohol consumption as a means of displaying legitimate masculinity. These studies have indicated that excessive drinking and the ability to tolerate and withstand the effects of alcohol are symbolic of performing a form of acceptable masculinity (De Visser & Smith 2007a; 2007b; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Peralta 2007; Peralta et al. 2010; Peralta et al. 2011; West 2001). Others have found that men's engagement in acts of violence can be used to construct dominant masculine identities, and to distance them from subordinate masculinities (Messerschmidt 1993; 1998; McMahan 2011; Peralta et al. 2010; Polk 1999; Stoudt 2006; Tomsen 2001; 2003; 2009; Tomsen & Mason 2001). Research has also shown that men's engagement in dangerous driving practices and car cultures is a way in which men can display and construct specific masculinities (Collins et al. 2000; Connell 1991; 1995; Poynting et al 1999; Walker 1998; Walker et al. 2000). As Featherstone (1995: 59) argues, risky practices are often seen by young men as ways of adding thrills to life, testing one's boundaries of fear and endurance, proving one's adulthood, and performing masculinity. They are used as attempts to engage in what Featherstone calls the 'heroic life', which involves courage, adventure, endurance, deeds of virtuosity and the capacity to attain distinction and a higher purpose through risk-taking.

Whilst men's engagement in risks can be seen as a means of constructing masculinities, research shows that women's conceptions of risk are also highly related to notions of femininity. As has been established, women are socialised from a young age to deal with risk in a certain way, one that emphasises risk avoidance and 'correct' behaviour (Crawford et al. 1992). Such research suggests that women are expected to be more mature than boys, to act responsibly, to conform to rules, to be responsible for the well-being of others, and are often portrayed as the vulnerable passive victims of risk rather than active risk takers (Lupton 1999a: 159). These representations are a reflection of the dominant ideals of emphasised femininity. In this context, risk-taking practices may be seen by women as a means through which to escape restrictive notions of femininity, or to directly challenge these ideals by expressing alternative femininities. Hargreaves' (1997) analysis of competitive female boxers found that their engagement in a male-dominated arena was empowering, a source of excitement and pleasure, and a way to confront traditional feminine expectations. Other studies, such as those by Gotfrit (1991: 179), have indicated that women's conceptions of risk in terms of the sexuality of nightclub dancing can involve losing control, the unknown, and daring to be potentially 'bad' by stepping out of 'good girl' territory. In a study by Tulloch and Lupton (2003), women tended to associate risk with risks to their children, or risks related to sexual activity, whereas men were more likely to see risk as a positive aspect of sports, travel, or daring deeds.

It is important to note here that individuals can only ever know and experience risks through their specific location and position within broader social and cultural structures. As Lupton (1999a: 112) notes, risk positions are often contingent upon the individual's location within social milieu, and are therefore important to an individual's claim to particular social groups and subcultures (Lupton 1999a: 112). Risk in this sense also serves political functions, as a means by which to self-identify as a part of particular social groups, and to claim or relinquish power in system based on hegemonic power relations. Research has indicated that members of social groups that are less powerful are more likely to be more concerned about risks than

members of powerful social groups. In what Slovic (2000) identifies as the 'white male effect', numerous studies have found that white males differ significantly from other groups in society in regards to risk perception. Flynn et al. (1994) found that the perceptions of risks by white men were consistently much lower than that of white women, non-white men, and non-white women. Other studies such as those by Graham and Clemente (1996) and Finucane et al. (2000) have found that white men, particularly those with higher levels of education and income, are significantly less likely than other groups in society to be concerned about risks. Such studies suggest that an individual's position in relation to social power is integral to the ways in which they conceptualise and negotiate risk. As Lupton (1999a: 119) suggests, rather than responding to risk as autonomous agents, individuals may engage and negotiate risk as members of specific social groups and networks, with differing claims to social and cultural power.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented a critical and theoretical analysis of the concept of risk. It has explored the semantic origins of risk and detailed the ways in which the understanding, usage, and definition of the term has changed over time. It has demonstrated the complexities of risk, outlining the ways in which risk as concept involves both natural and human elements, the weighing up of potential gains and rewards with possible adverse outcomes, and can be identified as having both positive and negative aspects in association with the potential for significant loss or gain. The chapter has presented an overview of the key ways in which risk has been understood and theorised within existing risk discourses, and outlined the fundamental similarities and differences between these various perspectives. Most importantly, this chapter has articulated the gendered nature of risk, drawing attention to the ways in which risk and risky practice can be understood as a gendered practice and as performing a crucial role in the social construction of gendered identities. In particular, this chapter has demonstrated that understandings of risk themselves are gendered, with risk and risky practices manifesting in the lives of women and men in different ways. For men, risk is highly related to the construction of

masculine identities, especially hegemonic masculinity, whereas for women understandings of risk often intersect with notions of normative or alternative femininities. Risk can also be understood as serving political functions, where the understanding and negotiation of risk and risky practice in the lives of individuals is related to their claims to specific social group and sub-groups and their overall position in social hierarchies. Through this process, this chapter has emphasised the importance of understanding risk as sociocultural practice, and the significance of risk and risky practice in the construction and performance of gendered identities. The following chapter presents a sociological analysis of two practices, risky drinking and public violence, and the ways in which these practices are drawn on by young men in the construction of masculine identities.

4. Risky Drinking and Public Violence

In the previous chapter it was established that risky practices are gendered; practices that can be drawn on to construct and perform gendered identities. In particular, it was noted that risky practices are often used by men in the construction of masculine identities. Having established risky practices as being gendered, the aim of this chapter is to conduct an analysis of the two specific risky practices that are the focus of this research, risky drinking and public violence, and to examine the ways in which these two practices are used by young men in the construction of masculine identities, in particular hegemonic masculinity. The chapter is organised around three main objectives. The first is to provide a sociological mapping of the practice of risky drinking, outlining what is known thus far in the literature on the topic and the extent to which the relationship between risky drinking and masculinity has been investigated. The second is to examine the literature on public violence, exploring what is known about this practice and its relationship to the construction of masculinity. The third objective is to explore the intersections between these two practices, examining the complex relationships and correlations between alcohol use and violence. Through this process, this chapter will outline the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as configurations of masculine practice that assist in the production of legitimate masculine identities that align with hegemonic masculinity.

Risky Drinking

The term 'risky drinking' refers to a pattern of alcohol consumption that leads to high levels of intoxication and increases the likelihood of alcohol-related harm or injury. It is related to a number of other well-known terms used to describe excessive alcohol use, including 'binge drinking', 'heavy episodic drinking', 'high-risk drinking' and other variations (NHMRC 2009;

Murgraff et al. 1999). There has been considerable debate and confusion within the existing literature on alcohol-related research on how exactly to define and quantify such terms. A significant proportion of the research into patterns of alcohol consumption has tended to use the label 'binge drinking'. This term emerged in the 1990s out of the work of the Harvard School of Public Health and became a popular catchword used to describe excessive alcohol use, particularly amongst young people. Initially, binge drinking was defined as a pattern of alcohol consumption that leads to high intoxication in a single drinking session, and was quantified as the consumption of five or more drinks in a row for men and four or more for women on a single occasion (Wechsler et al. 1994). However, arriving at a universal definition of binge drinking proved to be a difficult task, with discrepancies as to how much alcohol should be defined as a 'binge', in what time frames, and how often (Courtney & Polich 2009; Goodhart et al. 2003; Ham & Hope 2003; Herring et al. 2008; Wechsler & Kuo 2000). In recent years, the term has been criticised for being too emotive and definitively unclear (see Pennay et al. 2011), and as such there has been a shift away from its usage towards the use of more suitable terms such as risky drinking.

Although academic definitions are important, perhaps what is more significant is the definitions employed by governmental institutions and agencies as it is these definitions which become the official classifications upon which policy is based and trends monitored (Herring et al. 2008). The Australian Bureau of Statistics (2008) defines risky drinking as the 'consumption of alcohol over a short period of time (for example on any one occasion) at levels for which the risk of harm over the short term is considered 'risky' or 'high risk''. This definition is based on guidelines set by the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in 2001 that defined risky drinking as seven or more standard drinks in one day for males, or five or more for women. High-risk drinking was defined as eleven or more standard drinks in one day for males, or seven or more for females (NHMRC 2001). In 2009, the NHMRC released new guidelines that moved away from previous threshold-based definitions of 'risky' and 'high-risk'

drinking. These new guidelines recommended that risky drinking begin to be understood as leading to both short-term and long-term harms and introduced the concept of progressively increased risk of harm with the amount of alcohol consumed (NHMRC 2009). Under these revised guidelines, men and women drinking more than two standard drinks on any given day increase the risk of alcohol-related harm or disease over their lifetime, whilst those drinking more than four standard drinks on a single occasion increase the risk of alcohol-related injury arising from that occasion. Despite the difficulties that have emerged in attempting to arrive at a universal definition, the majority of research conducted in the area of risky drinking identifies it as a pattern of excessive drinking over a short period of time that results in immediate and severe intoxication (AIHW 2011a).

In recent years there has been a growing interest and concern with the problem of risky drinking, especially that amongst young people. Risky drinking is now widely acknowledged as leading to a range of serious short-term and long-term harms for individuals, and as a significant contributing factor for a broad range of public health issues that have serious impacts within societies (Kelly et al. 2011: xiii). The fact that risky drinking leads to a range of serious negative outcomes, both for the individual and for broader society, and that it is young people who are the principal recipients of these outcomes has lead researchers to explore the nature of risky drinking among young people and the reasons that lie beneath their predominant engagement in the practice. As such, a significant body of research has been established that examines the practice of risky drinking and the ways in which young people engage with the practice. This research has studied the practice of risky drinking amongst young people in the United States of America (the US), the United Kingdom (UK) and Europe, in Australia and New Zealand, and in numerous other countries around the globe.

The most extensive body of research on risky drinking amongst young people has been conducted by Henry Wechsler and colleagues (Wechsler et al. 1994; 1995; 1995; Wechsler & Kuo 2000; Wechsler & Nelson 2001), who have primarily focused on the practice of risky drinking amongst American college students. This research has drawn on data from a number of large-scale studies to examine the patterns of risky drinking amongst college students. These studies have indicated that patterns of risky drinking are high for college students, and that young people's engagement in risky drinking may be influenced by notions of gender, other social factors such as race and family history, the perceptions of peers, and personal understandings of risky drinking. These findings have been confirmed by numerous other studies of risky drinking among American college students and non-college students (Baer 1994; Clapp & McDonnell 2000; Nagoshi 1999; Tan 2012; Wood et al. 1992). Other US based research has examined more closely the influence of broad social structures on risky drinking, including an important collection of recent studies that have focused on the influence of gender on risky drinking amongst young people (Peralta 2007; 2008; Peralta & Cruz 2006; Peralta & Jauk 2011; Peralta et al. 2010).

The nature of risky drinking amongst young people has also received considerable attention within the UK and throughout Europe. In the UK, risky drinking has been found to be highly prevalent amongst young people in a cultural context that is socially and historically organised in relation to drinking and the consumption of alcohol (Measham 2008). Recent research has demonstrated that risky drinking is a significant feature of young people's leisure practices in the UK, with the consumption of alcohol being recognised as a central feature of the night time economy[3] and part of a 'work hard, play hard' ethic amongst young people where alcohol provides a means through which to counter the stresses and responsibilities of everyday life (Brain 2000; Measham 1996; 2004; 2006; 2008; Measham & Brain 2005; Murgraff et al. 1999;

[3] The 'night time economy' refers to the rapid development of inner cities, the development of night-time entertainment precincts, and significant increases in the number of bars, pubs, clubs and other drinking venues and restaurants in many late twentieth and early twenty-first century post-industrial cities (Kelly et al. 2011)

Szmigin et al. 2008). Other research has focused on the relationship between risky drinking and gender among UK youth (De Visser & McDonnell 2011; De Visser & Smith 2007a; 2007b). A substantial body of research has also examined the nature of risky drinking amongst European and Nordic youth. These studies have drawn on empirical research and large scale surveys, such as the European Comparative Alcohol Study, to examine the differences in drinking patterns amongst young people of different countries throughout Europe, including Finland, Sweden, Germany, France, Italy, Russia, Denmark, The Netherlands, and the Czech Republic. (Ahlström et al. 2001; Ahlström et al. 2007; Demant & Järvinen 2006; Demant & Ostergaard 2007; Järvinen & Room 2007; Kolind 2011; Mäkelä et al. 2006; Room 2001; Room & Bullock 2002; Tryggvesson 2004). Whilst there is evidence for differences between cultures in terms of risky drinking amongst youth, recent research has cautioned against self-evident assumptions that risky drinking is less problematic in some cultural contexts when compared to others, and argued that the negotiation and management of risky drinking practices is a common feature of youth cultures throughout Europe (Room & Bullock 2002: 645).

In addition to these studies, the practice of risky drinking amongst young people has also been the focus of studies conducted in numerous other countries. For example, there is interesting work on the drinking practices of young people in New Zealand (Campbell 2000; Kypri et al. 2004; Penwarden 2010), where risky drinking is reported to be not only common, but important for social identity construction and a contributing factor to a range of alcohol-related problems including poor health as well as interpersonal, anti-social and academic problems. Similar studies have also been conducted in various other cultural contexts, including Canada (Adlaf et al. 2005; Leatherdale et al. 2008), South Africa (Kaminer & Dixon 1995; Peltzer & Ramlagan 2009), broader Africa (Obot 2006; 2007; Tumwesigye et al. 2009), and in South America (Babor & Caetano 2005; Rehm & Monteiro 2005). Whilst the global research indicates that there are significant variations in patterns of risky drinking amongst youth across countries and cultures; differences in frequency of drinking; quantity of alcohol consumed; and in extent

of alcohol-related problems; risky drinking is a practice that is highly common and in many ways problematic for young people across the globe.

In Australia, there is a small but growing literature that focuses on young people and their alcohol consumption practices. The important work of Tomsen and colleagues (Homel et al. 1992; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; 2005; Tomsen et al. 1991) has demonstrated that patterns of excessive alcohol consumption amongst young people directly contribute to incidences of alcohol-related violence in public drinking contexts. Others such as Lindsay (2006; 2009; 2012) have examined risky drinking as social practice amongst young people in drinking establishments. There is also a body of research that has explored the levels and patterns of risky drinking amongst Australian secondary school students (White & Hayman 2006) and university students (Roche et al. 2007; Roche & Deehan 2002; Roche & Watt 1999), and the meanings and understandings of risky drinking among young Australian's more generally (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Kelly et al. 2011). Recent data indicates that young Australians are starting to drink at a younger age and that rates of risky drinking among young people have increased significantly over the past two decades (Chikritzhs et al. 2003; Chikritzhs & Pascal 2004; Roche et al. 2007; White & Hayman 2006). In much of this research, the alcohol consumption practices of young people are found to be important resources for the construction of social identities. Overall, these studies indicate the need for a better understanding of young people's engagement in risky drinking and the social and cultural factors that influence their engagement in this practice.

Risky Drinking and Gender

The existing research has revealed that patterns of risky drinking are highly gendered, and that the practice is particularly prevalent amongst young men. In almost every society, young men are consistently found to consume alcohol more frequently and in greater volumes than all other groups in society, including their female counterparts and all other male demographics

(Ahlström et al. 2007; Clements 1999; Kuntsche et al. 2004; O'Malley & Johnston 2002; Read et al. 2002; Valliant & Scanlan 1996; Wilsnack et al. 2000). General population surveys from around the world frequently report that rates for drinking quantity and frequency peak between the ages of 18 and 25 years and are highest for young men (Dowdall & Wechsler 2002; O'Malley & Johnston 2002; Wilsnack et al. 2000). Whilst there is evidence of a recent convergence in drinking patterns among young men and women in some regions, with young women now consuming alcohol at greater levels than previous generations (Lindsay 2006; Roche et al. 2007; Roche & Deehan 2002), young men remain the predominant force in regards to excessive alcohol consumption (Christie-Mizell & Peralta 2009). As recent research indicates:

> Drinking continues to be a male-dominated activity, men outnumber women in almost every category of drinking behaviour investigated in research: consumption, frequency of drinking and intoxication, alcohol abuse and dependency. Men are also less likely than women to be aware of the recommended daily limits (Mullen et al. 2007: 151)

Recent overviews of the existing research indicate that young males continue to drink on average a significantly higher number of drinks per drinking session than young females and other social groups, and do so more often (Ahlström et al. 2007; Babor et al. 2010; Kelly et al. 2011).

The gendered patterns of risky drinking reported in these studies is consistent with recent Australian data which indicates that the practice is significantly more common among young men (ABS 2008; 2009; 2012; 2014; AIHW 2007; 2008; 2011a; 2011b; 2014). According to the *National Drug Strategy Household Survey* (AIHW 2014), young adults aged 18 to 24 were more likely to drink at harmful levels on a single occasion than the rest of the adult population, with young males being significantly more likely to drink at harmful levels than young females and all other groups of men. Males were far more likely than females to drink alcohol in quantities that placed them at risk from a single occasion of drinking (47% compared with 27% for women), and were also more likely to consume alcohol in quantities that exceeded the NHMRC

single occasion risk guidelines more often than women, with 20% of men consuming these quantities at least weekly (compared with 7.5% of women). Data collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) indicates that of all men, 87.6% had consumed alcohol in the past year, with males being almost three times more likely to exceed the NHMRC guidelines than their female counterparts (29.1% compared with 10.1%, respectively). These figures illuminate the distinctly gendered nature of risky drinking in contemporary Australian society, and draw attention to the need to explore young men's alcohol consumption practices in greater detail.

In addition to differences in volume and frequency in regards to alcohol consumption, there are also significant gendered differences in the types of alcohol consumed. Studies show that men and women differ greatly in their preferred drink of choice, with males typically preferring regular strength beer and females preferring pre-mixed drinks and bottled spirits (Ahlström et al. 2007; AIHW 2011a; Babor et al. 2010; Roche et al. 2007). Lindsay's (2006) analysis of drinking practices amongst young Australians found that young men aged 18 to 30 almost unanimously drink beer as opposed to other alcoholic beverages. In-depth interviews with pub and club patrons revealed that young men were more likely to drink beer than young women, and less likely to drink wine and spirits. Recent research indicates that although there has been some shift in gender norms relating to drink choice, including the increased use of pre-mixed alcoholic beverages by young men, there remains clear gendered patterns associated with drink choice amongst young people, with some drinks such as beer and 'hard' spirits (typically whisky and bourbon) coded as masculine whilst other drinks (such as wine, cocktails, and champagne) are perceived as less 'manly' and therefore coded as feminine (Borlagdan et al. 2010; De Visser & Smith 2007b; Peralta 2007).

Being the predominant participants in risky drinking, research also indicates that young men are the most likely to experience alcohol-related problems as a result of their engagement in risky drinking. A comprehensive study of drinking among college students (Wechsler et al.

2000) found that young men who engage in risky drinking are more likely than other groups in society to experience alcohol-related violence, to report alcohol-related harm or injury, to drive after drinking, to engage in unprotected sex, to vandalise property, and to participate in activities they later regret. According to recent Australian data (AIHW 2011a), young males are far more likely than females to drink alcohol in quantities that place them at risk of alcohol-related injury, with almost two-thirds (64.6%) of young men aged between 18 and 19 and more than half (54.9%) of those aged 20 to 29 years placing themselves at risk of alcohol-related injury at least once a month. Other research indicates that young men are particularly over-represented among victims of alcohol-related violence (AIHW 2011b; Wells & Thompson 2009). These findings suggest that as consumption levels increase, gender differences in regards to alcohol-related problems become more apparent. At higher levels of consumption, the risk of alcohol-related injury increases more quickly for men (AIHW 2011b; NHMRC 2009).

The highly gendered patterns of risky drinking observed in the existing research have been theorised by some researchers as related to broader sociocultural understandings of masculinity and femininity. Historically speaking, drinking and alcohol consumption have primarily been considered masculine practices, with women often excluded from male-dominated drinking domains, for example the 'front bar' (Wright 2003), and compelled to avoid alcohol intoxication in order to evade social stigmatisation and to maintain a sense of 'femininity' and respectability (Borlagdan et al. 2010). However, the recent cultural shift towards greater female engagement in risky drinking has brought these cultural ideals under question. In recent years, much attention has been placed upon the so-called 'ladette'[4] culture, in which young women are presented as participating in alcohol consumption in much the same way as their male counterparts. Research has indicated that whilst female engagement in risky drinking is on the rise, such forms of heavy drinking among young women are still largely

[4] The term 'ladette' is used to refer to a young woman who engages in heavy drinking sessions and behaves in a boisterous, crude, and assertive manner (Jackson and Tinkler 2007: 254). The term is a derivative of the masculine term 'lad', and implies that a young woman who drinks excessively and acts assertively is acting like a young man.

perceived as unfeminine and as deviant forms of feminine practice. According to numerous empirical studies, young women who engage in risky drinking often are thought to be 'acting like men', as deviating from accepted cultural gender norms, and therefore presenting problematic femininities (Day et al. 2004; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Jackson & Tinkler 2007; Peralta 2007). It appears then that despite the recent convergence of drinking styles between young men and women, risky drinking is still considered inappropriate and undesirable for young women due to its lingering association with masculinity. There is evidence that young women who fall outside of the accepted cultural norms for drinking tend to be the target of serious negative social sanctions from their male and female peers (Borlagdan et al. 2010; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Peralta et al. 2010). This indicates that despite recent shifts in alcohol use patterns, strict gender ideals for alcohol use still persist with dominant ideologies of masculinity and femininity remaining firmly in place.

Risky Drinking and Hegemonic Masculinity

In recent years, there has been a significant shift within the existing scholarship towards understanding risky drinking and alcohol consumption as important practices for the construction of gendered identities. In particular, the relationship between risky drinking and the construction of masculinity is one that is now understood as important to the understanding of young men's engagement in the risky practice. The need for a better understanding of how young men's engagement in risky drinking is influenced by notions of gender has been recognised by numerous researchers in the field, who have argued that not enough is known about how ideologies of masculinity are enacted by young men through the use of alcohol consumption. A number of studies have indicated that young men's engagement in risky drinking can be seen as a way in which they construct masculine identities, especially hegemonic masculinity.

A significant portion of the research on young men and risky drinking has pointed towards the ways in which young men's engagement in the practice is shaped and informed by hegemonic masculinity. Young men's understandings of masculinity and of gender are consistently shown to have a direct influence on the ways in which their engagement in risky drinking is organised. Recent research has for example indicated that a fairly rigid system of gender norms exists amongst young people regarding alcohol consumption, where drinking large amounts of alcohol and doing so frequently is associated with being appropriately masculine. Conversely, drinking in moderation is perceived as being associated with femininity and therefore marginalised as a lesser form of masculinity (De Visser & McDonnell 2011; De Visser & Smith 2007b; Mullen et al. 2007; Peralta 2007; West 2001). For young men, drinking to excess is highly valued and is considered crucial to forming a legitimate and valued masculine identity. Young men acknowledge that drinking, and in particular excessive drinking, is equated with masculinity, and that the more they drink, the more highly they are regarded amongst their peers. Being able to drink excessively, to 'keep up' with your peers, and to 'hold one's drink' are important for constructing and presenting legitimate forms of masculinity (Campbell 2000; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Mullen et al. 2007; Penwarden 2010). As Peralta (2007) observes, young men pride themselves on the amount of alcohol they can consume and actively engage in proving to each other they can drink alcohol in large amounts. Risky drinking in this sense becomes a display of masculine accomplishment for young men, with those who drink larger amounts of alcohol being considered more masculine than those who drink less. Young men who drink moderately, or at least less excessively than others, risk being labeled 'soft' and accused of 'drinking like a girl' (Borlagdan et al. 2010). Such accusations have clearly gendered connotations and act as a discursive mechanism to reinforce and perpetuate dominant cultural norms surrounding masculinity and alcohol consumption.

For many young men, drink choice can be just as important as the amount of alcohol consumed in the construction of legitimate masculinities. A study of young British men by De Visser and

Smith (2007b) found that it is important for young men to drink 'manly' drinks and to be able to drink a large quantity of them. As noted above, beer and hard spirits are typically coded as masculine drinks, with other alcoholic variations such as wine, champagne, and pre-mixed beverages seen as being less masculine and more feminine (Borlagdan et al. 2010). According to a study by Peralta (2007: 747), there is a strong belief among young people that 'girls are supposed to drink girly drinks, and guys are supposed to drink beer' (Peralta 2007: 747). Young men generally see beer drinking as a key way in which to perform legitimate masculine identities, with any deviations or departures from this standard practice seen as an indication of subordination and effeminacy. For example, many young men report that drinking beverages coded as feminine as opposed to those seen as more masculine would bring a man's masculinity into question, often resulting in accusations of homosexuality, of effeminacy, and other forms of masculine marginalisation (De Visser & McDonnell 2011; De Visser & Smith 2007b).

An important feature of the relationship between risky drinking and masculinity is that it is embodied. In many studies, young men perceive risky drinking as related to the enactment of masculinity, with excessive alcohol consumption seen as a means by which to construct and perform legitimate configurations of masculinity. As Peralta (2007) notes, when it comes to alcohol use, the formation of masculine identities is centered on endurance and tolerance and being able to withstand the effects of heavy alcohol consumption. Young men see being able to drink to excess, to hold one's drink, and to exhibit bodily control despite heavy intoxication as symbolic of male strength and power. Men who drink heavily yet remain controlled and highly disciplined are praised, whereas men who spill their drinks, leave drinks unconsumed, or who get intoxicated too quickly are derided as inept drinkers and face marginalisation within the masculine hierarchy (Campbell 2000). In this sense, risky drinking can be understood as a form of 'body-reflexive practice' (Connell 1995; Messner 1992), with young men drawing on alcohol consumption practices as a way in which to construct gendered identities. Attitudes such as these that honor bodily performance help explain the prevalence of competitiveness amongst

young men when it comes to drinking. Risky drinking becomes an important instrument in the social embodiment of masculinity, where young men compete against each other to see who can drink the most alcohol, and who can remain standing when other cannot (De Visser & Smith 2007b; Peralta 2007). The display of masculine accomplishment through risky drinking and tolerating high intoxication relates also to the importance of drinking games and drinking stories (Giles 1999; Peralta 2007; West 2001), where young men engage in drinking games and stories about their own alcohol use and the alcohol use of their peers to construct masculine identities, drawing a sense of pride and accomplishment from the quantity and frequency of alcohol consumed.

The relationship between risky drinking and hegemonic masculinity has also been explored through the analysis of the social contexts in which men engage in excessive drinking. Risky drinking has been recognised as being organised in highly homosocial ways, with men typically engaging in the practice in the company of other men. Capraro (2000: 307) argues that social contexts of drinking are predominately 'male domains', that is, 'male dominated, male identified, and male centered'. Capraro notes that drinking is an event to be shared and experienced with other men, with the collective consumption of alcohol with fellow males being a way in which they can consolidate homosocial relationships. West (2001) argues that drinking cultures are important sites for men to 'work out' their masculinity, places where men use social practices related to drinking such as drinking games, male joking, sexual encounters with women, and the act of being drunk to construct and perform forms of masculinity. As Gough and Edwards (1998) note, male homosociality is often organised around the discursive subordination of the 'other', most notably women and homosexual men. Research such as that by Campbell (2000) has shown that alcohol use contributes to male bonding through the formation of an 'in-group'; a group that defines what is appropriate masculine behavior based on the dominant ideologies of masculinity of the subgroup and of the society. When drinking together, men are included or excluded from male homosocial groups based on their alcohol use patterns, with men who are

able to demonstrate an alignment with hegemonic cultural norms of alcohol consumption perceived as having a legitimate claim to masculinity, whereas those who cannot are ostracised and experience exclusion from the homosocial group. Ultimately, homosocial drinking cultures are places in which young men negotiate masculinities and where dominant ideologies of masculinity are reinforced and sustained.

The relationship between risky drinking and the formation of masculine identity therefore appears to be significant among young men. The research explored here demonstrates how dominant ideals of masculinity inform the drinking practices of young men, with young men often engaging in risky drinking in ways that affirm and reflect accepted cultural norms of masculinity and that relate to established hegemonic characteristics such as strength, power, control, and dominance. Many young men use excessive alcohol use to present a specific type of masculinity that aligns with culturally accepted and legitimised ways of being a man. Despite these findings, there is some evidence to suggest that the relationship between risky drinking and hegemonic masculinity is more complex. For example, De Visser and McDonnell (2011) argue that although many men ascribe to hegemonic attitudes for alcohol use, many do not. Citing earlier work (De Visser & Smith 2007b), the authors argue that it is possible to develop strong masculine identities that do not involve risky drinking. Some men reject associations between masculinity and drinking and use other arenas to affirm their identities as men, such as athletics, sport, or sexual relationships. Others have suggested that there is diversity in young men's drinking styles and that these patterns of alcohol use may change over time (Harnett et al. 2000; Mullen et al. 2007). What is important to note here is that whilst the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and risky drinking is significant, it is also complex. There remains a need for the greater understanding of the relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and their understanding of broader hegemonic masculine ideals.

Public Violence

The concept of violence is one that is widely acknowledged as being complex and multifaceted (Collins 2008; Krug et al. 2002; Ray 2011; Stanko 2005; Wieviorka 2009). Violence can take various differing forms: physical violence, sexual violence, psychological violence, child abuse and neglect, torture, intimate partner violence, self-directed violence, state violence, political violence, acts of terrorism, private violence, and public violence. Furthermore, violence can be acted out at the individual level, the interpersonal level, or the broader societal level. Violence also incorporates abstract concepts such as power, force, threat, and intent, and can vary in meaning and definition over time, from one person to the next, between differing cultures and communities, and across nations. As such, there is significant debate within the vast literature on the topic as to how exactly to define and measure violence. As Torrance (1988: 3) notes, violence is one of the most inconsistently defined social concepts, often used in vague and ambiguous ways that vary depending on the discursive position adopted by those offering them. More recently, Ray (2011: 3) has argued that violence is 'a slippery concept that permeates the unstable divisions between public and private, legitimate and illegitimate, individual and collective'. With significant discrepancies within the existing literature as to what it is exactly that can be defined as violence, it is important to give a clear account of how violence, and by extension public violence, is to be understood in this research.

To understand the concept of public violence, we must first move toward a definition of violence. In an often-cited definition, Elizabeth Stanko (2001: 316) identifies violence as 'any form of behaviour by an individual that intentionally threatens to or does cause physical, sexual, or psychological harm to others or themselves'. However, as Ray (2011: 7) points out, whilst this may be a reasonable working definition the concept is in fact much more complex, involving both individual and collective processes; a mix of intended and unintended violence; questions regarding what kind of threats may be considered violent; and issues of neglect and negligence. Within the extensive literature, a range of possible ways in which to conceptualise violence has

been presented by theorists from a range of disciplines. Bufacchi (2005) argues that these can be delineated into two broad categories: minimalist and comprehensive conceptions of violence. Minimalist conceptions present violence as primarily physical and related to bodily harm and injury. However, these definitions have been criticised for not taking into account the role of the broader social processes and contexts in which violence occurs, the existence of non-physical (especially psychological) violence, and unintentional harm. Comprehensive conceptions counter these criticisms by broadening the definition of violence to include social, cultural, political, and psychological harms rather than limiting violence to individual offending. There is also a distinction within the literature between instrumental and expressive violence (see Wieviorka 2009: 35). Instrumental violence refers to acts of violence that are committed in order to achieve clear goals and objectives, such as obtaining money or defending property. Conversely, expressive violence refers to violence enacted as a means through which to experience a sensual gratification or high. This latter form of violence has been theorised to be more severe as it is less oriented towards the accomplishment of specific goals but rather performed for thrill, arousal, and the enjoyment of domination (see McDevitt et al. 2002; Topalli 2006; Wieviorka 1995). However, the distinction between instrumental and expressive forms of violence has been criticised as research has shown that acts of violence often involve a complex combination of the two (Levi & Maguire 2004: 811).

Drawing from a comprehensive global analysis of violence and its various manifestations conducted by the World Health Organization (1996), Krug et al. (2002: 5) argue that any comprehensive analysis of violence should first define the various forms of violence in such a way as to facilitate their measurement. According to the World Health Organization, violence can be defined as:

> The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (WHO 1996: 5)

The WHO report further divides violence into three broad typological categories based on the characteristics of those committing the violent act: self-inflicted violence; collective violence; and interpersonal violence. Self-directed violence refers to violence an individual inflicts upon him or herself. Collective violence refers to violence inflicted by larger groups such as states, political groups, militia groups and terrorist organisations. Interpersonal violence refers to violence inflicted by another individual or group of individuals. The report also highlights the fact that acts of violence can be different in nature, either physical, sexual, psychological or involving deprivation or neglect. These four types of violent acts occur in each of the broad categories of violence. According to the report, these definitions of violence provide a useful framework for understanding the complex patterns of violence taking place in the everyday lives of individuals, families, and societies across the world.

Public violence, as the title suggests, refers to an act or acts of violence that takes place in a public space. Whilst the category 'public violence' does not fit directly with any of the three categories of violence defined in the WHO report, it is a particular type of violence that sits within certain subsections of this definition. The most applicable category of violence for the purposes of this research is the category of interpersonal violence. This research is primarily interested in forms of interpersonal violence that occur between individuals or groups of individuals. In particular, it is interested in forms of interpersonal violence that occur within the public domain. The current study does not aim to examine domestic violence, intimate partner violence, or other forms of family violence, though these may take place within the public domain. It is also not interested in self-directed violence, or forms of collective violence that occur publically including state-violence, political-violence, hate-crimes committed by larger

groups, and acts of terrorism. The central focus of this research is acts of interpersonal violence inflicted by an individual or individuals on those that are known or unknown in public spaces. Further, this research focuses on interpersonal violence that is primarily physical in nature, involving the direct use of physical force or power to inflict physical harm or injury on another, as opposed to other forms of interpersonal violence such as sexual violence, psychological violence, or violence that involves deprivation or neglect. With this in mind, public violence will be defined in this research as the intentional use of physical force or power by an individual or group of individuals against another person or persons that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury or death, and that takes place in the public domain.

Public Violence and Gender

Violence in almost all its incarnations is highly gendered practice. As Hall (2002: 36) notes, 'the claim that men commit most acts of physical violence is possibly the nearest that criminology has come to producing an indisputable fact'. Men are the principal perpetrators of violence, be it violence against women, violence against the self, or violence against other men (Flood 2014: 201; Hearn 1996: 99). It is important to recognise here that not all men are violent, and that violence is also committed by women. Yet there is substantial evidence that documents a significant relationship between men, masculinity, and violence. For example, the millions of individuals involved in wars past and present have predominantly been male (Connell 1985; 2000; Hutchings 2008; Morgan 1994), as are those involved in acts of terrorism (Hoffman 1998; Post 1990). In most societies the overwhelming majority of intimate partner violence and violence against known women is committed by men (Hearn 1996; 1998; 2012; Websdale & Chesney-Lind 1998), as is the majority of violence against men (Mitis & Sethi 2014). Men are also much more likely to commit homicide, suicide, and mass murder such as school shootings (Kalish & Kimmel 2010; Larkin 2011; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999), and to participate in forms of sexual or psychological violence (Archer 2000; Jewkes 2002; Jewkes et al. 2013). Violence has also been widely recognised as being disproportionately committed by young people (Krug et al.

2002). As Ward (2014: 27) observes, young people make up the overwhelming majority of perpetrators and victims of violence. Research demonstrates that although the age peak for violence varies across times and locations, rates of homicide, arrests for violent crime, and self-reported violence typically peak in the late teens and early twenties (Farrington 1986).

The research into the patterns of public violence in Australia follows these broad trends. Young people, especially young men, are at a greater risk of experiencing public violence than all other groups in society (ABS 2008; 2012; 2014). Furthermore, it is young men who make up the vast majority of those who commit such violence. As Flood (2011: 616) notes, young men commit the majority of all violent assaults and are the most likely victims of physical violence, especially in public spaces. An analysis of recent government reports reveals the patterns of public violence in contemporary Australian society, particularly as it is experienced by young men. According to the ABS (2012), young men aged between 18 and 24 years are the most likely to have experienced violence in the past year, with 24% of all young men reporting experiences of violence compared to 8.7% of all men. Young men are also more likely to be physically assaulted by a stranger than a person known to them, whereas the reverse is true for women. In 2012, an estimated 36% of all men had experienced violence by a stranger, compared to 12% of women, whereas 36% of women had experienced violence by a known person. Other reports indicate further differences for young men when it comes to experiences of violence. For example, the proportion of men aged 18 to 24 years (19%) who report experiencing physical assault by a male is almost five times the rate for men aged 25 years and over (4%), with the proportion of young women who report being physically assaulted by a male (5%) being significantly smaller than that of young men (ABS 2008).

What these studies also indicate is that the experience of violence for young people in Australia is patterned in particular ways. In terms of location, the research consistently shows that young women are most likely to be physically assaulted in their home or the home of another person,

whilst young men are most likely to experience violence in a public space (ABS 2007; 2008; 2012; AIHW 2011b). The majority of physical violence experienced by men occurs at a place of entertainment or recreation, such as a licensed premises, or at an outside location, including streets, parks, car parks, and laneways. Young men are also more likely than young women to experience alcohol or drug-related violence. In 2012, an estimated 68% of men who had been physically assaulted by a male reported that alcohol or drugs had been involved in the incident, with 31% of these men reporting that they themselves had been under the influence of alcohol or drugs (ABS 2012). Research also indicates that young men are much more likely than any other social group to be charged with committing acts of physical violence. According to the ABS (2008), young men aged 20 to 24 years are around five times more likely than women in this age group to be adjudicated for offences related to violence and the intended harm of others. What these findings suggest is that violence is a significant issue for young Australians. Further, experiences of physical assault that occur in public spaces appear to be particularly prevalent amongst young men.

A number of researchers have turned their attention to the problem of public violence among young men, and the reasons behind their engagement in violent practices. One of the central themes in the existing research has been the intersection of class and ethnicity with young men's engagement in acts of violence. Research indicates that young men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and marginalised racial groups are disproportionately represented in violent crime. A significant study of drinking environments by Tomsen et al. (1991) found that patrons in violent venues were typically young working-class males. Other studies such as those by Canaan (1996) and Baron et al. (2001) have suggested that the engagement in public violence by young men from lower socioeconomic and marginal racial groups may be a means of affirming their place in the broader social order. An important body of work by Ken Polk (1994; 1995; 1999) claims that there exists a subculture of violence among lower socioeconomic and racially marginalised young men, where violence becomes understood as a

part of the lifestyle and a tool for problem solving in tense circumstances. As Polk (1995: 147) states, 'the social marginality of these young males places them in a position where it becomes possible to consider actions that others would find unacceptably risky'. The significance of class and race in young men's engagement in violence is also echoed in the work on protest masculinity (see Collins et al 2000; Connell 1995; Poynting et al 1998; 1999). According to these understandings, the expressions of violence particularly prevalent amongst socially marginalised young men can be recognised as an attempt to claim social power where it is 'constantly negated by economic and cultural weakness' (Connell 1995: 116).

Another central theme in the literature on young men and public violence is the importance of social context and various situational variables that contribute to young men's engagement in violent practices. An important body of research by Stephen Tomsen (1991; 1997a; 1997b; 2005) and colleagues (Homel et al. 1992; Tomsen et al. 1991) has documented the nature of public violence, particularly amongst young men. These studies have shown that public spaces that are typically violent are also typically populated by young men, and have noted that factors such as high proportions of males, the presence of male groups, in particular male groups that were strangers to each other, contribute to violence in social environments (Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; Tomsen at al. 1991). The atmosphere of these social contexts has also been found to be important, with levels of discomfort, over-crowding, boredom, and a negative relationship with security employees all found to have an adverse effect on levels of violence and aggression among young men (Tomsen 2005; Tomsen et al 1991). These finding have been supported by further research, which has shown that young men are more likely than others to become involved in violent or aggressive behavior in public spaces, particularly with other young men, and those that are strangers, and that issues of insufficient space, overcrowding, and gender relations all increase the likelihood of male aggression (Graham & Wells 2001a; 2001b; Wells et al. 2009).

The predominance of young men's engagement in public violence has raised the question of the purpose of such violence in the lives of young men. An ethnographic study by Benson and Archer (2002) found that among young British men, public violence was used to achieve a number of goals, including having a good time, 'having a laff', appearing 'hard' and 'tough', protecting personal reputations, gaining status, and to generate stories that are good for storytelling and 'banter' in homosocial groups. For the young men in Tomsen's (1997a) study, public violence had a 'carnivalesque' quality, where violence was understood as a positive element of nighttime entertainment. Here, much of the violence in young men's experience takes on a pleasurable and entertaining dimension, with conflicts and fights between men seen as an enjoyable and expected aspect of having a night out and where disorder and violence enhance the social experience and accentuate a general sense of carnival. As Winlow and Hall (2006: 97) note, many young men openly express their enjoyment of the spectacle of serious physical violence, where the possibility of seeing blood spilt and witnessing actual violence creates a heightened sense of excitement that propels the night out beyond a stereotypical 'beer-fest' to a hedonistic experience of real risk and adventure.

Public Violence and Hegemonic Masculinity

The research into young men's engagement in acts of violence has demonstrated an important relationship between public violence and hegemonic masculinity. The engagement of young men in public violence has been found to serve specific gendered purposes, where public acts of violence and aggression become important practices drawn on by young men to establish, protect, and affirm legitimate masculine identities. The work of James Messerschmidt (1993; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2000; 2004; 2005; 2013) has recognised that violence serves as an important resource for doing gender, a practice through which masculinity can be performed and constructed. One of Messerschmidt's central theoretical claims is that men draw on violent practices as a way in which to lay claim to legitimate masculine identities and as a means of distinguishing masculinities from one another. Messerschmidt (1998: 132) notes that although

men are always 'doing' masculinity, certain contexts present themselves as more important for demonstrating and affirming masculinity; situations in which masculinity is 'more or less explicitly put on the line' (Morgan 1992: 47) and where the 'doing' of masculinity requires extra effort. Messerschmidt (1998: 130) argues that any discussion of masculinities and violence must recognise that there is a gender hierarchy at play among men, where men are positioned differently in male power relations on the bases of class, race, sexual preference, and their overall claim to hegemonic masculine identity. The capacity of men to exercise power is a reflection of their position in the gender order, with specific contexts (including those involving crime and violence) offering some men the opportunity to display greater power than others. Importantly, the demonstration of qualities such as authority, control, aggression and the capacity for violence are seen as imperative for constructing hegemonic masculine identities in Western societies (Messerschmidt 1993: 82).

A complex and powerful link between public violence and hegemonic masculinity has been noted by a number of other researchers in the field, with research demonstrating that hegemonic masculinity has a significant influence on young men's engagement in violent practice. In the extensive work of Tomsen (1997a; 1997b; 2005), young men often draw on violent and aggressive practices as means of enacting a specific form of masculinity that aligns with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. In the context of drinking environments, young men relate acts of violence to enhancing masculine status, gaining the respect of male peers, impressing female peers, defending male honor, and policing gender. In such contexts, masculine reputation comes under scrutiny, where a willingness to participate in violence and to respond quickly to any proposed threat or challenge reflects positively on masculine status, and where to not do so results in a loss of respect and amongst male peers and brings male identity into question. Young men speak of the importance of appearing tough and hard, of engaging in violence as a means of establishing and protecting male identity and male honor, and how losing a fight or backing down in the face of challenge or insult from other men results

in subordination and marginalisation within male hierarchies (Tomsen 2005). Violent situations that occur in public are therefore important sites for young men in displaying power, control, and physical strength. As McMahan (2011; 55) notes, the ability to fight and win is often met with great admiration amongst men, whereas withdrawing from or losing a fight is met with contempt, and can result in homosocial exclusion. Hence, public violence becomes a key activity through which young men prove or disprove their power and domination, and ultimately their masculinity. Further, as Messerschmidt (2012; 2016) argues, hegemonic masculinity can only be understood and legitimated through a conceptualisation of gender relations – that is, through ensuring unequal power relations between men and women, masculinities and femininities, and among men are reproduced and solidified. In regards to the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and public violence, the legitimation of hegemonic masculinity can only take place when 'superior' traits such as authority, control, and aggression are positioned in relation to other 'inferior' traits such as weakness, helplessness, passivity, and the incapacity for violence.

The relationship between public violence and masculine identity was also explored by Polk (1994; 1995; 1999), who found that young men's readiness to engage in acts of violence is a feature of a masculine culture of honor, where masculine aggression and violence play a central role in the defending and contesting of male identities. Polk argues that there is a purposive character to the fighting and violence in which young men engage, and that in situations where a threat to masculine identity and honor occurs, young men use violence to retaliate against such threats. These 'honor contests' are overwhelmingly masculine in character, and have been labeled as particularly a 'young male syndrome' (Wilson & Daly 1985). According to Polk (1995), a cultural expectation to defend masculine honor and respond adequately to challenges against masculine identity becomes important in the gaining and maintaining of legitimate masculine identities. For Polk, the presence of a social audience in public violence, especially young male peers, is particularly important as it makes any challenge to masculinity visible and provides the opportunity for masculine status to be affirmed in the presence of other men.

According to these and other studies, (Benson et al. 2002; Canaan 1996; Treadwell & Garland 2011), public violence is a key way in which young men construct masculine identities that they and their peers consider to be acceptable and appropriate.

Hegemonic masculinity is the pattern of male practice that sustains male power and privilege as legitimate through the subordination of women and less dominant masculinities. Men's violence can be seen as a very real and material way in which domination and subordination can be enforced, a practice that directly relates to the assertion of force, power, and dominance. As Connell (1995: 83) notes, in the hegemonic gender order it is overwhelmingly the dominant gender (men) that hold and use the means of violence in society. It is men, rarely women, who are officially trained to use violence in society, as police officers, military members, sports athletes, prison and security employees, and other agencies of defense and correction (Segal 1990: 267), so much so that violence becomes socially and culturally endorsed as a feature of masculinity. Connell argues that two specific patterns of violence emerge from this situation. The first relates to men's use of violence as a means to sustain their dominance over women. A considerable body of work on domestic violence, or what Hearn (1994: 605) prefers to call 'men's violence to known women', has consistently demonstrated that men can and do use violence against women to establish and perpetuate their position of dominance over women (Hearn 1996; 1998; 2012; Websdale & Chesney-Lind 1998). For Hearn (1994: 601), violence can be an accepted (though not always acceptable) and complicit way of being a man, where violence may act as a reference point for boys and men in regards to masculine identity. In many ways, men's violence against women can be seen as a means of affirming power and domination, through force, or as a reaction to a perceived loss or threat to power. As Segal (1990: 269) notes, in a world in which the 'traditional definition' of masculinity continues to deteriorate, some men may resort to violence as a way in which to shore up a sense of masculine identity and dominance.

The second pattern of violence that emerges relates to men's violence against other men. As Connell (1995: 83) notes, violence is an important feature of the male gender hierarchy and gender politics between men, where men use violence and the threat of violence against each other as a means of establishing power and domination over other, less dominant men. Here, violence becomes a way of claiming and asserting hegemonic masculine identities in a context of group struggle for dominant masculinities. In much of the research on young men's engagement with public violence, it has been found that young men often use violence against each other as means of establishing who is the stronger, tougher, more dominant figure, and who can be identified as weak, 'soft', and therefore subordinated (Benson & Archer 2002; Canaan 1996; McMahan 2011; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; Treadwell & Garland 2011). A legitimate display of masculinity requires the defending and protecting of male honor through adequately engaging in and responding to violence or threats of violence from other men. Violence can also be used as a means of drawing boundaries and making exclusions in regards to masculinity, for example, the use of homophobic violence against gay men as a means of rejecting queer masculinities and affirming heterosexuality (Mason 2002; Mason & Tomsen 1997).

In regards to the relationship between public violence and hegemonic masculinity, a number of researchers have theorised a link between violence, social and economic marginalisation, and protest masculinity. As we have seen, a significant proportion of public violence is committed by men from lower socioeconomic and socially marginalised groups. The concept of protest masculinity developed by Connell (1995: 109) suggests that men who cannot or do not fit the desired prerequisites of hegemonic masculinity, on the basis of race or class, often perform an exaggerated form of masculinity that attempts to make a claim to hegemonic power where other resources for such power are non-existent. In many studies of young men and public violence, violence has been found to be a key practice drawn on by young marginalised men to lay claim to legitimate and dominant masculine identities where there exist no other real resources for such a claim (Collins et al 2000; Connell 1995; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Poynting et

al 1998; 1999; Treadwell & Garland 2011). In such conditions, marginalised men's engagement in violent and aggressive practices can be seen as an attempt to display power and domination, and to gain some of the advantages of male privilege and patriarchy that so often lie beyond their grasp. As Connell (1995: 116) notes, this often translates to a 'constant concern with front and credibility', which certainly rings true of much of young men's engagement in public violence. Ultimately, this suggests that there may be an important relationship between young men's engagement in public violence, and their claim to hegemonic masculinity, in social contexts where resources to claim masculine legitimacy are relatively scarce.

The Relationship between Alcohol and Violence

The engagement of young men in risky drinking and public violence are in and of themselves significant social and cultural issues, however any examination of these two practices will reveal that they do not always occur in isolation from each other, but rather they often interconnect. The research that explores the relationship between alcohol use and violence has established strong evidence of an association between alcohol consumption and acts of violence (Graham & Homel 2008; Plant et al. 2002; Wells et al. 2005; Wells & Graham 2003; Wells et al. 2007). In studies that examine the relationship between alcohol use and physical assault, most find a high percentage of such incidents involve alcohol consumption by the offender, the victim, or both (Collins & Messerschmidt 1993; Plant et al. 2002). According to the AIHW (2008), approximately one in four Australians reported being the victim of alcohol-related verbal abuse, 13% were made to feel fearful by an individual under the influence of alcohol, and 4.5% of those aged 14 and over had been physically abused by someone under the influence of alcohol. The rates of physical and verbal abuse committed by an individual affected by alcohol were more than double the rate for other substance types, with more than one-third of victims (38%) having consumed alcohol themselves at the time of the incident. Alcohol consumption has also been found to be associated with other forms of interpersonal violence, including homicide (Carcach & Conroy 2001; Collins & Messerschmidt 1993; Darke & Duflou 2008), and intimate

partner violence (Riggs et al. 2000; Gil-Gonzalez et al. 2006). Research also indicates that it is not only the presence of alcohol that is a notable feature of many violent incidents, but also the amount of alcohol consumed. Researchers have reported that the risk for violence increases with the number of drinks consumed (Abbey et al. 2003), with excessive alcohol use often associated with aggression and violence (Wells & Graham 2003), and being a significant predictor of becoming involved in alcohol-related violence (Felson & Burchfield 2004; Felson et al. 2008; Peralta et al. 2010; Peralta et al. 2011; Wechsler et al. 1995; Wells et al. 2007).

Three key theories have been developed to explain the relationship between alcohol use and violence; disinhibition theory; deviance disavowal theory; and sociocultural perspectives (Shepherd 2007). According to the early disinhibition theory (Pernanen 1976; 1981; 1991), violent and aggressive behavior is the direct result of the pharmacological effects of alcohol consumption, where the effects of alcohol intoxication on cognitive abilities and functioning result in those under the influence of alcohol being less able to control violent behavior. Under this theory, alcohol-related violence is perceived to be the result of loosened behavioral constraints that are themselves the result of alcohol's effects on cognitive capacities. The concept of disinhibition remained the dominant explanatory theory for alcohol-related violence for many years until it was acknowledged that alcohol does not have a uniform effect on human behavior and that drinking behavior is influenced by social and cultural norms and expectations (Collins 1988). The disinhibition perspective was ruled out as an adequate explanation for the relationship between alcohol use and violence as it could not account for significant differences in rates of alcohol-related violence across various social settings and contexts, across diverse demographics, and between cultures.

Another theoretical perspective is the deviance disavowal hypothesis. According to this theory, alcohol intoxication is presented as an excuse for deviant behavior (including violence) not normally socially condoned and for holding individuals less responsible for their actions

(Graham et al. 2006; Graham et al. 1998). In deviance disavowal, individuals do not take full responsibility for their deviant actions whilst under the influence of alcohol, but rather attribute blame and responsibility for such actions to alcohol itself (Collins 1988; Fagan 1993). There is consistent evidence to show that individuals frequently use alcohol intoxication as an excuse to avoid responsibility for violent practices. Recent research has indicated that intoxication is an acceptable and legitimate excuse for violent behavior amongst young people, where alcohol use acts as an explanation for engagement in violence and where the link between intoxication and violence is a socially sanctioned outcome (Tryggvesson 2004; Tryggvesson & Bullock 2006). Similarly, the young men in a study by Mullen et al. (2007) reported that intoxication is often offered as an excuse for violence, where an offender might claim that his behavior would have been different if he had been sober. As Collins and Messerschmidt (1993) note, drinkers may see themselves as not being subject to the same rules of conduct as they are held to when sober, and may believe their behavior after drinking will not be judged as severely. Such cultural beliefs suggest alcohol may be predictive of violent behavior or, at the very least, used as an after-the-fact excuse for violence.

Whilst these two theories offer useful insights into the relationship between alcohol use and violence, more recent understandings have argued that the link between alcohol consumption and acts of violence is complex and ambiguous, and requires consideration of multiple individual, situational, and sociocultural factors. The idea of a direct causal relationship between alcohol and violence has been rejected by many, who claim that the fact that the numbers of those who do not commit acts of violence whilst under the influence of alcohol are typically equal to those who do complicates the relationship between these two practices (Peralta et al. 2011). As Collins and Messerschmidt (1993) note, alcohol use cannot fully suffice as an explanation for the occurrence of violence; it may be relevant only in the presence of other sociocultural factors. Numerous studies have demonstrated that the relationship between alcohol use and violence may in fact be moderated by individual or circumstantial

characteristics, such as age, gender, location of alcohol use, social and cultural expectations, socioeconomic status, personal background, and attitudes towards violence (Ito et al. 1996; Mitchell et al. 2008).

The overwhelming majority of the existing research focuses on the ways in which alcohol use leads to violence. This research indicates that there is most likely a correlation between alcohol consumption and engagement in violent practices, with alcohol being present in a high proportion of all violent incidents and a strong predictor of violence. Unfortunately, the ways in which violence may contribute to alcohol consumption is under-researched in the existing literature, and as a result the full nature of this relationship remains unclear. Research has shown that victims of violence often turn to alcohol use as a coping mechanism and as a means of dealing with the effects of trauma and post-traumatic stress (Dixon et al. 2009; Kaysen et al. 2007; Ullman et al. 2005). Research also indicates that a significant proportion of perpetrators of alcohol-related violence are also victims (Williams 1999; 2000). This suggests that pre-exposure to violence may in fact be a significant predictor of alcohol use. Furthermore, as Flood (2007: 617) notes, interpersonal violence can often take the form of socially legitimate practices, particularly in the domain of sports. Aggressive and violent behavior is routine in male-dominated contact sports such as American football, rugby, ice hockey, and can represent the sport itself, as is the case with boxing, wrestling, and martial arts. These domains have been found to be particularly relevant for the normalisation of violence, and for the validation of masculinities (Messner 2005). Research has shown that male-centric environments (such as sporting groups) are often highly homosocial domains, and that alcohol consumption is often a central feature of such environments (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Fisher et al. 2013). This suggests that men's engagement in legitimate forms of violence may precipitate their engagement in alcohol consumption, and that alcohol use may be an important feature of post-violence homosociality.

Despite the substantial evidence that demonstrates a correlation between alcohol use and violence, the relationship between these two practices is not simple or straightforward. The existing research indicates that alcohol consumption and intoxication significantly increases the likelihood of being involved in violence, however the majority of those who drink alcohol do not become offenders or victims of violence, and consuming alcohol does not necessarily act as a precursor to violent behavior (Plant et al. 2002). The relationship between alcohol use and violence therefore remains ambiguous and complex. Whilst alcohol use and violence do often occur together, and it appears there is some kind of relationship between them, it is likely that this relationship is moderated by other individual, social, and cultural factors.

Conclusion

This chapter has provided as sociological mapping of two risky practices, risky drinking and public violence, and has examined the nature of the relationship between these two practices. The central aim of this process has been to illuminate the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as gendered practices; practices that can be drawn on in the symbolic construction and performance of hegemonic masculinities. What this process has revealed is that as configurations of masculine practice, both risky drinking and public violence are important resources for the construction of legitimate masculinities. In regards to risky drinking, whilst there is evidence of a significant relationship between hegemonic masculinity and risky drinking, the nature of this relationship remains uncertain. There remains a need for the greater understanding of the relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and their understanding of broader hegemonic masculine ideals. In regards to the relationship between public violence and hegemonic masculinity, the existing research indicates that public violence can be understood as a key practice drawn on by young men to lay claim to legitimate and dominant masculine identities. In sociocultural contexts in which resources to claim masculine legitimacy are scarce, acts of public violence may offer young men a means by which to assert hegemonic power,

authority, and control over women and other men. In the following chapter, I set out a clear methodological framework for the current research which ultimately aims to examine the relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and their claim to legitimate and dominant masculinities.

5. Masculinities: A Methodological Approach

The central aim of this research is to examine the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a display of hegemonic masculinity. Its key objective is to examine the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and risky practice among young men, with the aim of coming to a greater understanding of the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as a way in which to align themselves with hegemonic masculinity and distance themselves from subordinate and marginalised masculinities. In order to conduct such an analysis, this research has adopted a dual-method approach. Drawing on a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with young Australian men, this research presents a qualitative analysis of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, and the ways in which young men draw on these practices to lay claim to legitimate and dominant masculine identities. The aim of this chapter is to set out the methodological framework of this study, and as such it has three main objectives. The first is to locate the study and its methodology within the broader scholarship on the critical study of men. The second is to outline the ways in which the accounts of young men in regards to their engagement in risky drinking and public violence yielded from a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews provides valuable insight into the relationship between these practices and masculinity, the influence of hegemonic masculinity at the individual level, and more importantly, the dynamics of hegemonic masculinity within the gender system as a whole. The third objective is to set out the particular research design and methods used in this research.

Studying Men and Masculinities

The study of men and of masculinity is in itself neither new nor necessarily radical, it all depends on how this is done (Hearn 2004: 49). Over the past three decades, the study of men and masculinities has developed a critical edge that takes as its central focus the examination of men's gender practice, and the impact of such practice within existing gender hierarchies. Such research has drawn on a diverse range of methodologies to explore the expression of masculinities in a vast array of social and cultural contexts; the workplace, schooling and education, sports, health, crime, violence, war and military, sexuality, migration, and more (Schrock & Schwalbe 2009: 277). A significant proportion of this existing scholarship has employed the use of qualitative research, which has often provided the empirical foundation for critical analyses of men and masculinities.

Qualitative research, with its emphasis on meanings, beliefs, and understandings, has been an intrinsic resource in the critical study of men and masculinity. Grounded in the interpretivist sociological tradition, qualitative research is primarily concerned with how the social world is interpreted, understood, experienced, produced and constituted (Mason 2002: 2-3). Within the critical studies on men discourse, it has provided a way in which to explore and document the underlying meanings and understandings men attribute to their gender practice in the context of the wider social world in which they live. Furthermore, it has allowed for the investigation of how these understandings impact upon the everyday lives of men and upon the gender system as a whole. Unlike quantitative methodologies that are concerned primarily with statistical analysis, measurable outputs and quantifiable data, qualitative research focuses on the formation and maintenance of meaning. The belief in this methodological approach is that drawing out the meanings people give to things can illuminate the underlying factors that contribute to how and why they do the things they do, and how this impacts on broader society (Ezzy 2006: 35). As Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005: 2) note, the assumption in qualitative

research is that in order to understand an individual's behaviour, it is imperative to understand the meanings and interpretations individuals ascribe to their practices.

Despite this apparent usefulness, qualitative methods are not practiced without criticism. Perhaps the most prominent of these criticisms is that qualitative research is less valuable as it is not governed by a clear set of rules. Some positivist researchers have made the argument that the interpretive nature of qualitative data renders it a 'soft' science, lacking in reliability and validity, and therefore of little value (Baum 1995; Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Guba & Lincoln 1994). Others have argued that qualitative research is merely anecdotal or at best illustrative, and that it is practiced in casual and unsystematic ways (Mason 2002: 1). However, to render qualitative data worthless on the basis of such criticisms is to overlook the importance of understanding context and meaning. Quantitative data can undoubtedly provide valuable statistical information and measures that contribute to the greater understanding of social phenomena. Within the critical study of men and masculinities, quantitative research has often provided great insight into broad patterns and trends among men and women, and highlighted the prevalence and extent of particular modes of behaviour, attitudes and beliefs. These studies have utilised a range of quantitative methods, including questionnaires, surveys, statistical analyses and quantitative measurement scales to document and quantify the extent to which men adopt particular beliefs, attitudes and behaviours. However, what these quantitative methods struggle to attain is exposure of the underlying meanings and interpretations that men give to these behaviours. As Liamputtong and Ezzy (2005: 2) note, accounting for meanings, beliefs and understandings requires the more fluid, though no less rigorous, methods offered by qualitative research.

As an example, this research is focused primarily on examining young men's engagement in two key risky practices, excessive drinking and public violence, and the relationship these practices have with hegemonic masculinity. There already exists substantial quantitative data that

documents the extent and prevalence of young men's engagement in these and other risky practices, as noted in the previous chapter. However, these quantitative measures do little in terms of understanding how and why young men choose to engage in such behaviours, and the meanings and understandings these young men attribute to such practices. Moreover, they cannot adequately grasp the reasons why young men see these practices as contributing to the development not just of masculinity, but of a privileged and legitimate form of masculinity.

The aim of this research is to critically assess the relationship between risky practices and hegemonic masculinity among young men, outlining the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence reinforces and sustains inequalities within gender hierarchies that positions men as dominant over women, and some men as more powerful than others. Little is known about young men's understanding of these risky practices, nor about how young men's notions of masculinity inform their engagement in such practices. In order to obtain a greater understanding of why young men are engaging in these risky practices, and the impact of these practices within the broader gender order, it is important to begin to explore the underlying meanings, beliefs, and understandings young men attribute to such practices, and the ways in which young men attribute masculinity to risky practices. The emphasis on meaning and interpretation found in qualitative methods provides the appropriate methodological means through which to achieve this objective. Furthermore, it also provides a way in which to document the patterns and social organisation of risky drinking and public violence among young men, drawing on the subjective experiences of young men to offer significant insights into these configurations of risky practice in contemporary social contexts.

In line with social constructivist perspectives, this research takes the position that gender is always a 'doing'; something that is produced, performed, and constructed in everyday social practice and interaction (Butler 1990; West & Zimmerman 1987). Masculinity, in this sense, is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon embedded in social practice; a process that

involves presenting or signifying particular behaviours or actions that are seen as expressions of masculinity. This research will argue that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as ways of 'doing' masculinity; configurations of practice that can be drawn on to enact and perform specific masculine identities. In line with Messerschmidt's (1997: 1998; 2013) theory of structured action, this research will argue also that the meanings young men ascribe to their gender practices are formed under specific social structural constraints. Thus, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as the outcome of the meanings young men attach to these social practices, which themselves are shaped and informed by broader hegemonic ideologies. Ultimately, this research will take the position that masculinity is a situated social and interactional accomplishment, where men are constantly held 'accountable' (West & Zimmerman 1987) for their masculine practice and as a result engage in these practices differently in different social structural situations and contexts.

In this study, masculinity will be identified in the research data in three key ways. Firstly, participants will be seen to be referring to masculinity when they explicitly refer to it in accounts of their experiences with drinking and public violence. For example, when a practice is described as 'manly', or 'masculine' or as associated with 'being a man'. Secondly, masculinity will be identified when practices are clearly organised in gendered ways. Here, the young men may not refer to masculinity explicitly, yet the practices being described can be identified as gendered. For example, being 'one of the boys', wanting to be the 'alpha male', or wanting to avoid being 'girly'. Thirdly, masculinity will be identified through referring back to the ways in which masculinity has been defined in the existing literature, with any references within the accounts of the young men that align with pre-existing traits and definitions considered to be referring to masculinity. An example of this would be referring to practices as 'tough', or 'strong', or a demonstration of 'power'.

Hegemonic masculinity, as we have seen, can be understood as the configuration of masculine practice that is currently accepted as culturally legitimate, and that reinforces and sustains the overall dominant position of men over women and the positioning of some men as dominant over others. In this research, hegemonic masculinity is identified as having two interconnected components: a cultural component and a political component. Together, these components act to ensure the overall legitimacy of patriarchy and the authorisation of gendered inequalities that see men collectively positioned as dominant over women in society, and some masculinities positioned as subordinate to others. With these components in mind, this research will identify hegemonic masculinity in two key ways. The first relates to the cultural component, where practices will be seen to be referring to hegemonic masculinity when they refer to currently accepted sociocultural norms and legitimate forms of masculinity. As has been discussed, men who desire to be seen as enacting legitimate masculine identities must express configurations of masculine practice that are in line with the currently accepted hegemonic masculine ideal. Therefore, any discussion of masculinity that refers to these sociocultural aspirations toward masculine legitimacy will be seen as referring to hegemonic masculinity. Secondly, hegemonic masculinity, whilst referring to a culturally legitimate masculinity, ultimately refers to a gender system that ensures the overall benefit of men in relation to women, and of some men in relation to other men. Hegemonic masculinity will therefore most importantly be identifiable when the accounts of the young men refer to practices or beliefs that allow men to assume an overall position of power over women, and some men to exert power over other less dominant men.

Given this study's interest in the different ways in which young men construct and perform forms of masculinity, and the relationship between masculine identity construction and the engagement in risky practices, it follows that this research is also interested in critically analysing young men's understandings and interpretations of risk. In order to do this, a firm understanding of what constitutes risk and how it can be identified is required. In terms of the

analysis of risk, this study sets out two key ways in which risk is to be identified. First, this study objectively defines risk as any activity or practice that is deemed likely to cause physical harm or increase the likelihood of harm for an individual or those around them. Both risky practices examined in this research are predetermined as objectively risky, as part of a set of practices that can be seen as increasing the potential of harm for individuals and others. Any other practices referred to that are likely to cause harm or increase the likelihood of harm to individuals will also be identified as a risk. Secondly, this research is also interested in subjective understandings of risk. It acknowledges that there is potentially great difference between what is identified as objectively risky and what the participants themselves see as 'risky'. For this reason, this study paid close attention to the participants' understandings of risk, and the practices that they identify as potentially harmful or dangerous.

In-Depth Interviewing

A predominant form of qualitative research in the study of men and masculinity is the in-depth interview. The in-depth interview provides a way in which to collect detailed qualitative data that has been sourced directly from men, which in turn is able to glean rich sources of descriptive information regarding men's practices and beliefs in regards to masculinity. In-depth interviewing provides access to knowledge; knowledge of the subjective meanings and interpretations that individuals give to their social practices, and knowledge of the social world itself (Minichiello et al. 1995: 1). Through the recounted experiences of individual lives, in-depth interviews also offer insight into broader cultural understandings and social processes (Dowsett 1996: 50). They elicit rich accounts of personal experience and subjectivity, and enable the researcher to examine not only individual meanings and understandings but also the wider contexts from which these conceptions arise (Silverman 2011: 17). In-depth interviewing has been used effectively to examine the ways in which men negotiate masculinities within broader gender hierarchies. Further, in-depth qualitative interviewing has been used effectively within the existing literature to expose the influence of culturally dominant ideals on men,

explore the dynamics of gendered power relations between men, and investigate the ways in which men use various social practices as expressions of masculinity[5].

Focus Groups

Another well-established form of qualitative investigation is the focus group. A focus group study is a carefully planned series of discussions designed to gather information and perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive and non-threatening environment (Krueger & Casey 2000: 5). In focus groups, participants interact, question each other, and explain themselves to each other (Flood 2004: 5). Focus groups are a flexible method of qualitative research that can bring together a diverse group of individuals to discuss issues of interest and provide rich sources of data that cannot be achieved through other methods (Barbour 2005: 742; Lee 2005: 100-101; Warr 2005: 200). A further advantage of conducting focus groups is that they provide valuable data on group norms, group meanings and understandings, and group processes, providing concentrated and detailed information on specific areas of group life (Bloor et al. 2001). Focus groups are also particularly useful in examining the ways in which discontinuities between individual attitudes and perceived social norms are expressed and negotiated (Wellings et al. 2000). A number of key studies have used focus groups in the critical study of men and masculinities. In these studies, focus groups have provided a way in which to bring together particular groups of men to explore and document their collective experiences of masculinity, and the group norms and understandings they have regarding specific topics of interest (see Giles 1999; Griffin et al. 2009; Perez-Jimenez et al 2007; Renold 2007; Royster et al 2006; Tomsen 2005; Wells et al. 2009). Ultimately, these studies

[5] See for example Arendell (1992a; 1992b; 1995; 1997); Bird (1996); Bowleg (2004); Brandes (2007); Braun et al. (2009); Christian (2005); Coles (2008); Collins et al. (2000); De Visser (2008); De Visser and Smith (2007a; 2007b); Donaldson (1991); Dowsett (1996); Dowsett et al. (2005); Drummond (2007); Duncan and Dowsett (2010); Edin et al. (2009); Flood (2000; 2008); Gailey and Prohaksa (2006; 2007); Gilmartin (2007); Goode (2008); Hinojosa (2010); Hurtado and Sinha (2008); Noble et al. (1999); Pease (2009); Penwarden (2010); Peralta (2007); Poynting et al. (1998; 1999); Prohaksa and Gailey (2010); Quintero et al. (1998); Reich (2008); Stoudt (2006); Tomsen (1997a; 1997b); Totten (2003); Walker (1998); Walker et al. (2000); Webb and Danulik (1999); Wedgewood (2003); Weis et al. (2002); Wersch & Walker (2009); West (2001); Willis (1977).

have used focus groups to yield valuable qualitative data from men in order to come to a greater understanding of the influence of masculinity and notions of manhood in their everyday lives.

Integrating Focus Groups and In-Depth Interviewing

When used individually, in-depth interviewing and focus groups offer effective ways to explore social phenomena and generate valuable qualitative data. When used together, the combination of these two methods provides a firm platform from which to develop a more sophisticated and nuanced qualitative investigation. Together, these two methods enable the production of a more holistic account of social phenomena by complementing one method that emphasises individual meaning and subjectivity with another that details group norms and understandings. In recent years, the combined use of focus groups and in-depth interviews has been undertaken by numerous researchers in the field to develop sophisticated reports of the dynamics of masculinity within contemporary gender systems (see McMichael & Gifford 2010; Mullen et al. 2007; Nyanzi, Nyanzi-Wakholi & Kalina 2009; Stoudt 2006; Tilki 2006; West 2001). This method of 'triangulating' the data (Mason 2002: 190), in which each method informs the other in order to produce a more comprehensive portrayal of the complexities of social reality offers researchers with a methodological strategy that can yield significant insights into the nature and dynamics of social phenomena. In adopting this technique of 'triangulation', the researcher can illuminate the multi-dimensional nature of the phenomenon in question, and demonstrate how the research has been able address more than one of those dimensions. This study has chosen to use the combination of focus group and interview data for these reasons.

Risky Masculinities: A Qualitative Analysis

The data for this study is based on a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews conducted with young Australian men aged 18 to 24 in the city of Wollongong, Australia. In total, twenty-eight young males participated in the study, in a total of twenty semi-structured interviews and two focus groups. The biographical profiles for each of these young men are provided in

Appendix A. In the first round of data collection, centred on individual in-depth interviews, participants took part in a semi-structured face-to-face interview conducted by the researcher at a time and location of the participants choosing. Interviews ranged in length from 60 to 180 minutes long and were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. The interviews covered a range of themes aimed at exploring young men's subjective experiences and understandings of risky drinking, of public violence, and of the relationship between these two practices and masculinity (see Appendix D). Participants in the second round of data collection took part in a focus group with five to six other members. Focus groups were conducted by the researcher and an assistant, and took place at the educational setting from which the participants were drawn. These lasted approximately 90 to 120 minutes, and were audiotaped and transcribed for analysis. The focus groups addressed similar themes to those in the in-depth interviews but paid closer attention to the role of group meanings, group processes and collective understandings (see Appendix E). All participants in the study received a gift voucher to the value of thirty dollars as a reimbursement for their time and transport costs.

Sample

The research sample in this study was identified as young Australian men aged between 18 and 24 years who regularly consume alcohol and who have been involved in public violence, either as victim, witness, or perpetrator. This study employed a 'strategic' and purposive approach to sampling (Mason 2002: 123-125), in that participants were chosen based on their relevance to the research question and the theoretical logic of the study. Following this approach, participants for this study were selected in a systematic way based on the pre-existing knowledge about young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and their relevance to the purpose of the study. Information-rich cases we selected for in-depth study with the aim of making the sample reflect, at least in key ways, the characteristics of the target population (Liamputtong 2010: 11; Rice & Ezzy 2001: 43; Walter 2006: 199).

The specific age group chosen is consistently recognised as being the most actively engaged in these particular risky practices (ABS 2008; 2009; 2012; 2014; AIHW 2008; 2011a; 2011b; 2014). Particular attention was also paid to the need to obtain a sample population that was diverse in socioeconomic status and level of education. Previous research has indicated that alcohol consumption patterns differ between employed and unemployed young people (Pidd et al. 2006) and between university students and other youth populations (Roche & Watt 1999), suggesting drinking patterns and practices are likely to vary across socioeconomic status groups and education levels. Similar differences have also been found in regards to public violence (Canaan 1996; DuRant et al. 1994; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen et al. 1991). Sample populations were therefore drawn from two distinct locations: a university campus and a community education campus. Drawing sample populations from these two distinct settings was considered likely to obtain a sample of young men that was diverse in key characteristics including socioeconomic status, educational background, race and ethnicity, and sexuality.

Recruitment

Participants for the study were recruited from two key settings: The University of Wollongong and the Wollongong TAFE (Technical and Further Education) Campus. These settings were chosen for a number of reasons. First, these settings provided access to large populations of young men who fit the desired age demographic. Second, recruiting from these settings increases the likelihood of obtaining a sample of young men who are diverse in educational and socioeconomic status. Thirdly, these settings are also likely to highlight other potentially important social and cultural differences between young men in regards to key variables such as race and ethnicity, sexuality, and social networks and aspirations. In each of the research settings, permission was obtained to place a print advertisement on notice boards, and to distribute this print advertisement amongst potential participants (see Appendix B). This distribution of research information amongst potential participants yielded an initial pool of respondents in each research setting that formed the basis of the research sample population.

Recruitment for this research was conducted in two main stages. The first stage involved recruiting twenty men, ten from each of the research settings, to participate in an in-depth interview. Respondents to the research advertisements made contact with the researcher through email or telephone communication and were subject to a short screening interview designed to assess the relevance of the respondent to the research. The screening interview asked a series of key questions regarding the respondent's patterns of alcohol consumption, his experience of public violence, his racial background, and his employment status in order to determine if they fit the requirements of the sample population (see Appendix C). If respondents were suitable for the purposes of this research, they were then given more detailed information regarding the study and invited to take part in an in-depth interview. The second stage involved forming two focus groups, one focus group from each setting. All participants who took part in an in-depth interview were given the option also to take part in a focus group however preference was given to respondents who had not participated in an in-depth interview. Of the 28 young men who participated in the study, only 5 participated in both an in-depth interview and a focus group. Additional focus group participants were selected from the initial pool of respondents from each research setting who were deemed suitable for the research. In total, the focus group from the University of Wollongong (UOW) sample had seven members whilst the focus group from the Wollongong Technical and Further Education campus (TAFE) sample had six members.

Ethical Considerations

Ethics clearance was sought and received from the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) at the University of Wollongong, and all conditions according to the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research were met. In order to meet these conditions a number of potential ethical concerns identified needed to be addressed. Firstly, due to the nature of the research topic and the discussion of practices that are considered risky, there was the possibility that participants may disclose information regarding criminal activities, events and

behaviours. In anticipation of this circumstance, this research had an outlined protocol for responding to such disclosures. Under the NSW Crimes Act (1900), any previous or intended serious criminal offence (an offence that carries a maximum penalty of five years or more imprisonment) must be reported. Under these mandatory reporting requirements, the researcher is required to report information regarding any previous or intended serious criminal offence to the police or other relevant authorities and can potentially be compelled by law to produce documents or disclose information about information obtained during the course of the research. As such, participants were informed prior to the research about these mandatory reporting requirements and cautioned on revealing information regarding any criminal activity. Secondly, there was also the potential that the discussions held in the interviews and focus groups may cause some participants to recall traumatic or distressing experiences. In order to be prepared for such occurrences, all participants were supplied with a list of local and national resources that provide counselling and support for such circumstances (see Appendix F).

Prior to their involvement in the study, participants were given information regarding the nature of the research and invited to discuss the project with those conducting the research. They were advised of any potential risks and burdens associated with the research, and were made aware that their involvement in the study was completely voluntary and that they could choose to withdraw their participation at any time, and withdraw any data that they had provided to that point. Furthermore, in order to ease any possible concerns with being identified the confidentiality and anonymity of all participants was guaranteed by the use of pseudonyms, the changing of personal details in all reporting of results, and the secure storage of all data.

Analysis

Interview and focus group transcripts were coded for key themes and concepts, and subjected to a thematic and systematic comparative analysis. Following the analytic model adopted by Borlagdan et al. (2010), this research took a modified grounded theory approach (Glasser & Strauss 1967; Strauss & Corbin 1997) known as 'adaptive theory', in which both pre-existing theory and theory generated from data analysis are used in the process of conducting empirical research (Layder 1998: 1). All data were coded using the qualitative data analysis software *NVivo 10* as an effective way to facilitate and enhance the coding, indexing, and retrieval processes involved in qualitative data analysis (Mason 2002: 151).

Making Sense of the Data

There is some debate as to how qualitative data obtained from in-depth interviews and focus groups should be read and interpreted, what such data can tell us about the social world, and its reliability and validity. Focus groups and in-depth interviews are used in qualitative research to generate rich, detailed data from individuals regarding subjective and group experiences. Some argue that these accounts simply tell the story of individuals or groups of individuals and should not be used to theorise beyond the world of these people's everyday experiences (May 2001: 29). Those that adopt this position believe that subjective accounts of individuals can never fully represent reality or absolute truth as they are produced in discursive, historical, and social contexts. That is to say, the meanings and interpretations individuals ascribe to personal experiences are produced, reproduced, and modified within specific contextual environments and are subject to their influence (Holloway 1989: 41; Marshall & Rossman 1999: 193). As Holland and Ramazanoglu (1994: 144) note, there is no way of knowing the degree of accuracy and truth presented in the accounts of individuals, thus, they should be seen as subjective narratives constructed in specific contexts for a specific audience.

However, others maintain that qualitative data not only offers insight into the lived experiences of individuals, but that it can also be used to draw attention to and theorise about wider social processes. The argument made here is that the detailed subjective accounts of individuals can be used to reveal the interplay between personal experience and broader social processes. According to this perspective, the accounts given by individuals in qualitative research can be viewed as producing facts with an unproblematic truth-value that directly mirror an individual's lived experience (Hollway 1989: 41). This view sees such accounts as factual statements that accurately represent and reflect social reality. As Prasad (2005: 14) notes, even though we are 'individually engaged in acts of sense-making', this is done within wider social contexts where interpretations and understandings are usually commonly shared and inter-subjective. Individuals are constantly engaged in the process of interpretation and it is this process that should be investigated in order to come to a greater understanding of social life. Rather than focusing on facts, this approach seeks to understand social life through examining how individuals produce social reality (May 2001: 14). However, this perspective also recognises that there is no absolute 'truth' or social 'reality', but rather reality is socially constructed through the experiences of individuals in social, cultural, personal, and historical contexts (Hennink et al. 2011:15). The accounts given by individuals in qualitative research therefore provide insight into the ways in which people understand and interpret the world, which in turn allows us to arrive at a greater understanding of social reality.

Therefore, as Flood (2000: 32) notes, we are faced with the decision between seeing accounts produced in qualitative research as 'culturally defined narratives' or as 'true/false reports on reality'. Drawing on theoretical arguments made by Silverman (1993), Flood argues that it is possible to see the accounts obtained through in-depth interviews and focus groups as situated narratives, or as potentially factual statements, or both according the purpose of the project. In line with Flood, the view that has been taken in this analysis is that the accounts of the young men presented in this research should be seen as being both; personal narratives that document

the subjective experiences of a particular group of young men, and also as factual statements that offer insight into the experiences and complex realities of young men on a grander scale. Like De Visser and Smith (2007a: 352), this research does not consider the accounts produced in this study as directly accessing the young men's 'private truths', but rather as representing 'a dynamic interplay of public and private responses'. The view taken in this research is that the accounts given by the young men in this study ultimately offer insight into their subjective experiences and lived realities.

Moreover, in line with those who have used in-depth qualitative accounts to theorise about broader social processes (Connell 1995; Dowsett 1996; Flood 2000; 2008), this research will take the view that such data can not only provide insight into the lived experiences of individuals, but can also allow researchers to illuminate the dynamics of wider social structures. This research explores the collective and personal accounts of young men regarding two practices, risky drinking and public violence. The result is a set of in-depth group discussions and subjective narratives that tell the story of how these young men understand and interpret these practices in regards to the expression of masculinity. This research will use these accounts to not only document the specific experiences of the young men in this study regarding risky drinking, public violence, and masculinity, but also to illuminate the experiences of young men more generally within broader systems of gender. Risky drinking and public violence are both social in nature, practices that are primarily engaged within social contexts. Through exploring young men's accounts of their experiences with these two risky practices, and the relationship between these practices and the expression of masculinity, a more dynamic understanding of the broader social processes regarding risk-taking and hegemonic masculinity can be achieved.

This research does however have its limitations. Firstly, significant restrictions in regards to time and resources have resulted in a relatively modest sample size. The research presented in this study was conducted as a part of a doctoral thesis and as such did not receive any

significant funding from research councils or government organisations and was conducted under certain time restraints. These factors had implications on the extent and reach of the research in terms of the potential number of interviews and focus groups possible within these restrictions. Secondly, the sample population of young men in this study were drawn from specific geographic locations that provided access only to specific men. Although the upmost care has been taken in regards to obtaining a diverse sample population that represents the target population in key characteristics including class, race, and sexuality, and given the relatively modest sample size, the overall diversity of Australian populations of young men could not be fully represented. Despite these limitations, the findings of this research offer significant insight into the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and masculinity amongst the participants in this study that may reflect broader patterns among young men more generally.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the methodological framework for this study, outlining the methodological underpinnings of the current research and highlighting the value and significance of these methods in the critical study of men and masculinity. The central aim of this research is to conduct a qualitative examination of the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and risky practice among young men. In particular, this research examines young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the ways in which these practices may be drawn on to construct legitimate masculine identities and distance themselves from subordinate and marginalised masculinities. In so doing, this research aims to illuminate the importance of understanding risky drinking and public violence as gendered practices; practices that are imperative for the construction of masculinities that align with the hegemonic ideal. The following chapters present a detailed analysis of the data produced from the interviews and focus groups conducted with the twenty-eight young men in this study.

6. Young Men, Risky Drinking and Public Violence

This chapter presents a sociological mapping of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence. The aim is to examine the social organisation and patterning of risky drinking and public violence amongst young men, and to explore the ways in which these practices manifest in the everyday lives of young men. The chapter is set out around three key objectives. Firstly, the chapter provides a detailed account of the practice of risky drinking as reported by the young men in this study. It explores the particular modes of alcohol consumption described by the participants in this study, and examines the meanings and understandings the young men attribute to this practice. Secondly, the chapter explores young men's engagement in public violence, examining acts of public violence among young men and documenting the social organisation of young men's engagement in such practice. Lastly, this chapter examines the complex relationship between risky drinking and public violence, focusing on the intersections and associations between these practices and the ways in which they co-occur in the lives and social practice of the young men in this study.

Young Men and Risky Drinking

The practice of risky drinking, a pattern of alcohol consumption that leads to high levels of intoxication and increases the likelihood of alcohol-related harm, is widely recognised as a significant problem amongst young men. As discussed in Chapter Four, research from Australia and abroad indicates that young men are the predominant force when it comes to risky drinking, drinking greater quantities of alcohol than all other groups in society, and doing so more frequently. An analysis of the data collected in this study reveals that the young male participants in this research are no exception to this trend. In this section of the chapter I

explore the practice of risky drinking among the young men in this study, and the ways in which their drinking practices are organised in specific ways with specific outcomes in mind.

Quantity and Alcohol Type

The engagement in risky and excessive alcohol consumption was universal among the participants in this study. The sampling strategy in this research selected young men on the basis of their regular engagement in alcohol consumption; however, this study found that the engagement in drinking practices that can be identified as risky was unanimous among the twenty-eight participants in this study. The young men in this study are men who drink and get drunk on a regular basis. In line with other research on young male drinking patterns (Clements 1999; De Visser & Smith 2007b; Ham & Hope 2003; O'Malley & Johnston 2002; Peralta et al. 2010; Roche et al. 2007), the consumption of alcohol in ways that leads to high intoxication was commonplace amongst the young men, with all of the participants reporting drinking large quantities of alcohol. On average, the majority of the young men report drinking between eight and twelve drinks in a single drinking session. The approach of the young men is largely one of 'drinking until you get drunk', and they concede that there are often times where the quantity of alcohol consumed exceeds these average levels, typically when they have become intoxicated and decide to drink more. The account of Beau, a first-year apprentice studying Electronic Technology at TAFE, provides insight into this process:

> I normally start on a six-pack [a pack of six cans or bottles of beer] then once I get to that stage I'm a bit pissed and I'm like, yeah I'll keep going, so I'll end up at eight or ten or eleven or whatever. I think it's one of those things where when you're pissed you're like, oh yeah, we'll keep going (Beau, 18, TAFE).

A number of young men did however report drinking at a much higher level. These young men were identified as occupying the higher end of the drinking spectrum, and reported drinking upwards of twenty drinks in a drinking session. One such participant is Lucas, a university student studying a Bachelor of Creative Arts majoring in Performance:

> They say that if you're a person that drinks every day you should not have a maximum of more than four drinks. On a night that I go out I will smash that and go through about twenty or thirty (Lucas, 21, UOW).

A distinct finding of this study was that the quantity of drinks consumed was often moderated by other factors, including cost and financial affordability, and level of alcohol tolerance. The young men in this study indicate that the amount of alcohol they consume can often increase if they have more money to spend, the price of certain types of alcohol is lower, and affordable drinks and drink specials are available. Toby, a first-year university student studying a Bachelor of Economics and Finance, states:

> I usually drink at least a six pack and then have drinks when I go out as well, depending on my money. I used to drink a lot of drinks when I went out because I had more money to spend on it, but now I try and limit myself to twenty dollars on drinks although it usually goes over that because I get to the stage where I'm happy to just spend my money (Toby, 18, UOW).

Many of the young men also spoke of how their tolerance of alcohol had increased over time to the point that they now have to drink a greater quantity of alcohol in order to become sufficiently intoxicated.

In terms of type of alcohol consumed, the young men provide a long list of alcoholic beverages that they enjoy. These range from various types of beer, to spirits, bourbons, wines, ciders, pre-mixed drinks, shots and cocktails. In line with previous studies (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Lindsay 2006; Roche et. al 2007), the most popular drinks of choice for the young men in this study were beer or spirits. Depending on the drinking context, the majority of the young men drink either full-strength beer or some form of spirits, with beer commonly being consumed at home or the home of friends and spirits typically consumed at drinking venues. For example, when asked what type of alcohol he prefers to drink, Jake, a second-year university student studying a Bachelor of Physical and Health Education, responds:

> Just beer usually, and if you go out in town obviously you drink vodka or spirits, but at home, because it's cheaper, I just get a case of beer because you can't really afford to get a case of bourbon… Basically the only time I'll be drinking spirits is if I go out in town, but other than that I mainly stick to beer (Jake, 19, UOW).

Interestingly, this study found that a significant number of young men (just under half) prefer drinking spirits to beer. Whilst many of the young men report enjoying the taste of beer, numerous men report an aversion to the beverage and find it less enjoyable and more problematic than drinking sprits, which they find easier to drink and gets them drunk quicker. As we see in the case of Jake, the young men's choice of alcoholic beverage is also often negotiated with affordability in mind. The consumption of beer at home is seen as a cheap and affordable way of getting drunk, with another popular and inexpensive choice being cask wine, or what the young men refer to as 'goon'. A number of the young men also spoke of experimenting with shots and other new and exotic types of alcohol as a means of 'mixing it up' and bringing variation to their drinking palate.

Frequency and Locale

On average, the young men in this study reported drinking at least once or twice, and sometimes up to three or four times per week. The most common times of the week to drink were Friday, Saturday, and Sunday nights, however the participants did frequently engage in risky drinking on weeknights. In particular, the young men spoke of what is known as 'uni night', a specific weeknight designated as the night students would go out drinking at popular drinking establishments who promoted themed nights and cheap drink specials. Andy, an apprentice in Metal Foundry studying his trade at TAFE, provides an account that is typical:

> I probably get drunk at least twice a week, minimum. Yeah if I don't get drunk on Friday night then I get drunk on Saturday night. If I get drunk on Friday night I probably go a little bit easier on Saturday night, and then go again on Sunday. But this weekend just gone was a blinder; we just went from Thursday to Sunday. Shit [laughs] (Andy, 23, TAFE).

There were however a small number of young men who drink less often than the others. These young men reported drinking more moderately, once or twice a fortnight, and in one particular case (Peter) once or twice a month. What was notable about these young men was that they reported a history of engaging in risky drinking more frequently, yet had decided a more moderate approach was more desirable for their particular circumstance.

The young men indicate that when they are drinking, in almost all cases they get drunk. According to the accounts of the young men, every occasion in which they consume alcohol is an opportunity to get drunk, an opportunity they seldom relinquish. In fact, to drink and to not get drunk is seen as a missed opportunity and a waste, as the following accounts indicate:

> Whenever we do go drinking we have the intention of getting drunk. It's not social; it's drinking to get drunk (Evan, 18, TAFE).

> As I said, it'd be like a waste of a weekend if I didn't get drunk both Friday and Saturday night (Aaron, 23, UOW).

This kind of approach echoes previous research on young people's modes of alcohol consumption, where drinking and drunkenness are understood to be fundamental leisure activities that form a significant part of the social lives of young people. This pattern of drinking, with the ultimate aim of becoming highly intoxicated, has been identified and labelled in various ways in existing research, such as 'determined drunkenness' (Measham 2004), and 'calculated hedonism' (Brain 2000; Szmigin et al. 2008). What is also noticeable about the young men's drinking patterns is that the frequency of risky drinking is often influenced by other factors such as the occurrence of birthday parties, special occasions, and study breaks. The young men report that they would often drink at times they normally wouldn't if it was some sort of special occasion, and more frequently engage in extended drinking sessions, what they call 'binges' or 'benders', if they had less study or work requirements.

In terms of locale, risky drinking amongst young men tends to occur in three broad locations; homes and house-parties; pubs and clubs; and nightclubs. According to the young men, a typical drinking session will often involve drinking in various locations over the course of a single night. The young men often begin their drinking at home or the home of a friend, make the transition to a pub or a nightclub a few hours later, and visit numerous other nightclubs as the night progresses to its conclusion. On some occasions, the night may continue at home. As Lucas states:

> It starts off with pre-drinks, and then we'll walk into town because it's only a ten-minute walk. Head to the first club until will get bored of there or we get kicked out, head to the second club… then if it's still early enough to keep going or everyone feels like an after-party then we'll head back to the ranch [share-house] and go until we pass out (Lucas, 21, UOW).

For the young men in this study, each of these drinking settings comes with its own advantages and disadvantages. Homes and house-parties provide a safe and enjoyable environment in which to drink and socialise with friends, but can provide limited access to socialise with those outside of their immediate social network, especially the opposite sex. Pubs and clubs provide the right setting for drinking and having a conversation with others, but the alcohol is generally more expensive. Likewise, nightclubs typically charge high prices for drinks but provide a high-energy atmosphere with loud music, dancing, and a greater opportunity for meeting new people and mixing with potential sexual partners.

Risky Drinking Participants

Risky drinking is an activity that is predominantly practiced by men, in particular young men. For the young men in this study, the engagement in risky drinking is a practice that is undertaken primarily with other young men. Young men drink with each other, share alcoholic beverages, buy each other drinks, encourage each other to drink more, and look after each other when they become too intoxicated. Although women also engage in the consumption of alcohol and are often present in drinking environments, the young men in this study preferred to drink

with male friends and peers rather than with their female counterparts. Stefan, a TAFE student studying Information Technology, provides an account that is typical of most young men's drinking patterns:

> Nothing beats just boys having fun, you know, we're all in it for the same game [reason], we all want the same thing, so it's more fun when you're with the guys (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

The young men report when they drink with other men they feel on the same 'wavelength', whereas they argue women do not understand, try to limit young men's drinking, and 'get sick of it really quickly'. Whilst there is some work on the homosocial nature of young men's practices (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Kimmel 1994; Thurnell-Read 2012), the homosocial nature of risky drinking for young men appears to be an important factor that deserves greater attention. As such, this notion shall be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Whilst young men's engagement in risky drinking is primarily done in the company of other young men, drinking with female friends and peers was a feature of most young men's drinking experiences. Although the majority of the young men report drinking more frequently with males, just under half of the interviewees indicated that they do occasionally drink in mixed gender groups. These young men indicate that drinking with female friends, girlfriends, and the girlfriends of their male friends was not completely uncommon. However, the young men universally report that drinking with male peers was more desirable. One possible reason for this preference was that the drinking practices of women are seen as significantly different to those of the men. Although many women do drink excessively and become highly intoxicated, the young men report that majority of women drink more moderately and are more careful about their alcohol consumption. Stefan continues:

> I would say that guys drink more, a lot more, whereas girls are probably a bit more careful with what they drink, how much they drink, and I'd say maybe girls are more careful with their money, like how much they spend when they drink, whereas with

> guys it's like we don't have a choice, like we have to keep drinking or the night is a failure (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

Furthermore, the young men contend that when young women do drink excessively and become highly intoxicated, the men are forced into a position of having to look after and 'babysit' the intoxicated women which they find frustrating and annoying.

Pre-Drinking and Drinking Games

A significant feature of young men's risky drinking that was universal amongst all participants in this study was a practice known as 'pre-drinking'. Pre-drinking, known also as pre-loading, pre-gaming or front-loading, refers to the practice of consuming pre-purchased alcohol in the period of time leading up to 'going out' to public drinking establishments and nightclubs (Wells et al. 2009). Typically taking place at a shared space such as a private home, the home of a friend, the aim in pre-drinking is to get as highly intoxicated as possible on affordable drinks so as to only spend a small amount of money on higher priced drinks at drinking venues. As a means of avoiding the excessive prices charged for alcoholic beverages at drinking venues, the young men in this study almost always consume the majority of their drinks in this pre-drinking phase before heading out to these venues. As Toby states:

> We'll almost always pre-drink, try to get as drunk as possible while still at home, and then go out because it is so much cheaper to drink beforehand (Toby, 18, UOW).

In addition to the financial benefits, pre-drinking is also an exciting social event in which young men get to socialise with friends and get excited for the night ahead. Aaron elaborates:

> It's a social event, you're with your friends and you sort of get gee'd up [excited] for the night. If you start at a pub, I mean, it's harder to get to that stage. I think pre-drinking puts you in the mood to go out rather than going to a club or a pub sober and then trying to start your night from there (Aaron, 23, UOW).

A popular pastime amongst the young men during this pre-drinking phase is a phenomenon known as drinking games; games organised around a set of rules that are designed to get participants highly intoxicated. With titles such as *Kings Cup*, *Fuck the Bus*, *Centurion*, and *Goon*

of Fortune, the young men indicate that the principal purpose of these games is to force each other to drink more and to get each other extremely drunk. Shane is a likable TAFE student studying a Certificate Three in Painting and Decorating. He sums up the central aim of drinking games neatly: 'The point is just to get you drunk [laughs] and quickly [laughs]' (Shane, 24, TAFE). Of the twenty-eight participants in this study, all of the young men report participating in drinking games and doing so frequently. This is in line with previous research on drinking games among young people (Beccaria & Sande 2003: Polizzotto et al. 2007). What is surprising however is not only the number of drinking games in circulation (twenty-four in this study), but also the ability of the young men to invent their own games, often based on films and movies, video games, and television programs. Whilst young women can and do take part in such drinking games, the young men indicate that they often prefer these occasions to be male-centric domains.

Good Nights and Bad Nights

The young men outline a number of common characteristics that contribute to a drinking session being a good experience. According to the young men, on a good night everyone is having a good time, there are good people, good conversation, and a good atmosphere. There is a distinct lack of negative influences such as police involvement, arguments and altercations, or the loss of personal items such as mobile phones and wallets. Importantly, a significant feature of a good night was that it was memorable and contributed to the creation of a good story. Similar to other research on drinking stories (Giles 1999; Peralta 2007; Tan 2012; Tutenges & Rod 2009), this study found that drinking stories were important currency for young men and that being able to tell and re-tell the events of a drinking session was for them a good indicator of the quality of the evening. Aaron is a confident Bachelor of Commerce graduate currently studying a Diploma of Education. He states:

> A good story makes a good night. If you have a story at the end of it that you can all relate to or have a laugh about the next day or the next time you sort of see each other, it's a good night (Aaron, 23, UOW).

Bad nights, on the other hand, are those nights that are remembered (or not remembered) for the wrong reasons: getting too drunk, passing out, getting into fights, getting arrested, or getting injured or hospitalised. However, as Andy highlights, whilst bad nights are those where everything seemingly goes wrong, many of these nights are also the most memorable and therefore can be recontextualised as good nights as they offer narratives associated with risk:

> I never look back on any of the nights and say that was a bad night because of drinking. I look back on the nights and say that was a bad night, but it's in a different context. We say bad night like 'aww man that was sick'. It actually means that it was good (Andy, 23, TAFE).

This is similar to the accounts of young men in Flood's (2000; 2008) research on the homosocial bonds between men, in which highly negative shared experiences between men nevertheless ultimately become celebrated stories.

Young Men's Perceptions of Risky Drinking

The young men in this study were asked also to give an account of their understandings and definitions of the term 'risky drinking'. These discussions revealed that young men identify a number of key determinants that for them render certain drinking practices as 'risky'. For many of the young men, risky drinking was seen as drinking beyond one's limits, drinking past a 'point' of no return. In these accounts, risky drinking was seen as being associated with alcohol tolerance, where those who drink more than they can handle become overly intoxicated and therefore a risk to themselves and others. Risky drinking in these accounts was also seen as related to a lack of control, where those who drink more than they can tolerate end up losing control over their actions and behaviours, leading to a situation where 'anything can happen'. These accounts are similar to those in other research (Guise and Gill 2007: 896; Measham 2006: 261) where young people's understandings of risky drinking are related to notions of control,

negotiation, and management. Another significant feature of risky drinking for the young men was related to pace and volume, where risky drinking was related to drinking large amounts of alcohol relatively quickly. The focus group conducted with TAFE students yielded some common responses:

> Facilitator: What does the term risky drinking mean to you guys?
>
> Darren, 19: Probably having that one drink too much.
>
> Thomas, 19: Just getting some alcohol and drinking it until it's all gone as fast as possible, that's what risky drinking is.
>
> Lewis, 19: When you drink and you pass out and you throw up and you get up again and you start drinking again [laughs], that's pretty stupid, that's risky drinking.
>
> Thomas, 19: Like, drinking when you know you shouldn't be drinking.

The large majority of the young men in this study identified excessive drinking as a risky practice. When asked what was 'risky' about risky drinking, the young men identified two key factors. Firstly, risky drinking was seen as risky due to the possibility of it leading to long-term health problems and irreversible damage to the body. Secondly, the young men also identified risky drinking as risky due to the range of short-term and long-term negative consequences that often come as a result of being highly intoxicated. These include physical injury, hospitalisation, and other legal, financial, or social repercussions. Whilst almost all of the young men agreed that risky drinking is in fact risky, a small number of men did not see the practice as risky at all. These young men argued that whilst risky drinking often leads to becoming highly intoxicated, it is generally a safe practice. For example, when asked if drinking alcohol can be risky, Lewis, a Digital Media student at TAFE, responds:

> Well it depends how you drink it, but more often than not, no, like you'll drink a hundred times and nothing bad will happen and then you drink one more time and you could end up in hospital. So going by those figures I don't think it's very risky. There's a small risk but it's not that risky, it's more about probability (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

In terms of their own drinking practices, half of the young men interviewed in this study indicated that they considered their drinking practices risky. However, the other half did not necessarily see their drinking as risky but rather argued that whilst there may be occasions where their drinking can be excessive, they believe they are able to maintain control of their actions whilst drunk.

Public Violence and Young Men

This study of risky practices among young men also involved an examination of young men's engagement in public violence. As we have seen, the research indicates that young men are at a greater risk of experiencing public violence than all other groups in society, being not only the most likely perpetrators of public violence but also the most likely victims of such violence. Whilst the young men in this study were selected on the basis of some involvement in public violence, the focus group and interview discussions conducted with these young men have found that experiences of public violence are almost omnipresent in the lives of these young men. Each of the twenty-eight young men in this study recounted significant personal experiences with public violence, that is, the intentional use of physical force or power by an individual or group of individuals against another person or persons that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury or death, occurring within the public domain. The aim of the following section of this chapter is to explore the practice of public violence among young men, and document the patterning and organisation of young men's engagement in such practices.

Experiences of Public Violence

The presence of public violence in the lives of the young men in this study was overwhelmingly prevalent. All of the participants in this research had experienced public violence first-hand, be it as victims of public violence, as perpetrators of public violence, as friends of those involved in public violence, or as bystanders bearing witness to such violence. The analysis of the young

men's accounts of public violence revealed that these experiences could be separated into three broad categories: personal experiences of public violence; the experiences of friends; and public violence between strangers. Of the twenty interviewees in this study, the vast majority (16) recall personal first-hand experiences with public violence in which they were directly involved, either as victim or perpetrator. In these experiences, these young men engaged in violent physical altercations with other parties, typically other young men, ranging from one-on-one disputes, group-against-group fights, or group assaults on an individual. For those who were perpetrators, public violence was often directed against another male individual or individuals who they believed had slighted them in some way, or against individuals who were perceived as a threat. One such participant was Stefan, who has recently received a ban from a local nightclub due to the fact that he physically assaulted a number of other young men at the premises. He states:

> I've gotta admit, I was pretty drunk, not quite blind but I didn't really know what was going on, and I could have sworn this guy started pushing him [male friend] and he was standing in front of me so I was getting pushed back as well. So I just ran in and started punching these guys (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

For those who were victims, public violence was typically directed at them by strangers. Although a small number of assaults were committed on individuals by those known to them, the vast majority of public violence was committed by individuals or groups of individuals who were strangers to the victim. This fits with wider patterns of physical assault documented in Australian research (ABS 2007; 2008; 2012; AIHW 2007; 2011b). The account of Matt provides a good example. Matt is a university student studying Mining and Engineering who experienced first-hand a physical assault from a stranger, in his case a group of strangers:

> One time in my home town, it was just like me and a friend, we just left the club, and I got beat up by a bunch of aggie [agricultural student] guys. They thought I was gay because I had colourful piercings and I was wearing a flanno shirt. I don't know where that came from; they just targeted me because I had piercings (Matt, 23, UOW: FG)

Whilst a small number of the young men in the study did not have direct personal experience with public violence, all participants report having experienced public violence through the participation of friends. The young men's exposure to acts of public violence was often the result of the actions and reactions of their friends and acquaintances who had become involved in arguments, fights and altercations with other individuals or groups. In fact, like many previous studies (Mullen et al. 2007; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; 2005) many of the young men report becoming personally involved in public violence, as victim or perpetrator, as a direct result of their male peers' involvement, and spoke of shared expectations to protect and defend their friends, to 'stand up' for their mates, to 'jump in' and participate in public violence if required, and to stop or 'break up' potentially dangerous situations.

The majority of young men however report that the most frequent and common experiences of public violence they had were witnessing violence that occurred between strangers and groups of individuals they did not know. The overwhelming prevalence of public violence in contemporary society has resulted in all of the young men in this study being able to recall vivid and extensive incidences of violence occurring in public between people they did not know. For all of the young men, violence between strangers in public was commonplace, typically violence between men. Although the young men reported incidences of violence between women, against women, and by women, the vast majority of public violence reported by the young men was that between males. These experiences ranged from fist fights to bar brawls, king hits and random attacks, glassings and assaults with weapons, and gang bashings.

Frequency and Locale

This study was interested also in the frequency and locale of these acts of public violence. In terms of frequency, when asked how often public violence occurs the young men presented two broad contrasting accounts. For the majority of the young men, public violence was considered a consistent and frequent feature of public nightlife. These men indicated that acts of public

violence were highly common amongst young people, especially young men, and reported that acts of violence occur almost every night they go out, often within the hour. Evan, a young man currently studying a bridging course at TAFE, reports that he experiences violence on almost all occasions he drinks, either in his home town or in the city:

> Yeah I see a fight or a near fight every time I go to the city, so it's a regular occurrence. If it happens when I do go the city every month or two I'd assume it would happen every night, or every weekend (Evan, 18, TAFE).

However, for other young men, public violence is less common then they thought it might be. For these young men, public violence does not occur on the majority of occasions but is however always a constant threat. According to such accounts, public violence may occur on the odd occasion but on the whole is relatively infrequent. As Beau states:

> I think I sort of see the situations where there's potential for that kind of thing to happen, but most of the time it doesn't happen (Beau, 18, TAFE).

Furthermore, one argument made by a small number of men is that institutions such as the government and the media have made the situation regarding public violence out to be worse than it actually is.

In terms of locale, the young men reported that the most common locations for public violence to occur are outside drinking locations such as pubs and nightclubs, in surrounding streets and alleyways, in transition spaces between nightspots, and in spaces associated with transport: Beau provides a sense of the locations that are most common for public violence:

> I'd say places like, sometimes outside nightclubs, and places close by like nearby alleyways, train stations, bus stops, outside take-away [food shops], Maccas [McDonalds Restaurant], public places, places where people are after drinking (Beau, 18, TAFE).

Again, this fits with wider patterns of public violence reported in general population surveys (ABS 2008; 2012; AIHW 2011b). The young men report that whilst there are some occasions where public violence does occur inside pubs and clubs, generally this is avoided due to the

presence of security guards and security cameras. The young men also speak of public violence as being more prevalent in certain locations. For example, many of the young men report experiencing increased levels of public violence whilst in and around highly populated Central Business Districts and popular nightspots such as Kings Cross, Sydney. Furthermore, when asked to recall the times in which public violence was most present, the young men indicated that acts of public violence occurred most frequently towards the end of the night, typically after midnight in the hours leading up to or following the closure of drinking venues. As Lucas states:

> There's a saying, nothing good happens after two a.m. It [public violence] usually happens after midnight, when everyone is drunk or high or whatever, when everything is winding down (Lucas, 21, UOW).

These findings are also in line with the existing research on young people and violence in the night-time economy (Allen et al. 2003; Finney 2004; Winlow & Hall 2006), which have demonstrated that the peak location and time for violent behaviour is in and around densely populated licensed venues at times that coincide with the closing times of such venues. According to the young men in this study, these are times in which intoxication is high, interactions with strangers increase, and a significant degree of friction can arise between individuals and groups of individuals.

Participants in Public Violence

The young men report that in their experiences of public violence, the most likely participants are males. Whilst there were incidences of public violence involving women (what the young men called 'cat-fights', 'girl-fights', or 'bitch-fights'), these were not the norm. In the majority of cases, public violence involves either two men fighting each other, a group of two or more men fighting another group of men, or a group of individuals attacking a lone individual. The young men note that men involved in public violence are typically intoxicated, and tended to be on the younger end of the spectrum:

> More often than not it's males, by far, and it's younger people, early to mid-twenties is usually the range that I see it in, not so much in people who are freshly eighteen, not that it doesn't happen when you're that young (Lucas, 21, UOW).

There were a number of other significant characteristics the young men noted in regards to the participants in public violence. Although there were incidences where the engagement in violence did occur between known parties, the accounts of the young men indicate that the majority of those who became engaged in public violence were often strangers to each other. These findings are also consistent with previous research which indicates that the peak age for violent offending is typically between 18 and 24 years, and the public violence most frequently occurs between strangers (ABS 2008; 2012; AIHW 2011b). Interestingly, a number of the young men argued that public violence is often committed by a certain type of person, though the description of this type of person varied among participants. For example, a number of the participants from the university sample made the distinction between university students, tradesmen ('tradies'), and those who were not students ('townies'). These participants argued that tradies and townies tended to be significantly more violent than university students due to the structure of their working week meaning they have to 'let loose' on the weekend. Other participants however argue that public violence is usually instigated by men fuelled up on testosterone, who they label 'jocks', 'gym-junkies', and 'alpha-male' types.

Motivations for Public Violence

When asked why individuals become involved in public violence, the young men refer to numerous reasons and motivations for engagement in such practices. For some young men, violence is seen as an inevitable result of biological and hormonal instincts, with men perceived as being naturally inclined to act aggressively. This is strikingly similar to the meanings given for young male violence in a study by Peralta and Cruz (2006). For other participants, men who engage in public violence are attempting to impress those around them whilst establishing themselves at the top of the masculine hierarchy. In a similar fashion to the young men in other

research (Benson & Archer 2002; Mullen et al. 2007; Tomsen 1997a) many of the young men in this study spoke of public violence being caused by tension between men, where incidences involving spilled drinks, accidental bumps and pushes, or a history of dislike between parties being a contributing factor to violence. The presence of women was also seen by many of the young men to be a significant contributing factor to public violence, with girlfriends and female acquaintances often cited as instigators and causal factors in male-to-male violence. Aaron's account is typical:

> It starts with an altercation, and then getting in each other's grill, and then a push, one will push and if no punches are thrown then it sort of doesn't go anywhere. I've seen a couple where they've jumped on each other and started hitting each other, over a girl or something, but on the dance-floor someone could just hit someone, they could turn around and be like what's going on, because when you're in a pub or club everyone's an alpha [male], everyone's trying to be the best (Aaron, 23, UOW).

The young men also suggest that alcohol and high intoxication play a significant role in public violence. The majority of the participants agree that alcohol greatly contributes to incidences of violence and aggression among individuals, arguing that it lowers inhibitions, promotes impulsive behaviour, and reduces tolerance.

The Importance of Mateship

A recurrent theme that emerged from the discussions with the young men was the importance of male-to-male friendships and the concept of mateship. According to the young men in this study, friendship and the homosocial bonds formed between men play a significant role in their engagement in public violence. The young men speak of an unwritten code between them and their male peers that consists of a strict and specific mode of conduct regarding public violence. Universally, the young men argue that standing up for and protecting your male friends is essential; a practice referred to widely as 'having your mates back'. The young men spoke of shared expectations between male friends that they would stand up for each other no matter the cost. As Stefan states:

> It's important to back up your mates because you know them, they're your friends, you hang out with them all the time and you build a bond with them, a connection, a friendship. I think it's important in a friendship that if someone's in trouble you're gonna help them out, it's just that's what friends do, you know, we help. I help him, he's gonna return the favour and help me (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

In regards to young men's engagement in public violence, this concept of mateship often takes the form of engaging in acts of public violence in partnership with friends, mediating violent situations for friends, and acting violently on behalf of friends. In the vast majority of the young men's personal experiences with public violence, male friends were in some way involved. When a friend is involved in a fight or altercation, the role of the 'mate' is however quite complex with the young men reporting a shared understanding of appropriate and inappropriate actions in such circumstances. For example, some of the young men indicate that it is understood that a fight between two individuals should be allowed to continue until there is a clear victor, with involvement from friends allowed only if the fight becomes unfair, or when friends of the opponent choose to become involved in the fight. Other participants indicate that a good mate is one that is 'cool-headed', not 'looking for a fight', and a friend who will break up a fight before it starts, especially if it looks like they are out-matched. Whilst many of the young men indicate they would fight for a friend regardless of whether that friend was in the right or wrong, other young men report that some friends can act inappropriately and this could affect their willingness to engage in public violence on that friend's behalf.

The Outcomes of Public Violence

The young men's engagement in public violence resulted in a range of outcomes of various consequence and magnitude. The participants report that whilst in many cases incidences of public violence are stopped before escalating too far, the result is often physical injuries such as bruises, black eyes, and bleeding noses. However, many of the young men also reported incidences in which the injuries sustained were of a much more serious nature. For example, the

startling account of Lucas provides a strong indication of the serious and severe physical injury that can come as the result of engagement in public violence:

> I had fractured cheekbones, a pool of blood under my eye; I was spitting blood for about three weeks. I'm slowly getting the feeling back in the top of my jaw now; it's been two months or something. Fortunately, I didn't have to have reconstructive surgery, which was a possibility for a little while there (Lucas, 21, UOW).

In the more violent cases that the young men reported, it was common for those involved to sustain more serious injuries including broken bones and concussion, and to be hospitalised. For the perpetrators of public violence, engagement in such practices can also result in serious negative outcomes. These include fines and financial penalties, being banned from certain locations, being arrested, being charged, and having to appear in court. One participant, Simon, had been fined, arrested and faced court numerous times for acts of public violence. He gives an account of the likely outcomes of public violence based on his personal experiences:

> Like, if you and a bloke are just having a push and a shove and a screaming match you'd cop a fine for public disturbance, but if the other bloke's bleeding or you're bleeding and its serious and they've had to take that much time and effort to break it up and what not - that's when you get arrested and charged (Simon, 21, TAFE).

For many of the young men, incidences of public violence did offer some positive outcomes in that they added an element of excitement and spectacle to the evening. In line with previous research into violence among men (Tomsen 1997a; Winlow and Hall 2006), the young men reported that incidences of violence had a carnivalesque quality in that they were 'exciting' and 'interesting' and provided a kind of macabre entertainment that they enjoyed witnessing. Daniel, a second-year Engineering and Mechatronics university student, provides an honest account of his view of public violence:

> I won't lie, when I see a fight I'm kinda like, oh yeah, this is a bit of entertainment, a bit of interest for the night, but I don't like seeing people get hurt, that's not on. But it certainly makes something to talk about, like I could go and talk to any of my mates

> about that fight we saw outside Abbey's [a local nightclub], that's engrained in our memories (Daniel, 21, UOW).

In a similar fashion to their engagement in risky drinking, incidents of public violence become valuable for the creation of stories and memories that can be told and re-told, and that become part of the collective memory of young male peer groups.

Young Men's Perceptions of Public Violence

In light of their experiences of public violence, the young men's definitions of the practice were largely based on physicality. For the majority of participants, public violence was primarily understood as physical abuse and assault that causes injury and harm to another individual:

> It's probably more of a physical thing, anything you do to intentionally hurt another person, that's a serious intent to hurt them. I can walk up to my mate and punch him in the arm and say 'how you going', that's not violence. Violence is actually trying to hurt another person (Daniel, 21, UOW).

For other participants, definitions of public violence were broadened to include any action that causes or inflicts damage to another person. For these men, public violence could also consist of not only physical harm but also verbal, mental and emotional harm.

In terms of public violence being perceived as risky, the overwhelming majority of the participants in the study report that they considered the practice to be highly risky. It is not surprising that the young men see public violence as risky per se; given the character of the practice itself does not offer a sense of moderate or safe levels of engagement. However, the young men speak of public violence being risky on a number of different levels. Firstly, engaging in public violence is highly likely to lead to serious injury for those involved. The young men noted that the outcomes of such violence are often unknown and can have devastating and permanent consequences. For example, many of the participants refer to the recent death of

teenager Thomas Kelly[6], a young man who was killed as a result of being 'king hit' in the popular Sydney night-spot King's Cross. As Lucas states:

> It's risky on all kinds of levels. There's the risk of hospitalisation, and death. That cricket player who got hit by the bouncer, the young guy in Kings Cross. One punch can end a life, which is scary, it's terrifying (Lucas, 21, UOW).

The young men spoke also of public violence being risky in the sense that it can lead to legal consequences. For many of the participants, the increased public presence of police officers, security officers, and security cameras meant that any involvement in acts of public violence could risk being charged with assault, being sued for damages, or being sentenced to jail. For a very small number of men (two), the presence of security and police officers was cited as a reason why they did not feel public violence was risky; however, this opinion was certainly the minority.

Risky Drinking and Public Violence: Exploring the Intersections

Whilst this study is interested in risky drinking and public violence as they manifest individually in the lives of young men, it is also interested in the ways in which they intersect and the relationship between these two practices. The problem of risky drinking and public violence amongst young men and the ways in which these practices co-occur has become a prominent concern for many in contemporary society. There has been significant social debate regarding the rise of 'alcohol-fuelled' violence (Vumbaca 2013) and the seeming increase in physical assaults in and around the public domain. As such, this research has examined young men's understandings of the relationship between risky drinking and public violence, the ways in which these practices intersect, and the potential reasons behind their co-occurrence. The remainder of this chapter will explore these themes.

[6] See Chapter One, or refer to Quilter (2012; 2014).

Alcohol as the Cause of Violence

In discussing the relationship between risky drinking and public violence, the most prominent link between the practices for the young men was alcohol as a significant contributing factor to their engagement in public violence. For the majority of the young men, becoming intoxicated is seen to significantly increase the likelihood of becoming involved in acts of public violence. Alcohol is perceived to be one of the main underlying factors in young men's engagement in public violence for a number of key reasons. Firstly, the young men speak of alcohol as providing increased confidence and a sense of invincibility. In a similar fashion to young men in previous studies (De Visser & Smith 2007b; Mullen et al. 2007; Peralta 2007; West 2001), the young men in this study argue that alcohol provides what they call 'liquid courage' and the motivation to engage in activities and behaviours they would not if they were sober. As Jake states:

> When you are drunk you have that courage and that confidence you don't have when you are sober, you sit there and you think you can take down anyone, you can be the big fish in the pond (Jake, 19, UOW).

The young men argue that alcohol contributes to violence in that it lowers inhibition and reduces the ability to control and monitor behaviour. For many of the young men, drinking and getting drunk ultimately alters their general state of mind to the point where they have less control of their actions and where they lose the ability to inhibit behaviours and actions that may have negative consequences. For the most part, the young men claim that alcohol consumption and being highly intoxicated has a severe effect on the ability to make informed decisions and can alter their perceptions of events and the behaviour of those around them. For example, many of the young men report that their cognitive ability and decision-making skills whilst under the influence of alcohol is highly impaired, and that they often make choices while intoxicated that are careless and irresponsible. As Daniel states:

> When you're drunk you lose the ability to say 'I think this is a bad idea, I shouldn't do this'. You'll be too drunk and you'll say 'no, I'm gonna do it anyway', and that's when it gets risky. Drinking means you lose the ability to make a well-judged choice; you make poor decisions when you're drunk (Daniel, 21, UOW).

This discourse has been well documented in other studies of the relationship between alcohol and violence, where disinhibition and the pharmacological effects of alcohol on cognitive ability are often offered as an explanation for violent behaviour (see Bushman 1997; Pernanen 1991).

For many of the young men, alcohol consumption and intoxication can also provide a legitimate excuse for violent behaviour. In line with previous research that has documented a deviance disavowal approach to alcohol-related violence (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Collins & Messerschmidt 1993: Mullen et al. 2007; Tryggvesson 2004) the young men in this study perceive alcohol as an excuse that can deflect responsibility for their violent actions to the alcohol itself. Thomas, a TAFE student currently studying a Diploma in Communications and Media, sums up this sentiment nicely:

> I just feel like with alcohol, it just gives you an excuse in a way because you can say I was drunk, I didn't mean to fight, I'm sorry, even if you don't really mean if you're sorry (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

A smaller number of the participants did however offer accounts of the relationship between alcohol and violence that were more critical and took into consideration broader social and cultural factors. Rather than seeing alcohol as a direct causal feature of violence, these young men argued that social context, spatial environment, and cultural demographic are equally important:

> I think it just depends on where you are, the company you're with, and the demographic that you're in (Aaron, 23, UOW).

> I guess anything can lead to violence, but do I think you drink and then you become violent? No, I think that's a big misconception of the media, it doesn't take into account where the drinking is occurring, in relatively tight premises where people are in close contact with each other (Peter, 20, UOW).

Interestingly, the young men also report that alcohol can significantly affect emotional responses and reactions in certain situations and contexts. For example, some of the young men indicate that drinking alcohol can lead to increased feelings of anger and hostility, and can lower tolerance levels: As Lewis states:

> Drinking gives you a shorter fuse. It makes you more emotional, and most guys usually only seem to have two emotions, happy and angry, and they can flip between one and the other really quickly, so drinking makes that transition a lot faster (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

In a similar fashion to the research on expectancy (Bushman 1997) where alcohol is seen to increase aggression because individuals expect it to, the participants in this study argue that alcohol intoxication can change the way they perceive and interpret their surroundings, often exaggerating their aggressive behaviour and responses to things happening in their immediate surroundings.

Alcohol as a Non-Contributing Factor

Whilst many of the young men in this study report that alcohol is a significant contributing factor to the occurrence of public violence, there were a number of men who argued that alcohol was not as influential on levels of violence as many believe. For these men, the relationship between drinking and violence is more complex. Whilst the young men predominantly report that public violence is a feature of the majority of drinking sessions, there were a small number who argued that there are many occasions in which alcohol is involved where violence does not occur. In these young men's experiences, drinking and becoming intoxicated does not always

lead to violence, but rather the presence of violence whilst drinking was the minority. As Evan states:

> Most of the times we go out there's no problems whatsoever, there's the really rare occasions where someone's getting a bit angry or aggressive, but it is mostly just drinking with no violence and you're just having a good night (Evan, 18, TAFE).

Another argument presented by some young men is that although there may be many individuals who engage in violence whilst under the influence of alcohol, the majority of those who drink and get drunk do not act violently. For many of the young men, the engagement in violence when drinking is a practice carried out by a minority of individuals with the majority of those who drink and become intoxicated doing so without becoming involved in violence and aggression. Toby states:

> I'd say the majority of time the people who drink don't get involved in fights; it's just a few cases where it does result in that (Toby, 18, UOW).

These young men argue that the fact that many individuals engage in risky drinking yet do not engage in public violence indicates that alcohol is not necessarily a contributing factor in public violence. The obvious conclusion from this perspective is that alcohol is not the central problem; but rather the problem lies with the individual. A common perception among the young men is that the issue of public violence should be reduced to the individual level, where those who choose to engage in public violence are individuals who act outside of the realms of acceptable social behaviour. The problem of public violence from this perspective is attributable to individual deviance and personal choice. Simon provides some insight into such perspectives:

> I'd say it's not the drinking that causes the violence; it's the people that are drinking that cause the violence. I wouldn't say the alcohol causes it in anyway because I know a lot of people that could sit there and drink quite a bit and not have a single streak of any form of violence in them, it's the people that are drinking that cause the violence (Simon, 21, TAFE).

For some of the young men then, becoming involved in public violence is related to individual characteristics and a person's inclinations towards violence and aggression, which can be influenced by factors including social class, race, family background, peer groups, and hobbies.

Violence without Alcohol

The young men also argue that there are many occasions in which violence occurs where alcohol has not been consumed. Many of the young men recount experiences of public violence that do not involve drinking or intoxication. The most prominent cause for young men becoming involved in violence without the influence of alcohol was if they had been wronged or disrespected by another individual. Typically, the young men largely indicated that violence without alcohol is premeditated, an action committed in reaction to a perceived offence. Shane states:

> I think violence where alcohol isn't involved is usually like if someone's clearly been disrespected or someone's just been shocked over something, like, that was an obvious sign of disrespect (Shane, 24, TAFE).

For a number of the young men, incidents of violence that are not influenced by alcohol typically happen for a reason, often as a result of perceived disrespect to friends, girlfriends, family, or disrespect directed at them personally. These findings echo the work on masculine scenarios of violence presented in the work of Polk (1994; 1995; 1999). There are also other contexts in which violence occurs in the absence of alcohol. Many of the young men recall incidents of violence in the schoolyard, sports field, workplace, incidents of road rage, and domestic violence. These forms of violence are drawn on by the young men to demonstrate that violence can often occur in situations in which alcohol is not necessarily involved.

What the young men are less sure about however is whether public violence could lead to risky drinking. When asked if they believe the relationship between drinking and public violence could happen in reverse, where engagement in public violence contributes to a subsequent

engagement in risky drinking, the young men struggled to find ways in which this could be possible. A number of young men suggest that alcohol consumption could be seen as a way in which to celebrate a victory over an opponent, or as a way in which to medicate physical pain or the emotional pain of losing a fight. Other young men suggest that drinking could be a good way in which to relax and de-stress after engaging in violence. However, for the majority of young men, the relationship between risky drinking and public violence was more likely to be one-directional, where alcohol consumption and intoxication leads to engagement in violence.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an overall analysis of the social organisation of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence. What this process has demonstrated is that risky drinking and public violence are practices that feature heavily in the lives of the young men in this study. In regards to risky drinking, the participant's accounts indicate that they drink large amounts of alcohol, and do so frequently. Furthermore, the young men in this study report significant levels of personal experiences with public violence. There is some evidence to suggest that there is a relationship between drinking and violence among young men, however the strength and nature of this relationship remains unclear. Ultimately, this chapter has begun the process of examining the ways in which these practices are experienced and enacted within the everyday lives of young men. In the following chapter, I begin to unpack the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity, and explore the ways in which young men draw on these practices to lay claim to culturally legitimate masculinities.

7. Risk and Masculine Legitimacy

This chapter explores the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as expressions of culturally legitimate masculinities. The aim here is to examine the relationship between young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the cultural component of hegemonic masculinity. In order for young men to construct configurations of masculinity that are considered culturally legitimate, they must enact modes of masculinity that are complicit and in line with the dominant hegemonic ideal. Drawing on the accounts of the young men in this study, this chapter examines young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the ways in which young men draw on these practices to make successful claims to masculine legitimacy. Firstly, it explores the concept of masculine legitimacy and documents the young men's understandings and definitions of legitimate masculinity. Secondly, it examines the dominant cultural ideals of masculinity in regards to risky drinking and the ways in which young men use drinking practices to construct legitimate masculine identities. Thirdly, this chapter looks at the cultural ideals surrounding young men's engagement in public violence and the ways in which such practices can be used to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy. Through this process, this chapter will illuminate the significant relationship between risky practice, culturally legitimate masculine identities, and hegemonic masculinity amongst young men.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Cultural Legitimacy

As established in Chapter Two, hegemonic masculinity has two central components that act simultaneously to ensure the continued dominance of men and subordination of women in society: a cultural component and a political component. When considering hegemonic masculinity as a cultural mechanism, the primary concepts to consider are the concepts of

legitimacy and consent. According to Connell's (1995:77) original definition, hegemonic masculinity can be defined as the configuration of gender practice that embodies the 'currently accepted answer' to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy. In this sense, hegemonic masculinity is about establishing a patriarchal gender system in which one form of masculinity is culturally acknowledged as the most legitimate form of gender practice. Revisiting Gramsci's (1971) concept of hegemony, socio-political authority can be understood as the product of both legitimacy and power. For Gramsci, legitimacy is achieved through establishing consent in the wider population, whereas power is obtained through social coercion based on force and domination. Applying this model of hegemony to the realm of gender, the legitimacy of hegemonic masculinity is achieved in part through the ideological persuasion of the greater part of the population. Through this process, broad cultural consent is achieved through social and cultural institutions and practices, and a hegemonic gender system is established that ensures the fundamental principles for a dominant group (men) become the fundamental principles across wider society (Donaldson 1993: 646; Howson 2006: 48). Ultimately, the cultural processes of hegemonic masculinity ensure that particular configuration of masculinity is established as a legitimate masculine ideal, and that this ideal ultimately resides in a position of power over women, and all other masculinities. The success of the hegemonic project ultimately hinges on the vast majority of men (and women) being complicit with the dominant hegemonic ideal and consenting to its legitimacy.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity recognises that at any given time, one particular set of masculine ideals are culturally exalted and positioned as dominant over others. These ideals represent the form of masculine character that is culturally acknowledged as the most legitimate form of masculinity. In order to explore the currently accepted cultural ideals of masculinity among young Australian men, this study examined young men's understandings of masculinity. The participants in this study were asked to give an account of their definitions and understandings of masculinity, responding to questions such as 'what is masculinity to you' and

'how would you define masculinity'. The accounts reveal that the young men's conceptions of masculinity are largely derived from a set of shared cultural norms and understandings. An analysis of the focus group and interview data reveals that the young men's understandings of masculinity can be broadly categorised into four main themes: masculinity as embodied; masculinity as performative; the psychological aspects of masculinity; and masculinity in relation to women. These four themes outline the currently accepted central ideals of masculinity that the young men consider to be indicative of culturally legitimate masculinities, and as such are now explored in greater detail.

Masculinity as Embodied

When asked to define the term 'masculinity', one of the most prominent themes that emerge from the data is that masculinity is primarily physical and embodied. For the majority of the participants, masculinity is a concept that is directly related to the body and body practices, characterised by a number of key physical attributes. These characteristics include physical size and strength, power, dominance, aggression, toughness, roughness, being muscular, and being physically able. According to these perspectives, masculinity is about being the 'biggest', the 'toughest', and the 'most powerful'. This perspective is summed up neatly in the definition of masculinity presented by Stefan:

> It's about being the alpha male. So it's about being powerful and dominant, you know, being very muscular and looking strong, being big, I suppose being good at fighting or stuff like that, maybe looking the part, so looking a bit rough or tough or stuff like that (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

This perspective echoes essentialist understandings of masculinity that emphasise the physiological and biological differences between men and women, and is typical of many of the young men's understandings of masculinity as being related to physical power and strength. Similar to accounts in previous research (Gilmore 1990: Kimmel 1995), the accounts of the young men in this study indicate that establishing legitimate masculine identities often involves

comparison with other men, with men who are bigger and more powerful than other men being seen as more masculine. As Aaron states:

> So when I look at someone, I don't look at his ability to drink as an indicator of how masculine he is, I look at his build, sort of how wide his shoulders are as to whether he's in my league or not (Aaron, 23, UOW).

Masculinity is also seen by some of the young men as being purely biological, and is characterised by 'having a penis', 'a set of testicles', a 'bigger body', and naturally having 'more testosterone' and by extension 'more aggression'.

Masculinity as Competitive

The understandings of masculinity presented by the young men in this study also refer to it as being competitive in nature. According to many of the young men in this research, masculinity involves demonstrating the appropriate masculine qualities and skills and being competitive. Central to the understanding of masculinity for many of the young men is the idea that you have to perform 'better than other men', and that masculinity is about being 'the best', and 'winning'. The account of Aaron provides a clear example:

> The way that I view masculinity is being able to perform better than the man sitting next to you, in terms of sport, in terms of, sort of, career, in business, or whatever (Aaron, 23, UOW).

In this sense, masculinity is about being more competitive, more successful, and more powerful than other men. The ability to display a competitive edge over other men; be it through direct means such as sports, fighting, or sexual conquest, or more indirect means such as having a more successful career or business, is seen to be characteristic of masculinity. In line with earlier research that has documented the competitive nature of masculinity (Bird 1996; Donaldson 1993; Howson 2006; Messner 1990; Messner & Sabo 1990; Stoudt 2006), the young men in this study indicate that masculinity is something that is constructed through the performance of predetermined culturally accepted ideals of masculinity; in this case success, power, and competitiveness.

The Psychological Aspects of Masculinity

Another theme that emerges in the accounts of the young men is the perception of masculinity as being related to psychological qualities. Whilst many of the participants identify masculinity as being primarily physical and embodied, many also acknowledge that mental qualities such as attitude, intelligence, and maturity are also significant masculine characteristics. For example, many of the young men speak of masculinity as being 'mature' and 'responsible'. As one participant states, masculinity is 'not necessarily being physically strong but rather mentally strong' (Evan, 18, TAFE). In a similar fashion to the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity defined by Howson (2006: 60), a significant theme for these young men was the idea of breadwinning and providing for a family. Many of the young men argue that masculinity is about taking responsibility for your actions and providing financial and material support for family and those in your care. Many of the young men also argue that masculinity is about having the right attitude; being confident, intelligent, having a sense of pride, and being secure in the self. This was related for some men to the idea of male pride and ego, where masculinity is seen as associated with having a strong sense of self-identity. Evan elaborates:

> I just think there's two sides to being masculine; there's the physical and there's the mental, like I could be as muscly as I wanted to be and I could be an absolute prick, but I still wouldn't be masculine. It's not so much just caring in general but the security of knowing your personality (Evan, 18, TAFE).

This perspective is in some ways sits in contrast to understandings of masculinity that emphasise its embodied and competitive nature. According to this perspective, physicality is not a necessary characteristic for masculinity but rather masculinity is characterised by psychological aspects such as a sense of maturity and self-confidence, where being 'smart', 'well composed', and 'mentally strong' is seen as indicative of ideal masculinity.

Masculinity in Relation to Women

The young men in this study also indicate that masculinity is about having a certain attitude towards women and femininity. In a similar fashion to pre-existing understandings of gender where masculinity is in effect defined as 'non-femininity' (Connell 1995: 70), the young men in this study identify an important dialectic between masculinity and femininity where masculinity is defined in opposition to femininity. The young men speak of the importance of displaying traditional masculine qualities such as 'strength' and 'power' whilst at the same time refraining from effeminate qualities such as 'crying', 'showing emotion', and 'weakness'. As Lucas states:

> The more masculine you are the more manly and tough you are. That defines you more as a man than it would if you displayed effeminate qualities (Lucas, 21, UOW).

Some of the young men indicate that that femininity is not as highly valued as masculinity and that to be legitimately masculine requires distancing one's self from weakness and demonstrating power and domination over women, such as being the primary breadwinner or being in control of situations in which females are involved. The idea that to be masculine is to be more powerful than women also manifests in the young men's relationships with women. Similar to existing research that has identified masculinity as being sexually constructed (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Mac an Ghaill 1994), many of the accounts presented by young men reveal that masculinity is also significantly related to their interactions and sexual relations with women, where masculinity is associated with 'hooking up', 'picking up chicks' and engaging in sexual practices with large numbers of women. Andy gives an account that is vivid and typical:

> If you can go out and get the girls you're fucking king shit. I was the first one out of all of my mates to sleep with a girl and I thought I was fucking king shit, and for years after that I thought that was it. If we were getting into an argument or something like that, if someone was giving me shit about something I'd be like 'how many girls have you fucking slept with? I've nailed [slept with] like four or five or something' (Andy, 23, TAFE).

Whilst these sentiments were expressed by the majority of participants, many of the young men suggest that masculinity can also be about being treating women with respect. In contrast to

perspectives of masculinity that position women as subordinate and inferior to men, according to these young men masculinity is reflected through attitudes and practices that are more respectful towards women, such as chivalry, 'being the gentleman', and providing protection and care. However, these understandings of masculinity, whilst seemingly respectful toward women on the surface, are in actuality rooted in patriarchal ideologies that ultimately position men as dominant and superior to women.

Risky Drinking and Masculine Legitimacy

The concept of hegemonic masculinity suggests that there exists a legitimate form of masculinity within a given gender order that is positioned as dominant over all women, and all other forms of masculinities. One of the central aims of this research is to examine the ways in which dominant cultural ideals of masculinity influence young men's engagement in risky drinking, and the ways in which young men's drinking practices can be seen as an expression of complicity and alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. What the research has found is that young men perceive risky drinking to be a legitimate form of masculine practice; a practice that can be drawn on to construct legitimate masculine identities that align with culturally dominant masculine ideals. In this section of the chapter, I explore the key ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking can be seen as a display of culturally legitimate masculinity, and as a resource for the successful claim to masculine legitimacy.

Risky Drinking as a Display of Strength and Resilience

One of the most prominent cultural ideals to emerge from the data relates to the concepts of strength and resilience. Risky drinking is by its nature an embodied practice; a practice that relates directly to the body and that requires physical action. It is no surprise then the young men in this study indicate that when they engage in the practice of risky drinking there are specific masculine expectations that relate to physical strength and endurance which they must display and enact in order to be perceived as legitimately masculine. The young men indicate

that it is crucial to drink as much, if not more, than others; to be able to 'hold your liquor'; to not pass out or vomit when drunk; and to demonstrate a high alcohol tolerance. Toby grew up on a farm in rural New South Wales, yet is currently living in a large university residence where risky drinking is commonplace. He states:

> It's expected if you're a man you can handle your alcohol, you can keep up with everybody else sorta thing, you're expected to not be as messy [drunk] as the girls sort of thing (Toby, 18, UOW).

There is an understanding amongst the young men that to engage in excessive alcohol consumption whilst withstanding the pharmacological effects of high intoxication is a display of masculine strength and endurance. The participants also indicate that young men are expected to drink large quantities of alcohol and 'go hard' when they are drinking. The young men indicate that drinking large quantities of alcohol is considered normative masculine practice amongst their male peers, a practice related to the display of strength and resilience. Jimmy is a university student studying a Bachelor of Creative Arts. He lives with a number of other male students, including fellow participant Lucas, in a notoriously rowdy share house. His account provides some insight into this process:

> As a man you are expected to drink in certain ways, you're expected to drink more, you're expected to drink for longer, yeah, you're expected to stay up longer and drink more (Jimmy, 23, UOW).

Conversely, to not engage in excessive drinking or to do so without successfully withstanding the effects of high alcohol consumption is seen to be acting outside of the realm of legitimate masculinity, and therefore labelled as 'weak' and 'soft'.

The young men also indicate that there are clear cultural norms surrounding what type of alcohol men are expected to consume. As in previous research (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Lindsay 2006), the participants indicate that they are expected to drink 'manly' drinks such as beer or hard spirits whilst rejecting feminine 'girly' drinks like cocktails and cruisers. For the young men in this study, consuming certain beverages such as full-strength beer, whisky, or bourbon is

seen as a display of masculine strength whereas drinking beverages such as wines, alcoholic ciders, pre-mixed drinks, and cocktails is seen as weak and effeminate. Men who drink beverages coded as feminine are seen as less masculine than men who drink 'manly' drinks. Whilst at times a small number of the young men occasionally engage in drinking more feminine drinks, typically to add variety and to 'mix it up', for financial reasons or for added fun, to do so regularly reflects poorly on masculine identity and results in ridicule. Interestingly, whilst some alcoholic beverages coded as feminine have lower alcohol content such as light beer or ciders, most have similar or at times higher alcohol content than drinks coded as masculine, which indicates that the gendering of alcoholic drinks may in fact have a complex relationship to their alcohol content. Nevertheless, the young men in this study indicate that drinking masculine drinks and avoiding feminine drinks is necessary in the display of culturally legitimate masculinities.

What these accounts suggest is that in order for young men to construct masculine identities that are considered culturally legitimate they must engage in risky drinking in ways that display physical strength and resilience, and reject weakness. In a similar way to previous research (De Visser & Smith 2007b; Peralta 2007), the young men in this study see the ability to withstand the effects of excessive alcohol use as a demonstration of bodily strength and endurance. In order to gain status and respect from male and female peers the young men must display strong and resilient drinking patterns by drinking large quantities of alcohol, drinking the right type of alcohol, whilst at the same time demonstrating a capacity for high alcohol tolerance.

Risky Drinking and the Competitive Spirit

Another cultural ideal that has come through prominently in the young men's accounts of their engagement in risky drinking is the importance of drinking competitively. According to Howson (2006: 60), one of the defining characteristics of hegemonic masculinity is 'a competitive spirit', and the 'desire and ability to achieve'. The young men in this study indicate that in order to

construct legitimate masculine identities, they must engage in risky drinking in ways that demonstrate a competitive edge over their male peers. The young men in this study are competitive with their male peers when it comes to drinking quantity, competing to see who can drink the most alcohol, who can drink for longer periods, and who can remain in control of themselves when others cannot. They place a high value on the ability to drink more than other men and check up with each other during drinking sessions (and in the days that follow) to see who has consumed the most drinks, what strength drinks are being consumed, and who is more intoxicated. Risky drinking, in this sense, becomes an important indicator of masculine accomplishment, where men who can drink more alcohol are seen as more masculine than those who drink less. As Toby states:

> There is a perception that guys should be able to drink more. It's kind of a competition as to who can drink the most, like not an actual competition but it's thought of that if I can drink more than you than I'm more manlier than you type of thing (Toby, 18, UOW).

Whether it is competitive in a direct form, such as drinking games that are designed to see who can drink the most alcohol, or indirect competition between male peers comparing drinking abilities, the young men use the practice of risky drinking to compete with each other and compare masculine ability. Men who have the ability to drink more than other men without succumbing to the effects of alcohol intoxication are attributed greater masculine status and reputation by their peers. Darren is a first-year TAFE student studying Bricklaying. His account is typical:

> If you passed out after only two beers you'd get bagged out because that would not show that you were very masculine, but if you could drink a whole case [of beers], that's definitely counted as more masculine (Darren, 19, TAFE).

These accounts are in line with the findings of various other studies (Campbell 2000; De Visser & Smith 2007b; Harnett et al. 2000; Peralta 2007; West 2001) which have found that men are competitive and rank their performance when it comes to alcohol consumption, and that men who drink larger quantities of alcohol are regarded as more masculine than other men. What

these accounts indicate is that being able to drink more than other men and demonstrate high alcohol tolerance not only provides a sense of masculine achievement for young men, it also places those men who can drink more competitively than other men in a position of power over those who cannot. Interestingly, the young men also indicate that these levels of competition between men can intensify when drinking in the presence of strangers. The young men report that being in a group of male strangers makes it more likely for them to drink more competitively, as they feel they must demonstrate masculine competence by 'keeping up' with and 'out-drinking' other men. However, levels of competition between men can also diminish for some men when drinking in male friendship groups. A number of the young men indicate that the expectations for men who have a particularly low alcohol tolerance to drink competitively can be lessened within established male friendship groups who have developed knowledge of each other's drinking patterns. Here, men who have a demonstrated history of not being able to drink as much as other men, whilst still routinely ridiculed, are generally not expected to drink as much as their peers and given a kind of reprieve from the competitive drinking realm.

Risky Drinking and Control

The accounts of the young men also indicate that the ability to drink excessively yet remain in control is highly valued within masculine drinking cultures. Ironically, whilst risky drinking is essentially a practice that involves drinking to excess, becoming highly intoxicated, and in many ways relinquishing control, cultural ideals of risky drinking nevertheless also include maintaining a sense of control over one's actions. For many of the participants, the ideal male drinker is one who can consume large quantities of alcohol yet remain in control and not become 'too drunk' or overly intoxicated. Whilst it is important to drink large quantities of alcohol and to 'keep up' with male peers when drinking, it is also important to 'hold your piss[7]' and demonstrate the ability to drink without losing control. Steve is a second-year university

[7] The phrase 'hold your piss' refers literally to repressing the need to urinate, and figuratively to demonstrating alcohol tolerance, with *piss* also a colloquial term form alcohol (see Campbell 2000: 572)

student studying a Bachelor of Commerce who currently lives in a share-house with seven of his closest male friends, including fellow participants Tim and Jake. He states:

> If you're going to be drinking you want to be able to control yourself and your beer and that, if you don't you just look like an idiot (Steve, 19, UOW).

The young men speak of the importance of drinking without 'blacking out' or 'passing out', and the shame that comes with having to vomit as a result of alcohol consumption. To become too drunk, to pass out, or to vomit is perceived by the young men as a loss of control often associated with weakness and femininity, and attributable to a lack of drinking experience. There is a high value placed on 'knowing your limits' and a widespread understanding amongst the young men that more experienced and successful drinkers do not allow themselves to get overly intoxicated. When asked about his idea of an ideal male drinker, Aaron responds:

> My opinion is someone who can hold themselves well, who doesn't go looking for fights, who doesn't get to the point where he can't look after himself, someone who can hold himself and still hold a conversation and be a good person (Aaron, 23, UOW).

So whilst risky drinking ultimately leads to high intoxication, the accounts of the young men indicate that there are expectations to exhibit self-control when intoxicated and to successfully manage the tension between intoxication and control (see Lindsay 2009). To become overly intoxicated and to succumb to the pharmacological effects of high alcohol consumption often results in ridicule and being seen as someone who does not know their limits. In this sense, risky drinking is a 'body-reflexive practice' (Connell 1995: 59), in that the young men draw on drinking practices that have a bodily dimension to construct masculine identities. These findings are similar to those in previous research (Campbell 2000; Mullen at al. 2007; Peralta 2007) which have found that the ability to demonstrate control when it comes to risky drinking is imperative for the successful performance of legitimate masculinity. The young men in this study indicate that maintaining and demonstrating control when drinking whilst avoiding being seen as overly intoxicated is a way in which to construct masculine identities that are culturally accepted and endorsed.

Interestingly, whilst displaying control and not getting 'too drunk' are highly valued, the majority of the young men report that they have at some stage engaged in drinking beyond their limits, with many recalling these as being favourable and memorable drinking experiences. These findings are in line with the existing research on the value of drinking stories (Giles 1999; Peralta 2007; Tan 2012; Tutenges & Rod 2009). Drinking to excess is often the central motive for risky drinkers, and there is a sense among the participants that experiences of getting too drunk and overly intoxicated, what some call getting 'shit-faced', whilst being cause for ridicule at the time, can be seen retrospectively as a positive and amusing experience. This suggests the relationship between risky drinking and control is in fact complex. In terms of masculinity, the display of masculine competence and a mastery of drinking ability in the immediate context can reflect positively on masculine identity and status. However, being able to draw on experiences of extreme drunkenness and intoxication may retrospectively serve as kind of 'war story' and a retelling of masculine achievement.

Risky Drinking and Homosociality

The young men in this study also draw attention to the importance of homosocial relations with other men when engaging in risky drinking. A small but significant body of research has identified male homosociality as playing a distinct role in the lives of men, particularly in relation to hegemonic masculinity (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Kimmel 1994; Sedgwick 1985; Thurnell-Read 2012). Male homosocial relationships facilitate the understandings between men of what does and does not constitute authentic masculinity, and assist in maintaining a hegemonic ideal to which men hold each other accountable. As Kimmel (1994: 128) notes, masculinity is homosocially enacted by men with manhood being practiced and performed in front of and authenticated by other men. In line with this research, the accounts of the young men in this study suggest that the homosocial relationships formed between men when engaging in risky drinking play an important role when it comes to constructing legitimate masculine identities.

As has been established, risky drinking is a practice that is highly homosocial for young men. Young men drink with each other, share alcoholic beverages, buy each other drinks, encourage each other to drink more, and look after each other when they become too intoxicated. In her analysis of drinking as an enactment of class and gender, Lindsay (2006: 49) found that there are particular modes of socialising within drinking settings. Although women and men may both be present in the same drinking environment, the young men in this study indicate that the majority of drinking tends to happen in same-sex groups. Despite the fact that some participants occasionally drink in mixed-gender groups, the young men report that on the whole they prefer to drink with male friends. According to their accounts, there are clear expectations among young men regarding who they should drink with and when. Young men are expected to drink with their male friends, to join them in planned and spontaneous drinking occasions, and to participate in other drinking related activities such as drinking games and shouting rounds[8]. As Stefan states:

> Yeah, you should have a drink with the boys, yeah for sure, definitely. It's kind of expected; it's just part of the culture (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

The young men speak of a shared understanding between men that male friendships should take priority over relationships with girlfriends, female acquaintances, and all other women. The young men refer to this as 'ditching the bitch' and putting 'bros before ho's'. Whilst a small minority of the participants reported that at times they enjoy the company of women when engaging in risky drinking, the overwhelming sentiment amongst the young men was that drinking with other men was the preferred and culturally expected mode of drinking. As Beau states:

> I guess like you'd be expected, like it would be sort of looked down upon by guys if you were to choose something over drinking with the guys, like priorities, like the whole bros before ho's sort of thing. That'd be a part of it; you'd be expected to drink with the boys (Beau, 18, TAFE).

[8] 'Shouting' is a colloquial term for the practice of individuals in a group taking rotating turns to purchase a round of drinks for the whole group.

These accounts suggest that in order to align with the cultural ideals of masculinity regarding risky drinking, young men are expected to prioritise men over women and to place higher value on patterns of homosocial drinking. Many of the participants indicated that to not drink with male friends or to prioritise female relationships over those with men results in being positioned as an outsider and facing subordination within masculine hierarchies. Men who choose not to honour the male homosocial code face slippage within male group standings and homosocial group exclusion.

Risky Drinking and Cultural Legitimacy

What is clear then in the accounts of the participants is that young men draw on the practice of risky drinking in order to construct legitimate masculine identities that align with the cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity. As a cultural ideal, hegemonic masculinity sits over and above men as an aspirational goal that is considered the most legitimate and authentic configuration of masculinity. Whilst the number of men who actually meet this hegemonic ideal may in fact be minute (Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 1987; 1995) or perhaps even non-existent (Hearn 2004; 2012; Howson 2012), it nevertheless remains the cultural benchmark for legitimate masculinity. In order to make a successful claim to an acceptable and culturally legitimate form of masculinity, young men must engage in risky drinking in ways that are complicit and in alignment with the dominant hegemonic ideal. According to the understandings of masculinity presented by the young men in this study, contemporary cultural ideals of masculinity are based around four key themes: masculine embodiment and physicality; masculine performance; psychological strength and maturity; and specific relations with women. Men who aspire towards the hegemonic ideal must enact masculinities that demonstrate an alignment with these cultural ideals.

In regards to risky drinking, the accounts of the participants in this study indicate that young men must engage in risky drinking in specific ways in order to construct legitimate

masculinities. Young men who participate in risky drinking in ways that are considered culturally legitimate; drinking large quantities of alcohol; drinking 'manly' drinks; demonstrating a high alcohol tolerance; withstanding the effects of intoxication; drinking competitively; and honouring male homosocial drinking codes are perceived as enacting configurations of masculinity that are in line with hegemonic masculinity. Through such practice, these young men are able to attain socio-cultural masculine legitimacy, earning masculine status and respect among their male peers and being perceived as more masculine than men who do not live up to these ideals.

The young men in this study universally recognise that there exists a masculine hierarchy within drinking cultures, where men who can drink in ways that align with the cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity are seen as more masculine than those who cannot. According to the accounts of the participants, young men who can successfully drink in the culturally approved ways are considered to be more legitimately masculine than those who fail to live up to the dominant ideal. Men who are seen to fully embody the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in regards to drinking are referred to as being the 'alpha male', the 'top dog', and 'king of the jungle'. Lewis' account provides a good example of how risky drinking is related to masculine legitimacy:

> There's a very sort of hierarchy feel to it where if you drink more you're a more of a man. There is a masculinity associated with drinking more, but as long as you drink and you don't, like you drink the right drinks and you drink acceptable amounts, then you're accepted (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

Such accounts indicate that masculine legitimacy for young men is contingent upon the way in which they engage in risky drinking, where drinking in culturally approved ways provides support for the construction of legitimate masculine identities. What is also clear in the accounts of the young men is that those men who do not live up to the cultural ideals in terms of risky drinking are seen as less masculine than those men who do. According to the accounts of the

participants, young men who do not engage in risky drinking in ways that align with the cultural ideals are seen as lacking the qualities that encompass legitimate masculinity. These men often face forms of subordination and ridicule within masculine hierarchies, and are given various labels that reflect their lack of masculine legitimacy, including 'lightweight', 'pussy', 'bitch', 'girl', 'soft-cock', 'sissy', 'poofter', and 'faggot' amongst others. As Stefan states:

> If you drink more you're more of a man for sure, if you don't drink much then you're a lightweight, you can't handle anything, and that's not good because then you're seen as a little. Generally, these people who are lightweights are these little small fucking nothings. It's like, man up! Have a few. You should be able to handle it (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

As such accounts indicate, to not drink in the right ways and to be labelled negatively causes significant damage to masculine reputation and ultimately results in a loss of masculine status and respect, and slippage within the masculine hierarchy. These themes will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

The Complexities of Risky Drinking

There are, however, alternative interpretations and understandings of the relationship between masculinity and risky drinking presented in the accounts of some young men. These range from recognising the relationship between drinking and masculinity yet negating its importance, to rejecting the idea of a relationship between masculinity and drinking altogether. For example, a small number of young men in this study argue that whilst there is a significant relationship between risky drinking and masculinity, this relationship is not as important as it is made out to be. These young men acknowledge that whilst some people may see certain drinking practices as more masculine than others, they themselves choose not to support such ideologies. As Steve states:

> To me there's no difference between guys who drink a lot and guys who don't, others might see them as less of a man if they can't drink as much but I don't see it like that. I don't buy into that (Steve, 19, UOW).

Whilst recognising the dominant cultural ideals of masculinity in regards to drinking, these participants suggest that such ideologies are childish and insignificant. They argue that drinking in ways that do not align with dominant cultural ideals does not necessarily equate to being less masculine, but rather is a personal decision made by the individual. Jackson is a TAFE student studying Physical Education. He states:

> I don't really see myself as less of a man if I don't drink because at the end of the day it's my decision. It's my decision if I wanna drink or if I don't wanna drink, I know how much I can drink. It's not a challenge for me for someone to say to me you're a pussy, you can't drink and all that, because at the end of the day it's my decision if I wanna drink or if I don't wanna drink (Jackson, 18, TAFE: FG).

What is noticeable amongst the young men who present such arguments is a kind of self-confidence and self-assuredness. Whilst these young men recognise the existence of dominant cultural ideals regarding drinking and masculinity, they appear to place a higher value on maintaining self-control and not having to prove oneself, which may suggest they ascribe more strongly to discourses of masculinity that are more closely associated with mental strength and control. Other young men argue that although drinking is important in constructing legitimate masculine identities, it is not the only significant factor. These young men indicate that there are alternative methods of gaining masculine legitimacy that do not necessarily involve alcohol use, such as frequent sexual relations with women, sporting achievement, or being big and muscular. These alternative claims to masculine legitimacy are similar to those reported in other research on young men's use of risky drinking to construct legitimate masculinities (De Visser & McDonnell 2011; De Visser & Smith 2007b).

For a smaller minority of young men, there is no significant relationship between risky drinking and notions of masculinity at all. According to these participants, drinking alcohol is in no way related to the construction of masculinity. For example, Brandon is a university student studying Commerce and Marketing. When asked about the relationship between masculinity and drinking he states:

> We're not gonna talk down to a bloke who's not drinking, we'll shake his hand instead. I don't think there's anything to do with masculinity and drinking whatsoever, not in Australian culture (Brandon, 20, UOW: FG)

In a similar way to the participants who reject the importance of the relationship between drinking and masculinity, these accounts may represent the more extreme end of the spectrum in regards to masculinity being about demonstrating self-control and inner-strength. Interestingly, whilst these young men explicitly claim there is no relationship between drinking and masculinity, the practices detailed in their own accounts indicate otherwise. The same men who claim there is no relationship between masculinity and drinking exhibit behaviours and practices that appear to demonstrate an aspiration towards the dominant hegemonic ideals. This highlights a tension between young men's beliefs and actual practices, and suggests that the relationship between masculinity and risky drinking may be part of broader taken-for-granted cultural ideologies.

Public Violence and Masculine Legitimacy

This research also examined the ways in which culturally dominant ideals of masculinity inform young men's engagement in public violence. In a similar fashion to young men's understanding of risky drinking, the participants in this study indicate that there are clear cultural norms and ideals that dictate what is and what is not considered legitimate masculine practice when it comes to their engagement in public violence. In order to construct legitimate forms of masculinity, young men must participate in public violence in ways that are culturally approved and in alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. What this research has found is that despite public violence being understood to be a dangerous and dysfunctional practice, young men drawn on acts of public violence to construct culturally legitimate masculine identities. In line with previous research on the relationship between masculinity and violence (Messerschmidt 1993; 1997; 1998; 2004; 2013; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; 2005) this research has found that young men engage in acts of public violence as a way of

'doing gender' (West & Zimmerman 1987). The remainder of this chapter will explore the principal cultural ideals that emerge from the discussions with young men's regarding their engagement in public violence, and the means by which young men draw on this practice to construct and enact legitimate forms of masculinity.

Public Violence as a Display of Strength and Courage

The discussions with the young men reveal that one of the most important aspects of their engagement in public violence is the display of strength and courage. When asked to give an account of the cultural norms and ideals young men face in regards to public violence, the participants emphasise the importance of demonstrating physical strength and supremacy over other men. These findings support those of previous studies (Benson & Archer 2002; Hinojosa 2010; Peralta et al. 2010; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a) which have indicated that demonstrating physical strength, ability, and courage in the face of violent situations and altercations is important in the construction of masculinity. For example, Tomsen (1997a: 94) found that men often draw on violence to enact what he describes as 'power displays', an assertion of social power related to a heightened sensitivity to perceived threats and challenges from other men. Similarly, Polk (1995: 152) argues that the display of physical strength in violence serves to protect against threats to manhood. For the majority of the young men in this study, demonstrating physical strength and the ability to be the 'biggest', the 'toughest', and the 'strongest' when it comes to physical fights and altercations is a way in which to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy. As Simon states:

> It's definitely about who's the biggest and who's the toughest, because when you talk about masculinity that's the main pinnacle point of what makes a man, being the biggest, the toughest, the meanest. In a violent situation the masculinity will come from who's the toughest, who's the better fighter sort of thing (Simon, 21, TAFE).

A particularly strong theme for the young men is the importance of 'winning' and emerging the victor when it comes to public violence. The young men indicate that the display of physical

supremacy, domination, and power over opponents and emerging the 'winner' is imperative in order to establish a legitimate masculine identity. When asked why it is important to win fights, Daniel states:

> If you're gonna get in a fight you're gonna wanna win it because you're gonna get less hurt and there's less negative consequences. You don't want to be seen to be losing a fight, it would reflect badly on your masculinity (Daniel, 21, UOW).

Closely related to the notion of masculine strength and power is the notion of courage. For many young men in this study, it is important to show willingness to fight and become involved in public violence. Whilst some participants argue that it would be considered unwise to get involved in an altercation with an opponent that is bigger and stronger, many of the young men indicate that demonstrating courage and a lack of fear in regards to public violence reflects favourably on masculinity. A good example of this is found in Beau's account of becoming involved in public violence:

> I actually think some blokes would respect some guy for going into a fight as opposed to backing down, like they'd say yeah he got smashed [badly beaten] but at least he had the balls to have a go. I guess being masculine is like, yeah he stood up for himself even though he knew it wasn't gonna end well (Beau, 18, TAFE).

What these accounts demonstrate is that young men are expected to engage in public violence in certain ways that display strength and courage. In order to construct masculine identities that are considered culturally legitimate, young men must demonstrate physical strength and domination over other men, and show courage in the face of violence.

Public Violence and Male Honour

The discussions with young men in this study also indicate that the concept of male honour is important to their engagement in public violence. A well-established finding in much of the literature on public violence is that a significant proportion of violent incidents among men can be attributed to the protection of male honour (Benson & Archer 2002; Graham & Wells 2003; Homel et al. 1992; Lindsay 2012; Peralta et al. 2010; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a;

2005; Treadwell & Garland 2011). Violence between men, particularly violence that takes place in the public domain, is often found to be attributable to men protecting and defending their male reputation in the face of perceived threats and challenges, what Polk (1999: 6) describes as 'honour contests'. Honour contests are typically instigated by trivial incidences, such as a bump, a look, or a verbal exchange that is perceived as an insult and a challenge to an individual's masculinity. In line with this work, the participants in this study consistently highlight the importance of protecting their male honour and reputation in regards to public violence. Challenges and threats of violence are seen by the young men in this study as direct challenges to their masculinity and as such require specific actions and reactions that demonstrate an appropriate response to these challenges. When asked why he feels he needs to engage in public violence, Jimmy states:

> Yeah well it's just honour, male honour, like I have to defend myself. That's something that's been around for centuries, like you can feel like less of a man if you don't stand up for yourself (Jimmy, 23, UOW).

To respond to adequately to threats to male honour is seen as a gendered power display that demonstrates a form of strength and resolve. However, to not respond to such threats adequately is seen by the young men as a form of submission which in itself is related to weakness and femininity, and as such reflects negatively on masculine identity and reputation.

As public violence takes place in the public domain, a typical feature of such violence that has been found to be significant is the presence of a social audience (Hall 2002; Homel et al. 1992; Polk 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a). According to Polk (1999: 13), the social audience plays a crucial role in public violence as 'it makes any challenge to honour a visible and public matter'. In this sense, the presence of a social audience in incidences of public violence makes the performance of masculinity even more crucial. Many of the young men in this study report that it is essential to stand up for yourself and to protect your masculine reputation when it comes to public violence, as to 'back down' or 'walk away' from a fight is widely perceived by a broader

social audience as a relinquishing of power and a form of defeat that is accompanied by a sense of shame and weakness. Shane provides a clear example of this:

> Deep down when that guy got in my grill and I backed down I kinda was a bit ashamed of myself, because it is a masculinity thing in that sense. There is that typical textbook form of masculinity there and people can sense it, people can see it (Shane 24).

Whilst being defeated in a fight can have a negative effect on masculine status and reputation, some of the participants argue that it would be considered better to engage in public violence and to be defeated rather than to not engage in public violence at all, suggesting a fundamental devaluing of non-violence amongst young men. In this sense, the young men indicate that protecting male honour and defending masculine reputation is in many ways more important than simply emerging the victor, which suggests the relationship between masculinity and public violence is not simple or straightforward, but rather intricate and complex.

Public Violence and Mateship

One the most interesting themes to emerge from the discussions regarding public violence is the notion of mateship. Like risky drinking, public violence is a highly homosocial activity that is largely practiced by men who are members of broader male friendship groups. However, there are some key differences between the homosocial nature of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence. Firstly, the homosocial bonds formed between young men appear to be much stronger and robust when it comes to public violence. There is a clear understanding amongst all of the participants that there exists a strong cultural expectation to support male friends when they become involved in violent incidences. The young men refer to this as 'backing up your mates' and 'having your mates back'. When asked what qualities are the essential characteristics for friends in violent situations, Lucas states:

> Someone who you know you've got their back and you know for a fact they've got your back, that's the best friend you can have. It's obviously the basic levels of friendship, you get along, you have fun drinking together, you have fun chasing

> women together, whatever, but there is also that other level, like when I go out with my mate who I consider to be my brother I feel so safe, I don't have a worry in the world because I know he's got my back and I know he's a hell of a fighter (Lucas, 21, UOW).

Whilst drinking homosocially with male friends is a cultural expectation among young men, the participants in this study indicate that the need to be physically available for support when friends become involved in public violence is of paramount importance. The young men speak with pride of the times in which they have come to the aid of friends who were involved in violent altercations, and attribute great status and respect to friends who have supported them when they themselves have become involved in public violence. Conversely, to not support friends when they require assistance or to abandon them in the midst of violent situations is considered a significant betrayal of friendship and often results in a loss of trust amongst male friends, and in many cases homosocial group exclusion. In cases where friends have failed to assist in fights and altercations, the nature of that friendship ultimately comes under scrutiny and the friendship often abandoned. An obvious reason for this is that failing to support a friend involved in a violent incident could potentially allow them to come to physical harm, and demonstrates a lack of commitment to the friendship. The fact that such failures to support friends in the face of violent situations often results in homosocial exclusions indicates the strength and importance of homosocial mateship bonds when it comes to public violence.

A second key difference between public violence as compared to risky drinking in regards to homosociality is that whilst practice of risky drinking is fairly prominent amongst both men and women, public violence is much more likely to be committed by men and against men. The accounts of the young men reveal that public violence typically involves male participants, and often also their male friends. Whilst the young men prefer drinking with male peers, risky drinking is a practice that often involves both women and men. When it comes to public violence however, the gender gap is much greater as such violence typically involves and

attracts male participants. The young men did report incidences of female involvement in public violence, though female violence is usually directed at other women and rarely towards or involving men. In this sense, public violence is much more centred on male homosociality than risky drinking. As such, the display of mateship and the honouring of homosocial bonds is of much more importance in regards to public violence for the construction of culturally legitimate masculinities.

Another important aspect of the relationship between male homosociality and public violence is the act of intervention. As a male friend, young men are also expected to mediate and intervene in each other's involvement in certain violent situations. Many of the young men in this study argue that fighting between men should be fair and preferably be one-on-one. Part of constructing a legitimate masculine reputation is making sure that when friends become involved in violence that it is conducted fairly. However, there is also an expectation that friends will not get involved unless it is needed. As Simon indicates:

> In my group of friends, a good mate is one that'll stand there and keep it fair and when enough is enough stand in and say righto that's enough, let's separate. But pretty much that's it, unless the need arises, like I said if more than one jump in, yeah come in and back you up, don't leave you hanging two-on-one or whatever, but then don't get involved if there's no need to be (Simon, 21, TAFE).

As has been established, the participants indicate that a good friend is one that is 'calm', 'cool-headed' and makes good decisions; a friend that will not only stand by your side when required but also remove you from potentially dangerous and violent situations, especially ones in which you are outmatched. However, to not adequately support or intervene when friends become involved in public violence leads to being seen as someone who 'can't be trusted', often referred to as a 'dog', which has a substantial negative effect on masculine reputation and status.

In this sense, the display of mateship and the honouring of homosocial bonds can be seen as important in the construction of legitimate masculinities. Despite a small number of studies on

the nature of homophobic violence conducted in groups (Mason 2002; Mason & Tomsen 1997; Pease & Pringle 2001; Tomsen & Mason 2001) and male friendships in drinking settings (Benson & Archer 2002; Tomsen 1997a), the relationship between mateship, male homosociality, and public violence is one that appears to be under-researched in the existing literature. As such, this theme will be explored in greater detail in subsequent chapters.

Public Violence and Women

The participants in this study also indicate that there are certain expectations placed on young men regarding their engagement in public violence and the relationships they have with women. Whilst public violence is overwhelmingly a male-dominated practice, many of the participants argue that much of the violence that occurs in public spaces is often the result of perceived offences against girlfriends and female acquaintances. As has been established in existing research (Benson & Archer 2002; Tomsen 1997a; Tomsen et al. 1991), a significant proportion of public violence involves women in some way, be it a remark or a perceived advance on a girlfriend, a romantic history between parties, men competing for the same woman, or women who instigate the violence themselves. The incidences of public violence reported by the young men in this study largely follow this pattern, with a significant proportion of violent incidences involving women in some way. In a similar fashion to protecting their male honour, the young men indicate that there are cultural expectations to stand up for and defend the honour of their female acquaintances. A particular violent incident recalled by Jake provides a vivid example:

> I was with my girlfriend one night, she had just turned 18 and it was her first night in town, and some guy said 'keep your fucking slutty girlfriend in line'. I was like, whatever mate, have a good night, then he was like 'you're a faggot, you won't even stand up for her', and I was like fucking hell. He just kept going and I didn't want to get into it but the guy just kept going at me so the next thing I knew we were punching on and I ended up knocking him out (Jake, 19, UOW).

For many of the young men, to not protect and defend the honour of their girlfriends or female acquaintances would be seen as weak and would reflect badly on their masculinity. When asked why they feel the need to intervene on behalf of women the young men suggested it is about trying to display masculine power and dominance and presenting the right image. The expectations young men report regarding women and public violence are connected to broader gendered ideas about the differences between women and men. Many of the participants see men as being stronger and more powerful than women, who are seen as weak and 'more fragile'. Some of the young men's account also suggest that such displays of male violence are related to notions of perceived male ownership of women, where women are seen as male 'property' or 'territory' to be marked, protected, and defended.

Public Violence and Cultural Legitimacy

The discussions with young men regarding their engagement in and understandings of public violence therefore reveal that acts of public violence can be seen as gendered practices; practices that are drawn on by young men in their construction and formation of masculine identities. In the same way as their engagement in risky drinking is seen as way in which to perform masculinity, young men in this study participate in public violence in specific ways in order to establish legitimate masculine identities. In detailing their experiences with public violence, all of the young men in this study recognise that the ways in which they engage in this practice has a significant influence on their masculine identity and how they are perceived by others, especially other men. In order to earn status and respect amongst male and female peers and gain a sense of masculine legitimacy, young men must engage in public violence in ways that are understood as culturally valid and complicit with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. In regards to public violence, the accounts of the young men indicate that these include demonstrating physical strength and courage, protecting and defending male honour, honouring mateship and male homosocial bonds, and enacting specific relations and attitudes towards women. However, to engage in public violence in ways that do not align with the

dominant cultural ideals of masculinity results in masculine legitimacy coming under scrutiny and being positioned as less masculine within the masculine hierarchy.

The accounts of the young men indicate that there is a hierarchy and a power struggle between men in regards to public violence. In order to establish masculine identities that are recognised as culturally legitimate, young men must engage in public violence in ways that display the ideals widely held up as the hegemonic standard. According to their accounts, young men gain certain levels of status and respect from their peers if they engage in public violence in the appropriately masculine ways. As Darren observes:

> Violence does equate to masculinity. It's that whole image you know of the one who triumphs is more masculine, like it dates back to all that Roman stuff and Sparta, that was all masculinity and violence, so the biggest guy is the best guy… They get respect from like their peers and stuff, and like a sense of like this guy knows how to fight or whatever. It's a good thing (Darren, 19, TAFE).

To engage in public violence in ways that align with the established cultural ideals enables men to lay claim to masculine reputations that reflect strong masculine identities. Conversely, to not engage in public violence in these ways results in damage to masculine reputation and a loss of status and respect. According to their accounts, young men who fail to engage in public violence in the culturally approved ways are seen as enacting masculinities that are weaker and less masculine than other more legitimate masculinities. As with risky drinking, these men face being seen as weak and inferior and labelled in ways that diminish their masculine identities, such as 'pussy', 'soft', 'bitch', 'wuss', 'poofter' and 'faggot' amongst others. As the account of Lewis indicates, to not engage in public violence in ways that are culturally expected and approved ultimately results in damage to masculine reputation and being seen as less of a man:

> I've been in that situation where I just said I don't wanna fight, and then my friends, like they don't understand why I don't wanna fight, well I just don't feel like getting into a fight, but they don't seem to understand that, and yeah, it damages your masculinity in some way (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

What such accounts indicate is that young men's successful claim to masculine legitimacy can therefore be seen as contingent upon the ways in which they engage in public violence.

The Complexities of Public Violence

Interestingly, whilst the participants in this study largely acknowledge that the ways in which young men engage in public violence has a significant influence their claim to masculine legitimacy, not all of the participants place the same value on the importance of such practices to constructing legitimate masculine identities. A number of the views presented by young men in this study present complex understandings of the relationship between public violence and masculinity. On the one hand, the accounts of the young men indicate that the participants are highly aware of the importance of being complicit with the cultural expectations regarding public violence, and for the most part act accordingly. However, at the same time a number of the young men also present accounts that devalue the importance of the practice in regards to masculinity. In a similar fashion to the alternative accounts presented by some young men in regards to risky drinking, for some young men the relationship between public violence and masculinity is not as important as it is made out to be. Whilst these men acknowledge that there are certain cultural ideals regarding men's engagement in public violence, they choose not to adhere to or place value on such ideals. These participants present alternative understandings of masculinity that centre on inner-strength, self-control, and being secure in one's own masculine identity. Like the alternative accounts presented in regards to risky drinking, these men ascribe more closely to discourses of masculinity that are strongly associated with mental strength and control. These men see themselves as mentally stronger than those who participate in public violence, who they see as irrational and idiotic, and instead claim they 'have nothing to prove'. As Andy States:

> There's been plenty of guys that've tried to start me, and I'd just go 'I don't fight man it's cool', and I see myself as the bigger man then, I see myself as the guy who doesn't have anything to prove (Andy, 23, TAFE).

Despite that fact that all of the participants in this study have personally engaged in the practice of public violence, some of the participants argued that walking away or backing down from potentially violent situations is the better response. For these young men choosing not to fight does not reflect negatively on masculine identity, but rather is the 'smarter' thing to do and an indication of 'being the bigger man'. According to this perspective, choosing not to fight does not necessarily reflect negatively on masculine image and identity.

However, this perspective is negated by two factors. Firstly, the majority of the young men who report backing down and walking away as the better option on many occasions do not carry out such practices in their own accounts, but rather participate in ways that align with the hegemonic ideal. Although these young men may report such beliefs, their accounts indicate that when faced with potentially violent situations their actions prove otherwise. Secondly, the majority of the young men argue that walking away and backing down from violent situations is extremely hard to do, with most acknowledging the social pressure to respond, most likely due to the broadly accepted cultural ideals of masculinity. As the account of Andy suggests, some young men may see engaging in public violence as less important, particularly when they already have a legitimate claim to culturally legitimate masculinities. For these men, the need to engage in public violence in order to demonstrate masculine legitimacy may be less important as they are able to draw on other sources of masculine legitimacy that do not relate to acts of violence, such as physical size and strength, sporting identities, or an impressive history of heterosexual sexual relations, and as such have little to prove. For most however, young men's engagement in public violence is of the upmost importance for the construction and display of legitimate masculinities.

Conclusion

This examination of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence has demonstrated that cultural ideals of masculinity have a significant impact on the ways in which

young men engage in these practices. In regards to risky drinking, in order to construct legitimate and culturally valid masculinities young men must engage in risky drinking in ways that align with this dominant cultural ideal. Through drinking large quantities of alcohol, drinking the appropriate types of alcohol, drinking competitively, demonstrating a high tolerance for alcohol consumption, not getting overly intoxicated and valuing homosocial drinking relationships, the young men in this study are able to enact masculinities that are culturally legitimate. When it comes to public violence, young men must engage in public violence in specific ways in order to make a successful claim to configurations of masculinity that are perceived as culturally legitimate and in line with dominant hegemonic ideals. Through displaying strength and courage in the face of violence, protecting and defending male honour, honouring mateship and homosocial bonds, and enacting certain attitudes towards women, young men can lay claim to culturally legitimate masculinities. Ultimately, young men who successfully engage in risky drinking and public violence are seen as more masculine than those men who do not, and are therefore perceived to be enacting legitimate masculinities. Those men who fail to live up to the hegemonic standard in regards to risky drinking and public violence are seen as less masculine and positioned as subordinate within the masculine hierarchy. The following chapter will examine the nature of such masculine hierarchies and the relations of power, domination, and subordination between men in relation to these risky practices.

8. Risk and the Masculine Hierarchy

The previous chapter explored the ways in which young men use risky practices as a means through which to construct culturally legitimate masculinities. This chapter presents an analysis of the dynamic forces of power at play within the masculine hierarchy, and the ways in which young men's overall positioning within this hierarchy is contingent upon the ways in which they engage in risky drinking and public violence. It examines the ways in which young men's engagement in these practices is organised in ways that position certain configurations of masculine practice as dominant, whilst other forms of masculinity that fail come into alignment with a dominant hegemonic ideal are positioned as subordinate. The chapter serves three key purposes. Firstly, it revisits the notion of the masculine hierarchy and the relations of power and domination between men and masculinities that underpin the hegemonic gender system. Secondly, it examines young men's engagement in risky drinking and the ways in which this practice is organised in ways that authorise certain modes of masculinity and position others as inferior. Thirdly, this chapter explores public violence and the ways in which young men's engagement in this practice contributes to the positioning of certain configurations of masculine practice as superior to other less dominant forms of masculinity. The chapter also offers a comparison of the two practices, exploring the similarities and differences between risky drinking and public violence in relation to young men's positioning in masculine hierarchies.

The Masculine Hierarchy

As established in Chapter Two, the concept of hegemonic masculinity centres on the notion that there is not one form of masculinity in society, but multiple, and that the relations between these masculinities are based on dominance and subordination. In the gender model presented by Connell, beneath the dominant ideal of hegemonic masculinity there exist four main

variations of masculinity: complicit, subordinate, marginalised, and protest masculinities. Each of these configurations of masculinity assumes a particular position within the masculine hierarchy and has a specific relationship to the workings of hegemonic masculinity as a whole. As has been explored, the most crucial configuration of practice in relation to hegemonic masculinity is complicit masculinities, that is, configurations of masculine practice that do not embody hegemonic masculinity yet are complicit in sustaining and upholding the hegemonic model (Hearn 2004; Howson 2009). Complicit masculinities represent the overwhelming majority of men within the masculine hierarchy who play a crucial role in maintaining the legitimacy and authority of hegemonic masculinity. Although the number of men who actually meet the hegemonic ideal may be quite small or even non-existent (Connell 1995; Hearn 2004; 2012; Howson 2009), complicity with the hegemonic pattern ensures they gain patriarchal privileges from the overall subordination of women, and makes it less likely for them to experience subordination within masculine hierarchies. As such, although 'few men are Bogarts or Stallones (Connell 1995: 185), or David Beckhams or Brad Pitts, most men aspire towards and support such models of masculinity and in so doing contribute to sustaining and perpetuating male patriarchal hegemony.

Beneath the dominant ideal of hegemonic masculinity and the large majority of supporting allies found in complicit masculinities, the other main variation of masculinity within the masculine hierarchy is subordinate masculinity. Within the hegemonic system of gender relations, subordination refers to the positioning a form of masculinity as lower or inferior to other dominant masculinities on the basis of their relationship to hegemonic masculinity. Subordinate masculinities are those masculinities that fail to come into alignment with the requirements of the hegemonic ideal, and as such are positioned as less powerful than those that do. As Connell (1987: 186) observes, subordinate masculinities may not necessarily be clearly defined, with hegemony often involving the obfuscation of cultural alternatives, but are always those demarcated as lacking in authentic and legitimate masculinity. For example, the most easily

recognisable form of subordinate masculinity is homosexuality, due to its association with effeminacy and deviation from the heteronormative model of gender relations endorsed by hegemonic masculinity. However, subordination does not always necessarily refer to homosexual masculinities, but ultimately refers to any masculinity that fails to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy. Such masculinities are subject to direct forms of subordination with the masculine hierarchy, including physical violence, harassment, and discrimination, and also indirect forms of subordination such as a loss of masculine status and respect or homosocial group exclusion.

The remaining configurations of practice within the masculine hierarchy are marginalised masculinities and protest masculinities. Marginalised masculinities refers to men who are positioned as outside of hegemonic masculinity on the basis of structures external to gender including age, race, ethnicity, class and religion. For Connell (1995: 80), marginalisation is an external factor to the gender order as opposed to the internal relations of hegemony, subordination and complicity. The interplay between gender and external structures such as race and class creates further relations of subordination and domination between masculinities. Protest masculinities are marginalised masculinities that rework the themes of hegemonic masculinity in order to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy, in a context in which they would otherwise have no claim to hegemonic power. These men may enact exaggerated or over-emphasised forms of masculinity to compensate for their lack of access to hegemonic legitimacy, or express forms of masculinity that challenge and reject the defining aspects of hegemonic masculinity (Howson 2006: 65).

To recognise the gender order as being founded on a system of gendered relations of domination and subordination between men and women, and among the multiple masculinities, opens up new ways in which to analyse the power dynamics at play within the gender order. In order to come to a greater understanding of the gender system as a whole, it is imperative to

examine the relations of alliance, domination, and subordination between masculinities in society and the ways in which the masculine hierarchy operates in the everyday lives of men to support and uphold hegemonic masculinity. In terms of these relations between men, there exists a masculine hierarchy that positions a specific configuration of masculinity as superior to all others. This form of masculinity sits over and above complicit, subordinate, marginalised, and protest masculinities as an 'empty signifier' or aspirational ideal (Hearn 2012: 594; Howson 2009: 8; 2014: 18) which men are expected to support and come into alignment with or face subordination within the gender order. This chapter will now turn to an analysis of the ways in which young men draw on risky drinking and public violence as a means by which to construct masculinities that are complicit and in alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity and that therefore position them favourably within the masculine hierarchy.

Risky Drinking and Masculine Hierarchies

As this research has established, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as way in which they construct culturally legitimate masculinities that align with the dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity, however, is a concept that has not only a cultural component, referring to cultural ideals and sociocultural consent, but also a political component centred on gendered relations of power. As such, in addition to examining the role of dominant cultural ideals in relation to young men's engagement in risky practices this research is equally interested in the ways in which young men's engagement in risky practices is related to their positioning within masculine hierarchies. The discussions with young men in this study indicate that their engagement in risky drinking is organised in ways that position certain configurations of masculine practice as superior and subordinate other forms of masculinity that do not align with hegemonic masculinity. In this section of the chapter, I explore young men's engagement in risky drinking and the ways in which young men's positioning within the masculine hierarchy is contingent upon their engagement in this practice. What this research has found is that young men often engage in risky drinking to lay claim to

positions of power within the masculine hierarchy and also to position other men as less powerful. Young men who demonstrate drinking practices that are in line with the hegemonic masculinity are able to position themselves as powerful and authoritative within the masculine hierarchy, whilst young men who do not engage in risky drinking in ways that are deemed appropriate are ultimately perceived as deficient and as presenting masculinities that are deviations from the desired hegemonic ideal and therefore positioned as subordinate.

Risky Drinking and Gender Policing

The accounts of the young men in this study reveal that in order to construct legitimate forms of masculinity in relation to risky drinking, young men must drink in ways that support the dominant hegemonic ideals endorsed and upheld by wider society. As we have seen, these include drinking large quantities of alcohol, drinking masculine drinks, demonstrating a high tolerance for alcohol, withstanding the effects of intoxication, and displaying specific attitudes towards women and male peers. What is also clear in the accounts of the young men is that those men who do not live up to these ideals in terms of risky drinking are subject to subordination within the masculine hierarchy. According to the majority of participants in this study, young men who do not engage in risky drinking in ways that demonstrate an alliance with hegemonic masculinity are ultimately seen as enacting weaker configurations of masculinity and therefore positioned as subordinate and inferior to those men who do.

The clearest and most direct way in which we see this in the accounts of the young men is through a process known as gender policing (Butler 1999; xii). Gender policing refers to the way in which individuals who are perceived to be acting outside of the realms of normative gender expression are disciplined, devalued, and delegitimised for inadequately performing gender. This practice stems from a gender system based on heteronormativity and compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1980) that demands individuals act in accordance with established understandings of sex and gender. According to various researchers (Carr 1998; Kane 2006;

Pascoe 2007), men often draw on gender policing as a means by which to not only challenge and question the masculinity of others, but also to establish and reaffirm their own masculine identities. For example, in her research on high school masculinities, Pascoe (2007) found that young men and boys not only engage in gender policing to establish gender practices deemed inappropriate and to locate other men as inadequately masculine, but also to affirm their own legitimate masculinities. The analysis of young men's engagement in risky drinking conducted in this study has found that young men often experience gender policing in regards to their drinking practices, both as subjects and participants, where men who fail to meet hegemonic expectations in regards to risky drinking are subject to specific forms of masculine discipline and punishment.

The young men in this study acknowledge that there exists a clear masculine hierarchy within drinking cultures, where men who drink in ways that align with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity are seen as enacting legitimate masculinities and positioned as superior to those who do not. Men who drink in ways that most closely resemble these ideals are seen as occupying the hegemonic position within the drinking order, and given labels that reflect their dominant position within the male hierarchy. These include titles such as 'alpha male', 'top dog', and 'king of the jungle'. The account of Lewis provides an insight into young men's understandings of masculine hierarchies in regards to risky drinking. Whilst being small in stature and somewhat effeminate, Lewis reports that being able to drink adequately is a tool that can be used to gain acceptance and approval from other men:

> There's a very sort of hierarchy feel to it where if you drink more you're a more of a man. There is a masculinity associated with drinking more, but as long as you drink and you don't, like you drink the right drinks and you drink acceptable amounts, then you're accepted (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

Such statements illuminate the processes of complicity involved risky drinking, and demonstrate how young men participate in certain modes of drinking in order to gain

acceptance and avoid subordination. Conversely, the young men report that those men who do not live up to the hegemonic ideal regarding risky drinking face strong gender policing from their peers, and are routinely ridiculed and given various labels that reflect their subordinate positioning within the masculine hierarchy. The most common of these labels were 'lightweight', 'pussy', 'bitch', 'girl', 'soft', 'soft-cock', 'sissy', 'poofter', and 'faggot' amongst others. For example, men who drink beverages coded as feminine are seen as less masculine than men who drink 'manly' drinks, and are therefore given negative labels such as 'bitch', 'pussy' or 'lightweight', terms commonly ascribed to men who do not drink in legitimate ways. Stefan provides a vivid account that is typical of such processes:

> If you order cruisers you're a little bitch. There are definitely drinks that I'd say are more manly, beers or spirits maybe, hard drinks and stuff. So there are manly drinks and girl's drinks for sure. We give each other banter [verbal abuse] if you get like a little pussy drink, everyone knows that, it's like a manly culture sort of thing; you're just like a little bitch, a little pussy, why are you drinking that? Have a beer, c'mon, man up! Something like that, man up, you gotta be a man. It's everywhere; it's just the way it is (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

The accounts of the participants indicate that young men who do not drink in the appropriate ways are subject to gender policing in the form of name-calling and verbal insult that ultimately brings their masculinity into question. When asked to describe the reasons behind such labelling, many of the young men indicate that the aim is to 'make other men feel small' or 'less than you', indicating a direct relationship to subordination within the masculine hierarchy. Lucas provides a sense of this process:

> Being called a pussy, [It's] being emasculated I suppose, you get teased, you get ribbed, you get drawn on, you get called gay, a pussy, you know, all these anti-masculine terms. They're gendered as female, you're a pussy, you're a vagina, you're a woman, you're a girl, and that's not a good thing if you're a guy, especially a young guy (Lucas, 21, UOW).

In this sense, these forms of gender policing can be seen as a way in which young men challenge and destabilise other men's claim to masculine legitimacy, whilst simultaneously solidifying their own masculine identifies and dominant positioning within the male gender order.

What is interesting about these gender policing terminologies is the way in which they relate to subordinate masculinities such as homosexuality and also to femininity. The language of abuse reported by the young men in this study shares a great deal in common with that observed by Connell (1995: 79), where terminologies symbolically associated with homosexuality and femininity are used to expel subordinated masculinities from the 'circle of legitimacy'. In a similar way to previous research (Campbell 2000: 576; De Visser & Smith 2007b: 600; Mullen et al. 2007: 160; Peralta 2007: 750), the participants in this study argue that constructing legitimate masculine identities within drinking cultures is as much about negating an association with femininity and subordinate masculinities as it is about performing hegemonic masculinity. In this research, young men who fall outside of the confines of legitimate masculine practice in regards to risky drinking are systematically categorised as non-masculine and relegated to subordinate positions within the gender order. As the accounts of the young men show, the labels ascribed to young men who fail to drink adequately are meant to emasculate, or at the very least, act as tools of subordination. To be labelled in these ways causes significant damage to masculine reputation and ultimately leads to demotion within the masculine hierarchy. Therefore, in order to distance themselves from masculinities that are positioned as subordinate and inferior, young men must engage in risky drinking in ways that demonstrate complicity and alignment with the dominant hegemonic ideal.

The accounts of the young men suggest that such forms of gender policing are universal amongst young men. Whilst a small number of participants did not fully endorse such practices believing them to be somewhat childish and idiotic, all of the participants in this study had at various times been subject to, and had participated in gender policing. The data reveals a clear

collective understanding amongst the young men that for men to drink in ways deemed inappropriate and not in alignment with dominant masculine ideals inevitably results in being labelled in ways that diminish masculine identity. This diminution may be temporary, lasting only for the immediate drinking session, or permanent, depending on the individual's ability to counter the accusation. The young men report that the key way to reverse being labelled negatively in regards to risky drinking is to demonstrate culturally legitimate and approved drinking patterns. There were however varying gradients or shades of gender policing for the young men. When directed at strangers, the young men suggest gender policing is a powerful method of bringing an individual's masculinity under question and displaying dominance. However, a number of the participants indicated that at times they engage in gender policing in less serious and humorous ways as a form of 'friendly banter' between friends, where the same labels are used but with less ill-intent. However, whilst the young men argued that such labelling does not really 'mean anything' amongst friends, either as subject or as policing agent, it was apparent that the underlying ideology behind such forms of banter ultimately can be identified as an extension and perpetuation of broader hegemonic ideals.

Risky Drinking and the Loss of Masculine Status

In addition to the direct subordination young men face in the form of gender policing, young men who fail to engage in risky drinking in legitimate ways also face more indirect forms of subordination within the masculine hierarchy which often take the form of a loss of masculine status and respect. As touched on above, the subordination associated with gender policing comes in various shades, some temporary and some more permanent, dependent upon the relationship between the parties and the response of the subject. What the discussions with the participants reveal is that consistent failure to display legitimate drinking practices can cause significant damage to masculine reputation and result in a more permanent loss of masculine status and respect amongst peers, and slippage within the masculine hierarchy. As numerous studies have established (Campbell 2000: 576; De Visser & Smith 2007b: 600; Mullen et al.

2007: 160; Peralta 2007: 750), alcohol consumption practices are a means by which men establish and earn the respect of their peers. By engaging in drinking practices that align with the dominant ideal, men are able to accumulate 'masculine capital' (De Visser & McDonnell 2013: 5) and construct masculine identities that yield masculine status and respect. According to many of the participants in this study, engaging in risky drinking in the appropriate ways enables them to establish a favourable reputation among their peers and to demonstrate legitimate configurations of masculine practice. These young men speak of risky drinking as being a means by which they can gain 'credit' and 'kudos' for acceptable masculine achievement, and earn a dominant position within the masculine hierarchy by claiming masculinities that are considered more masculine than others. George is one participant who has established a reputation amongst his friends for being able to drink very large quantities of alcohol, a reputation that contributes to his masculine status. He states:

> The more you can drink the more respect you're looked at with, like, say if you walk into a pub and it's already known that you can drink, they're gonna say 'oh you see him, I once seen him do a whole case of beers on his own and walk out'. You've got people talking about you. That's fame right there… It's about reputation and status, alcohol and reputation go hand in hand (George, 22, TAFE).

In contrast, men who fail to engage in risky drinking in ways that are considered acceptable and appropriate are seen as less masculine and ultimately lose masculine status and respect amongst their peers. Many of the young men indicate that to consistently fail to live up to the hegemonic standard in regards to drinking diminishes masculine reputation and results in being positioned as inferior and subordinate to other men. The accounts of Stefan and Evan give an insight into this process:

> If you don't drink much then you're labelled a lightweight, you can't handle anything, and that's not good because then you're seen as a little. I dunno, you put them in the corner as like a little skinny, scrawny kid, you know? Generally, these people who are lightweights are these little small fucking nothings. It's like man up, have a few; you should be able to handle it (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

> It doesn't reflect well on their masculinity, because to us the more you drink the more of a man you are, so if you get really drunk off only a few beers or whatever it's not really masculine (Evan, 18, TAFE).

As these accounts indicate, maintaining a strong masculine reputation is highly important for the construction of masculine identities, especially for young men, with the loss of masculine respect, status, and standing among peers being a constant threat and a potential source of great shame and humiliation. The accounts of the young men consistently reveal that their engagement in risky drinking has a significant influence on their claim to masculine power and the securing of legitimate masculine identities. Those who demonstrate legitimate drinking practices not only acquire masculine status, they also gain an advantage over those who do not drink adequately and are authorised to participate in the subordination of others. As Steve states:

> If you can handle your drink, you'll probably get more status and avoid getting shit. If you can drink more, then you can give other people shit. You don't have to cop it because you're all good (Steve, 19, UOW).

However, young men who fail to earn the respect and regard of their peers through their drinking practices face ridicule from peers and are ultimately positioned as less powerful than those men who can claim legitimate masculinities and therefore denied equal standing within the masculine hierarchy.

Interestingly, whilst the young men indicate that their successful engagement in risky drinking is vital establishing and maintaining masculine status and reputation, they also indicate that there are other ways in which to gain the respect of peers in circumstances that would otherwise negate masculine status. For example, many of the participants suggest that whilst not drinking in ways deemed appropriate typically leads to subordination and masculine diminishment within the masculine hierarchy, men who can put forward a legitimate justification for their illegitimate drinking practices can make a claim to masculine legitimacy

and power despite its apparent absence. A significant number of the participants report that male friends who do not drink in the appropriate ways or who abstain from alcohol completely can at times be given a reprieve for such deviations on the basis of certain conditions deemed valid, most notably religious reasons, health reasons, or occupational reasons. For example, Aaron reports that being a dedicated basketball player and also someone who has recently re-established his religious beliefs provides a legitimate excuse for his occasional non-engagement in risky drinking:

> I think you've gotta be able to say something back to them when they say 'well why don't you drink' and so you've gotta be doing something that is beyond drinking. So like, for me it's with my sport, or now sort of my religious beliefs, that is my sort of excuse as to why I'm not gonna have a big night. So, I think you've gotta have a reason (Aaron, 23, UOW)

As Aaron's account indicates, non-compliance with the hegemonic ideal can at times be accepted where a legitimate excuse is offered. In fact, many of the participants report a sense of respect and admiration for those who choose not to drink to expected standards in such situations. This may relate back to notions of masculinity associated with mental strength and acuity. For other young men, a loss of masculine status in regards to drinking can be countered by making alternate claims to masculine legitimacy. Whilst engaging in risky drinking is an established method of earning the respect and admiration of peers, some young men report that there are other ways of gaining masculine capital in the absence of drinking ability. In much the same way as the young men in De Visser and Smith's (2007b: 602) study, the participants in this study indicate that masculine legitimacy can be yielded from exemplary performance in other masculine domains, such as sports, sexual pursuits, physical strength and presence, and the display of mateship and respect.

Homosocial Group Exclusion

In addition to facing strong gender policing from peers and a loss of masculine status and reputation, the young men report that those who fail to engage in risky drinking in ways that

align with the hegemonic ideal also experience subordination within the masculine hierarchy through homosocial group exclusion. As we have seen, the homosocial bonds between men have been identified as being highly important for the construction and regulation of masculinities within the broader gender hierarchy of power relations (Bird 1996: 121; Flood 2008: 341; Kimmel 1994: 128; 2008: 47; Thurnell-Read 2012: 250), helping to sustain hegemonic masculine ideals and playing a significant role in establishing accepted forms of masculinity. While male friendships help establish and sustain collective understandings of masculinity, they also promote exclusionary practices and competitiveness between men with males seeking the approval of other men and attempting to improve their position within masculine social hierarchies through masculine accomplishment (Flood 2008: 341). Thus, the stakes are seemingly high in male homosocial group settings, which simultaneously present the opportunity for acceptance, affirmation, or rejection (Thurnell-Read 2012: 251). As Gough and Edwards (1998) note, hegemonic masculinity is asserted in male homosociality through the discursive subordination and denigration of the 'other', which most notably relates to women and homosexual men. To enact masculinities that align with the established masculine ideal is to achieve acceptance and authorisation within broad homosocial groups, whereas a failure to do so results in homosocial negation, group exclusion, and masculine subordination.

The accounts of the young men reveal that the homosocial nature of male drinking practices provides an environment in which some configurations of masculinity are homosocially authorised as acceptable and legitimate, whilst other are located as deviant and illegitimate, and therefore positioned as subordinate. The inability of some men to engage in risky drinking in the accepted ways positions them as inferior to other men and negates their ability to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy amongst peers. According to many of the young men in this study, men who do not drink in the appropriate ways are ultimately denied membership of broader homosocial groups. These men are perceived as lacking the desired hegemonic qualities and therefore positioned as the 'other'; as acting outside of the realms of acceptable

masculinity. As a result, they are often excluded from male friendship circles, perceived as not aligning with collective understandings of masculinity and therefore relegated to positions of less power and influence within the masculine hierarchy. The discussions with the young men in this study reveal that engagement in risky drinking is a key pre-requisite for inclusion in male friendship groups, a practice that indicates that you are 'one of the boys' and demonstrates alignment with group ideals. However, those men who do not participate adequately in such drinking practices are perceived as 'not fitting in' and inevitably positioned as outsiders and excluded from group activities. As Toby states:

> My friend that couldn't handle his alcohol, we thought oh you can't handle your drinks, you're not like us, you need to drink more; you need to work on it (Toby, 18, UOW).

Toby's account is indicative of a broader pattern among the participants of excluding those who do not participate in risky drinking in ways that align with the dominant ideal. The young men indicate that men who do not drink enough, who get drunk too quickly, or who do not drink at all are typically ostracised from male homosocial drinking groups and positioned as subordinate to other men. Thomas provides insight into this process:

> I feel like you just end up falling out of the group, you know what I mean, like there was a friend who, because we like Asian food and that kinda stuff and he didn't, so when we had food and that he didn't want any, so in the end he just kinda got cut out of the group because he wasn't interested in the same stuff. So like, if you're not interested in alcohol then you just kind of fade away (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

According to such accounts, young men who do not engage in risky drinking in the appropriate ways are often perceived as abnormal, as acting outside of the realms of normative masculine behaviour. These men are 'pushed aside' and excluded from male homosocial groups on the basis of being perceived as weird and deviant, and for the failure to align with collective understandings of legitimate masculinity. The accounts of the participants therefore indicate that young men must participate in risky drinking in the appropriate ways to avoid homosocial exclusion and to attain group inclusion.

Those who do not engage in risky drinking can also be seen as boring and uninteresting, or as an irritating presence in homosocial settings. For many of the participants, men who do not drink in the appropriate ways are seen as difficult to socialise with and as hindrances to homosocial activities. Graham, a third-year Mining and Engineering student, provides some insight into this process:

> They're not going to enjoy the group activity that everyone else is doing so they'll be cut out of it, they're not really gonna gel with the rest of the group and they're not really gonna want to do it again, so we're not going to invite them to such things (Graham, 24, UOW: FG).

The nature of such homosocial exclusion can be direct, in the form of being directly excluded from homosocial drinking activities; or indirect, where individuals are not necessarily excluded from homosocial groupings but rather face diminishment within such settings. George's account gives insight into the nature of indirect homosocial exclusion:

> It's not like you get told to leave or anything, you're just not spoken to as much as everyone else is, your opinion isn't asked for as much as everyone else's is. You still have a voice and you can still participate in the conversation, but what you have to say wouldn't be as important as what someone else would have to say, you kinda get bumped down the popularity chain (George, 22, TAFE).

Ultimately, what these accounts suggest is that young men who do not drink in ways that align with the established hegemonic ideal face certain forms of exclusion and segregation within male homosocial drinking settings, which results in slippage and subordination within the masculine hierarchy. In a similar way to the homosocial exclusion reported in Campbell's (2000: 573) study of masculine drinking practices, young men who fail to live up to shared masculine ideals regarding risky drinking are excluded and subordinate within the male social hierarchy due to their inability to enact masculinities that align with the established hegemonic ideal.

Whilst the majority of the participants' accounts indicate that male homosocial exclusion is a function of an individual's inability to drink in ways that align with the hegemonic ideal, some

participants present an alternative understanding of such exclusionary practices that is based more on the perspective of intoxicated individuals. For example, a number of young men present the argument that insecurity and anxiety about intoxicated behaviour may play a role in excluding some men from drinking groups. According to this perspective, individuals who are intoxicated can be insecure about their own drunkenness and therefore exclude others on the basis of their perceived sobriety. As Thomas suggests:

> I feel that people who get drunk are really insecure about their own drunkenness because they want everyone to be at the same level, and if there's one person who is kinda out of that and not fun then they're just kinda pushed to the side (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

The account of Thomas is supported by others, such as that of Lewis which highlights the importance of inclusion in drinking settings and suggests that participation and involvement in drinking practices is imperative in order to avoid exclusion:

> I think they just want you to be included in the drinking culture, so inclusion is important, and like I said before if you're drinking then they feel more comfortable, like talking to you and hanging out with you, because they know how drunk they are and if they see a drink in your hand then they figure well this guy's drunk too, it doesn't matter how I talk, I don't have to watch myself I can just relax (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

A further perspective presented in the accounts of the young men is that participation in risky drinking when others are drunk may not necessarily be an aspiration towards homosocial inclusion, but rather a response to the banality of sobriety. According to these accounts, choosing to engage in risky drinking when others are already intoxicated is more a desire to have fun and avoid boredom rather than attain homosocial inclusion. This argument is in line with existing research that claims risky drinking among young people is a form of 'calculated hedonism' that acts as a release from the pressures and triviality of everyday life (Measham 2006; Measham & Brian 2005; Szmigin et al. 2008; Winlow & Hall 2006). However, whilst some do not recognise the importance of homosociality in relation to risky drinking, it is apparent

that many young men engage in risky drinking in certain ways to avoid group exclusion and subordination within the masculine hierarchy, and to demonstrate complicity with shared group ideals that relate to hegemonic masculinity.

Public Violence and Masculine Hierarchies

In addition to exploring young men's engagement in risky drinking and the ways in which it is influences their positioning in the masculine hierarchy, this research has also examined young men's engagement in public violence and the ways in which this practice is organised so as to position some men as superior and others subordinate. As the previous chapter established, in order to construct legitimate forms of masculinity young men must participate in public violence in ways that are culturally approved and in alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. These include displaying physical strength and courage, protecting male honour, honouring mateship and homosocial bonds, and expressing certain attitudes towards women. What this research has also found is that failure to enact these culturally legitimate modes of masculine practice in regards to public violence not only denies young men masculine legitimacy, it also has a significant influence on their subsequent positioning and claims to authority within the broader masculine hierarchy.

In detailing their experiences with public violence, the young men in this study report that the ways in which they engage in this practice has a significant influence on their masculine identities and how they are perceived by other men. Young men's successful claim to masculinities that offer authority over other men is ultimately conditional to the ways in which they engage in public violence. Young men who engage in public violence in ways that align with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity are perceived as presenting configurations of masculinity that are legitimate and authoritative. Conversely, young men who fail to live up to the shared masculine ideals in regards to public violence are seen as presenting masculinities that are deficient and deviate from the hegemonic ideal, and therefore subject to various forms of direct

and indirect subordination within the masculine hierarchy. Young men who engage in public violence in ways that are complicit and in alignment with the hegemonic ideal are ultimately seen as more masculine than those men who do, with those who do not display such practice seen as less masculine and therefore positioned as inferior and subordinate to other more dominant masculinities within the masculine hierarchy.

Physical Domination

In regards to the processes of domination and subordination within masculine hierarchies, the most significant feature of public violence is that it is primarily physical and interpersonal in nature. Whilst risky drinking is a practice that relates to the body and body practice, the nature of men's dominance over other men in regards to risky drinking is largely discursive and non-physical. Importantly, the key difference between risky drinking and public violence is that displays of power and domination over other men in regards to public violence generally take an overtly physical form. As has been established, men draw on violent practices as a way in which to lay claim to legitimate masculine identities and as a means of distinguishing masculinities from one another (Messerschmidt 1993; 1997; 1998; 2004; 2013). Young men often use violence against each other as means of establishing who is stronger and more dominant, and who can be identified as weak and therefore positioned as subordinate (Benson & Archer 2002; Canaan 1996; McMahan 2011; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; Treadwell & Garland 2011).

In line with this research, the accounts of the young men in this study reveal that in order to establish masculine legitimacy and avoid subordination within the masculine hierarchy, young men must engage in public violence in ways that demonstrate a sense of physical strength, power, and domination over other men. For the majority of participants, the ways in which they engage in public violence is directly related to relations of hierarchy and power between men.

Young men engage in acts of public violence in order to display physical domination and to avoid being perceived as inferior to other men. As Toby states:

> Yeah I'd say guys would think that being violent is a way of showing their dominance and showing that they are a man, and that they are masculine, definitely, because it shows that they are dominant and that they have control and it displays how strong they are sorta thing (Toby, 18, UOW).

In many of their accounts, the young men speak of physical size and strength as being important indicators of masculine domination over other men. Here, physical domination is about being the 'biggest' and the 'toughest' and having 'control', with many young men indicating that those who can demonstrate and assert the greatest power in regards to public violence are widely acknowledged as the most masculine and therefore positioned at the top of the masculine hierarchy. Stefan gives insight into the relationship between public violence and physical domination:

> When you go out clubbing or anything and violence erupts, it's in our genes to wanna be the top dog and fight and be king of the jungle. It's all about being the alpha male, being strong and powerful, being dominant (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

Whilst Stefan offers an essentialist account in which such processes are seen to be the result of biological impulses and genetics, the sentiment conveyed here is that young men feel the need to be dominant and powerful amongst other men. As public violence takes place in the public domain in the presence of a social audience, it is crucial that young men exhibit physical domination and power over other men in order to establish and maintain legitimate masculine identities. According to many participants in this study, being seen to prevail over an opponent is extremely important when it comes to public violence. These young men report that it is imperative to demonstrate physical supremacy over an opponent in order to secure or sustain a dominant position in the social hierarchy. However, to withdraw from a fight or to be defeated is understood by the young men as indication of weakness and a relinquishment of masculine power which results in subordination. As Beau states:

> I just think it's just like saying, like almost just submitting to the other bloke and saying he's got all the power in this confrontation, I'm the weaker man. So it's about power, definitely (Beau, 18, TAFE).

The accounts of the young men indicate that it is important to prevail and 'come out on top' when it comes to public violence, as to submit to another man is seen as a form of emasculation that reflects badly on masculinity. A number of the young men in this study report incidences in which their engagement in public violence resulted in physical defeat. It was apparent that such losses had a significant impact on the young men's self-perceptions and the perceptions of others regarding their masculinity. For these men, being defeated was accompanied by a sense of shame, humiliation, worthlessness and a loss of self-respect. One of these young men was Lucas, who reports his feelings after an incident in which he was badly beaten by another man:

> I wanted to walk around with a paper bag over my head after I got hit. I didn't want to go to uni, I didn't want to see people, I didn't want people to see me as the loser of that fight (Lucas, 21, UOW).

Lucas's account is typical of the sentiments felt by all of the young men who reported being defeated by an opponent in an incident of public violence. The young men argue that it is commonly understood that to be defeated when engaging another man in public violence has the effect of diminishing their position within the masculine hierarchy. To be physically dominated by another man or other men ultimately results in a loss of masculine status and respect among peers, and being positioned as secondary to other men. As Daniel suggests:

> If you're gonna challenge someone you don't want to lose because it's like saying they're better than me, and that knocks you down the ladder definitely (Daniel, 21, UOW).

What the accounts of the young men indicate then is that public violence is used among young men as form of 'power display' (Tomsen 1997a), a resource used for domination and subordination and to establish and organise masculine hierarchies among young men. As detailed in Chapter Six, the public violence described by the young men in this study primarily involved men who were not known to each other. Thus, young men, particularly young men

who are strangers to each other, engage in acts of public violence as a means of working out who is the most powerful and dominant. Whilst there is some evidence in this research that engagement in public violence can offer some sense of masculine respect regardless of outcome, with some young men who engage in public violence yet emerge defeated still earning some level of praise and respect for their participation, what is more prominent in the accounts presented by the young men in this study is that displaying physical domination and supremacy over other men is of paramount importance in the construction of legitimate and authoritative masculine identities, and the claiming of dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy.

Public Violence and Gender Policing

The participants report that young men who do not live up to the ideals of hegemonic masculinity in regards to public violence are subject to significant forms of gender policing and labelled in ways that diminish their masculine identities and position them as subordinate to other masculinities within the masculine hierarchy. Young men who do not engage in public violence in ways considered appropriate and acceptable are perceived as acting outside of the realms of normative masculine behaviour and therefore subject to various forms of discipline and delegitimisation. In much the same way as young men face gender policing for failing to participate in the practice of risky drinking in the approved ways, the participants in this study report that young men who fail to engage in public violence in ways that demonstrate an alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity face being perceived as subordinate and labelled in ways that diminish their masculine identities. These labels include terms such as 'pussy', 'pansy', 'bitch', 'faggot', 'poofter', 'wuss', 'soft', 'gay', and 'girl' amongst others. Again, these labels have obvious connotations with subordinate masculinities such as homosexuality, and with femininity, and are used by young men to scrutinise and bring into question other men's masculine practice. The similarities between risky drinking and public violence in regards to gender policing are striking, and point towards broader patterns of domination and subordination that underpin the gender system as a whole. Lucas provides a sense of the

tensions young men face in regards to performing public violence in the appropriate ways, and how gender policing relates to positioning within the masculine hierarchy:

> I'll call them a pussy if they back down from me. It's all about your own image you know? When I walked away from that fight I was sitting there paranoid; Do Robert and Chris think I'm a pussy? Did they want me to beat the shit out of that guy? Am I now less of man for not having hit that guy? It was a mindfuck (Lucas, 21, UOW).

These findings support previous studies which have demonstrated that young men often draw on violent and aggressive behaviour as a means of enacting masculinities that are in line with hegemonic masculinity and as a means of avoiding subordination within male hierarchies (Benson & Archer 2002; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; 2005; Treadwell & Garland 2011).

All of the participants in this study report experiences of gender policing in regards to public violence. The majority of these young men report feelings of anxiety and pressure to participate in public violence in the appropriate ways in order to avoid subordination within the masculine hierarchy. There were however a small number of men who indicated that challenges to masculine legitimacy presented in the form of gender policing can be negated or rendered powerless if the individual chooses to disregard such practices. For these young men, attempts by other men to question the legitimacy of their masculinity were countered by emphasising individual agency and demonstrating firm beliefs in non-violence. In a similar fashion to those who fail to engage in risky drinking in the established ways, young men who do not participate in public violence in ways that align with the hegemonic ideal must offer a legitimate excuse for their deviation in order to avoid subordination. Thus, whilst these young men admit there are strong social expectations for men to engage in acts of violence in certain situations, especially in regards to public violence, their accounts suggest that it is possible to counter acts of gender policing through openly rejecting hegemonic notions of violence and establishing an understanding that for them public violence is not a viable option. What was noticeable across the small number of young men who were able to present such understandings was a sense of

maturity and mental strength. However, despite their inclinations toward non-violence, these young men ultimately still find themselves within a 'masculine subculture of violence' (Polk 1995) and therefore are required to continually manage and negotiate their positioning within the masculine hierarchy.

An interesting feature of young men's participation in public violence that did not appear in similar accounts of risky drinking was the notion of being 'the bitch' and 'bitching out' other men. For many participants in this study, an important part of maintaining a sense of legitimate masculine identity in regards to incidences of public violence was the ability to avoid being dominated by another man and subsequently seen as 'the bitch': a person who is made to feel inferior and subordinate to an apparent opponent. Many of the young men report that it is important to assume the dominant position and to be seen to be 'bitching out' other men. Aaron provides some insight into such processes:

> Just say I get into an altercation with someone, I'll touch their hair, I'll be like 'just relax bro, just relax' and stuff and I'll touch their face a little bit and say 'just relax man', and then if they don't take a swing then I've won sorta thing. They know I've won because I haven't fought them but I've bitched them sorta thing, I've made them feel small and everyone's seen that I've made them feel small - so I've won without fighting (Aaron, 23, UOW).

Collectively, the young men understand the importance of avoiding such labels. The term 'bitch' has an obvious association with womanhood and femininity. Historically, the term (literally meaning female dog) has been used as a derogative term for a woman, however the term is also increasingly used in popular culture, particularly rap and hip-hop cultures, to refer to men who are positioned as subordinate or unmanly (see Adams and Fuller 2006). The accounts of the young men in this study indicate that such labels are designed to subordinate men and other masculinities, and to describe masculine practice that is deemed to be weak and inferior, and a relinquishment of masculine power.

A further difference between risky drinking and public violence in regards to gender policing was that these labels of subordination and masculine diminishment were often also the source and instigation of incidences of violence among young men. Similar to previous research (Mullen et al. 2007; Polk 1994), a significant number of all the incidences of public violence reported by the young men involved some form of name-calling or verbal abuse from an opposing party. Gender policing is a resource often drawn on to question the practices of men and their masculinities. As such, the accounts of the young men indicate that such gender policing can also be drawn on to provoke and incite other men towards public violence. The account of Jake, who reports a long history of violence, provides an insight into how gender policing can progress into public violence:

> If this person has been ragging on [verbally abusing] you all night saying you're a poofter, you're a faggot, all that sort of thing, then you shape up to them and you knock them out in one punch. It's unfortunate because that's how brain damage and shit like that happens and it sometimes leads to death, it's not good (Jake, 19, UOW).

Such accounts painfully demonstrate that the relations of power and hierarchy between men can have a significant influence on young men's engagement in public violence. Young men draw on public violence not only to secure a position of power and dominance within the masculine hierarchy, but also to avoid subordination and to address challenges to masculine legitimacy by other men.

Public Violence and the Loss of Masculine Status

As has been previously discussed, it is widely established that much of the violence that occurs between men in public is attributable to the defence of male honour and men saving-face in response to perceived threats and challenges to masculine reputation (Benson & Archer 2002; Graham & Wells 2003; Homel et al. 1992; Lindsay 2012; Peralta et al. 2010; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a; 2005; Treadwell & Garland 2011). In line with these findings, the importance of maintaining masculine reputation and status in regards to public violence is a

constant theme throughout the accounts of the young men in this study. The overarching view presented in these accounts is that to engage in public violence in ways that align with the established hegemonic ideal enables men to construct masculine identities that come with a sense of masculine status and power. Conversely, to not engage in public violence in these ways results in significant damage to masculine reputation and a loss of status and respect, leading to slippage within the masculine hierarchy.

According to their accounts, young men who engage in public violence in ways that demonstrate an alignment with the dominant hegemonic ideals are seen as enacting masculinities that are superior and dominant over other less dominant masculinities. Through displaying strength and courage, homosocial loyalty and support, and a willingness to protect and defend male honour, young men can lay claim to masculine identities that are considered acceptable and appropriate. In so doing, young men gain a sense of status and reputation that reflects favourably on their masculinity and their standing within the male social hierarchy. As Thomas states:

> If you get into a fight with someone, it kind of reverberates through your extended friends and I feel like you kind of get a bit of a reputation for being more like, like the top dog. I feel like that reputation that you have is just kinda like you show that you're the best and then other people kinda spread that on if you know what I mean, it spreads out (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

The young men indicate that earning a reputation for engaging in public violence in the appropriate ways enables them to gain the respect of peers and attain masculine status. However, what is also clear in the young men's accounts is that to respond inadequately to threats and challenges of violence, or to participate in public violence and be defeated leads to being perceived as less masculine and inferior to other men. To not defend male honour in the face of rebuke, to withdraw from violent encounters and challenges, or to be badly beaten when engaging in public violence results in a clear loss of masculine status and standing within the male hierarchy, a loss that can have serious ramifications for one's sense of masculinity and masculine identity. Beau gives some insight into this process:

> I guess you would be interpreted as the kinda guy who's just happy to take whatever happens to you, like among other guys they'd be like 'oh yeah, he doesn't care, you can do whatever you want, he doesn't stand up for himself'. You'd be seen as someone that, yeah you could take his girl, you could take his drink, he's not gonna do anything about it; he's a push over, just not someone to worry about (Beau, 18, TAFE).

This account is typical of many of the participants' experiences with public violence, in which maintaining a sense of masculine respect and credibility among peers is conditional to the ways in which one engages in public violence. The young men indicate that to react poorly and to fail to engage in public violence in the appropriate ways is damaging to masculine reputation and ultimately results in being seen as less masculine, as weak, and being 'looked down upon' by other men.

The reports of the young men regarding masculine status and reputation when it comes to engagement in public violence are however somewhat complex and multifaceted. Whilst there are clear understandings between men regarding what constitutes legitimate or illegitimate masculine practice in regards to public violence, these understandings are underpinned by various circumstances and situations that require a more detailed analysis. For example, the young men indicate that at times mere participation in a fight or altercation can provide the participant with a sense of masculine status, regardless of defeat or other negative outcome. For many of the participants, the size and stature of opponents is a significant factor to be considered when judging an individual's engagement or disengagement in public violence. To engage in a fight with a much bigger opponent and be defeated is seen to be much less humiliating than to be beaten by a smaller opponent. Similarly, to engage in public violence with numerous opponents is considered to offer more status than a one-on-one altercation. As Aaron states:

> I think if you lose a fight you do lose a bit of respect, but like if you haven't got any experience in a fight, like you've never been in a fight , then you don't have a bad or

> good reputation, it doesn't matter, but as soon as you get that first fight and say you lose it, like I think it depends on the opponent as well and the number of people, like if there's ten guys and you lose the fight then no one's gonna say you lost respect, but if it's one-on-one and it's a tiny guy and you're a big guy and you lose, you're definitely gonna cop some flak for that (Aaron, 23, UOW)

The young men indicate that a degree of common sense is necessary when it comes to public violence and that whilst engaging in fighting and physical altercations when outnumbered or outmatched can invoke masculine awe and admiration, it can also lead to being perceived as foolish and idiotic. Many of the participants refer to the importance of being mentally aware of the overall situation in regards to public violence, what some referred to as 'having a good head on your shoulders'. For the majority of the participants, there was however a general consensus that making a claim to masculine legitimacy meant that 'you have to at least do something' and demonstrate some form of strength and assertiveness.

Many of the participants also indicate that whilst engagement in public violence generally reflects favourably on masculine status and reputation, there are situations in which participation in public violence can have a negative impact on masculine standing. For example, there is a high emphasis placed upon the reasoning and justification for engaging in violence. It is widely accepted among young men that there are certain situations and circumstances that warrant engagement in public violence, including significant challenges or threats to the self, to friends, or to female associates or partners. However, the young men report that to engage in public violence too frequently, for the wrong reasons, or without justification, such as a small bump or other minor incidents, results in being perceived as a 'hot-headed' and a loss of respect and status among peers. In contrast, many of the participants indicate that men who are known to be able to fight adequately yet choose to refrain from fighting and avoid violence when there is in fact an appropriate reason are held in the highest regard and earn the most respect from their peers. The processes of gaining and maintaining masculine status and respect among male peers in regards to public violence appears then to require a complex balance of factors. Whilst

it is imperative to engage in public violence in ways that display strength, domination, and self-respect, it is important to do so in ways that demonstrate common-sense and an awareness of the overall situation that is presented. Young men who engage in public violence in order to protect and defend male honour, or the honour of those around them including male peers or female acquaintances are seen as enacting legitimate configurations of masculinity and as such earn the respect and admiration of their peers. However, men who do not participate in public violence in ways deemed appropriate, either withdrawing from violent encounters and challenges to masculine legitimacy, or engaging in public violence in ways that are deemed inappropriate and unnecessary ultimately lose respect and standing within the masculine hierarchy and face forms of masculine subordination.

Homosocial Group Exclusion

This study has found that male friendships and the homosocial bonds formed between men are highly important in relation to public violence. When it comes to participation in fighting and physical altercations in the public domain, young men place a high value on providing support and assistance for friends when they become involved in public violence. Despite a small number of studies on the nature of homophobic violence conducted in groups (Mason 2002; Mason & Tomsen 1997; Pease & Pringle 2001; Tomsen & Mason 2001) and male friendships in drinking settings (Benson & Archer 2002; Tomsen 1997a), the relationship between mateship, male homosociality, and public violence is relatively under-researched in the existing literature. According to the young men in this study, the display of mateship and the honouring of homosocial bonds is highly regarded for the construction of legitimate masculinities and avoiding subordination within the male social hierarchy. As such, in order to avoid subordination within the masculine hierarchy and to lay claim to masculine legitimacy, young men must be prepared and willing to engage in public violence in solidarity with other men.

The participants in this study unanimously report that having a reputation as someone who can be relied upon for support and assistance when it comes to public violence is highly valued among young men. When asked if they would engage in public violence if their friends were involved, the majority of the young men indicated that there are clear expectations for men to provide support for male friends in such situations. To do so is to demonstrate loyalty, allegiance, and dependability in the face of adversity, something a number of young men likened to the relationships formed between men in war and conflict. The account of Ravi, a university student undertaking a Master's degree in Mechatronics, is typical of the accounts presented by the young men in this study and illuminates the importance of demonstrating mateship and honouring homosocial relationships in regards to public violence:

> When he is in trouble you didn't run away, you stood there by his side, you actually fought for him. It's like, the same goes even when you are in a war, if a solider is by your side and he helps you out to survive, that's something that bonds you for a lifetime, the same things with my friends as well (Ravi, 24, UOW).

The young men argue that to honour these homosocial bonds in the face of physical violence not only demonstrates true friendship, it allows men to secure a legitimate position within the masculine hierarchy. Conversely, the young men report that to fail to provide adequate support and assistance for friends in regards to public violence causes significant damage to masculine status and reputation, and often results in homosocial group exclusion and exile. Drawing on their experiences with public violence, many of the participants indicate that to be known as someone who does not stand up for friends or who withdraws from violent situations when support is needed results in a loss of masculine standing and popularity. As one participant states, 'you wouldn't want to be known as someone who leaves their mates in bad situations' (Beau, 18, TAFE). Furthermore, other participants report that it is better to provide support to friends and face physical injury than it is to abandon friends when needed. As Lewis states:

> I would rather stick around and get my arse beaten than I would, like, leaving the situation and leaving my friend, because after that I'd feel a bit scummy, like how good of a friend am I if I leave my friends just by themselves (Lewis, 19, TAFE).

According to these perspectives, such abandonments result in significant loss of respect and standing among male friends, and subordination within the male hierarchy. The young men report that failing to provide the right support for peers in situations of violence results in 'ex-communication' from male homosocial groups, a loss of masculine respect, peer ridicule and harassment. When asked what a group response would be to an individual who did not provide support in regards to public violence, Thomas states:

> I feel like you would probably be exiled a little bit, just like they'd probably not see you as someone who was willing to stick up for their morals, someone who's not really a good friend in a way, they're kinda flimsy in a way, like they won't stick up for their own selves… the friends would be like if you didn't do that then you wouldn't fight for me would you, you know what I mean (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

What is interesting is the way in which these exclusions play out in the relationships between men. Whilst there were a small number of situations in which a failure to provide adequate support and assistance for a friend when confronted with public violence resulted in a complete breakdown and abandonment of that friendship, the majority of homosocial group exclusions in regards to public violence were in fact more subtle. When asked what it may look like for an individual to be exiled from a male friendship circle as a result of failing to engage with them in public violence, a number of the young men indicate that whilst still a partial member of the group such individuals would ultimately lose the respect of friends, be positioned on the periphery of the group, and face ridicule behind closed doors. A further factor to consider is the strength of these homosocial bonds for different groups of men. What was apparent in this study was that whilst there was a clear collective understanding for young men in regards to the role of male friends in relation to public violence, those young men who had a close circle of male friends reported homosocial bonds that were particularly strong, with many engaging in public violence as a result of these bonds. This suggests that male friendships and the strength of male homosocial bonds may be a significant factor that influences young male participation in acts of public violence.

Conclusion

This chapter has examined the ways in which young men's overall positioning within the masculine hierarchy is contingent upon the ways in which they engage in risky drinking and public violence. Overall, what the discussions with the young men in this study indicate is that both risky drinking and public violence are practices that are important for the construction of legitimate and authoritative masculinities. Young men who participate in risky drinking and public violence in ways that align and are therefore complicit with the hegemonic ideal are able to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy and therefore position themselves as powerful and dominant over subordinate masculinities. However, those men who fail to meet the hegemonic standard in relation to risky drinking and public violence are ultimately positioned as inferior and subordinate to other more dominant masculinities within the masculine hierarchy. A key difference between risky drinking and public violence in terms of masculine subordination was that displays of power and domination over other men in regards to public violence often take an overtly physical form, with acts of public violence being a way in which to enact physical dominance and maintain hierarchies of power among men. Having established risky drinking and public violence as practices that are used by young men in order to lay claim to dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy and to position other men as subordinate, the following chapter will examine the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence acts to ensure the overall domination of men and subordination of women in society.

9. Risk and the Legitimacy of Patriarchy

Hegemonic masculinity is a theoretical concept that seeks to explain the fundamental inequalities that constitute historical and contemporary systems of gender. It is a concept that centres on the relations of power and domination between men and women and among masculinities and femininities within the gender order; relations that ultimately ensure the superiority of men and overall oppression of women in society. The central aim of this chapter is to examine the relationship between young men's engagement in risky practices and the reproduction of patriarchy in contemporary systems of gender. The chapter explores young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the ways in which these practices are organised in ways that contribute to the overall subordination of women and dominance of men in society. It is primarily interested in the ways in which young men's engagement in these practices acts to strengthen and reinforce established patriarchal ideologies. Drawing on the accounts presented by the young men in this study, this chapter will demonstrate that risky drinking and public violence are a part of a broader patterning of gender practice that ultimately supports hegemonic masculinity and the legitimacy of patriarchy. Firstly, this chapter revisits the relationship between hegemonic masculinity and patriarchy, exploring the relations of power and domination between men and women in society and the ways in which men's collective power over women is established, reproduced, and legitimated. The chapter then explores young men's engagement in risky drinking, and then public violence, focusing on how these practices contribute to the overall positioning of men as superior and women as subordinate in society. The aim of this process is to demonstrate that risky drinking and public violence are configurations of masculine practice drawn on by young men to not only secure a dominant position within the male hierarchy, but also to ensure the continued domination of men and the overall oppression and subordination of women.

Hegemonic Masculinity and Patriarchy

This research presents the concept of hegemonic masculinity as having two distinct yet theoretically connected components; the cultural component and the political component. In the cultural sense, hegemonic masculinity refers to the way in which a particular form of masculinity is culturally established and endorsed as the being most legitimate and authentic form of masculinity. Through establishing cultural legitimacy and broad social consent, hegemonic masculinity is idealised as the cultural benchmark for masculinity to which all men must aspire and be held accountable. In a political sense, hegemonic masculinity refers to the way in which this configuration of masculinity is able to establish, maintain, and reproduce a position of power, domination, and oppression over women and other lesser masculinities within the gender hierarchy. To this point, this thesis has explored the ways in which risky drinking and public violence are expressions of culturally legitimate masculinities (Chapter Seven), and the ways in which these practices are organised around and contribute to relations of power and authority between men and masculinities (Chapter Eight). The aim of this chapter is to examine the way in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence acts to strengthen and reinforce the legitimacy of patriarchy and the overall subordination of women.

Patriarchy, according to Sylvia Walby (1990: 20), can be defined as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress, and exploit women. As a concept, patriarchy focuses on the social structuring of gendered power and the various forms of oppression between men and women in society (Hearn 1987: 43). A key feature of patriarchal ideologies is the belief that men and women are essentially different and that males and females possess different capacities for thought, feeling, and behaviour (Schwalbe 2014: 53). The concept has a long history of academic and political debate, a debate that emerged most prominently from the discussions of gendered power initiated by second-wave feminism. The undoing of patriarchy has been a fundamental aim of the theorisation of hegemonic masculinity from its very

conception. As Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 830) note, the concept of hegemonic masculinity emerged largely in response to the overwhelming inequalities found within existing gender systems and broader systems of knowledge. According to Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1985: 590-592), hegemonic masculinity is centrally connected to the institutionalisation of men's dominance over women, with one of the central facts about masculinity being that men in general are advantaged through the subordination of women. In *Gender and Power* (Connell 1987: 183), Connell expands on this argument by declaring that the broad gender system ultimately centres on a single structural fact, 'the global dominance of men over women'. For Connell, it is the global subordination of women to men that provides the essential basis for differentiation within the gender hierarchy, between men and women, and among men and among women. As a theory of gender, hegemonic masculinity is therefore primarily concerned with how men come to inhabit positions of power within the gender order, and the processes by which they legitimate and reproduce social relationships and alliances that generate their dominance over women.

As Connell's (1995: 77) original definition states:

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

The problem of the 'legitimacy of patriarchy' is crucial to the understanding of how masculine hegemony is achieved, and how men's power over women is maintained and reproduced. Connell argues that the main axis of power in the contemporary gender order is men's domination and subordination of women, a structure that persists despite various local reversals and resistances (e.g. female breadwinning, female superiors). For Connell, these resistances create a problem of legitimacy which has significant importance for the maintenance of patriarchal power. According to Connell, the solution to the problem of the

legitimacy of patriarchy is found in hegemonic masculinity. Whilst the conditions for the defence of patriarchy may change over time, hegemonic masculinity is able to establish and re-establish itself as the leading and dominant force within the gender system through the combined hegemonic processes of cultural consent and political coercion. Drawing on the Gramscian concept of hegemony, Connell argues that hegemonic masculinity is able to build and maintain cultural legitimacy and social domination through ensuring its interests and ideologies become the fundamental principles for all subordinate groups and across wider society. Hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally concerned with sustaining and reproducing a gender system based on the overall domination of men and the oppression of women.

Hegemonic masculinity therefore describes a gender system in which a particular configuration and ideology of masculinity is able to achieve social ascendency and position itself as the dominant force within the gender order, over women and over all other lesser forms of masculinity in society. The key to hegemonic masculinity maintaining its position of power and dominance within the gender order is ensuring its principles remain the most legitimate and desirable across wider society. A significant factor to be considered here is what has come to be known as the 'patriarchal dividend'. According to Connell (1995: 79), the patriarchal dividend can be defined as 'the advantage men in general gain from the overall subordination of women'. Whilst the numbers of men who achieve or fulfil the ideals of hegemonic masculinity may be small, very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model (Carrigan et al. 1985: 592). While there may be various reasons for masculine complicity, the most significant reason is that most men gain privileges and benefits from the subordination of women. As Demetriou (2001: 341) notes, men's dominant positioning in patriarchal societies offers a number of material benefits that position men at an advantage, including higher incomes, access to positions of power, greater prestige and greater authority. Despite the fact that they do not or cannot meet the hegemonic standard, complicit masculinities are able to lay claim to the advantages offered by male patriarchy whilst playing a significant role in

supporting and upholding the dominant hegemonic ideologies. In this sense, complicit masculinities are likely to be most central to the construction of relations between men and women, and among men. As Hearn (2004: 61) states, 'if anything, it is the complicit that is most hegemonic'.

The concept of hegemonic masculinity also presents a clear model for the role of women within patriarchal systems of gender. Within such systems, the complicity and compliance of women is crucial to the perpetuation of patriarchal ideologies and an overall gender regime that positions men as superior and women as subordinate. As Connell (1987: 186) notes, expressions of femininity play a fundamental role in upholding and maintaining hegemonic masculinity. The most important configuration of femininity is what Connell calls 'emphasised femininity', femininities that express a complete compliance and accommodation of the hegemonic principles and those which are oriented towards serving the interests and desires of men. Like hegemonic masculinity, this model of femininity is given the most cultural and ideological support in society. Whilst these ideological representations may not necessarily correspond to actual lived femininities, they clearly define the dominant cultural expectations of womanhood. Emphasised femininity, in this sense, is a performance of legitimate femininity, one performed especially to men. Like masculinities, there are however a multiplicity of femininities within the gender hierarchy. Other femininities, including ambivalent and protest femininities, must position themselves in relation to emphasised femininity, either in partial support or complete rejection respectively. However, what is paramount within the hegemonic gender order is that women are always positioned as subordinate and inferior to men. The ideals of emphasised femininity ultimately position women as complicit to hegemonic rule, with dominant conceptions of femininity oriented towards full support of hegemonic masculinity and providing a firm platform from which patriarchal power can be established, sustained, and reproduced.

Risky Drinking and Patriarchy

The aim of this study is to explore the ways in which two risky practices, risky drinking and public violence, are used by young men in gendered ways. In particular, this research is interested in the ways in which young men draw on these practices to perform hegemonic masculinity. In this section of the chapter, I explore young men's engagement in risky drinking and the ways in which their engagement in this practice supports and reproduces the legitimacy of patriarchy. What this analysis will demonstrate is that young men's engagement in risky drinking is organised in ways that contribute to female subordination and oppression, and which strengthen patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant over women. Through their engagement in risky drinking, young men are able to claim positions of power and authority and set themselves apart as being dominant over women.

Risky Drinking and Female Subordination

The analysis of focus group and interview data in this study indicates that young men's engagement in risky drinking is organised in ways which ensure the continued dominance of men and subordination of women in society. According to their accounts, young men draw on risky drinking as a form of gendered practice that allows them to establish positions of power, privilege, and domination over women and to reduce women to positions of subordination and inferiority to men. One of the key ways in which the young men in this study are able to enact these patterns of domination and subordination is through a set of gendered attitudes and double standards that ultimately position women as subordinate to men, and which render risky drinking as a practice that is acceptable for men yet unacceptable for women. The participants report significant differences in the ways in which men and women are required to act when it comes to risky drinking, with female risky drinking often seen in an unfavourable light. One particular argument presented by many of the young men is that excessive drinking and drunkenness is not a 'good look' for women and that being seen to be extremely drunk and highly intoxicated can have a negative effect on a woman's social reputation. In a similar way to

existing international research which has found similar gendered attitudes (Day et al. 2004; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; De Visser & Smith 2007; Mullen et. al. 2007; Peralta 2007; 2008; Peralta et. al. 2010; Young et. al. 2005), many of the young men in this study argue that female drunkenness is 'unfeminine' and not 'ladylike' and indicate that they feel women should be 'composed', 'well-presented', and act according to their gender. Aaron gives some insight into the young men's understandings of female drinking and drunkenness:

> I think girls should hold themselves in an appropriate way. Being in that uncontrollable state where the girl's skirt is up because she's lying on the footpath, it's just gross; it's not ladylike (Aaron, 23, UOW).

Such statements indicate that young men expect women to act in certain ways when it comes to alcohol consumption, ways that are different to men. Furthermore, if a woman engages in alcohol consumption in ways that differ to the accepted social norms for female drinking, she risks her standing and reputation among her male and female peers. A number of the young men report that women who drink excessively and become highly intoxicated are often 'looked down upon' and gain a reputation that reflects negatively on their femininity. These participants suggest that such behaviour is considered 'unattractive' and seen as a 'turn off'. Evan elaborates:

> We look down upon those girls who do that, with their boobs falling out and they scrape their knee against the corner or on the floor or whatever. It's that group of five or six girls who are just unbelievably trashed, they couldn't tell you from a bar of soap. It's not a good look; their make-up is running; their hair is all over the place; their white dress is stained to the shit-house (Evan, 18, TAFE).

What these accounts suggest is that when it comes to risky drinking, young women face certain conditions imposed on them by young men, conditions which have a patriarchal edge. Young women are expected to drink in ways that align with widely accepted feminine norms; norms which correspond with the ideals of emphasised femininity and which support and reproduce patterns of patriarchy. These include not getting highly intoxicated, being 'ladylike', and remaining in control. Those women who do not engage in drinking in these authorised ways risk receiving a negative feminine reputation and being subject to various forms of ridicule and

harassment from young men (and other women). Ultimately, young men act out positions of power over women and use this power to exclude young women from equal participation in risky drinking. Whilst young men are free to drink and get drunk as they choose, the patriarchal conditions imposed by young men do not allow young women the same privileges. Whilst there is evidence to show that young women are now drinking at greater levels than in previous generations, and that this pattern may be linked to increased movements towards gender equality (Demant 2007; Keyes et. al. 2008; Lindsay 2006: 32; Roche et al. 2007; Roche & Deehan 2002), this current research suggests that many young men do not consider young women to be their equals in regards to risky drinking. In fact, young women who engage in risky drinking are punished and disciplined by young men for deviating from acceptable and established forms of femininity.

The accounts of the young men indicate other significant differences in the ways in which women and men are perceived when it comes to their engagement in risky drinking. These perceptions stem from essentialist notions of gender where women are presented as weak and inferior and men as innately superior. For example, many of the young men argue that women simply cannot tolerate or 'handle their alcohol' in the same way as men. These men cite physical and biological differences between men and women as the key reason why women should not engage in risky drinking in the same way as men do. Whilst some young men admit that there are women who can drink to excess and remain in control, the majority of the young men in this study argue that most women who engage in risky drinking cannot tolerate large quantities of alcohol and are therefore inferior to men who can. The young men report that women who try to 'keep up' with men and drink equal quantities inevitably end up overly intoxicated, which in turn requires young men to ensure the women are safe which they argue is frustrating, problematic, and a hindrance to otherwise enjoyable drinking contexts. The inability of women to engage in risky drinking successfully, that is, drinking large quantities without becoming overly intoxicated, is taken as evidence of male superiority over women.

There is also a sense in the young men's accounts that women are constantly subject to male authority and rule on the basis of their perceived innate weakness and vulnerability. For example, a common justification for male superiority in regards to risky drinking is that intoxicated women are too 'emotional' and too 'high maintenance'. Many of the young men complain that intoxicated women are overly emotive and require a great deal of supervision and care. As George states:

> Girls get very emotional about things when they're drunk, like the smallest thing can be blown way out of proportion, like it's the end of their life. Whereas if it's a bloke it'll either end up with a punch on or it'll just be like whatever and just move on (George, 22, TAFE).

For over half of the participants, the notion of having to care for and protect women who are highly intoxicated is related to the idea of female fragility and the perceived dangers women face in terms of sexual assault and violence. What we see in the young men's accounts is that young men perceive women to be weaker, more vulnerable, and less powerful than men. Women are not able to remain in control and 'hold themselves' as well as men when drinking, and as such must be protected and defended in the face of various risks and dangers. A number of young men rightly claim that women are far more likely to be the target of rape and sexual assault, whereas men are more likely to be the victims of physical assault. Whilst there is evidential truth in these claims, they ultimately reflect and support a broader patterning of male patriarchy in society more generally. The underlying belief that is consistent in the discussions with the young men regarding risky drinking is that men are authoritative and women are vulnerable and therefore must come under masculine rule and care. This line of enquiry has received little attention within the existing research, with the exception of the research of Borlagdan et al. (2010), and as such these findings add to perspectives on the complex nature of risky drinking among young men and women.

The accounts of the young men also demonstrate that women are subject to consistent sexual objectification in drinking cultures, and are often monitored and assessed according to how they dress, act, and relate to men. For many of the young men, women are primarily present in drinking contexts for sexual reasons; to be looked at; to be flirted with; and to provide opportunities for sexual activity. This is in line with the findings of other research on the role of women in often male-centric drinking domains which has found that women are expected to play out certain roles in drinking environments, especially roles that relate to sex and sexual activity (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Day et al. 2004; Lindsay 2006; Peralta 2007). The young men in this study indicate that women are expected to smile, be flirtatious, and to be sexually available, however they must never be too sexually agentic, promiscuous, or dress inappropriately. The account of Lucas is typical of how women are perceived by young men in drinking cultures:

> There is a difference when I drink with guys and girls, I'm not trying to sleep with any of the guys… there's always sexual tension, particularly when you drink and you are around other sexually active and sexualised people. It's always at the back of your mind, at least for me and people I'm friends with, we're always trying to get with one of the girls or a chick from town (Lucas, 21, UOW).

As such statements indicate, women are often sexualised and subject to the male gaze within drinking environments, seen only as potential 'hook-ups' and sexual partners. For many of the young men in this study, social interactions with women within drinking settings are purely a means toward a sexual end. There is also evidence that some young men see drunk and intoxicated women as easy targets for sexual coercion, where the effects of alcohol on women increase the potential for sexual activity. When asked what they thought of drunk and intoxicated women, one focus group participant responded 'jackpot!' (Dave, 20, UOW: FG). These and other similar comments suggest that some young men perceive women, and especially intoxicated women, to be sexual objects available for male sexual satisfaction. Whilst it must be acknowledged that young women in drinking environments are often also looking for potential sexual activity, the patterns of sexual objectification presented by many young men in this study are particularly reductive. Furthermore, there is also evidence that young men and women often

understand alcohol to be a form of 'social lubricant', where alcohol is used to decrease inhibition and increase social activity, including sexual activity, among both men and women (Harnett et al. 2000; Peralta 2007; 2008; Tan 2011). This may account for some of the understandings presented by the young men, but ultimately there is evidence to suggest that young men's engagement in risky drinking often involves the sexual objectification of women.

Although the above mentioned themes of female subordination are prominent across the accounts of the young men in this study, there are some instances in which some young men present alternative accounts. For example, there are a minority of young men in the sample who report acceptance of female risky drinking despite their acknowledgment of the existence of double standards in relation to the practice. These men are not particularly troubled by highly intoxicated women, but rather argue that like men, women should be allowed to drink in any manner they choose. Furthermore, whilst the majority of young men in this study primarily drink with male peers, there are a minority of men who report significant female friendships and who in some circumstances choose to drink in mixed gender peer groups. These young men argue that although there may exist some key differences, female drinkers are largely similar to male drinkers. In such accounts, women are not presented as overly 'emotional ', 'high maintenance or 'messy' but rather as individuals who can drink in much the same way as men. These findings suggest that as young women's drinking practices are changing over time, so too are the norms and understandings regarding female drinking. Whilst the large majority of men in this study still resist or reject female risky drinking, a small minority are beginning to be open to female drinking practices that are similar or equal to their male counterparts. However, despite these deviations, the overwhelming sentiment present in the young men's accounts is that men are superior and dominant when it comes to risky drinking. For the most part, the young men contend that women cannot and should not drink in the same way as men. Women who drink to the point of high intoxication are positioned as acting outside the realms of normative feminine practice and ultimately face further subordination from men within the

gender hierarchy. Furthermore, within drinking contexts women are consistently sexualised by young men and reduced to positions of subservience to men.

Risky Drinking and the Policing of Femininity

The conversations conducted with the young men indicate that male patriarchy and men's collective power over women is also expressed through the direct policing of femininity. What is clearly evident in the accounts presented by the young men is that in order to come into alignment with the dominant ideals of femininity presented in the hegemonic gender system, that is, to express emphasised femininities that support and uphold hegemonic masculinity, women must engage in risky drinking in ways that are approved and accepted by men. Similar to the way in which young men face gender policing if they do not drink in ways that are seen as appropriately masculine, the accounts of the participants suggest that young women who do meet the ideals of widely established feminine expectations face significant forms of gender policing from men. These women are judged harshly by young men and given labels that reflect negatively on their femininity, including 'slut', 'slag', 'gronk', 'ganger', 'tart', 'cheap', 'trashy' or 'nasty'. These are labels that noticeably reflect and reinforce notions of female subordination to men. Evan sums up the dynamics of the policing of femininity neatly:

> A guy can drink till his brain falls out and he'll just be some drunk guy, but if a girl does it she's a slut, she's got no regard for her own safety, which pretty much it is, but it's just a woman with the morals of a man, that's how I see it, that's the easiest way I can put it. If a guy drinks so much until he can't stand up its regarded as a skill, you know, it's an achievement, something you can do, but if a girl does it then it just looks trashy which isn't good (Evan, 18, TAFE)

Interestingly, some young men in the study encourage this kind of behaviour in women as it allows them to perceive women in certain ways, ways that relate to female oppression and subordination. For example, Stefan gives a particularly frank account of how he and his friends perceive women who engage in risky drinking:

> We call 'em gangers [gang-bangers], sluts, anything like that. Yeah, it's encouraged when we go out. I like to see that when I'm drunk, sluts and gangers. It just means they're out there to fuck basically, they're a ganger, you see them with their fucking skirts up and all that sorta stuff, falling over and getting heaps maggot [drunk], they're fucking gangers, we like that, we love it (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

The sentiment conveyed here is that women who engage in risky drinking are 'easy' targets for men's sexual advances. What this evidence suggests is that not only are these women given labels that reflect and reinforce the subordination of women to men, these labels also act as discursive tools which allow men to claim positions of power and domination over women and directly act out male to female patriarchal relations. Overall, there appears to be a loose continuum of male gender policing and general responses to female intoxication among the young men. At one end of the continuum are men who actively engage in the policing of femininity by verbally insulting women who they deem to be acting inappropriately. At the other end of the continuum are those men who do not directly engage in female gender policing, yet who demonstrate a general compliance and support of such policing practices. These findings are particularly stark, yet are consistent with those of previous researches which have reported that violations of gender norms by women in regards to drinking are often met with negative labelling and connotations with waywardness and promiscuity (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Day et al. 2004; De Visser & McDonnell 2011; Jackson & Tinkler 2007; Lyons et al. 2006; Lyons & Willott 2008; Plant 2008; Peralta 2007; 2008; Young et. al. 2005).

Again, there were some deviations and departures from such sentiments within the young men's accounts. A number of young men report incidences and situations in which female risky drinking is in fact encouraged by young men. One such situation is drinking games. Whilst the men primarily prefer to engage in pre-drinking rituals in the company of other men, drinking games are a site in which female risky drinking is often endorsed and encouraged. In such circumstances, women who participate equally in risky drinking with their male counterparts are not reprimanded for their participation but rather applauded for such practice. There is

however the possibility that female intoxication is encouraged in such circumstances in order to capitalise on female drunkenness and increase young men's chances of sexual encounters and activities. Interestingly, there is also a sense among some participants that women who can engage in risky drinking practices in ways that replicated those of men can potentially earn a certain degree of respect and admiration from their male peers. In a similar fashion to the research of Young et al. (2005), some young men in this study argue that female peers who can 'drink like a guy' yet remain in control can attain certain masculine privileges and homosocial inclusion. One participant, Toby, has a female friend whose demonstrated drinking ability has earned her such respect:

> As I said, one of my closest friends, she's thought of as one of the boys because she can out-drink a lot of my guy friends, so she's thought of as more masculine. She's not masculine, but it's like, oh yeah you're one of the boys because you can out-drink these other guys sort of thing (Toby, 18, UOW).

Such accounts suggest that in certain situations women who can demonstrate high alcohol tolerance and other drinking abilities associated with masculinity can potentially earn respect and avoid stigmatisation from men. In enacting gender performances that emulate those of the men, these women are embraced as 'one of the boys' and receive homosocial inclusion. It must be noted however that in such situations the female is typically an acquaintance of the young men as opposed to a stranger.

Risky Drinking and Female Exclusion

The accounts of the young men indicate that women are also subject to male patriarchal power through overall exclusion from male homosocial drinking groups. As has been firmly established, the homosocial nature of drinking contexts plays a significant role in the creation and regulation of masculinities among young men. Drinking with other men is a way in which young men not only construct and affirm legitimate masculinities, but also participate in the rejection and exclusion of those configurations of masculinity that fail to meet the hegemonic

ideal. What is evident in the accounts presented by the young men in this study is that in a similar way to which certain masculinities are subordinated and excluded from male homosocial groups on the basis of their failure to come into alignment with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, by extension, women are denied membership of homosocial drinking groups due to their innate differentiation and dialectic 'otherness'. To reiterate Gough and Edwards (1998), male homosociality often involves the assertion of hegemonic masculinity through the subordination of the 'other', typically women and homosexual men, though as we have seen also men who do not meet hegemonic standards. In describing their engagement in risky drinking, the young men in this study indicate that the positioning of women as inferior and subordinate to men within the gender hierarchy is often reinforced and sustained in drinking contexts through female exclusion from male drinking groups. To be clear, women are not always excluded from drinking settings in which men are present. As Lindsay (2006: 48) notes, drinking environments such as bars and nightclubs are typically co-populated by men and women, though there may exist strict gendered groupings within such settings. The accounts of the young men suggest that young men and women do at times drink together, be it during pre-drinking sessions, whilst participating in drinking games, or general socialising within drinking environments. What is less common however is the practice of young men engaging in heavy drinking with young women, with the overwhelming majority of participants reporting a preference for engaging in the practice of risky drinking with other young men. There were a number of common reasons for this preference that give insight into the ways in which female homosocial exclusion contributes to the overall subordination of women and domination of men in society.

Firstly, the young men report that drinking in the company of women is less enjoyable and more restrictive than drinking in male-only groups. The majority of the participants claim that women are 'too protective' and 'overly careful' when it comes to risky drinking, often referring to them as 'babysitters' or as 'motherly'. The young men indicate that the presence of women in

drinking contexts often requires them to be more restrained and well-behaved, which is ultimately seen as a restriction to male agency. As Steve (19, UOW) states: 'when the girls are around, you've gotta act a bit more, well you can't be as nuts [wild], you've gotta be a bit more calm'. Women are also perceived as being 'too serious' and as having a tendency to be less spontaneous and overly planned. As such, many of the young men indicate that they find drinking with women 'annoying' and 'frustrating'. Stefan provides insight into these sentiments:

> It's more fun when you're with the guys; I think it's more fun. If you're with girls and like some of my mates have girlfriends, it's just not the same, they're heaps protective and they get heaps annoying. It's just like, fuck off, go away, we don't want you here. They'll try and discourage you from getting with other girls and stuff, it's just annoying (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

In many of the young men's accounts, drinking with women is seen as a practice that is simply impractical. The young men report that the presence of women significantly alters the mood and dynamic of drinking sessions. A number of the participants suggest that having females present results in significant changes in the ways in which men act and interact with others, where men become distracted and preoccupied with maintaining a good reputation and looking good in front of the girls. According to the young men, this change in group dynamic often 'ruins the mood' of male drinking sessions and results in men feeling they must constantly be on their best behaviour.

In contrast, the participants in this study indicate that drinking in male-only settings allows men to act in ways that are less restrictive and more gratifying. The young men report that drinking with other men is 'more fun and less serious' as it allows them to act in ways that better reflect their own inclinations. For example, many of the participants suggest that drinking with other men is superior to drinking with women as men are generally on the same 'wavelength' as each other and share similar wants and desires. Whilst drinking with women requires men to moderate their behaviour, the young men in this study highly value drinking with other men as

it is within such homosocial settings that they can do and act as they please. Jake's account provides some insight into young men's preference for male homosocial drinking:

> Yeah I usually just drink with the guys, I kinda like it like that way because then the boys can just be boys. You can sit there and take the piss, like swear and just act like boys you know, like you don't have to tone it down (Jake, 19, UOW).

This preference for settings in which 'boys can just be boys' is highly prevalent across the sample of young men in this study, and in a similar way to previous research on male homosociality (Bird 1996; Flood 2008; Kimmel 1994) suggests that male homosocial drinking settings provide an important space for the strengthening and reinforcement of hegemonic masculine ideals, and the exclusion of those who complicate or obfuscate such ideologies.

Perhaps the strongest theme to emerge from the young men's accounts in regards to the gendered relations of power between men and women in relation to risky drinking is the prioritisation of male friendships over female relationships. As has been previously identified, the homosocial nature of risky drinking among young men often requires young men to place a higher value on the friendships they have with their male peers and to devalue the relationships they have with women. The young men in this study consistently refer to shared understandings between men that 'the guys' should always be prioritised over 'the girls; a practice referred to as 'ditching the bitch' or putting 'bro's before ho's'. These labels alone suggest a positioning of women as less than and subordinate to men. Many of the young men recount numerous instances in which they have received praise for prioritising male drinking sessions over their relationships with women, or conversely been reprimanded for their failure to do so. There appears to be a clear code of practice among young men that involves the direct exclusion of women from male-dominated drinking settings. Andy provides a rich account of young men's exclusionary practices in regards to women in drinking settings:

> So we've always had the rule that you don't bring your girlfriend to the pub. You can bring your girlfriend, like if we're going to Northies, or the night clubs, or The Vinyl Room or something, fuck it, bring your missus. We don't give a shit because we're not

> all sitting around the table telling everyone about the skull-duggery we got up to on the weekend before; who ended up where; did one of us end up at the knock-shop [brothel]; did one of us end up getting kicked out of somewhere; did someone end up getting into a fight; did someone do this.; did someone do that. If one of the guy's girlfriends is there we just sit down and go 'so what are you doing this weekend' you know, until they walk away and then as soon as the girlfriend walks away we go 'you're a fucking idiot! Why'd you bring your girlfriend here' and he's like 'I didn't invite her, like she just wanted to fucking come'. Well you tell her no [laughs] (Andy, 23, TAFE)

These findings are consistent with other recent research which has uncovered similar themes of male prioritisation over women (Kimmel 2008; Kimmel & Davis 2011). What is clear in the participant's accounts is that men use their collective power to establish and reinforce ideologies that see women subordinated to men and excluded from male-dominated domains. In the pursuit of environments in which masculinity can be openly expressed and authenticated, young men's engagement in risky drinking involves exclusionary practices that see women relegated to positions of powerlessness, of diminished influence, and of dialectic 'otherness' which ultimately reaffirms and reproduces their subordinate positioning within the gender hierarchy.

Public Violence and Patriarchy

In addition to examining the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking reinforces and sustains patriarchy, this analysis has also explored the ways in which young men's participation in public violence contributes to the subordination of women within gender hierarchies. In this section of the chapter, I examine the ways in which public violence is drawn upon by young men to reproduce hegemonic principles that see men lay claim to positions of power and authority over women. This section will focus primarily on men's power over women, and the key ways in which young men's engagement in public violence strengthens firmly established patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant and superior over women. What this analysis will establish is that young men's engagement in public violence is

organised in ways that allow men to exude physical power over women, to locate women as objects or possessions, and which validate men's engagement in public violence whilst classifying women's engagement in such practice as an illegitimate and deviant form of femininity. In these ways, young men's engagement in public violence upholds and supports the broader hegemonic principles that guarantee the overall domination of men and subordination of women within the gender hierarchy.

Public Violence and Men's Power over Women

Public violence, according to the young men in this study, is a highly gendered practice. In much the same way as previous studies (Messerschmidt 1993; 1997; 2013; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a; 2005; 2008), the young men in this study report that their engagement in public violence is an important resource for the construction of masculinities. Public violence is a practice that can be drawn on in the 'doing' of masculinity; to be seen as more masculine, as tough and strong, and as a way of laying claim to legitimate masculinities whilst subordinating other lesser masculinities. Whilst there is substantial research that documents the relationship between acts of public violence and the display of masculinities, especially those the indicate dominance over other men, there is little that seeks to explore the way in which forms of public violence contribute to patriarchy and the overall domination of men over women. Most research that examines the oppression of women by men through violence focuses on more private forms of violence such as intimate-partner violence (Hearn 1998; 2012). However, this research has found that like other forms of violence, public violence is a practice that is used to exert power and domination over women. The accounts of the participants indicate that young men's engagement in public violence serves also to position men as more powerful, more dominant, and more authoritative than women, and acts as a symbolic display of male superiority. In many ways, young men's engagement in public violence can be seen as a form of 'body-reflexive practice' (Connell 1995: 60-65); a practice drawn on by young men to sustain and uphold the social processes of patriarchy that lie at the core of hegemonic masculinity. Young men's

participation in public violence and the organisation of such practice therefore becomes a vital tool for the establishment of male power and authority over women; a gender practice that ultimately acts to reproduce male superiority and subordinate and oppress women.

An important feature of the findings that must be noted at the outset is that the overall participation rates of males and females in regards to public violence are quite different to those found in risky drinking. Whilst the participants report that a significant number of women engage in the practice of risky drinking, the same is not evident in regards to public violence. Public violence is a highly masculine practice, a practice engaged in primarily by men. Although the participants report that in some instances women do engage in violence, these instances are significantly smaller in frequency than women's engagement in risky drinking. An analysis of the data in this study reveals that these differences in gender segregation between the two practices can in many ways be accounted for due to broad patriarchal ideologies that position men as dominant and women as inferior. The young men in this study report that public violence is centrally connected to male power, male physicality, and the demonstration of superiority over others. What is evident in this study is that young men's engagement in public violence is organised around a shared set of understandings that see men positioned as physically and mentally superior to women, and women positioned as weaker, more vulnerable, and more fragile than their male counterparts.

The belief that men are superior to women due to innate physical and biological differences between men and women is an argument put forward by many of the young men in this study. Such understandings represent a key way in which men's power over women is asserted and established through public violence. The vast majority of the participants make the essentialist claim that violence is a practice that is 'engrained' in men; an activity that is natural for men to engage in due to innate physical components: male hormones, physically and mental strength, greater muscle mass, and also genetics. As Schwalbe (2014: 53) notes, the belief that males and

females are essentially different kinds of human beings is foundational to the establishment of a gender hierarchy. The absence of such understandings would render a gender order senseless. The young men's understandings that men's power and authority over women is the inevitable result of innate physiological and biological differences between males and females represents a core patriarchal ideology that allows men to lay claim to positions of superiority over women in society. When asked the reasons behind the prevalence of men's engagement in public violence, Dave, a university student studying International Economics, presents an argument that reflects these essentialist notions of masculinity:

> I guess it's like primal instincts. If you look at animals as a whole, humans are animals and pretty much in all species the male animals tend to be more, you know, they fight more, for pride or to show off to the girls or whatever, it's just sort of instinct I guess (Dave, 20, UOW: FG).

A similar account is offered in the interview with Stefan:

> I think it's probably more in our genes to fight. It's more of manly thing fighting; girls probably are more into swearing at each other and bitching whereas guys take it more physically. We use our fists rather than words (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

These understandings presuppose that the prevalence of male involvement in acts of violence is an unavoidable fact primarily attributable to men's physiological and biological make-up. The sentiment presented here is a dangerous one as it not only provides a seemingly legitimate excuse for male violence, but it also positions men as naturally superior to women and ultimately places them at the pinnacle of a gendered hierarchy of power.

Similarly, the superiority of men over women is also reflected in the young men's beliefs that women are inherently weaker and less powerful than men, and their overall emphasis on female fragility. Whilst there are young men in this study who report more balanced perceptions of gender differences in which males and females are largely equal, a significant theme that runs through most of the participant's accounts is that women are generally more fragile and have less physical and mental strength than men. Ultimately, the young men claim that women's

supposedly innate feminine attributes render them as weaker, physically inferior, and therefore as subordinate to men. George provides some insight into the perceptions many young men have of women's physicality in relation to public violence:

> To me, a girl is the opposite of a male. A male is powerful; they talk over everyone; they're more dominant, whereas the female is opposite to that. Not like live to serve the male sort of thing, obviously that's the wrong thing to say, but they're more fragile than men, emotionally and physically. To me a girl should be nicer and calmer than the male, whereas the male is allowed to be more rowdy. The girl is softer and, I don't know, more gentle (George, 22, TAFE).

Again, these views ultimately position men as dominant and women as subordinate within the gender order, and therefore uphold wider patriarchal beliefs that position men as innately superior to women.

Based on their understandings of women being less dominant and more fragile, many of the participants claim that women must therefore be sheltered from public violence and emphasise the role of men as protector and defender. A particularly strong theme evidenced in the young men's accounts is that due to their physical superiority men are in no way permitted to engage women in public violence, and that to do so is perceived as an inexcusable abuse of male power and treated with contempt. Andy provides a vivid vignette that demonstrates the extent and ferocity of these views:

> So she came up and started yelling at him and right at the end she spat right in his face and he just stood up and punched her straight in the nose. We all looked at him, and its Friday afternoon at the Seaview in Townsville. She was the only girl in the pub and about fifty tradies just saw a guy hit a girl in the face. We we're just like 'you brought this on yourself bud'. He woke up the next day and he was fucked up. He had a broken wrist and a broken rib and a pretty badly busted nose, like everyone just laid into him. We we're just like 'you can't hit girls'. We weren't even gonna help him, like he just punched a chick in the face man, like fuck! (Andy, 23, TAFE)

This physical attack on Andy's male friend highlights the strength and prevalence of men's perceived physical superiority over women, and provides a clear demonstration of the way in which men's power over women is normalised and made to appear customary, to the point that any public and physical exertion of male power over women is met with extreme condemnation. Whilst it may be generally true that men exert more physical power and strength than women, and ultimately favourable that men do not exert such power over women, the engagement of young men in public violence is seen in this study to be a demonstration of male power over women and the inevitable result of biological inclinations towards violence. Young men's engagement in public violence is shaped and informed by their understandings of male superiority over women, and reinforces such ideologies within a subculture of male violence.

Public Violence and the Possession of Women

In an extension of the patriarchal ideologies that emphasise female fragility and male superiority, a further finding in the data is the tendency of young men to assert ownership over women and to see women as objects of male possession. A common theme reported by the participants is that women often play a significant causal role in the instigation of public violence. The participants consistently acknowledge that women often contribute to the initiation of violence between men, much of which can be attributed to the interrelated notions of male honour and the perception of women as objects of masculine possession. In many of the accounts that detail young men's engagement in public violence, women are often presented as a form of a masculine property; a kind of or 'territory' to be marked or a domain that must be fought for, protected and defended by men. Lucas provides a succinct account of such notions:

> You hear stories of a guy hitting another guy in the club just for talking to his girlfriend, its machismo, that whole machismo thing of it's my property, so you can't even talk to her. A lot of violence comes from girls, the perceived ownership of a woman, that's what it's about; I've had plenty of fights about that (Lucas, 21, UOW).

A significant number of the young men in this study describe incidences in which public violence erupted between men on the basis of such understandings, where men react to perceived slights and offences directed at women; typically girlfriends, partners, or female friends. In these accounts, young men typically act on the behalf of women and engage in acts of violence as a function of the shared belief that women are under the authority and control of men. There are numerous examples within the data that could equally demonstrate this point, but Jake's previously discussed account of his girlfriend's first night out provides particularly vivid illustration of the dynamics of such occurrences:

> I was with my girlfriend one night, she had just turned eighteen and it was her first night in town. Some guy said 'keep your fucking slutty girlfriend in line' and I was like 'whatever mate, have a good night' and then he was like 'you're a faggot you won't even stand up for her'. I was like, fucking hell, and he just kept going. I didn't want to get into it but the guy just kept going at me. The next thing I knew we were punching on. It ended up not good, I ended up knocking him out (Jake, 19, UOW).

These findings are consistent with the substantial body of existing research which has documented the importance of male honour in regards to public violence (Benson & Archer 2002; Graham & Wells 2003; Homel et al. 1992; Lindsay 2012; Peralta et al. 2010; Polk 1994; 1995; 1999; Tomsen 1997a; 2005; Treadwell & Garland 2011). As Polk (1995: 151) notes, faced with what appears to be a deliberate and provocative insult by another male, young men often see such actions as requiring a demonstration and defence of male honour. The latent belief beneath such practices is not only that women are more fragile than men and must be sheltered from acts of violence, but more importantly that women are objects of masculine possession that are under male control and authority. As we see with Jake, under these circumstances, any challenge or questioning of this ownership or authority is perceived as a threat to male honour that must be dealt with accordingly.

Interestingly, a number of the young men suggest that women expect to be protected and defended by men. In the various accounts in which girlfriends, female friends, or female

strangers become involved in potentially violent altercations, many of the young men report feeling the need to step in and act on the female's behalf, a belief they feel is at least in part attributable to the expectations of women. Thomas sums up these sentiments:

> I don't know why but I feel like it's also the woman's expectation as well, like I feel that they would also expect [male protection] because that's just one thing that really feels like you'd have to say something, like how could you just be like 'nah that's okay'. I don't know, I feel like there's a lot of women that would be disgusted in a way if a guy didn't stand up for them in that way, like I feel like it's an expectation (Thomas, 19, TAFE).

Such accounts draw attention to the ways in which women can also play a role in endorsing and supporting male patriarchy. The observations of the participants that some women expect to be protected and defended by men in regards to public violence demonstrates a degree of feminine complicity in regards to male power over women; a complicity that is in line with the theory of emphasised femininity presented in the hegemonic gender model. In order for men to maintain and reproduce their position of hegemonic power and authority over women, it is necessary to gain the consent of those whom are being subordinated. It is no surprise then that some women support the notion that men are more powerful and physically superior to women, and therefore present an expectation that men should act in defence and protection of women.

Public Violence and the Policing of Femininity

The accounts presented by the young men in this study also indicate that the patriarchal ideologies that see women positioned as subordinate to men are also sustained and enforced through the policing of femininity. According to the young men's accounts, public violence is a practice that is highly masculine and therefore a practice that should be avoided by women. A number of the young men argue that whilst it is expected that men will engage in such practices, women should not participate in public violence in the same way men do. Again, drawing on essentialist conceptions of gender that see males and females as fundamentally different types of human beings, these young men argue that women are not 'designed' to participate in acts of violence or aggression due to their inherent weakness and fragility. However, the young men

acknowledge that women, whilst not to the same extent as men, do occasionally engage in public violence. The majority of the participants report incidences of feminine engagement in public violence, either in opposition to other women, or less frequently in conflict with men. Whilst there are some young men who argue that women should be permitted to engage in acts of public violence if they choose to do so, the overwhelming sentiment evident in the data is that female participation in the practice of public violence is highly condemned and regarded as inappropriate feminine practice. In much the same way as women are policed for engaging in risky drinking in inappropriate ways, the young men report that women who choose to participate in public violence are often admonished and criticised for such practice. Aaron makes this point clear:

> It's definitely not okay for women to fight, women shouldn't be doing that. I'm a big fan of 'the lady', you know, someone who holds themselves and respects themselves. I think that if you're dropping the f-bomb and the c-bomb [swearing] and if you're throwing bottles and stuff, like I'm not going to want to take you home to my parents, I don't wanna talk to you (Aaron, 23, UOW).

In other words, Aaron is suggesting that women should not engage in public violence as it reflects poorly on their femininity. Similar to the way in which men enforce strict rules of feminine behaviour around risky drinking, women who partake in public violence are often seen as 'unladylike' and subject to significant gender policing from their male peers. These women are perceived as acting outside of accepted feminine norms and given labels that not only classify their violent behaviour as illegitimate, but that also replicate and reproduce female subordination; These include labels such as 'slut', 'slag', 'whore', 'tart', 'bitch', 'ganger', 'mole', 'dirty', and 'stupid'. Stefan provides a succinct summary of the way in which women are subordinated for their engagement in public violence:

> If I saw girls fighting I wouldn't like it, I'd probably break it up because I'm bigger than them anyway, girls are smaller than me so I could do that. I'd think that they were dirty little sluts, not attractive, I'd definitely think less of them and look down upon them (Stefan, 18, TAFE).

To my knowledge, these findings have not been documented elsewhere in the literature on public violence. Whilst there is interesting recent research on the rise of young women's engagement in risky drinking and the closing of the gender gap in regards to excessive alcohol use (Borlagdan et al. 2010; Day et al. 2004; Demant 2007; Jackson & Tinkler 2007; Lindsay 2006; Roche et al. 2007; Roche & Deehan 2002), the engagement of young women in public violence does not yet seem to be as pronounced and therefore has received comparatively less academic attention. However, the data collected in this research suggests that female participation in acts of public violence is not completely non-existent and such engagement by women can lead to further subordination by men within the gender order.

An interesting related aspect found in many of the young men's accounts is the notion that whilst female engagement in public violence is not supported, such violence can be highly entertaining and add excitement to an evening. Whilst there are men who report a dislike of violence in all its forms, there are many who argue that acts of violence and aggression committed by women are exciting and entertaining aspects of the night-time economy. For these men, female engagement in public violence is largely perceived as a source of male entertainment to be observed and ridiculed. This is in many ways similar to the way in which some young men ridicule and deride female risky drinkers who become overly intoxicated, and the way in which male-to-male violence adds a carnivalesque quality to social experiences (Tomsen 1997a; Winlow & Hall 2006). Ultimately, young men in perceived positions of power in relation to public violence are able to lay claim to masculine legitimacy whilst at the same time highlighting and ridiculing the illegitimacy of those who do not meet the required hegemonic standard.

Conclusion

The above analysis has shown that young men's engagement in two risky practices, risky drinking and public violence, is organised in ways that allow men to claim positions of power

and authority over women. In regards to risky drinking, young men's engagement in this practice is largely based on notions of female subordination and patriarchal ideologies that position men as superior and women inferior on the basis of supposed innate physiological and biological differences. Young men also engage in enforcing strict gender norms and expectations in regards to female engagement in risky drinking, and exclude women from male-dominated drinking groups on the basis of their dialectic 'otherness' which ultimately reaffirms and reproduces their subordinate positioning within the gender hierarchy. In regards to public violence, young men's engagement in this practice allows them to exert physical superiority and power over women, to perceive women as objects of male possession, and to negate female engagement in public violence on the basis of their fragility and femininity. In these ways, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence upholds, supports, and ultimately reproduces broader hegemonic principles that guarantee the legitimacy of patriarchy and overall subordination of women within the gender hierarchy.

10. The Empty Signifier

The basis of the argument presented in this research is that there is a significant relationship between young men's engagement in two risky practices, risky drinking and public violence, and hegemonic masculinity. Young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is widely acknowledged as a critical problem for many societies across the world. Despite the implementation of various educative and legislative strategies, young men's continued engagement in these practices remains a significant contributing factor to a vast range of public health issues that have serious and severe consequences not only for young men, but also for other individuals and for wider society. The gendered patterns of engagement in regards to risky drinking and public violence indicates that it is imperative to critically examine young men's engagement in these practices and the ways in which their participation in such practices is informed by their understandings of masculinity. In line with the recent rethinking and reformulation of the concept, it is important also to examine the dynamics of hegemonic masculinities as they play out in the everyday lives and practices of men, in this case young men, within existing systems of gender and gendered power. This research was therefore driven by a number of key research questions. Primarily, this research was interested in the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be understood as a display of hegemonic masculinity. More specifically, this research examined the ways in which young men draw on risky drinking and public violence to construct culturally legitimate masculinities; to claim dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy; and to sustain and reproduce the legitimacy of patriarchy and the overall domination of men and subordination of women in society. In so doing, this research marks a significant contribution to the greater understanding of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence. More importantly, it draws attention to the importance of understanding young men's engagement in risky drinking and

public violence as configurations of practice that support and reproduce hegemonic masculinity, and which distance young men from subordinate and marginalised masculinities.

Young Men, Hegemonic Masculinity, and Risky Practice

Understandings of young men's widespread engagement in risky drinking and public violence require considerable rethinking in light of the results of this study. What this research has found is that the meanings, beliefs, and understandings young men attribute to these risky practices are greatly influenced by their understandings and beliefs regarding masculinity. Furthermore, the understandings of masculinity reported by the young men in this study are themselves greatly influenced by the dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity. The primary focus for this research was the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity among young men. The core findings of this research have been presented in the respective empirical chapters: 'Risk and Masculine Legitimacy' (Chapter Seven); 'Risk and the Masculine Hierarchy' (Chapter Eight); and 'Risk and the Legitimacy of Patriarchy' (Chapter Nine). This section will synthesise the empirical findings presented in these chapters in order to answer the key questions posed at the outset of this research, and outline the key theoretical implications of these findings.

Culturally Legitimate Masculinities

The research conducted in this study has found that young men understand risky drinking and public violence to be legitimate forms of masculine practice. Risky drinking and public violence are practices drawn on by the young men in this study to construct and perform masculinities that align with the culturally dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity, therefore providing a means through which to make a successful claim to masculine legitimacy. As has been established, hegemonic masculinity refers to a culturally accepted and endorsed mode of masculinity that is positioned as the most authentic and legitimate form of masculinity within a given social and historical context. In order for men to make a successful claim to masculine

legitimacy, it is necessary to express or enact configurations of masculine practice that align closely with the hegemonic and therefore culturally dominant form of masculinity. Whilst this culturally legitimate mode of masculinity may not be realistically attainable for the majority of men, if any at all (Carrigan et al. 1985; Connell 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 2012; Howson 2009), it nevertheless remains the ideal form of masculinity that sits over and above all men as an aspirational goal toward which all men must orient themselves or face subordination within the masculine hierarchy. A close examination of young men's understandings and beliefs regarding risky drinking and public violence reveals that both of these risky practices are considered to be culturally legitimate practices, especially in regards to masculinity and masculine identities.

In regards to risky drinking, the accounts of the participants in this study indicate that excessive alcohol consumption is imperative for the construction of culturally legitimate masculinities among young men. There are exceptionally clear collective and individual understandings among young men regarding what is acceptable and legitimate masculine practice in regards to drinking and alcohol consumption, and those patterns of drinking which are considered to be illegitimate. There were four key ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking was seen to provide a successful claim to masculine legitimacy. Firstly, young men whose drinking practices demonstrated strength and resilience; that is, drinking large quantities of alcohol, drinking beverages with high alcohol content, and demonstrating a capacity for high alcohol tolerance were seen as the most legitimate in terms of masculinity. Secondly, young men must drink in ways that demonstrate a competitive edge over others, especially other young men. For example, young men who can drink a greater quantity of alcohol and drink for longer periods are considered more masculine than those who drink less alcohol or who get drunk more quickly. Thirdly, young men must drink in ways that demonstrate self-control. Whilst young men are expected to drink large quantities of alcohol, at the same time they must do so in ways that demonstrates the ability to remain in control of the self and to not get overly intoxicated.

Lastly, young men are expected to drink in ways that prioritise male friendships and homosocial relationships with other men. To fail to do so results in homosocial exclusion and being positioned as subordinate to other men.

What these results demonstrate is that there are clear cultural norms and ideals when it comes to risky drinking and alcohol consumption among young men. Young men must engage in risky drinking in ways that align with these broad cultural expectations or face subordination and demotion within the masculine hierarchy. What is most interesting is that these ideals of risky drinking are in fact complex and at times contradictory to each other. On the one hand, young men are expected to drink large quantities of alcohol, drink for long periods of time, and drink beverages with high alcohol content. However at the same time, young men must demonstrate alcohol tolerance and forms of self-control whilst avoiding becoming overly intoxicated or showing any bodily effects of intoxication. In some ways, this paradox in regards to young men's alcohol consumption practices supports the claims of Hearn (2012) and Howson (2009; 2014) that hegemonic masculinity acts as a kind of 'empty signifier'; a totality that is literally impossible but nonetheless tied to the process of hegemony through which equivalence can be achieved (Howson 2009: 19). As Hearn (2012: 594) suggests, hegemonic masculinity may not exist in any actual pure form, but rather it acts as an aspired configuration of practice combining actual and aspired practices. In this sense, whilst young men may not be able to fulfil all the requirements for legitimate risky drinking, they must engage in this practice in ways that demonstrate complicity, alignment, and aspiration towards the hegemonic ideal in order to be seen to be enacting legitimate masculinities. To fail to do so is to be seen to be enacting weaker or illegitimate forms of masculinity, and subsequently positioned as subordinate and inferior to those men whose masculine practice in regards to risky drinking more closely aligns with the culturally legitimate masculine ideal.

Young men's engagement in public violence was also found to be crucial in the construction of culturally legitimate masculinities. In a similar fashion to young men's understanding of risky drinking, the participants in this study indicate that there are clear cultural norms and ideals that dictate what is and what is not considered legitimate masculine practice when it comes to their engagement in public violence. The results of this study indicate that there are four key ways in which young men's engagement in public violence is related to notions of masculine legitimacy. One of the key characteristics found to be important for the construction of legitimate masculinities in relation to public violence was the display of strength and courage. Demonstrating physical strength and domination over other men and showing courage in the face of violent situations was found to be necessary for the construction of culturally legitimate masculine identities. Young men are also expected to protect and defend their male honour within a subculture of violence where masculinities are constantly questioned, challenged, and contested by other men. Perhaps the most striking of the findings in relation to public violence is that there exists a strong ethic of friendship and mateship amongst young Australian men, where providing support and allegiance to male friends by way of participation in public violence alongside them is of paramount importance in relation to legitimate masculinity. To provide such assistance to male friends is considered a display of true friendship, whereas a failure to do so is considered a betrayal of trust and results in masculine subordination. There are also clear expectations for young men in regards to attitudes towards women and public violence. For example, it is highly important for young men to protect and defend the honour of their female acquaintances, especially girlfriends and female partners, and to reject physical violence committed by men against women.

The discussions with the young men in this study reveal that public violence, though widely understood by the young men to be a dangerous practice, is often drawn on in the construction of legitimate masculinities. Young men participate in public violence in specific ways in order to earn status and respect among their male peers and to attain a sense of masculine legitimacy. In

some ways, the performance of culturally legitimate masculinities through public violence is clearer and more direct than with risky drinking. Whilst successful engagement in risky drinking requires a complex balance of excessive alcohol use and self-regulation, the expectations on young men regarding public violence appear to be more clearly defined; demonstrating strength and courage; protecting male honour; honouring the strict codes of mateship; and defending women. That being said, meeting the requirements for culturally legitimate and accepted modes of masculinity in relation to public violence ultimately demands a certain degree of willingness to participate in public violence, especially under certain conditions. This is in line with previous research which has demonstrated that violent contexts are important sites for the demonstration and affirmation of masculinities; situations in which masculinity is more explicitly put on the line and requires extra effort (Messerschmidt 1998: 132; Morgan 1992:47; Tomsen 1997a; 1997b; 2005). In this study, young men participate in public violence as an active resource in the claiming and maintaining of culturally legitimate masculinities. Young men who do not participate in public violence in ways deemed culturally acceptable and appropriate are ultimately seen as deficient in masculine character and therefore positioned as subordinate.

It must be acknowledged that not all young men in this study necessarily engaged in risky drinking or public violence in these culturally legitimate ways at all times. In fact, it was apparent that many of the participants found the successful negotiation and management of these cultural expectations difficult at the very least, or perhaps even impossible. For example, whilst all of the young men in this study engaged in excessive drinking practices, many of them reported occasions, some more frequent than others, in which they failed to successfully meet one or more the four key requirements for risky drinking. Some even referred to themselves as 'lightweights', a direct acknowledgement of their perceived masculine inadequacy. Similarly, some young men were clearly more successful at performing legitimate masculinities in regards to public violence than others. Whilst factors such as physical size and strength cannot be

ignored, it was apparent that some participants did not consider themselves to be 'good fighters', whereas others were more experienced and skilled. It is important to also acknowledge that there were a small proportion of men who in some ways rejected parts of the culturally dominant ideal of masculinity in regards to these practices, or presented alternative accounts. What is evident in such accounts is recognition of shared dominant cultural ideals yet an active resistance or rejection of these ideals based on personal beliefs and understandings. These accounts provide some indication for the possibility of change and mobilisation in regards to established hegemonic principles and as such will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

With these differences and variances in mind, what was common among the participants in this study was an overall awareness of the cultural expectations in regards to these two practices, and the ways in which their participation in these practices has a direct influence on their claims to culturally legitimate masculinities. Ultimately, all of the young men in this study operate within a gender system based on hegemonic masculinity. In order to lay claim to culturally legitimate masculinities and establish masculine legitimacy, the young men in this study are required to participate in risky drinking and public violence in specific ways; ways that align with the dominant ideals of hegemonic masculinity. As we have seen, hegemonic masculinity may not be an actual lived reality for many, if any men, but rather act as an aspirational goal or 'empty signifier'. Through their engagement in risky drinking and public violence, the young men in this study are able to construct masculinities that align with but do not necessarily enact hegemonic masculinity. Whilst the majority of the young men in this study do not fully embody all of its characteristics completely, each demonstrates a degree of complicity with hegemonic masculinity and the dominant cultural ideals in regards to risky drinking and public violence. Ultimately, what is most evident here is configurations of what Connell (1995: 79) would refer to as complicit masculinities; masculinities that do not fully embody hegemonic masculinity yet are complicit in sustaining and upholding the hegemonic

model. This is in line with the argument developed by Hearn (2004: 61) that it is complicit masculinities that are likely to be the most widespread, and that if anything, it is the complicit that is most hegemonic.

The Masculine Hierarchy

The research conducted in this study has also found that young men engage in risky drinking and public violence as a way in which to secure positions of power within the masculine hierarchy and also to position other men as less powerful. As discussed in Chapter Eight, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is one based on relations of power, domination, and subordination between men and the various masculinities within the gender system. It is important to recognise masculinity as a socially constructed multiplicity, and that the gender order is organised around a set of relations of hierarchy and power between the multiple forms of masculinity in society, and between masculinities and femininities. As Connell (1987: 183) notes, the interplay between the various forms of masculinity is an important part of how hegemonic masculinity works, as hegemonic masculinity is always constructed in relation to other forms of masculinity and also in relation to women. The discussions with the young men in this study indicate that there exists a clear hierarchy among young men in regards to masculinity, especially in relation to risky drinking and public violence. In order to secure dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy, this study has found that young men must engage in risky drinking and public violence in ways that are complicit with the hegemonic ideal. Young men who fail to demonstrate configurations of masculine practice that align with this ideal are positioned as less powerful than other men and ultimately face subordination and delegitimisation within the masculine hierarchy.

In regards to risky drinking, the accounts of the young men reveal that their engagement in risky drinking is organised in ways that position certain configurations of masculine practice as superior and other forms of masculinity that do not align with hegemonic masculinity as

inferior. There were three clear ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking contributed to the establishment and maintenance of masculine hierarchies of power between men and masculinities within the gender order. The clearest and most direct way in which young men negotiate their positioning within the masculine hierarchy and the positioning of others is through the process of gender policing. This study found evidence of a universal system of gender discipline and punishment in regards to risky drinking and the performance of legitimate masculinities. Young men who enact masculinities that closely align with the hegemonic ideal in relation to drinking were identified across the sample as dominant within the masculine hierarchy, and given labels that reflect such positioning including 'the alpha male', 'top dog' or 'king of the jungle'. On the other hand, those young men who fail to drink in ways considered acceptable faced clear subordination and were given labels associated with femininity, homosexuality, and the subordinate 'other', such as 'pussy', 'bitch', 'girl' and 'faggot' amongst others. In addition to these forms of gender policing, young men who fail to engage in risky drinking in legitimate ways also faced a loss of masculine status and reputation amongst male peers. Whilst young men who demonstrated skilled performance in regards to risky drinking were able to accrue masculine capital (De Visser & McDonnell 2011) and respect, those who did not were ultimately seen as less masculine and therefore positioned as less powerful and denied equal standing within the masculine hierarchy. Young men who fail to engage in risky drinking in legitimate ways were also found to face homosocial group exclusion. According to their accounts, young men who do not drink in the appropriate ways are ultimately denied membership of broader homosocial groups and expelled from the 'circle of legitimacy' (Connell 1995; 79) due to their inability to conform to the established hegemonic ideal.

In regards to public violence, this study has found that the ways in which young men engage in this practice has a significant influence on their positioning within the masculine hierarchy and how they are perceived by other men. There are a number of key ways in which young men's engagement in public violence effects their positioning within the masculine hierarchy. Firstly,

in order to establish masculine legitimacy and avoid subordination within the masculine hierarchy, young men must engage in public violence in ways that demonstrate a sense of physical strength, power, and domination over other men. It is highly important for young men to 'come out on top' in regards to public violence, as to not do so is seen as a form of submission and emasculation that reflects poorly on their masculinity and has a direct effect on one's position within the masculine hierarchy. Secondly, there was also evidence of gender policing in regards to public violence. Young men who do not participate in public violence in ways deemed appropriate are ultimately given labels associated with subordination and emasculation, including 'pussy', 'bitch', 'wuss' and 'pansy' amongst others. Thirdly, the young men in this study indicate that failure to engage in public violence in the right ways has a direct effect on masculine status and reputation. For example, young men who do not defend their male honour, who withdraw from violent challenges and encounters, or who are badly beaten clearly lose standing among their male peers, whereas those who do gain a sense of status and reputation that reflects favourably on their masculinity and standing within the male social hierarchy. Lastly, the young men in this study indicate that it is important to place a high value on friendships and mateship, to the point of participation in public violence on the behalf of friends. Young men that honour homosocial bonds in the face of public violence are seen to be enacting true and legitimate forms of masculinity, and therefore secure dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy. However, for young men to fail to provide adequate support and assistance for friends in regards to public violence results in significant damage to masculine reputation, and often results in homosocial group exclusion and exile.

The engagement of young men in risky drinking and public violence therefore has a significant impact on the positioning of some men as dominant within the masculine hierarchy, and some men as subordinate. Young men who engage in risky drinking and public violence in ways that align with the dominant hegemonic ideal in relation to these practices are able to secure dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy. However, those young men who fail to

engage in risky drinking and public violence in ways that are complicit with and in support of the hegemonic ideal are perceived as less dominant and less masculine than other men and ultimately positioned as subordinate. In line with Connell's (1987; 1995) assertion that the gender order is based on relations of power and domination between men and masculinities, it is clear that there exists a hierarchy of power among young men in regards to risky drinking and public violence. What is evident in this research is that young men draw on risky drinking and public violence as resources of power in their active struggle for authority and domination within the masculine hierarchy in relation to other men. Here, the participants are required to enact certain configurations of masculine practice in order to lay claim to dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy, and to avoid subordination and delegitimisation. However, what we see is that some young men are able to do this more successfully than others, with some participants occupying dominant positions within the masculine hierarchy whilst others are relegated to less dominant positions. Furthermore, the accounts of the young men indicate that these positions within the masculine social hierarchy are always contestable, open to challenge, and under close watch from other young men. Ultimately, young men's struggle for power and authority within the broad masculine hierarchy requires constant and consistent displays of legitimate masculine practice.

When considering the relations of power, domination, and authority between men and the dynamics of the masculine hierarchy as they play out in the lives of the young men in this study, it is evident that the majority of young men present or aspire towards configurations of masculine practice that are in line with hegemonic masculinity. Whilst there are some minor divergences, on the whole these complicit masculinities do not tend to deviate or depart from the desired hegemonic ideal but rather reflect and actively support the hegemonic model. Furthermore, it is also possible that what we see in young men's widespread engagement in risky drinking and public violence is a form of protest masculinity, with young men presenting overtly masculine configurations of practice in an attempt to claim hegemonic power where the

resources for such power are scarce or non-existent (Connell 1995: 109-119). Whilst many of the participants in this study are young, white, heterosexual men, with only a handful of exceptions, it is possible that young men's claims to power are in fact muted or blurred in a transitional context in which factors such as age, employment status, financial assets, and significant relationships are in a state of flux and therefore less concrete. Thus, the young men in this study may not be dissimilar to those in other research on protest masculinities (Collins et al. 2000; Connell 1995; Poynting et al. 1999; Tomsen 1997a). This possibility opens up one potential area of future research. Whilst there have been some important studies conducted on this topic, the existing research on protest masculinities is surprisingly scarce, especially among young men. It is clear that much more work is needed in order to unpack the nature of protest masculinities among young men and their claims to power in a relative context of poverty.

The Legitimacy of Patriarchy

This research has found that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence also contributes to the reproduction of patriarchy and a gender system based on the overall domination of men and subordination of women. As discussed in Chapter Nine, the legitimacy of patriarchy is the lynchpin upon which the hegemonic gender system is based. Whilst it certainly involves cultural ideals and consent, hegemonic masculinity ultimately and most importantly refers to the way in which a gender system based on fundamental inequalities between men and women is established and reproduced. At its core, hegemonic masculinity is about the doing of power and dominance in men's practices, and the various ways in which men assume positions of structural and interpersonal power in most spheres of life (Hearn 2004: 51). The discussions with the participants in this research show that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence contributes to the continued reproduction of patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant over women. The participation of young men in risky drinking and public violence makes it possible for them to claim positions of power and authority over women, and to support and reproduce ideologies that ultimately ensure the domination of men

and subordination of women in society. Through this process, young men are able to lay claim to certain advantages and privileges offered by male patriarchy whilst playing a significant role in supporting and upholding the dominant hegemonic ideologies.

In regards to risky drinking, this research has demonstrated that young men's engagement in excessive alcohol use is organised in ways that subordinate and oppress women, and which strengthen patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant in society. The discussions with the participants in this study reveal that young men hold strongly gendered attitudes towards risky drinking which present excessive alcohol use as a practice that is acceptable for men yet unacceptable for women. For the majority of the young men, female engagement in risky drinking is considered unattractive and a deviation from accepted feminine norms in regards to drinking. Women are perceived to be less equipped to handle the effects of alcohol, and as such require the constant supervision and protection of men. Furthermore, many young men argue that women are primarily present in drinking contexts for sexual reasons; to be looked at, flirted with, and to provide opportunities for sexual activity. Young men's engagement in risky drinking is ultimately a demonstration of masculine power over women, where the superiority of men in regards to heavy alcohol use offers a sense of power and authority over women. What this study has also found is that male patriarchy and men's collective power over women is also expressed through the direct policing of femininity. Women who fail to express femininities that support and uphold hegemonic masculinity, that is, women who do not express emphasised femininities, face significant forms of gender policing from young men, including labels such as 'slag', 'slut', 'ganger' and 'tart' and others. These labels not only reflect and reinforce the subordination of women to men through their association with promiscuity and waywardness, but also act as discursive tools which allow men to claim positions of power and domination over women. What is also evident is that young men's engagement in risky drinking contributes to the legitimacy of patriarchy through promoting female exclusion from homosocial drinking settings. Ultimately, men use their collective power

to establish and enforce ideologies that see women subordinated to men and excluded from male-centric domains. Young men's engagement in risky drinking involves exclusionary practices that see women relegated to positions of powerlessness, of diminished influence, and of dialectic 'otherness' which ultimately reaffirms and reproduces their subordinate positioning within the gender hierarchy.

Young men's engagement in public violence was also found to contribute to male patriarchy and the overall subordination of women to men. What this analysis has established is that young men's engagement in public violence is organised around a shared set of understandings that see men positioned as physically and mentally superior to women, and women positioned as weaker, more vulnerable, and more fragile than their male counterparts. Like risky drinking, young men's engagement in public violence acts as a demonstration of male power and authority over women, a practice that ultimately reproduces male superiority and acts to diminish and subordinate women. Young men's engagement in public violence is often also based on notions of male ownership and possession of women. In many of the young men's accounts, women are presented as a form of a masculine property; a kind of 'territory' to be marked or a domain that must be fought for, protected and defended by men. The latent belief beneath such practices is not only that women are more fragile than men and therefore must be sheltered from acts of violence, but more importantly that women are objects of masculine possession that are under male control and authority. Furthermore, in a similar fashion to the way in which young men actively oppose female engagement in risky drinking, women who engage in acts of public violence are also seen as practicing illegitimate and deviant forms of femininity and therefore subject to significant forms of gender policing and discipline. As such, women who engage in public violence are typically labelled as 'sluts', 'whores', 'gronks', or 'gang-bangers' and discursively positioned as subordinate.

It is evident then that the engagement of young men in risky drinking and public violence allows men to claim positions of power and authority over women, and to reinforce and reproduce patriarchal ideologies that see women collectively positioned as subordinate and inferior to men. Hegemonic masculinity is ultimately about men's collective power and domination of women. What we see in young men's accounts of their engagement in risky drinking and public violence is patterns of power, domination, and subordination between young men and women, where young men's participation in these practices not only allows them to claim positions of power over their female counterparts, but also supports and reinforces broader patriarchal ideologies that see men positioned as dominant and women positioned as subordinate in society. Whilst there were some participants who presented or attempted to present more gender-equitable attitudes towards women, many young men did not see these patterns of domination and authority over women to be problematic, but rather they saw them as natural, ordinary, and part of established modes of behaviour. This is in line with the notion that hegemonic beliefs and ideologies become the ideologies for the whole gender system (Donaldson 1993: 645; Hearn 2004: 54). In fact, what was most celebrated among the young men in regards to feminine practice was women who presented femininities that were 'ladylike' and deemed appropriate for women. In other words, those that fit with the dominant ideals of emphasised femininities which are oriented to accommodating the interests and desires of men and which are based on compliance with hegemonic masculinity. Women who engage in practices that deviate from this model of femininity, such as women who engage in excessive alcohol use or those that choose to engage in public violence, often face forms of direct and indirect discipline and punishment from men as a part of the collective strategy to subordinate women.

In this sense, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is clearly related to the ways in which men obtain and maintain social and ideological power over women within systems of gender. Here, alternative configurations and understandings of gender are

subordinated whilst particular configurations and ideologies of masculinity based on the legitimacy of patriarchy are positioned as the dominant force within the gender order, especially over women. As Carrigan et al. (1985: 592) note, whilst the numbers of men who achieve or fulfil the ideals of hegemonic masculinity may be small, very large numbers of men are complicit in sustaining the hegemonic model. While there may be various reasons for masculine complicity, the most significant reason is that most men gain privileges and benefits from the subordination of women, the patriarchal dividend. These patterns of complicity, authority, and patriarchal advantage are clearly evident in the young men in this study. In regards to risky drinking and public violence, young men who support and are complicit with the hegemonic model stand to gain significant advantages and privileges as a result of the overall subordination of women. The accounts of the young men in this study suggest that these advantages include a sense of physical, mental, and material power over women; a sense of authority and control; and the ability to dictate terms in regards to female engagement in these practices. Whilst most, if not all of the young men in this study do not fulfil the requirements for hegemonic masculinity, their complicity with the hegemonic model allows them to lay claim to these advantages offered by male patriarchy whilst playing a significant role in supporting and upholding the dominant hegemonic ideologies. In this sense, the complicit masculinities presented by the young men are a significant contributing factor to the legitimisation of patriarchy and a gender system based on the overall subordination of women in society.

Hegemonic Masculinities

It is important to consider the findings of this research in relation to the most recent theoretical developments in regards to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. As discussed in Chapter Two, the important work of Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) and Messerschmidt (2010; 2012; 2014; 2016) has assessed the academic appropriation of the concept of hegemonic masculinity and how this appropriation engenders gendered knowledge. This significant rethinking has outlined a number of key themes that are to be considered when conducting contemporary

analyses of hegemonic masculinity. First, that we recognise the existence of multiple hegemonic masculinities across three key levels: the *local*, *regional*, and *global* level. Second, that we recognise the existence of a variety of other non-hegemonic masculinities: *dominant*; *dominating*; and *positive*. Here I consider these themes in relation to the data presented in this research.

In line with the reformulated conception of hegemonic masculinity, this research has primarily documented configurations of hegemonic masculinity that exist at specifically the local level. In conducting a series of focus groups and in-depth interviews with young men from two specific local settings, the University of Wollongong and Wollongong TAFE, this research has presented a detailed analysis of the dynamics of masculinities, gender, and gendered power as they play out in the lives of young men within this specific social setting. In particular, this research has demonstrated that in order to construct masculinities that are considered culturally legitimate and powerful over women and other less dominant men, young men in this setting must engage in risky drinking and public violence in certain ways – ways that align with the dominant hegemonic ideal. Whilst it is likely that the patterns of hegemonic masculinity examined at the local level in this research may provide insight into the construction of legitimate masculinities more broadly, in particular the regional level, the limited scope of the current research has made it impossible to extend these findings in such a way. Globally speaking, it is possible the patterns of risky drinking and public violence and the use of these practices to lay claim to legitimate masculinities documented in this research may in fact be similar across multiple nation-states and territories (in particular America, New Zealand, Canada, and the United Kingdom). However, as a study of young masculinities within at the local level of immediate communities this research is not able to confirm such claims. What this research does provide is a local-level critical analysis of young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence and the use of these practices in constructing legitimate and authoritative masculinities at this level.

According to Messerschmidt's (2012; 2016) most recent work, hegemonic masculinities are not fixed in nature but rather fluid and transitory. The findings of the research in this study suggest that young men's construction of legitimate masculinities may in fact move back and forward between multiple forms of masculinity and therefore is momentary and fleeting. For example, one may argue that the participants in this study shift between displaying *dominant* masculinities that align with a culturally dominant, common, and widespread ideal, and *hegemonic* masculinities that reinforce and reproduce unequal power relations between men and women and among men. This reading of the data would suggest that whilst there is certainly evidence of masculinities that legitimate gender inequality, such as the use of terms of subordination in regards to gender policing ('pussy', 'bitch', 'girl', 'sissy', 'poofter', 'faggot' etc.), there are also others that merely describe ideals and traits of masculinity that are the most celebrated and common within the culture of risky drinking and public violence among young men. Whilst these dominant configurations of masculinity may be the most common and widespread, they are not necessarily the most acceptable traits for all young men, nor do they necessarily legitimate unequal gender relations. Furthermore, at times there is also evidence among some young men of *positive* masculinities that reflect equal and egalitarian attitudes towards the relationship between men and women, masculinities and femininities, and among men. What these findings suggest is that young men's construction and performance of masculinities may in fact be complex and fluid involving both hegemonic and non-hegemonic configurations of masculinity in specific cultural settings over time. This line of thinking is significant in that it enables a more distinct conceptualisation of how hegemonic masculinities are unique among the diversity of masculinities, and therefore provides a potential focus for subsequent research.

Implications for Future Research

At the outset of this study, it was noted that young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence is now acknowledged as a critical problem facing many contemporary societies

across the globe. Whilst extensive education strategies continue to be devised and implemented by governments and other social organisations in order to target young men's engagement in these practices, in addition to the implementation of numerous legislation and policy changes, young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence continues to have serious and severe negative outcomes that impact at both the individual and societal level. Whilst these strategies make up an important part of the response to the problems of risky drinking and public violence among young men, this research has argued that such strategies must be further strengthened by critical analyses that aim to provide deeper insight into young men's continued engagement in risky drinking and public violence. The principal aim of this research has been to address this lack within the existing research by critically examining the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence can be seen as a performance or construction of hegemonic masculinity. In so doing, this research has uncovered a number of potential lines of enquiry which open up a considerable scope for future research. These future lines of enquiry can be loosely grouped into three key categories; critical studies on men; gendering risk and risky practices; and the undoing of hegemonic masculinity.

Critical Studies on Men

The importance of examining the influence of gender and gendered power in the lives of young men has been highlighted in this research. In response to the call of Hearn (2004: 59) that it is time to shift from a focus on masculinity to a focus on men themselves, to examine actual configurations of masculine practice and what men actually think, feel, and do, this research has examined the lives and practices of young Australian men and the ways in which these practices are shaped and informed by hegemonic masculinity. What is clear in the research conducted in this study is that understandings and beliefs in regards to gender, and in particular masculinity, have a significant impact on the everyday lives and practices of young men. This research has demonstrated that cultural ideals of masculinity have a significant influence on young men's practices and behaviours, and the ways in which they interpret the practices of others. In this

study, young men's understandings regarding masculinity had a particular impact upon their engagement in two risky practices, risky drinking and public violence. These understandings not only influence the ways in which young men engage in these practices, but also how they act in relation to other men and also in relation to women. These findings suggest that it is important for future research to continue to examine the influence of gender and in particular hegemonic masculinity on young men's practices in other areas of young men's lives. As Schrock and Schwalbe (2009) note, it is imperative to further examine men's actual practices and the various ways in which men learn to signify masculine selves. Furthermore, these studies should primarily focus on how men's practices are organised around the doing of men's power, between men and masculinities, and also between masculinities and femininities.

This research has also highlighted the need for more critical studies on the importance of complicity and complicit masculinities within the context of hegemonic masculinity. In setting out to examine the influence of hegemonic masculinity in the lives of young Australian men, this research has uncovered the importance of understanding the ways in which the vast majority of men are complicit with and therefore support and uphold the ideals of hegemonic masculinity. This is in line with Hearn's (2004: 61) claim that it is complicit masculinities that are likely to be the most widespread, and that if anything, it is the complicit that is most hegemonic. It is crucial that future research begin to unpack the various ways in which complicity with the hegemonic model plays out within the lives of men, and furthermore, the advantages and privileges that are gained in this process. In line with the previous work of both Hearn (2004; 2012) and Howson (2009; 2014), the research conducted in this study suggests that complicit masculinities are crucial to the success of the hegemonic project, and that any challenges or contestations to the overarching power and authority of hegemonic masculinity are likely to be related to the issues of complicity and consent within broad systems of gender.

A further line of enquiry that has emerged from this research is the importance of examining the relationship between young men and protest masculinities. Given that the original theoretical framework of hegemonic masculinity highlighted the importance of these configurations of practice (Connell 1995: 109-119), the research into protest masculinity is surprisingly limited. With a few notable exceptions (Collins et al. 2000; Martino 1999; Poynting et al. 1999), research that examines the ways in which men, especially young men, attempt to claim power where there exist no real resources to claim that power are few and far between. The research conducted with young men in this study echoes the findings of this previous work on this topic and suggests that protest masculinities may be particularly important for young men, as they attempt to negotiate and manage the construction of legitimate masculinities in a transitional context in which the resources to do so are more fluid and less concrete. It is imperative that future research begin to address the need to further examine expressions of protest masculinity, especially amongst young men, and especially in a socio-political climate in which it appears over-exaggerated forms of masculine practice such as risky drinking and public violence are becoming more prevalent.

Gendering Risk and Risky Practice

In regards to risk and risky practice, this research has demonstrated the importance of understanding these concepts as gendered. In this study, risky drinking and public violence were important resources drawn on by young men in the formation and construction of legitimate masculine identities. In line with sociocultural understandings of risk (Beck 1992; Douglas 1992; Giddens 1991; Lupton 2006), these findings support the notion that risky practices such as these are used in contemporary societies for social, cultural, and political reasons, particularly in relation to self-identities. Whilst there is already a degree of interesting work on the influence of risk and risky practices in the everyday lives of individuals (Featherstone 1995; Lyng 1990; 1993; 2005; Lupton 2006; Tulloch & Lupton 2003), it would be of particular interest to see the overall gendered nature of risk and risky practice explored in

greater detail. This is not to discredit the importance of existing research that documents gendered patterns in regards to risk, nor the various studies that have demonstrated the ways in which specific risky practices are important in the construction of gendered identities. The kind of research being suggested here is that which grapples with the complex concept of risk itself, and more importantly, the ways in which this concept plays out within systems of gender in contemporary 'risk societies'.

In regards to risky drinking, this research has documented particular patterns of excessive alcohol use among young Australian men. Furthermore, it has done so through the lens of gender and masculinity; drawing attention to the ways in which young men's engagement in risky drinking is related to their understandings and beliefs regarding masculinity. It is imperative that future research and policy in regards to risky drinking amongst young people acknowledge the importance of gender and gender performativity in relation to this practice. To do so would greatly increase the scope and efficacy of such strategies and assist in the need to systematically address the serious negative impacts of excessive alcohol use among young people. Whilst much of the findings in this study are in line with previous research, there were a number of specific patterns of risky drinking that may be of particular interest to those examining risky drinking amongst young people. The first of these is the practice known as 'pre-drinking'. Whilst not entirely novel to this research, the practice of consuming large quantities of alcohol before entering night-time economies was especially prevalent amongst the young men in this study, and by their accounts, amongst all young people. This pattern of risky drinking, designed primarily to avoid having to pay excessive prices for alcohol, may have particular effects for young people's drinking and on drinking contexts more generally. A similar related pattern is young people's engagement in drinking games. The prevalence of young men's engagement in drinking games that primarily served to get participants highly intoxicated in short periods of time was striking. These two patterns, pre-drinking and drinking games, have the outcome of ensuring participants are significantly intoxicated even before they enter

broader drinking contexts. The prevalence of these practices, especially among young men, may be a significant contributing factor to the widespread engagement of young men in risky drinking, and as such they require greater attention.

In regards to public violence, this study has provided much needed insight into young men's engagement in this practice and has highlighted the importance of understanding the significant relationship between public violence and masculinity. The research conducted in this study clearly demonstrates a link between young men, public violence, and understandings of masculinity. In the same way as it is important that future research into risky drinking acknowledge its gendered dimensions, it is equally important that future research on the nature of public violence amongst young men be mindful of the influence of gender and gendered ideologies. To recognise the importance of masculinity in relation to public violence may be an important first step in the direction of change and reform in regards to young men's continued engagement in violence, especially that which occurs within the public domain. The most striking feature of young men's engagement in public violence documented in this study is the strength and importance of mateship and male friendships. Universally, the young men in this study acknowledged the importance of providing support and reinforcement for friends who become engaged in violent altercations and incidences, regardless of the consequences. It was apparent that this pattern of involvement in public violence is commonplace among young men, with almost all of the young men in this study reporting similar incidences of group violence among young men. Whilst the concept of mateship itself may be based on positive characteristics such as loyalty and friendship, what was evident in the patterns of public violence among the young men in this study is that the bonds of mateship can have the negative effect of drawing young men into engagement in acts of violence where there was no previous intention for such engagement. This is a dangerous precedent which needs obvious exploration. Future studies of public violence among young people, especially young men, should pay close

attention to the homosocial relationships formed between men and the power and influence of understandings of mateship in their engagement in such practices.

Undoing Hegemonic Masculinity

Most importantly, future research should aim to examine the possibilities for change and mobilisation within the existing gender system. At its core, the theory of hegemonic masculinity is fundamentally concerned with the undoing of male hegemony and the legitimacy of patriarchy. Whilst this is no easy task, it nevertheless remains the ultimate project for the critical studies of men discourse. As a system of gender, hegemonic masculinity is organised around a complex set of relationships between men and women, and between masculinities and femininities; relations based on notions of power, authority, domination, and subordination. These relations are socially and historically produced and reproduced through the hegemonic processes of consent and coercion, which are themselves related to notions of legitimacy and power. However, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005: 853) note, hegemonic masculinity is always open to challenge and contestation, and its social reproduction is not guaranteed. The success of the hegemonic project relies on the establishment and reproduction of broad cultural consent among subordinate groups and factions. Therefore, any process that undermines or complicates the establishment of such consent could prove vital to the undoing of the hegemony of hegemonic masculinity. As established by Hearn (2004: 61), complicit masculinities (and femininities) are the most widespread and therefore are the most crucial in terms of the reproduction of hegemonic masculinity. This suggests that it is complicity that provides the key to the undoing of hegemonic masculinity. To return to an earlier point, it is imperative then that future critical studies on men address more holistically the vast majority of men (and women) who are complicit with the hegemonic model, as it is these configurations of practice that ultimately ensure the continued reproduction of a gender system fundamentally based on gendered inequalities found in hegemonic masculinity.

There have been a few indications of such possibilities presented in this research. In the discussions with young men in this study, there were a number of configurations of practice presented that indicated a clear deviation from the hegemonic standard in relation to risky practice. Whilst all of the participants demonstrated an overall complicity with the ideals of hegemonic masculinity, there were some elements of resistance or rejection of these ideals within a number of young men's accounts. These resistances were based on personal beliefs and understandings that did not fit with the shared dominant cultural ideals of hegemonic masculinity. For example, there were some young men who did not necessarily fully exhibit cultural alignment with the hegemonic ideals for risky drinking or public violence at all times. These young men tended to emphasise individual choice and a rejection of other men's insistences of the terms of engagement in risky practice. Though they acknowledged their existence, there were also some men who did not fully endorse the playing out of masculine hierarchies in regards to risky drinking and public violence. There were also some men who presented attitudes toward women that were less authoritarian are more egalitarian. These young men were significantly more open to female engagement in risky drinking, though less open to female engagement in violence. What we see in these accounts is the presentation of alternative attitudes towards gender and evidence of the possibility of non-compliance with broad hegemonic ideologies. Whilst these resistances did not reflect complete rejections of hegemonic ideals, they nonetheless provide some indication for the possibility of change and mobilisation in regards to established hegemonic principles.

Limitations

This research has presented a critical qualitative analysis of the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity amongst young Australian men. In so doing, it has generated valuable data that provides significant insight into young men's engagement in these two practices, and the ways in which these practices are related to hegemonic masculinity. The research has however encountered a number of limitations which

need to be considered. Firstly, this research has encountered significant restrictions in regards to time and resources which has resulted in a relatively modest sample population. Secondly, this sample was drawn from specific research locations that provided access only to specific men. Thirdly, this research sample consisted only of male participants and as such data regarding the relationship between gender and risky practice reflects only a masculine perspective.

The research presented in this study was conducted as a part of a doctoral thesis, and as such did not receive any significant funding from research councils or government organisations and was conducted under certain time restraints. As such, it was not possible to extend the research beyond ordinary means. Despite these limitations in terms of time and financing, an effective and resourceful sampling strategy was established that capitalised on two large readily available populations of young men, the University of Wollongong and the Wollongong TAFE campus, that attracted a relatively modest yet highly relevant sample of young male participants. It must be acknowledged that these men were drawn from specific populations consisting of men from specific geographic locations. Whilst many of the participants had previously lived in other locations, all of the young men in this study lived in and around the city of Wollongong or the Sutherland Shire. Although it was a research priority to obtain a diverse sample population that represented the target population in key characteristics including class, race, and sexuality, the overall diversity of Australian populations of young men could not be fully represented in this study. That being said, the findings of this research offer significant insights that may reflect young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence more generally. Furthermore, as this research was primarily interested in social constructions of masculinity, and due to certain restrictions on resources, the research sample did not include female participants. However, conducting interviews and focus groups with female participants and mixed gender samples could possibly enrich the understanding of the relationship between risky drinking, public violence, and gender and the dynamics of gender and gender

performativity within gender systems as a whole. In order to extend the research and findings presented in this study, it is suggested that future research compare and contrast the practices of larger populations of young men, from diverse geographic locations. Furthermore, research that incorporates a mixed-gender approach may offer unique insight into the experiences of women in regards to risky drinking, public violence, and hegemonic masculinity.

Conclusion

In light of the increased concern and public debate within contemporary societies surrounding young men's engagement in risky drinking and public violence, this research has found that young men's engagement in these practices is significantly influenced by their understandings of masculinity. The discussions with young men in this study have established that young men engage in risky drinking and public violence to construct culturally legitimate masculinities; to claim positions of power and authority over other men within the masculine hierarchy; and to establish and reproduce the legitimacy of patriarchy and unequal power relations between men and women that ultimately see men positioned as dominant and women positioned as subordinate. These findings provide valuable insight into the factors that underpin young men's widespread engagement in these practices, and open up significant areas of interest for future policy and research. In order to systematically address the problems associated with risky drinking and public violence amongst young men, it is imperative that we acknowledge the importance of gender, and in particular masculinity, in regards to young men's engagement in these practices. To do so not only marks an important step forward in the understanding of why young men continue to participate in these practices, but also for acknowledging the dynamic role of young men within existing systems of gender as a whole.

Appendices

A. Biographical Profiles

This research conducted twenty individual interviews and two focus group discussions, and had a total of twenty-eight participants. The table below (Figure 1) provides details regarding the specific research locations from which each interviewee was recruited. A second table (Figure 2) provides details regarding the specific research locations for each of the focus group participants. Furthermore, brief biographic profiles are provided for each of the participants. The research participants are presented in alphabetical order by name.

Figure 1: Interviewees by Locale

The University of Wollongong	**Wollongong TAFE**
Aaron	Andy
Daniel	Beau
Jake	Darren
Jimmy	Evan
Lucas	George
Peter	Lewis
Ravi	Shane
Steve	Simon
Tim	Stefan
Toby	Thomas

Figure 2: Focus Group Participants by Locale

The University of Wollongong	Wollongong TAFE
Brandon	Darren
Dave	Jackson
Graham	Lewis
Lachlan	Shane
Matt	Stefan
Nicolas	Thomas
Vijay	

Aaron

Aaron is aged 23, and is a Bachelor of Commerce graduate (majoring in Accounting and Finance) currently studying a Diploma of Education. He is a tall, broad shouldered and muscular Caucasian with a keen interest in sports, especially basketball, and going to the gym. He is currently single, with a number of previous long term relationships, though enjoys going out looking for girls and one-night stands. He currently resides in the Sutherland Shire with his family, and has worked as financial advisor and bartender. What is most noticeable about Aaron is a sense of self-confidence and being secure in his own identity. Aaron's is currently trying to curb his engagement in risky drinking due to a number of reasons, including his recent recommitment to Christianity and sports commitments, though reports an extensive history of excessive alcohol use. He also reports extensive and frequent engagement in acts of public violence.

Andy

Andy is aged 23, and an apprentice in Metal Foundry studying his trade at TAFE. He is a thickset, medium height Caucasian with numerous visible tattoos, who also works part-time at a local

pizza restaurant. He is currently single, having recently ended a relationship with his girlfriend, and socialises mainly with a large group of male friends. He resides in the Sutherland Shire with his family, where he went to a catholic primary school and a public high school, receiving only his School Certificate. Andy is quite friendly and particularly open about his experiences with risky drinking and public violence which were quite extensive. His engagement in risky drinking was above average, drinking large amounts of alcohol more frequently than other participants. He also presented one of the more violent histories, especially in regards to public violence.

Beau

Beau is an 18-year-old first-year apprentice studying Electrical Technology at TAFE. A Caucasian who is small in stature, he enjoys what he describes as 'immature' activities such as riding bikes and skateboarding, and is a member of his local Surf Life Saving Club. An only child, he lives in the northern suburbs of the Illawarra with his father after his parent's recent separation. He is currently single, and socialises mainly with a small group of male friends. Although he grew up being involved in a local Christian church, he reports that he 'grew out if it' and now no longer attends. Beau's engagement in risky drinking and public violence was average in comparison to the other young men in this study, with frequent weekly sessions of risky drinking, and less frequent though semi-regular incidences of violence.

Brandon

Brandon is aged 20, and is a university student studying Commerce and Marketing. He is a short Caucasian who enjoys playing music and writing songs. He currently lives independently in Wollongong and is somewhat of a joker, with a sharp sense of wit and humour. Whilst his engagement in risky drinking was typical for young men in this study, his engagement in public violence was not particularly extensive. He reported being witness to incidences of public violence on numerous occasions, with only occasional personal engagements in such practices.

Daniel

Daniel is 21 years of age, and is a second-year Engineering and Mechatronics major. He is a self-identified 'country boy' having grown up in the North West regions of New South Wales, though now lives on university campus in a share house residence with his girlfriend and a number of close male friends. Daniel is a Caucasian who is tall and slim though he reports he used to be much bigger, and is extremely polite. Daniel's account was interesting in that he provided insight not only into risky drinking and public violence as experienced within the urban context, but also that of more rural settings. His reported experiences with these practices were mid-range and relatively average among the young men in this study.

Darren

Darren is aged 19, and a first-year student studying Bricklaying at TAFE. He is a Caucasian who is of medium height and quite thin, with a keen interest in sports, especially soccer, tennis, and rugby league. Darren currently lives with his father in the outer suburbs of Wollongong and is not currently in a relationship. Whilst he grew up attending a local youth group and was schooled at a local Christian school, he no longer has any spiritual involvement. He socialises mainly with a small group of male friends, with whom he engages in risky drinking quite regularly. Darren's experiences with public violence were not as extensive as some other young men, though he had some involvement with acts of violence in and around drinking establishments.

Dave

Dave is aged 20 and currently studying International Economics at university. He is a Caucasian of medium height though he has a solid build. He is also somewhat of a joker, with his favourite leisure activities including video gaming, drinking, and dancing. He lives at home with his parents in the outer regions of Wollongong, and is not religious. Dave's participation in risky drinking was above average, drinking more frequently and to a greater extent than most other

young men in the study. His engagement in public violence was more in line with most other men's experiences, with frequent observations and occasional participation in acts of public violence.

Evan

Evan is 18 years of age, and is currently studying a bridging course at TAFE with the hope of transitioning to university to study Communications and Media. He is of Filipino descent, of medium height and build, and is openly homosexual. He currently lives in the Sutherland Shire region with his mother and her partner, and socialises primarily with a close-knit group of male and female school friends. Evan reports a long history of bullying and violence on the account of his sexuality, and as such is ranked a second degree black belt in martial arts. Whilst Evan himself now refrains from engagement in violence due to a particularly severe violent outburst at high school, he reports significant experiences with public violence. For example, his former partner is now serving a sentence for the physical assault of another whilst they were out drinking. Evan's engagement in risky drinking is more in line with the drinking practices of other young men in this study.

George

George is aged 22, and is studying his School Certificate equivalent at TAFE. He is a tall and large young man of Indigenous heritage, currently living with his grandmother in Wollongong. He reports an interest in music and journalism, and admits he got involved in drinking and taking drugs at a young age. He has a small group of close friends, male and female, with whom he frequently goes nightclubbing in Sydney, and considers himself an atheist. George's engagement in risky drinking was above average, with a particular pattern of drinking large quantities of alcohol over short periods of time. As a man of a large build, he reports being confronted and challenged in regards to public violence quite regularly, though he tries to avoid engagement in such violence if possible.

Graham

Graham is aged 24 and is a third-year Mining and Engineering student. He is tall and slim and of Caucasian descent, and exudes a degree of self-confidence and intelligence. Although he was born in New Zealand, he has lived in Australia for over ten years and currently resides in a share house in Wollongong with Matt, who also participated in this study. His engagement in risky drinking was frequent and extensive, and on average with the other participants in this study. Graham's engagement in public violence was however less pronounced, though such experiences were not completely absent.

Jackson

Jackson is aged 18, and is studying Physical Education at TAFE. He is of African descent, having lived in Australia for four years, and is of medium height and medium build. He currently lives independently in the Sutherland Shire and has a keen interest in sports, most notably soccer and basketball. He identifies as a Muslim, and currently does not have a girlfriend though he has had a number of long-term relationships. Jackson is good friends with another participant, Stefan, with the pair often engaging in risky drinking together with other male friends. Whilst Jackson did not frequently participate in public violence personally, his frequent presence in drinking environments meant that he was often witness to such violence, and was occasionally required to participate.

Jake

Jake is aged 19, and is a second-year university student studying a Bachelor of Physical and Health Education. He is of medium height and build, and is of Indigenous and Irish descent. He has a keen interest in rugby league and plays representatively. Jake grew up in a lower socio-economic region of Western Sydney and currently lives in a large share house in Wollongong with a number of other male friends. He describes himself as Catholic though he reports he only goes to church on special occasions, and is currently in a heterosexual relationship. Jake's

engagement is public violence is above-average, with a particularly extensive history of involvement in this practice. An incident of bullying as a child lead to his father enrolling him in boxing lessons, training which he frequently draws on in his engagement in public violence. He was recommended to take part in the study by a number of his housemates who also took part in this study, Tim and Steve. His engagement in risky drinking was also frequent and extensive.

Jimmy

Jimmy is aged 23, and currently studying a Bachelor of Creative Arts majoring in Performance. He is a dreadlocked Caucasian of medium height and build who likes surfing, acting, and listening to music. He lives in a share house in Wollongong with two other male friends, one of whom also participated in this study (Lucas), and is currently in a relationship with his girlfriend who is also a semi-permanent resident at the house. He grew up on the North Shore of Sydney, and primarily went to Catholic schools. Although he describes himself as spiritual, he does not fully identify with any major religion. Jimmy's participation in risky drinking and public violence was largely on average with the other young men in this study.

Lachlan

Lachlan is aged 20, and is a university student studying Commerce and Marketing. He is a Caucasian of medium height and build who enjoys playing tennis and socialising with his male and female friends. He was born and raised in rural New South Wales, though now lives on university campus with four other house mates. He is very polite and softly spoken, and has a part-time job in hospitality. He identifies as Catholic and is currently not in a relationship. Lachlan's engagement in risky drinking is common for young men living on campus, with frequent and extensive engagement in alcohol use. His engagement in public violence is less extensive, though he reports frequent exposure primarily due to the engagement of friends.

Lewis

Lewis is aged 19 and is currently studying Digital Media at TAFE. He is a tall and skinny Caucasian of English descent, who has studied martial arts for eight years and is also interested in photography. He lives with his mother and grandmother in Wollongong, and is currently not in a relationship. Lewis appears to be a bit of an outsider, with a lack of any close friends, though he does have acquaintances with whom he likes to drink. Lewis' slight build is one of the reasons he offers for his propensity to get drunk relatively quickly, and as such he reports being intoxicated more frequently than many of the other young men. His knowledge and skill in regards to martial arts has also contributed to his willingness to become involved in public violence.

Lucas

Lucas is aged 21 and is a university student studying a Bachelor of Creative Arts majoring in Performance. He is a tall and skinny Caucasian with an androgynous appearance, wearing a woman's singlet and eye mascara. Lucas was born in Western Australia and raised and schooled in Canberra, though he now resides in a share house in Wollongong with two other male friends, including another participant Jimmy. He is currently in a heterosexual relationship, and reports a long history of sexual promiscuity and relations. Lucas self-identifies as a 'party boy', and has a reputation for engaging in risky drinking and also illicit drug use. As such, his engagement in risky drinking was above average when compared to all other participants in the study. Furthermore, Lucas reported significant participation in public violence, both personally and on behalf of friends.

Matt

Matt is aged 23, and is a university student studying Mining and Engineering. He is Caucasian with a small build and of medium height, and had brightly coloured hair and a number of noticeable piercings. He was born and raised in rural New South Wales, though currently lives

in a share house in Wollongong with a number of other young men including another participant, Graham. He enjoys socialising with a group of mainly male friends, and works part-time as a sky-dive instructor. He is not religious, nor is he currently in a relationship. Matt's engagement in both risky drinking and public violence was mid-range, on average with the majority of participants in this study. However, Matt did report frequent incidences of being targeted for violence, which he attributed primarily to his alternative outward appearance.

Nicolas

Nicolas is aged 19, and is currently studying a Bachelor of Commerce at university. He was born in South Africa, and has lived in Australia for a total of four years. He is a Caucasian of medium height and build, who reports having an interest in outdoor activities such as surfing, hockey, and rugby. He currently resides in a share house as a part of the university accommodation, and is currently single. Nicolas gives thoughtful and insightful answers, though seemed to be somewhat of an outsider in comparison to the other focus group participants, perhaps due to his nationality. Whist he provided some insight into the drinking cultures and violent practices of South Africa, the majority of his engagement in risky drinking and public violence was conducted within the Australian context. Nicolas' participation in these practices was largely with a small group of male friends, and was relatively average in comparison to all other participants.

Peter

Peter is 20 years of age, and is a third-year university student studying a double degree of Law and Engineering. He is of Macedonian heritage, and is quite tall and well built. He and his family lived in Western Sydney for the majority of his life, though they have lived in Wollongong for the past three years. Peter is a strikingly intelligent young man who is particularly involved in a number of university societies and groups, especially the Macedonian society of which he is president. He enjoys socialising with male and female friends, and is currently single. Peter's

engagement in risky drinking was more pronounced than his participation in public violence, though he had personally been involved in violent incidences in public spaces on a number of occasions.

Ravi

Ravi is aged 24, and is a university student undertaking a Master's degree in Mechatronics. Ravi was born and raised in India and has lived in Australia for three years, currently residing in a share house in Wollongong with a number of male friends. His hobbies include playing guitar and video games, as well as occasionally playing football. Whilst he is currently single, he only recently separated from his girlfriend of two years. Ravi reported significant engagement in both risky drinking and public violence. His drinking practices were organised largely around a group of male friends, most of whom were also Indian. His relatively recent arrival to Australia meant that he was able to provide significant insight into cultures of drinking and violence that were not his own, but which he was now required to participate. Many of the incidences of public violence reported took place in India during his undergraduate, though there were also numerous incidences that had took place during his time in Australia.

Shane

Shane is 24 years of age, and is a TAFE student currently studying a Certificate Three in Painting and Decoration. He is a Caucasian of a medium height and large build, who enjoys playing music and socialising with a small group of male friends. He was born and raised in central Queensland and currently splits his living situation between his mother and father, who have recently separated but still reside in Wollongong. He reports recent bouts of mental illness, though has sought professional assistance for these conditions. Shane is likable and street smart, and has recently started a relationship with a girl het met through a friend. His engagement in risky drinking is above average, drinking greater quantities and more frequently than other participants in the study. His engagement in public violence is however average,

though his propensity for verbally abuse contributes to his frequent confrontations with violence.

Simon

Simon has recently turned 21, and is currently studying a Certificate Four in Property Services at TAFE. He is relatively short with a medium build, and is of Indigenous and Irish descent. He enjoys playing rugby league and plays representatively for a local team, and also participates in professional online video gaming. Although he is currently single, a recent relationship has resulted in the birth of a son and as such he has become a father for the first time. Whilst he has previously lived independently, he has recently moved back to the family home as he tries to establish stability in his life. Simon's participation in risky drinking and public violence was extensive. He reports a long history of engagement in public violence, with numerous criminal charges and court appearances, and identifies his drinking practices as problematic. Whilst he has made attempts to address these problems and is currently actively pursuing more responsible pathways, it was apparent that he found non-participation in these practices difficult.

Stefan

Stefan is aged 18, and is a TAFE student studying a Bachelor of Information Technology. He is a Lebanese Australian who is small in stature though of medium height. He was born and raised in Western Sydney, and currently lives in the Sutherland Shire with his family. His hobbies include web design and computers, and he enjoys going night-clubbing with his group of male friends, including another participant Jackson. Stefan's engagement in risky drinking and public violence was above average. Whilst having only recently turned eighteen, Stefan reports frequent engagement in risky drinking for the past three years, especially with his male friends. In regards to public violence, Stefan reports extensive engagement in acts of violence in public and recently received a ban from a local nightclub for assaulting another young man. Whilst this

ban has been somewhat of a wake-up call, he indicates that it is likely that he will re-offend given the prevalence of violence within drinking cultures.

Steve

Steve is 19 years of age, and is a second-year university student studying a Bachelor of Commerce majoring in Marketing and Human Resources. He is Caucasian and relatively tall and well built, and currently lives in a share house in Wollongong with a large number of male friends, including other participants Tim and Jake. He enjoys playing rugby league and played competitively until he started university, and also likes to go to the gym regularly. He grew up on a farm in rural New South Wales and is currently single. Steve's participation in risky drinking is around average for the young men in this study, and was primarily organised around a close-knit circle of male friends. However, his engagement in public violence was not as significant as other participants due to his ability to diffuse a violent situation. Overall, Steve did not support participation in public violence, though there were a number of incidences in which he was required to participate, often due to the participation of friends.

Tim

Tim has recently turned 20, and is a first-year university student studying a Bachelor of Engineering. He is a Caucasian of medium height and medium build who enjoys outdoor activities such as surfing. He was raised on a cattle farm on the South Coast of New South Wales, though now resides in a large share house in Wollongong with a large group of male friends, including other participants Jake and Steve. He currently identifies as single, though was recently in a relationship with a girl who now lives in Europe with whom he still communicates regularly and plans to visit later in the year. Tim's engagement in risky drinking was quite extensive, especially considering his residence in a large share house consisting of mainly male friends. His participation in public violence was less pronounced in comparison to other young

men, though there were numerous observations and occasional participations, typically as a result of the engagement of friends.

Thomas

Thomas is aged 19, and is currently studying a Diploma in Communications and Media at TAFE. He is a Caucasian who is small in stature and of a slight build, who enjoys reading books and playing video games. He currently lives with his mother in the outer suburbs of Wollongong, and has been in his current relationship with his girlfriend for almost two years. Thomas is intelligent and softly spoken, and provides answers that are both thoughtful and insightful. His engagement in risky drinking is usually with a small group of male friends, though he occasionally drinks with his girlfriend and female friends, and is on average with the other participants. His experiences with public violence are also average, with numerous participations and frequent observations.

Toby

Toby is aged 18, and is a first-year university student studying a Bachelor of Economics and Finance. He is a Caucasian of a medium height and slim build, who works part-time as a bartender and theatre usher. He was born and raised on a farm in rural New South Wales, and currently resides in university accommodation. He is currently single, though has had two significant previous relationships, and whilst from a Catholic family he does not consider himself to be religious. Toby engages in risky drinking frequently, two or three times per week, yet his engagement in public violence is relatively scarce though not entirely absent from his account. The most common forms of public violence reported by Toby are those of friends or strangers, typically experienced in and around drinking establishments.

Vijay

Vijay is aged 21, and is a university student studying a Bachelor of Economics. He was born in Sri Lanka, though has lived in Australia for the past thirteen years, and currently lives with his family in the Sutherland Shire. He is employed part-time as a kitchen hand, and enjoys music and playing sports. He is of a medium height and build, and offers intelligent and thoughtful insight into his engagement in risky drinking and public violence. His experiences regarding risky drinking were on par with the majority of other participants, drinking two or three times per week, though his experiences of violence were less common. Vijay had experienced public violence only a handful of times, with relatively little personal engagement compared to some of the other young men in this study.

B. Recruitment Advertisement

ARE YOU MALE? DO YOU REGULARLY DRINK ALCOHOL?

Researchers would like to speak to young men aged 18 to 24 years who regularly drink alcohol. Face to face interviews will be conducted between October and December 2012.

In the interview you will be invited to share your views and opinions about drinking behaviours amongst young men.

The interview takes around 1 to 2 hours and is held at a convenient location for you. Interviews are anonymous and confidential.

You will receive a $30 gift voucher for your time (JB Hi-Fi or Coles-Myer).

Contact Adam on 0418 217 637 (call or text)
or email ajr935@uowmail.edu.au

C. Pre-selection Questionnaire

1. Name…… Contact ……..

2. Age……..

- ☐ Text
- ☐ Email
- ☐ Call
- ☐ Other
  ……

3. Where did you hear about the study?

- ☐ University of Wollongong
- ☐ Wollongong TAFE
- ☐ Wollongong Youth Services

4. How did you hear about this study?

- ☐ Poster or flyer
- ☐ Friend
- ☐ Other……

5. In which country were you born?

- ☐ Australia
- ☐ Other (please specify)……

6. If English is not the language spoken at home, what language is spoken at home?

……..

7. What is your current employment status?

- ☐ Student……..
- ☐ Unemployed
- ☐ Part-time employment
- ☐ Full-time employment

8. If you are employed, what is your occupation? ……

9. In the last six months, how often have you consumed alcohol?

- ☐ Often (once a week)
- ☐ Very often (more than once a week)
- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ Rarely (once or twice a month)
- ☐ Very rarely (once or twice in six months)

10. In the last six months, how often have you been drunk?

- ☐ Often (once a week)
- ☐ Very often (more than once a week)
- ☐ Everyday
- ☐ Rarely (once or twice a month)
- ☐ Very rarely (once or twice)

11. Have you or any of your friends ever experienced public violence, either as a result of drinking or not related to drinking?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

12. What are your preferred days and times for the interview?

- ☐ Monday……..
- ☐ Tuesday……
- ☐ Wednesday……..
- ☐ Thursday ……
- ☐ Friday……..
- ☐ Saturday ……..
- ☐ Sunday……....

13. What would be your preferred location for the interview?

- ☐ Office
- ☐ University of Wollongong……..
- ☐ Other……..

14. What gift voucher would you prefer?

- ☐ JB Hi-Fi
- ☐ Coles/Myer

15. Are you willing to take part in a focus group about young men's attitudes towards drinking and public violence?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Thank you for your interest in the study.

D. Interview Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Welcome

Thanks for taking the time to take part in this interview.

This is a study about young men's attitudes and beliefs about drinking and public violence, and the relationship these practices have with masculinity.

The aim of this study is to find out about what young men think, feel, and do when it comes to alcohol use, violence, and expressing masculinity.

I am here to learn from you. In terms of what young men know about these topics, you are the expert.

Three things to give you – the ethics committee at the university requires me to go through all this;

• Information Sheet – Give time to read this. Then work through it.

• Consent Form

• Gift Voucher – Please sign this.

There are no right or wrong answers to my questions. In this interview, you are the expert and the teacher.

I am not here to judge you, or to teach you, but to listen to you.

I am recording the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments.
No names will be included in any reports. Your comments are confidential.

I'd like you to take your time in answering and talking. Give as much detail as you can. Feel free to use people's names (they won't appear in anything public).

Use any language you want. Just use the language you would normally use when talking with your friends. So if you want to swear, or say 'fuck', or 'cunt', or 'bitch', that's fine.

Do you have any questions?

Let's begin.

(Start recording).

GENERAL BIOGRAPHY/LIFE HISTORY

Tell me a bit about yourself…

Age

Family history

Studying

Education and schooling

Employment

Living situation

Hobbies

Relationships

Religious involvement

DRINKING ALCOHOL & GETTING DRUNK

How often do you drink alcohol?

How much do you drink?

What kind of alcohol do you drink? (Beer, wine, spirits, shots). Favourite?

How often do you get drunk?

How much do you drink when you get drunk?

Tell me about the last time you got really drunk?

When do you stop drinking? When can you tell you've had enough?

What are some of the things you like about drinking?

What are some of the things you don't like about drinking?

GOING OUT DRINKING

Can you describe a typical drinking session…

What days of the week do you usually drink?

When do you start drinking? (Pre-drinking?)

Where do you drink? (Pub, club, parties, at home, at a friend's place?)

Who do you drink with? (Friends, family, workmates)(Male/female)

Have you ever played drinking games?

What is the difference between a few drinks and a big night out?

What makes for a good night?

What makes for a bad night?

MALE HOMOSOCIALITY AND DRINKING

Who do you drink with more often, guys or girls?

Is there a difference when you drink with guys as opposed to girls?

Is there any competition between guys when it comes to drinking?

Do you ever feel pressured to drink more when you're with you male friends?

Do you think being in a group of male friends makes it more likely for you to drink more?

What makes a good mate in terms of drinking?

In what ways do you think drinking alcohol is related to male bonding?

GENDERED ATTITUDES TOWARDS DRINKING

What are the differences in the ways in which men and women drink?

Should women act differently to men when they're drinking?

What do you think about girls who get really drunk and make a mess of themselves?

Why do you think girls are drinking and getting drunk like the guys do?

Do you think getting really drunk is more dangerous for guys or girls?

DEFINING RISKY DRINKING

How would you define risk?

In what ways do you think drinking alcohol can be risky?

How would you define risky drinking? (Binge drinking)

How much alcohol do you think is too much? How much alcohol is risky?

Would you describe the way you drink as being risky?

Would you say risky drinking is normal amongst the people you know?

MASCULINITY AND DRINKING

What is masculinity? How would you define it?

In what ways do you think drinking is related to being a man?

In what ways do guys use alcohol to show that they are a man?

As a man, are you expected to drink in certain ways?

Drink certain drinks…

Drink lots…

Keep up…

Hold your drink…

Have a drink with the boys…

Are there any other expectations?

What happens if you don't drink in these ways? Don't meet these expectations?

How do you feel about this? Do you feel like you measure up to these expectations?

Are you seen as being less of a man if you drink less than others?

Are you seen as being more of a man if you drink more than others?

What do people think about guys that can't drink very much alcohol? (Lightweights)

What do people think of guys who don't drink at all? (Soft-cocks)

Do you gain more status and respect amongst your mates if you drink and get drunk?
What names do people give to guys who can't drink or won't drink? (Pussy, soft-cock)

What does it mean if someone calls you 'weak' or 'soft' in terms of drinking?

Can you still be considered manly if you don't drink? Drink little?

What do you think makes an ideal male drinker?

If you had one minute to describe the relationship between drinking and masculinity what would you say?

(10 MINUTE BREAK)

EXPERIENCING PUBLIC VIOLENCE

• Things you have seen – violence between others

• Things you have experienced personally – personal experiences of violence

• Things your friends have experienced – violence you've seen friends experience

(1) Things you have seen - Have you ever seen people use public violence?

Can you describe what you've seen?

How does it start?

Who is usually involved?

Where does it happen?

When does it happen?

Does that kind of thing happen often?

What is the usual outcome?

Does that kind of thing happen often? Have there been others?

(2) Things you have experienced personally - Have you ever personally been involved in public violence?

Can you describe what happened?

How did it start?

Who was involved?

Where did it happen?

When did it happen?

What was the outcome?

Does that kind of thing happen often? Have there been others?

(3) Things your friends have experienced - Have your friends ever been involved in public violence?

Can you describe what happened?

How did it start?

Who was involved?

Where did it happen?

When did it happen?

What was the outcome?

Does that kind of thing happen often? Have there been others?

Why do you think public violence happens?

What do you think about people using violence in public?

How did you feel when these events were happening?

How did you feel after the events happened?

DEFINING PUBLIC VIOLENCE

What is violence? How would you define it?

In what ways do you think public violence is risky?

Would you describe your experiences of public violence as risky?

Do you think experiences of public violence are common amongst people your age?

Are there situations where using public violence is ok?

MALE HOMOSOCIALITY AND PUBLIC VIOLENCE

Have you ever gotten into a fight because of your mates?

Have you ever felt pressured to get involved in a fight because of your mates?

Do you feel like you're more likely to experience public violence when you are you're out with your mates

Do you feel the need to protect or stand up for your mates?

What makes a good mate in terms of fighting?

Do you think public violence is related to male bonding?

Do you think people enjoy seeing fighting in public?

GENDERED ATTITUDES TOWARDS VIOLENCE

Why do you think men get involved in violence more often than women?

What are the differences in the ways in which men and women experience violence?

What do you think about girls getting into fights? Is that okay?

Should women act differently to men when it comes to public violence?

MASCULINITY AND PUBLIC VIOLENCE

In what ways do you think violence is related to being a man?

In what ways do guys use public violence to show that they are a man?

Do guys gain more status or respect if they get into a fight?

Are you considered more of a man if you fight?

Do guys feel the need to protect and defend their male honour?

As a man, are you expected to react in certain ways when it comes to fighting?

If someone does something to you

If someone challenges you to a fight

If someone does something to your girlfriend

If someone does something to your mate

What about if you start a fight over something little

Are there any other expectations you can think of?

What happens if you don't meet these expectations?

Would people think a guy was less of a man if he didn't want to fight? (Weak)

Would people think a guy was less of a man if he backed down from a fight? (Soft)

What happens if you lose a fight?

Can men still be considered manly if they don't want to fight?

Is choosing not to fight ever seen as a good thing?

What do you think makes an ideal male fighter?

If you had one minute to describe the relationship between violence and masculinity what would you say?

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RISKY DRINKING & PUBLIC VIOLENCE

In what ways would you say drinking and violence are related?

Why do you think drinking and violence often occur together?

In what ways do you think drinking can lead to violence?

In what ways do you think violence can lead to drinking?

How often would you say violence happens when people are drinking?

How often would you say NO violence happens when people are drinking?

How often does violence happen when people are NOT drinking?

How much of a role do you think spatial environment plays in these things?

RISKY DRINKING, PUBLIC VIOLENCE, AND MASCULINITY

How do risky drinking and violence compare when it comes to being a man?

Is one more important that the other when it comes to being a man?

Do you think one is riskier than the other?

How important is taking risks when it comes to masculinity?

In what ways do you think risk taking is related to being a man?

In what ways do guys use risk taking to show that they are a man?

Do guys gain more status or respect if they take risks?

Are you considered more of a man if you take risks?

CONCLUSION

Is there is anything you've left out that you'd like to say?

What has it been like to do this interview?

Do you know anyone who might like to be involved? (Snowballing)

Would you be interested in participating in a focus group?

Hand out debriefing sheet – counselling and support resources.

E. Focus Group Schedule

INTRODUCTION

Welcome.

Thanks for taking the time to take part in this focus group

My name is Adam Rogan and assisting me is Nikolai Russo. We are both researchers with the University of Wollongong.

This is a study about young men's attitudes and beliefs about drinking and public violence, and the relationship these practices have with masculinity. The aim of this study is to find out about what young men think, feel, and do when it comes to alcohol use, public violence, and masculinity.

You have been invited to take part because you are young men who regularly drink alcohol, and who have possibly experienced public violence in some way.

Before we get started, let's go through the things I've given you:

- Participant Information Sheet
- Consent Form
- Questionnaire
- Counselling and Support Resources
- Name Tags
- Gift Vouchers

There are no right or wrong answers to my questions, but rather differing points of view. In this focus group, you are the experts and the teachers. I am here to learn from you.

Please feel free to share your point of view even if it differs from what others have said. You don't need to agree with others, but please listen respectfully as others share their views.

You've probably noticed the microphones. We're recording the session because we don't want to miss any of your comments. We will be on a first name basis this afternoon, but no names will be included in any reports. Your comments are completely confidential.

As we are recording, we would ask that you speak one at a time. In other words, try not to speak over each other.

We also ask that you turn off your mobile phones. If you cannot and if you must respond to a call please do so as quietly as possible and re-join us as quickly as you can.

I'd like you to take your time in answering and talking. Give as much detail as you can. Feel free to use people's names (they will be changed).

Use any language you want. Just use the language you would normally use when talking with your friends. So if you want to swear, or say 'fuck', or 'cunt', or 'bitch', that's fine.

Do you guys have any questions?

Well, let's begin.

1. ICEBREAKER

Let's find out some more about each other by going around the table.

Tell us who you are and the best and worst thing about your week so far.

2. RISKY DRINKING

I'd like to hear about your experiences with drinking. Can you describe for me a typical drinking session? (Where, when, when do you start, who with)

Think back to the last time you got really drunk. Can you tell me what happened?

When do you stop drinking?

What does the term "risky drinking" mean to you?

How would you define the word "risk"?

3. RISKY DRINKING AND MASCULINITY

Why do you think guys your age like to drink and get drunk?

Are some guys more likely than other guys to drink heavily?

Are some groups of guys more likely than other groups of guys to drink heavily?

How would you say drinking alcohol is related to being a man?

How do people react to men who don't drink and get drunk?
What does it mean if someone calls you a "lightweight" or a "pussy" or "soft"?

What makes a good friend or mate when it comes to drinking?

4. PUBLIC VIOLENCE

I'd like to hear about your experiences with public violence. Can you describe for me any experiences you or your friends have had with public violence?

Think back to a time when you experienced public violence in some way. How did you feel when it was happening? (After it happened?)

What do you think are some of the reasons behind public violence?

What do you think about people who get involved in public violence?

Do you think public violence is risky?

5. PUBLIC VIOLENCE AND MASCULINITY

Why do you think men get involved in violence more often than women?

Are some guys more likely than other guys to get involved in public violence?

Are some groups of guys more likely than other groups of guys to get involved in public violence?

How would you say public violence is related to being a man?

Some people say guys fight because it's natural; other people say guys fight because they are expected to. What do you think? (Remember to discuss male honour)

Imagine you get into a bit of push and shove with another guy at a bar, and he challenges you to a fight – How would you respond?

How do people react to men backing down from a fight/losing a fight?

Are you expected to be there for your mate if he gets into a fight, to "have his back" so to speak?

6. RISKY DRINKING, PUBLIC VIOLENCE, AND MASCULINITY

Some people say that drinking alcohol and public violence go together, that there is a relationship between drinking and violence. What do you think?

Think back to your experiences with public violence. How often was alcohol involved in these experiences?

Think back to your experiences with drinking alcohol. How often would you say public violence happens when you are drinking and getting drunk?

Are some guys more likely than others to use drinking and fighting to be seen as a man?

How do drinking and fighting compare when it comes to being a man? Is one more important than the other when it comes to being seen as manly?

Is one riskier than the other?

Some people say that the location and environment plays a role in drinking and fighting? What do you think?

Finally, if you had one minute to talk to the government about the problem of risky drinking and public violence among young men, what would you say?

7. CONCLUSION

(Nikolai - Give a short summary of what has been talked about)

Is that a good summary of what has been said??

Is there anything that we should have talked about but didn't?

Is there anything else that you'd like to add?

END

Well, that brings us to the end of the focus group.

Thanks so much for taking part!

F. Counselling and Support Resources

Lifeline
Ph: 13 11 14
www.lifeline.org.au
24 hour anonymous and confidential counselling, support and referral

MensLine
Ph: 1300 78 99 78
www.menslineaus.org.au
An Australian Government initiative providing telephone counselling and a referral service for men

Reach Out!
www.reachout.com.au
A web based service that provides information, support and interactive features to help young people get through tough times

Beyond Blue
Ph: 1300 22 4636
www.beyondblue.org.au/
This site tells you everything you ever needed to know about depression; from causes, symptoms and treatments through to info on support services and people's real life stories

DrinkWise
www.drinkwise.org.au/c/dw
Get the facts about alcohol and understand the health risks. Make informed decisions when it comes to drinking alcohol

DRUG ARM Australasia
Ph: 1300 656 800
www.drugarm.com.au
DRUG ARM Australasia is a not-for-profit organisation that is committed to reducing harms associated with alcohol and other drug use.

1800 RESPECT
Ph: 1800 737 732
A national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for anyone who has experienced—or are at risk of—physical or sexual violence. This service is designed to meet the needs of people with disabilities, Indigenous Australians, young people, and callers from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds

Victims Access Line
Ph: 1800 633 063
Provides support and information to victims of all crimes, including sexual and physical assault and domestic violence

Crisis Counselling
Ph: (02) 9331 2000
(Salvation Army Crisis Line. Sydney local call)

Salvation Army Care Line
Sydney metro Ph: (02) 9331 6000
Regional NSW Ph: 1300 36 36 22

Family Drug Support Helpline
Ph: 1300 368 186

Alcohol and Drug Information Service
Metropolitan (Sydney) Ph: (02) 9361 8000
NSW Country Ph: 1800 422 599

Drugs & Alcohol Multicultural Ethnic Centre (DAMEC)
Ph: (02) 9699 3552

Alcohol and Drug Services Helpline
ACT (02) 6205 4545
NSW 1800 422 599 (NSW country) (02) 9361 8000 (Sydney)
SA 1300 131 340 (for SA callers only)
VIC 1800 888 236
NT (08) 8948 0087 (Darwin) (08) 8951 7580 (Central Australia)
1800 131 350 (Territory wide)
QLD (07) 3837 5989 (Brisbane) 1800 177 833 (Free call within QLD outside Metro area)
TAS 1800 811 994
WA (08) 9442 5000 (Perth) 1800 198 024 (WA country)

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