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“Anyone who strikes a woman is not a real man”

A qualitative content analysis of Australian masculinity, mateship and
violence against women.

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Abstract

This thesis investigates seven Questions without notice from the Australian House of Representatives regarding violence against women. The statements were produced by former prime ministers Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull. Their responses are analysed through a qualitative content analysis. The results have been interpreted through masculinity and mateship theories in order to provide a discussion of Australian masculinity, which I claim is heavily influenced by ideals of mateship. The study aims to shed light on prevention of violence against women through a redefinition of hegemonic masculinity in an Australian context. Violence against women is a human rights violation, but it can only be combated if gender equality is obtained. As Raewyn Connell's masculinities theory shows, solely redefining hegemonic masculinity does not generate gender equality. The result of the study shows however that the prime ministers avoid the issue of gender equality to a large extent which may contribute to that violence against women remains at high rates in Australia.

Keywords: violence against women, domestic violence, family violence, hegemonic masculinity, Australian masculinity, mateship, Connell

Thesis

Table of content:

1. Introduction	p. 4
1.1 Purpose and research question	p. 5
1.2 Primary material	p. 6
1.2.1 Limitations	p. 8
1.3 Previous research	p. 9
1.4 Theory and method	p. 13
1.4.1 Theory	p. 13
1.4.2 Method	p. 16
2. Analysis and discussion	p. 17
2.1 A qualitative content analysis of expressions of masculinity and mateship in Questions without notice	p. 18
2.2 Discussion - Connecting masculinity and mateship	p. 31
3. Conclusion	p. 34
4. Concluding thoughts	p. 34
5. List of references	p. 36

1. Introduction

When residing in Australia as a foreigner, my perceptions of “Aussie culture” were mostly positive: I found people open-minded, relaxed, having a strong sense of fairness and loyalty. The term “mateship” truly was the epitome of what I would have described as Australian values. Mateship can be described as “a fraternal relationship, bound by loyalty and courage; where practical support is a prerequisite, along with toughness, independence and resilience; it is light-hearted camaraderie, where overt displays of vulnerability or emotion are to be avoided.”¹ I believed I was part of this, but when I returned home I began to question mateship. I realised that perhaps I were not considered a member of mateship culture.

I came across an article criticising ‘mateship’ as a narrative that was exclusive to men. A connection between mateship and a particular Australian masculinity has long been established by many different sociologists.² In fact, mateship can be described as a part of Australian masculinity. Was mateship merely a facade of a larger masculine, identity project? What could be the consequences?

I learnt that Australia had immense problems with violence against women (VAW). In the Australian Human Rights commission’s report to the United Nations (UN) special rapporteur on VAW, the rate of VAW is described as “disturbingly high” with 40.8% of women stating in a survey from 2012 that they have experienced some form of violence since the age of 15.³ I wondered if this was one result of mateship. The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW) from the UN defines VAW as ‘any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.’⁴ Moreover, a government commissioned survey released before the launch of a anti-VAW campaign in

¹ Karina J., Butera “Neo-mateship in the 21st century: Changes in the performance of Australian masculinity” *Journal of Sociology* vol. 44(3) 2008, p. 269.

² Linzi Murrie “The Australian Legend: Writing Australian Masculinity/Writing ‘Australian’ masculine” *Journal of Australian Studies*, 1998, 22:56, 68-77, p. 68-69.

³ Australian Human rights commission submission to the special rapporteur on violence against women “Violence against women in Australia” Australian human rights commission 20/1/2017, retrieved 28/11/18, link in list of references.

⁴ UN Women’s website “A brief overview of the United Nations and violence against women”, Un.org, retrieved 23/11/18, link in list of references.

2015 showed that one in four Australians thought that it was not a serious problem if a guy slaps his girlfriend when he is drunk and they are arguing.⁵

I wondered then again, if my perceptions of Australian mateship matched with reality. On one hand, there are values of loyalty and fairness while on the other side there is VAW on an epidemic scale. I claim that VAW is a global human rights violation: its consequences may be fatal and affect many other fundamental human rights. Why is it still so wide spread, despite a wide anti-violence consensus? I was interested to see if this perceived masculinity was visible, even in statements that were anti-VAW. I believe mateship is a part of Australian masculinity, and it is therefore interesting to study to understand the Australian context. VAW can be a way of expressing masculinity, but is not generally accepted in Australian society. Investigating whether masculinity is expressed in statements denouncing VAW is a point of entry to comprehend underlying structures of masculinity, which in the Australian context is mateship. I therefore wanted to investigate if mateship and masculinity shone through at a political level, in statements against VAW by prime ministers.

1.1 Purpose and research questions

The objective of this thesis is to investigate what and how ideals of mateship and masculinity are expressed by former prime ministers of Australia. I believe that the two ideals may prevent development towards gender equality. The utterances expressed are relatable to questions regarding gender in general, and masculinity in particular. The analysis aims to decode underlying patterns of masculinity which are prevalent in VAW discourse, while attempting to explain perceptions of “an ideal Australian male.” The Australian ideal of masculinity distinguishes it from other countries as it is closely related to values regarding mateship.⁶ In fact, I argue that mateship is the hegemonic masculinity in Australia. Previous research has not focused on the connection between the two in statements from politicians. Politicians are elected by their constituents, and their wish is to represent them in the parliament or government. Their goal is to communicate beliefs that the people respond to. It

⁵ Department of Social services “Reducing violence against women and their children - research informing the development of a national campaign”, commissioned by the Australian government, november 2015, retrieved 14/12/18, link in list of reference.

⁶ Butera, Karina J., “Neo-mateship in the 21st century: Changes in the performance of Australian masculinity” p.266.

is therefore interesting to see how expressions of masculinity and mateship from the general public are influencing political leaders. My research questions are as follows:

- Do the former prime ministers (PMs) express masculinity and mateship and how are these concepts visible in statements regarding VAW?
- What, if any, connection can be made between mateship and masculinity in statements about VAW?

1.2 Primary material

The primary material of this thesis are seven statements in the Australian House of Representatives (HoR) about VAW by former Australian PMs Tony Abbott and Malcolm Turnbull. All of the statements are so called Questions without notice which are posed during Question time in parliament. A member of parliament asks a question to a minister who does not receive allocated time to prepare his or her answer. This works as a source of information and is popular to report on in media since it often becomes a party-political contest.⁷ I chose this type of statements because I believe a spontaneous response can give an insight to how the PM wishes to communicate. Rather than a speech, the unprepared responses do not allow many rhetorical tool such as figures of speech to be used but the responder's answer must be brief. He or she must answer the question within a time frame and cannot in that sense avoid the question.

The time frame of this task is one of the reasons why only two PMs are investigated. The reason as to why it is Abbott and Turnbull and not other PMs such as Kevin Rudd or Julia Gillard is due to the fact that the government funded campaign launched in 2015 show tendencies of a shift back to regarding VAW as a gendered question (background information about the de-gendering of VAW during the Howard prime ministership can be found in the section below).

Abbott and Turnbull are elected members by the Australian people: they are in that sense restricted to represent the views of the electorates, not themselves. Abbott and Turnbull wish to win elections and must present and communicate statements which make them

⁷ Legislative council, Parliament of Victoria "Information sheet 3 - Questions: Question time (question without notice)" parliament.vic.gov.au, retrieved 08/01/10, link in list of references.

likeable and votable for the people. It is fair to say that they have put much thought into this issue. It could be seen as a weakness for the thesis that the PMs have a goal, but I would argue that it is in fact the opposite. The results of the analysis show that there are traces of Australian masculinity culture “surviving” in the statements despite the PM’s grading their language to suit the voters. If anything, that demonstrates that the presence Australian masculinity and mateship is an important factor in the discourse used by politicians regarding VAW. A single individual cannot represent a whole people but because Abbott and Turnbull are political figures, I believe, they must endure a higher standard than “the common man.”

The statements can be found through the archive of Australian Parliament, called Hansard. Hansard’s mission is “to provide an accurate, substantially verbatim account of the proceedings of the parliament and its committees which, ...correcting obvious mistakes, neither adds to nor detracts from the meaning of the speech or the illustration of the argument.”⁸ I believe this is a credible source for the statements. The search words were ‘domestic violence’, ‘family violence’ or ‘violence against women’ as all of these terms are used in Australian legislation to describe the same phenomena. The following paragraphs give a brief introduction to the context of the statements.

In early January 2015, Australian of the year Rosie Batty and former police chief Ken Lay were named as members of an advisory panel on VAW prevention.⁹ The panel is referred to in the first response by Tony Abbott on March 4th 2015. PM Abbott replies on the issue of VAW, brought up by the leader of the Opposition Bill Shorten.¹⁰ Three months later, on 3rd June 2015, the issue is brought up by Shorten once again, wishing to renew the parliament's commitments to eradicate VAW. PM Abbott replies again (response 2).¹¹ On the 14th of September the same year, Shorten asks PM Abbott for cooperation in creating a family violence package. This is the third response.¹²

⁸ Parliament of Australia *Hansard*, aph.gov.au, retrieved 29/11/2018, link in list of reference.

⁹ Melissa Davey and Shalailah Medhora “Rosie Batty and Ken Lay appointed to new domestic violence advisory panel” *The Guardian* 28/01/2015, retrieved 23/11/2018, link in list of references.

¹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 04/03/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

¹¹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 03/06/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

¹² Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

In September, following a vote of no confidence, a leadership spill meant Abbott lost the prime ministership to his liberal colleague Malcolm Turnbull.¹³ Consequently, a campaign aimed against VAW which was due to launch around 10 days later by Abbott, was instead presented by Turnbull.¹⁴ Two months later, Shorten asks the new PM for support in a bill that would allow victims of domestic violence to take leave from work because of the abuse. PM Turnbull says that his government will consider the motion carefully, which is the fourth response.¹⁵ On November 23rd 2016, roughly a year later, Shorten asks for support for a motion aiming to protect vulnerable victims during court proceedings, to which Turnbull begins with recognising VAW in response 5.¹⁶

A year on, Shorten asks a Question without notice regarding domestic violence as a reason for leave at work once again. Turnbull replies, but is accused by another member of parliament, Burke, of not answering the question. As Turnbull answers, the time expires (response 6).¹⁷ The last response (7) is from 18th of June 2018, the questioner Bandt asks if the PM will support an increase in efforts to change men's behaviour following the murder of Eurydice Dixon, a young woman in Melbourne.¹⁸ Turnbull explains that while people are grieving, action must be taken among men to work as role models in order to create a nation that is respectful towards women. Shorten also replies to the question.¹⁹

1.2.1 Limitations

A few things may be said regarding the chosen material: both Abbott and Turnbull have spoken about VAW at other times but the limitation is set to VAW being raised as a Question without notice in the HoR. The other statements are quite dated and so the legitimacy of the

¹³ Gabrielle Chan & Katharine Murphy "Liberal leadership spill: Malcolm Turnbull ousts Tony Abbott as Australian PM - as it happened" *The Guardian* 14/09/15, last update 13/03/18, retrieved 22/11/18 link in list of references.

¹⁴ Kenny, Mark "Prime minister Malcolm Turnbull go hard against domestic violence" *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 22/9/2015, retrieved 20/11/2018, link in list of references.

¹⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25/11/2015, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

¹⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 23/11/2016, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

¹⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 05/12/2017, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

¹⁸ Danny Tran and staff "Eurydice Dixon: Grief, anger as thousands gather at park vigils around Australia" *The Age* 18/06/18, retrieved 22/11/18 link in lists of references.

¹⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 18/06/2018, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

sources cannot be guaranteed. There is for example, a risk that video material could have been manipulated to fit a certain purpose. Other statements in the media are often brief and do not give enough context for a stable qualitative content analysis. As a consequence, there are not many statements that could be analysed. The scarcity of responses in the HoR can also be explained by the fact that neither of the PMs in question served in office for longer periods (Abbott two years and Turnbull three years).

It could be interesting to see whether the shift towards a de-gendering of VAW affects the expressions of masculinity and mateship by the PMs active in that period. I have therefore chosen three statements before the campaign, and four after. These four statements are very regular in their occurrence: the theme is brought up once a year, at almost exactly the same time. This could be an interesting point of discussion of how VAW was high on the political agenda in 2015, but that interest has decline since.

The reason for choosing VAW rather than sexual violence or physical violence in general, is also because of an interest to see how a shift in official discourse has affected expressions of masculinity and mateship. Physical violence does not necessarily have the same extent of gendered violence. Sexual violence, however, is a gendered issue but I believe that sexual violence is part of the VAW spectrum. This can be seen in the UN definition of VAW, stated in the introduction. Rather than concentrating specifically on sexual violence, a focus on VAW allows the question of sexual violence to be included in the definition. Therefore, I believe sexual violence can be address through looking at VAW, as preventing VAW is about creating an environment where women are safe to live every aspect of their lives as they wish.

1.3 Previous research

The following section provides previous research relevant for the analysis. As well as to demonstrate discoveries and conclusions already made by researchers, this section serves as background information to the subjects covered throughout the thesis. To thoroughly understand Australian masculinity in VAW discourse, some facts must be laid clear. I believe the chosen studies do just that.

The most important secondary material for this thesis is ““Real men don’t hit women”: constructing masculinity in the prevention of violence against women” by Michael Slater.

The study critically examines how gender norms of masculinity remain in campaigns of VAW prevention. Slater claims that these campaigns tend to be one-dimensional, only focusing on gender norms while forgetting gender inequality. The result is that gender inequality is endorsed through upholding gender norms in the prevention campaigns, rather than challenging them. The phrase ‘real men don’t hit women’ is in one campaign said by a man working in a male-oriented job, even though marginalisation of women from these portrayed professions actually increases the likelihood of VAW. The phrase and image is thus problematic, despite the campaign having pro-feminist intentions.²⁰

In terms of the Australian context, in mid 1990- the conservative John Howard government considered VAW a relationship, not a social problem. Preventional work was aimed towards counselling and ‘risk avoidance’ workshops were held for women and girls.²¹ A shift in international human rights attitudes during this period generated a larger focus on gender norms, Slater writes. Despite this, some of the campaigns against VAW launched were not as progressive as expected. Slater mentions that campaigns were not strictly anti-violence, as they produce a sense of threat of violence from other men to stop the perpetrator.²² A Croatian ad called for men to “hit me, not her”²³ and more subtle expressions of masculinity could also be found in prevention organisation White Ribbon’s campaigns. Here, the discourse is also pertained by masculinity: encouraging men to ‘men up’ and that ‘thousands of good men have got their back.’²⁴ Often, portrayals of women show them admiring this ‘new type’ of men.²⁵ Slater’s article argues that an attempt to redefine and challenge perceptions of masculinity becomes a counter-productive move as the analysis fails to address gender inequality, which in turn is a large factor in VAW. This article is relevant for the thesis because there are traces of the same tendencies in the statements said by Turnbull and Abbott.

The consequences of the Howard government are also discussed in Ruth Phillips’ “Undoing an Activist Response: Feminism and the Australian Government’s Domestic Violence Policy.” It targets the social conservative Howard government which steered the

²⁰ Michael Slater “‘Real men don’t hit women’: constructing masculinity in the prevention of violence against women” *Australian and New Zealand journal of criminology*, 2016 vol 49(4) p. 468.

²¹ Michael Slater “‘Real men don’t hit women’: constructing masculinity in the prevention of violence against women” p. 465.

²² Ibid” p. 470.

²³ Ibid p. 469.

²⁴ Ibid p. 470.

²⁵ Ibid p. 471.

discussion of VAW away from questions of gender to an issue of relationship and family. Social conservatism is by its nature anti-feminist, Phillips write, as it views the break-down the the family as a threat to society.²⁶ During the Howard government, funding for anti-VAW was cut and much of the remaining funds were aimed towards Aboriginal communities. This further racialized the issue, claiming it was a problem of Aboriginal families, rather than that of the larger society.²⁷ Also, the campaigns launched at the time, Phillips claims, created a shift from previous feminist activism into a gender neutral VAW language. For example, a brochure distributed to all Australian households used terms such as ‘the abusive partner and victim’ despite the statistics clearly showing that men were more likely to abuse, and women to be the abusee.²⁸ The PM reportedly wanted to avoid ‘man blaming’ language, and thus, domestic violence (including children) became the preferred term.²⁹ A statement from Howard reads that hard work is being undertaken so that ‘Australian *families* can live free of the fear of violence’³⁰ demonstrates this shift. As my analysis shows, different terms are used to explain VAW in Australia. This study explains the causes behind the inconsistency.

Connections between mateship, masculinity and VAW are presented by Alison J. Towns and Gareth Terry in their study of men’s discourse in Aotearoa/New Zealand in their article “‘You’re in That Realm of Unpredictability’: mateship, loyalty and men challenging men who use domestic violence against women.”³¹ Towns and Terry have conducted focus groups where men discuss domestic VAW. The results showed that mateship was present. Asking about or challenging another man’s behaviour was considered disloyal: one participant described it as “wrecking the whole system of bonding.”³² Other participants said that challenging other men’s VAW was hard because you were not ‘a good mate’ who interfered in the other’s private matters. This contributes to a dichotomy where men are considered public and women private. Towns and Terry explain that this is because it is hard for men to go against the hegemonic masculinity in society, which in this case is mateship. A

²⁶ Ruth Phillips “Undoing an Activist Response: Feminism and the Australian Government’s Domestic Violence Policy” *Critical Social Policy Ltd* vol 26(1), 2006, pp. 194.

²⁷ *Ibid* p. 209.

²⁸ Phillips “Undoing an Activist Response: Feminism and the Australian Government’s Domestic Violence Policy” p. 212.

²⁹ *Ibid* p. 210.

³⁰ *Ibid*, my italics p. 205.

³¹ Alison J. Towns & Gareth Terry “‘You’re in That Realm of Unpredictability’: mateship, loyalty and men challenging men who use domestic violence against women” *Violence Against Women* 2014, Vol. 20(8) p. 1012–1036.

³² *Ibid* p. 1020.

consequence is that men do not talk about VAW, and a culture of silence is created.³³ Although this study is from Aotearoa/New Zealand, I believe it is a valuable source to explain mateship culture in Australia too. Some of the tendencies in these statements can also be found in the responses that have been studied in this thesis.

The connection between violence and masculinities is further established in “Men, masculinities and physical violence in contemporary Europe” by Katarzyna Wojnicka. Wojnicka investigates the intersections between men, masculinities and violence. The author claims that media portrayal of physical violence often depicts the issue as gender-neutral, similarly to the goal of the Howard government. That is to say, that there is a symmetry between victim and perpetrator in terms of gender. Wojnicka explains that this is a misconception as men statistically are more likely to be both the perpetrator and victim of physical violence. Women are little involved in performing physical violence, but are at a large extent victims of male violence in all countries of investigation.³⁴

However Wojnicka also writes that “men who do not fit into the norms of hegemonic masculinity are more likely to become victims of men-to-men violence than the men who can be described as members of the dominant group in a given society.”³⁵ Gay, trans and queer men are particularly vulnerable. Thus, there is an ideal of masculinity which is exclusive and may resort to violence in order to protect this state. But also, Wojnicka writes, physical confrontation may also be an appealing way for men to prove or express their manhood. In dangerous situations, using violence can even be glorified if it is used to “defend” a woman, with or without her consent. Wojnicka describes this as connected to honour and it is also a clear example of asymmetry, as it is only connected to men, Wojnicka concludes.³⁶ Although Wojnicka’s article is not related to VAW, I believe it sheds light on the issue of masculinities as a cause of physical violence. As described in the introduction though, VAW is more widely defined than just physical.

³³ Ibid p. 1015-1019.

³⁴ Katarzyna Wojnicka “Men, masculinities and physical violence in contemporary Europe” Centre for European research at the University of Gothenburg, 14/2/2015 p. 16.

³⁵ Ibid p. 22.

³⁶ Ibid p. 26-27.

1.4 Theory and method

The following section outlines the chosen theory and method for this thesis. The method aims to decode the text, which is relevant as masculinity is not always explicitly expressed. I believe this is an appropriate method since the purpose of this thesis is to decode masculinity which may be concealed. The theories takes this aspect into consideration, too. The main theory of this thesis will be based on hegemonic masculinity theory by R.W Connell. Connell is one of the leading researchers on masculinity in the world. I believe hegemonic masculinity theory is a suitable option for this thesis because the aim is to investigate expressions of masculinity. Connell's theory provides a nuanced and comprehensive view as it has been developed over many years of research. The structures of gender relations presented below are relevant because they explain different aspects of gender, including its contrasts, contradictions and plurality, which are all visible features in the analysis. Also, Connell herself is Australian, and the theory could make observations about Australian masculinity as this is the context where it was developed by Connell. To complement the hegemonic masculinity theory, 'mateship' is also used as a theoretical term. This is due to the fact that the thesis examines masculinities in an Australian context. As introduced earlier, I claim 'mateship' is hegemonic in Australian masculinity. The theories should thus be seen as co-dependent, as they both describe essential qualities within the same phenomena.

1.4.1 Theory

Hegemonic masculinity

The basics of Connell's hegemonic masculinity theory are laid clear in her book *The men and the boys*. In the introduction, Connell introduces seven key conclusions from previous research which are also necessary starting points in order to discuss the masculinity aspect of gender.³⁷ Connell refers to (1) plurality in masculinities as there is no universal masculinity and diversity also exist. The masculinities are also (2) hierarchical and hegemonic; there's usually one form of masculinity 'that is more honoured or desired,'³⁸

³⁷ Raewyn/Robert Connell, *The men and the boys*, Polity, Cambridge, 2000 p. 9-13.

³⁸ Connell, *The men and the boys* p. 10.

though it may not be the most common or comfortable form. Some masculinities may be organized around the acceptance of a hegemonic masculinity, what Connell calls complicit masculinities.³⁹ Furthermore, masculinities are (3) defined in collectively and sustained by institutions, for example among children in a playground or at work. Next, (4) bodies or biology do not determine masculinities but are important factors. Masculinity enactment may lead to bodily consequences through for example hard work, excessive exercise or violence, but is also linked to conduct. Feminine conduct with a male body or reverse is seen as abnormal.⁴⁰

Connell's fifth conclusion is that (5) masculinity is an active construction, produced by people's actions. This creates (6) internal complexity and contradiction of desires and conduct: for example some heterosexual conducts can also be interpreted as stereotypically homosexual. The construction, complexity and contradiction of masculinities explains Connell's last conclusion that (7) masculinities are dynamic. Gender practices alter when historical circumstances in which masculinities are created, change. Progress is far from quick, as men will defend their resources and privileged positions in society.⁴¹ As stated above, these seven conclusions are necessary starting points for understanding masculinities.

42

Bearing in mind these key conclusions, the theory of this analysis is based on Connell's descriptions of social gender relations. When studying social gender relations, patterns appear which are labelled 'structures'. Connell suggests a four fold model of the structure of gender relations. This part of the theory is the main basis for the analysis, although the seven conclusions are relevant and used in the analysis. *Power relations* is the first factor presented. Connell describes this often referred to as 'patriarchy' which is a general structure that persists despite resistance and local exceptions, creating a legitimacy problem. Next, Connell explains *Production relations (division of labour)* where task allocation and capital are of most importance. Men control large corporations and private fortunes, making the capitalist economy a gendered process. The inequality can be called the *patriarchal dividend*.⁴³

³⁹ Connell, *The men and the boys* p. 31.

⁴⁰ Ibid p. 11-12.

⁴¹ Ibid p. 12-14.

⁴² Ibid p. 9.

⁴³ Ibid p. 24-25.

In *Cathexis (emotional relations)*, Connell writes about desire which could be defined as “emotional energy being attached to an object.”⁴⁴ Practices that create these desires are part of the gender order. Finally, the last part of the four fold model is *Symbolism*. This is a key factor in the analysis as it is concerning the process of communication. Grammar, syntax, visual and sound vocabularies are important elements of gender practice. Expressions may be more or less subtle and/or conscious, also regarding appearance where gender may be reinforced by clothing, make up, gestures etcetera.⁴⁵

Mateship

This thesis claims that mateship is a part of Australian masculinity. To understand the context of masculinity and mateship in Australia, Jack Holland and Katharine A.M Wright’s article “The Double Delegitimation of Julia Gillard: Gender, the Media, and Australian Political Culture” is partly focused on explaining mateship. I am using their explanation of mateship in this thesis. Holland and Wright claim that gendered narratives are used to explain “what it means to *be* ‘an Australian.’”⁴⁶ The most prominent narrative is the idea of mateship which worked as a tool in creating a positive, loyal working class. This perspective is also brought up in Nick Dyrenfurth’s article “John Howard’s hegemony of Values: the Politics of Mateship in the Howard decade.” Mateship was a way to create solidarity, often referring to ‘brotherhood’ originating in pre-modern ideals.⁴⁷ The qualities of this brotherhood such as egalitarianism derived from the ‘Australian legend’ of a unique, although mythological, Australian experience. This became an important part in forming an Australian national identity which could be used for political gain by the Australian Labour movement.⁴⁸

Holland and Wright mean that this myth is fundamentally exclusive in terms of race and gender. The success of the Australian Labour movement embedded mateship into the national identity as a value of egalitarianism.⁴⁹ This, Holland and Wright argues, further

⁴⁴ Connell, *The men and the boys* p. 25.

⁴⁵ *Ibid* p. 26.

⁴⁶ Jack Holland & Katharine A.M Wright “The Double Delegitimation of Julia Gillard: Gender, the Media, and Australian Political Culture” *Australian Journal of Politics and History* vol 63(4), 2017, p. 591.

⁴⁷ Nick Dyrenfurth, “John Howard’s Hegemony of Values: The Politics of ‘Mateship’ in the Howard Decade.” *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, June 2007, p. 212.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*

⁴⁹ Holland & Wright “The Double Delegitimation of Julia Gillard: Gender, the Media, and Australian Political Culture” p. 591.

cemented the idea of the ‘true Australian’ to be “manly, true and white.”⁵⁰ Equally, the laid-back, down-to-earth qualities (that I personally experienced) of Australian national identity are often associated with a young Australian male.

Although the terms ‘mate’ and ‘friend’ can be used interchangeably, it is important to note that they are not the same concept in this thesis. Karina J. Butera describes mateship as “the symbolic practice and value-laden ideology that represents a particular type of loyal bond between members of a struggling, or under-class.”⁵¹ Mateship can thus be connected to a larger social project than friendship. In her article, Butera demonstrates the connection between friendship and mateship which she claims is affected by perceptions of masculinity. I believe Connell would be of the same opinion. Mateship is, as well as hegemonic masculinity, an exclusive concept aiming to identify certain members that it wishes to include or exclude. My analysis therefore benefits from the use of both these theoretical concepts as they together manage to reveal expressions of masculinity and mateship.

1.4.2. Method

The method of this thesis is a qualitative content analysis. A content analysis can be divided into two genres: a quantitative method or a qualitative method. In the latter, words are not counted by for example frequency, or measured in any way.⁵² In their article “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis” Hsiu-Fang Hsieh and Sarah E. Shannon define qualitative content analysis as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.”⁵³ Qualitative content analysis aims to examine the language through identifying terms, words and phrases to obtain a deeper understanding of the contextual use.⁵⁴ Vocabulary, grammar and syntax are therefore valuable points to analyse when using a content method. Connell’s theory of masculinities describes the social practices which create

⁵⁰ W. Spence cited in, N. Dyrenfurth, “John Howard’s hegemony of values: the politics of ‘mateship’ in the Howard decade” p. 212.

⁵¹ Butera, Karina J., “Neo-mateship in the 21st century: Changes in the performance of Australian masculinity”, p. 269.

⁵² Göran Bergström & Kristina Boréus (ed.), *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys*, 3., [utök.] uppl., Studentlitteratur, Lund, 2012, my own translation from Swedish p. 50.

⁵³ Hsiu-Fang Hsieh & Sarah E. Shannon, “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis” *Qualitative health research*, Vol. 15 No. 9, November 2005 p. 1278.

⁵⁴ *Ibid* p. 1278.

gender structures. These may surface in language and can be more or less conscious and/or subtle. This makes it relevant to use a method wishing to reveal the hidden, like a qualitative content analysis. Thus, the method and theory connect well on this point.

My first step of the content analysis was carefully reading the texts to derive any codes. Key thoughts and concepts were then highlighted. I then proceeded with noting down first thoughts and impressions which formed the initial analysis. The codes were sorted into categories and then further put under subcategories, as suggested by Hsieh and Shannon.⁵⁵

I will be studying expressions of masculinity and mateship through investigating the language in seven Questions without notice from the Australian HoR. In the analysis, I have extracted quotes from the seven responses and categorised them under the headings: “Conflicting use of terms and misconceptions of VAW”, “The role of men and their responsibility”, “Uniting parliament”, “Personal relationships with women” and “Lack of reference to mateship.” Terms in these headings are frequently used by both Abbott and Turnbull, except the last one (it is however relevant, I believe). The responses are presented thematically for clarity, rather than chronologically. I chose this approach to avoid a confirmation bias, which could have occurred if headings were chosen from the theories, followed by quotes from the texts. An analysis of the citations follow the subcategory and its quotes, using Connell’s hegemonic masculinity theory as a perspective on expressions of masculinity and mateship theory from sources presented earlier.

I am aware of the fact that some quotes may fit under multiple headings but these have been chosen for their expected clarity of the issues.

2. Analysis and discussion

As written in the introduction, the definition of VAW used in this thesis is from the DEVAW which says “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.”⁵⁶ In the analysis, I demonstrate what expressions of masculinity and mateship are visible in the

⁵⁵ Hsieh, Hsiu-Fang & Shannon, Sarah E. “Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis” p. 1279.

⁵⁶ UN Women’s website “A brief overview of the United Nations and violence against women”, Un.org, retrieved 23/11/18, link in list of references.

statements. In the discussion, the second question concerning a connection between the two is discussed. VAW is not an accepted expression of masculinity in Australia, but mateship is. Studying the latter can therefore reveal aspects of masculinity, as I claim that mateship has become the hegemonic masculinity in Australian culture. Politicians aim to appeal to constituents and wish to communicate in a convincing matter. They can therefore be investigated as a representation of the general public's interests, which also applies to questions of masculinity.

2.1 A qualitative content analysis of expressions of masculinity and mateship in Questions without notice

All the seven responses are so called Questions without notice which means the responder has not received time to prepare the answer. In January 2015 (response 1) parliament takes an initial step to put VAW on the political agenda. Abbott has created an advisory panel on VAW.⁵⁷ In June the same year, (response 2) the government is asked to renew commitments to combat VAW. The Opposition asks for support to launch a family violence package in September 2015 (response 3). Then, Abbott loses the prime ministership and Turnbull makes his first response on VAW in November 2015 after the launch of the campaign "Let's stop it at the start"⁵⁸ when Opposition Leader Shorten wants support for a motion allowing victims of VAW to be granted leave from work (response 4). In November 2016, Turnbull replies on the question of family court proceedings and also addresses VAW (response 5). In December 2017, Turnbull is asked again about leave from work but also brings up a scandal regarding disrespectful behaviour and the Labour party's involvement in a union (response 6). The last response (7) is from June 2018 when Turnbull pays tribute to Eurydice Dixon who was murdered when returning home from meeting a friend.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Davey, Melissa, Medhora, Shalailah "Rosie Batty and Ken Lay appointed to new domestic violence advisory panel" 28/01/2015, retrieved 19/12/18.

⁵⁸ Australian Government, Violence against women. Let's stop it at the start, The issue - Disrespect and violence against women, respect.gov.au, retrieved 10/12-18.

⁵⁹ Tran, Danny and staff "Eurydice Dixon: Grief, anger as thousands gather at park vigils around Australia", 18/06/18, retrieved 22/11/18.

Conflicting usage of terms and misconceptions of VAW

Research has shown that not using the correct term to describe violence, can be considered a violent act in itself. Misconceptions of VAW are expressions of masculinity as the issue tends to be misguided, meaning that the suggested solution may not actually address the root of the cause.⁶⁰ A similarity between all Questions without notice is the use of multiple terms to describe the phenomena VAW. In Australian federal jurisdiction, different definitions of VAW coexist: ‘domestic violence’, ‘family violence’ and ‘violence against women and their children’ are used. The lack of coherency previously received criticism from the UN special rapporteur on VAW.⁶¹ During the Abbott prime ministership, domestic violence or family violence were the most common terms. In Response 1, Abbott makes acknowledges gender in the issue of domestic violence, but does not use the term VAW.⁶² He says:

“For too long it (family violence) has been hidden, and just because the crime happens behind closed door does not make it any less of a crime. In fact, sometimes it can be even more of an even more horrific crime, because it happens in the home, and the home should be a sanctuary for everyone, particularly for women and children.”⁶³

I believe there is confusion regarding Abbott’s Response 1 if he is referring to VAW specifically, since he mentions women’s underprivileged position, or if he is referring to violence occurring in the home as a genderless issue. Most likely, the choice by Abbott was subconscious but the lack of a subjective agent conceals the perpetrator.⁶⁴ The power relation is not described; that is, men abusing women. Not acknowledging the inequality or asymmetry of violence contributes to an impunity where no one can be held responsible. I think it could be seen as a type of resistance to change, which Connell discusses.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ Linda Coates & Allan Wade “Language (*sic*) and violence: analysis of four discursive operations” *The Journal of Family Violence* vol 22, 1/10/2007, p. 513.

⁶¹ United Nations Human rights office of the high commissioner “End of mission statement by Dubravka Šimonović, United Nations Special Rapporteur on Violence against women, its causes and consequences, on her visit to Australia from 13 to 27 February 2017”, OHCHR.com, retrieved 23/11/2018, link in list of references.

⁶² Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 04/03/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁶³ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 04/03/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁶⁴ Bergström & Boréus (ed.), *Textens mening och makt: metodbok i samhällsvetenskaplig text- och diskursanalys* p. 284.

⁶⁵ Connell *The men and the boys* p. 24-25.

Nevertheless, Abbott's attempts to justify his use of the term 'domestic violence' in Response 3: "... violence is violence, and we do not in any way explain it or minimise it by saying that it is domestic violence."⁶⁶ By doing this, Abbott appeals to create consensus through a hegemonic opinion.

Vocabulary and metaphors of secrecy like 'hidden' and 'behind closed doors' in the quote is symbolism suggesting that women and their issues have not been seen, presumably by society and the justice system. Historically, (and in many countries, still reality) VAW has not been illegal, instead it has been seen as a private matter whether a man uses violence against (his) women.⁶⁷ This is a possible explanation as to why VAW has been accepted and/or neglected in Australia. Abbott makes it clear that domestic violence is not excused as being part of the private sphere and states it is a crime regardless, which is a good step for change and prevention. But at the same time, the quote includes a common conception that women and children belong to the home to another extent than men. This is an example of power relation as described by Connell. The emphasis on sanctuary for women and children contributes to the description of a relationship between men and women as belonging to different spheres of society. The gender inequality is thus not addressed in Abbott's response.

As for mateship, the public-private dichotomy confirms Holland and Wright's explanation of mateship as exclusively male as they are given a natural place in the public. Women are restricted to the home. The statement is not a one-off from the norm: Abbott repeats his earlier opinion about domestic violence being a more horrific form of violence because it is conducted in the home which should be a "refuge and a haven" in Response 3.⁶⁸ Mateship as a problematic phenomena is not addressed explicitly, the quote I believe appears more as social conservative. However, I do believe it plays a role in his response. Bearing in mind the criticism mateship has received for being sex segregated,⁶⁹ Abbott's wording is interesting because he claims that domestic violence is worse than men on men violence in the public. Somehow, men ought to expect some form of violence (if they do not comply with the norm). I believe this is connected to the exclusiveness of mateship and masculinity: an

⁶⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁶⁷ Paula Tavares & Quentin Wodon "Global and legal trends in women's legal protection against domestic violence and sexual harassment" Ending violence against women note series, The World Bank, Washington DC, 2017, p. 6-7, retrieved 14/12/18, link in list of references.

⁶⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁶⁹ N. Dyrenfurth, "John Howard's hegemony of values: the politics of 'mateship' in the Howard decade" p. 213.

issue that may cause much trouble for example homosexual men or other men defying the hegemonic masculinity who may be punished for just that.

A contrasting opinion to Abbott's response on private and public, however, can be found in Response number 7. Turnbull says that "women must be safe everywhere - on the street, walking through a park, in their homes and at work".⁷⁰ Here, women's safety is not made more important in the home but in all aspects of society. But Turnbull also uses multiple terms. The most obvious example is Response 5 where the speaker uses all of the terms in the same statement. In the question, Turnbull is asked about family violence, but replies without this term. He says:

"Addressing *domestic violence* is a priority for all of us. We have to stop it. *Violence against women and children* is utterly unacceptable. The truth is that not all disrespect of women ends up with *violence against women*, but that is where all *violence against women* begin."⁷¹

Likewise as Abbott, there is confusion as to which term he refers to, or all three.

A relevant misconception is how VAW is recognised as only physical. The quote below (used under the next subcategory) illustrates Abbott's notion of VAW as physical abuse. "Anyone who *strikes* a woman or a child..."⁷² limits VAW and ignores the definition provided by DEVAW. By only addressing the physical aspects, sides of VAW such as coercive or financial control are hidden. These problems may consequently not be tackled. I claim that for social change to happen, the issues must be named and understood. This makes it necessary to use terms correctly. Men's privileged position and resources can be defended and confined if this is not done, despite masculinities being dynamic - contributing to the power gender relation explained by Connell.⁷³ Masculinity is expressed, and gender inequality which created the issue of VAW is not mentioned.

⁷⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 18/06/2018, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁷¹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 23/11/2016, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister, my italics.

⁷² Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister, my italics.

⁷³ Connell, *The men and the boys*, p. 24.

The role of men and their responsibility

A men's issue

The most frequent expression of masculinity in this analysis is that of men's roles and responsibility in conducting and preventing VAW. Connell writes that men are predominantly more violent than women in many aspects of society: in the home, in sports and in global conflicts. In Response 2, Abbott confirms that VAW is a men's issue as men are statistically the perpetrators.

“My message and, I am sure, the message of everyone, in this chamber to our brothers, to our sons and to our mates- because, let's face it, overwhelmingly this is a problem of male perpetrators against female victims- is: no more, never ever again. This is not a women's issue. It is a men's issue. It is a national issue. All of us- the men in this chamber, in particular - have a real challenge to rise to.”⁷⁴

Because of the asymmetry of men being more likely to be perpetrators, they should be the ones in charge to fix the problem. Women do not have any responsibility according to Abbott. This is a strategic move to avoid 'victim blaming', a concept where the victim is blamed for the perpetrators actions.⁷⁵ 'Victim blaming is particularly common in questions of domestic violence, something that Turnbull brings up in response 4: "...she says that the most common question she was asked after that tragedy was: 'What did you do to make him do that?' The victim of the most horrific crime was blamed.”⁷⁶ Recognizing victim blaming is a way to emphasize that a victim never can be held responsible, thus enforcing the notion that this is strictly a men's issue, creating a hegemonic consensus.

There is a general belief in society that men are naturally more violent than women. This is justified through biology as men have a higher level of the 'male-hormone' testosterone, than women. Connell says this is not credible, as all men are not violent, and

⁷⁴ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 03/06/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁷⁵ Megan Stubbs-Richardson, Nicole E. Rader & Arthur E. Cosby "Tweeting rape culture: Examining portrayals of victim blaming in discussions of sexual assault on Twitter", *Feminism and Psychology* vol. 28(1) 90-108 2018, p. 92.

⁷⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25/11/2015, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

because women are capable of committing violent acts (especially as punishment against children).⁷⁷ However, the aggressive male is and has been the hegemonic masculinity in society, implicating that men who are not violent belong to a subordinated masculinity. In the quote below from Response 3, Abbott attempts to redefine what type of masculinity is considered hegemonic:

“I make the fundamental point, in response to the Leader of the Opposition: anyone who strikes a woman is not a real man. Anyone who strikes a woman or a child is a coward. All of us have a very heavy duty to say to our brothers, to our fathers, to our sons and to our mates that domestic violence is never, ever acceptable and never, ever justifiable.”⁷⁸

His statement seeks to change male gender norms. ‘Real’ men do not hurt women, instead, they have ‘a duty’ to prevent VAW. As described in the theory, Connell claims that masculinities are dynamic and constantly change. What Abbott is striving to do is therefore not unjustified or impossible. Connell writes that the goal of gender equality includes changing masculinities through opening up gender norms to make them available for everyone’s enjoyment.⁷⁹ This is not occurring in Abbott’s Response 3: Abbott redefines, but does not dismantle or open up masculinity. Abbott describes men who hit women and children as ‘cowards’. It could be questioned if he would say the same about men’s violence against men, or violence in general. In that sense, it is not the violence that Abbott addresses, but what a ‘real’ man does or does not. Consequently, there is still a hegemonic masculinity expressed in his utterance, something that is also visible in the usage of the word ‘duty’ or, as said in Response 2: men have a “duty to be a protector and not a persecutor.”⁸⁰

This can be connected to Connell’s theory through production relations (division of labour) where men have an allocated task (a “duty” or “challenge”) to protect women, with or without their consent. Bodies also play a role here: large physique attributes social practices of nurturance and care, providing men with an incentive to look after women.⁸¹ The same wording of duties is visible in Response 7 by Turnbull “.... respect the women in their lives, is

⁷⁷ Connell, *The men and the boys*, p. 214-215.

⁷⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁷⁹ Connell, *The men and the boys*, p. 205.

⁸⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 03/06/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁸¹ Connell, *The men and the boys*, p. 77.

vitaly important. We all, as parents and grandparents, have a *duty* to do that. Also, we have a very profound *duty* to ensure that our public places...”⁸² This also plays into mateship, where practical support and loyalty are considered virtues:⁸³ protecting your mates and caring for the weak is a duty for anyone wanting to belong to the mateship culture. I believe that this is a sign of the exclusiveness of the two ideals that confirm each other. Being a part of mateship means having a duty to protect women, something that only men can do. Masculinity and mateship are intertwined in this sense.

Turnbull’s response is interesting as his main point regarding prevention of VAW is related to increasing men’s respect of women, which is discussed below.

Respect

The role of men is brought up many times by Turnbull. The key word of the campaign launched in 2015 is ‘respect,’⁸⁴ and Turnbull mentions the importance of respecting women in all his responses. It is probable that it is a conscious choice as his opinions should go in line with the campaign which the government he represents proposed. Turnbull explains that all men need to serve as role models to treat the core issue which he claims is disrespect. This was also one of the results in the study presented at the launch of the new campaign. The study showed that “boys blame others, particularly the female, and deflect personal responsibility telling each other it was a bit of a joke – it didn’t mean anything.”⁸⁵ Respect is at the core of the problem, Turnbull claims. In his first response, number 4, he says:

“It is absolutely critical that all men—as fathers, as grandfathers, as teachers, as employers, as members of parliament, as prime ministers and as alternative prime ministers, like the Leader of the Opposition —make it absolutely clear that violence against women and children must stop. And all of us must recognise that, while disrespecting women does not always result in violence against

⁸² Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 18/06/2018, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister, my italics.

⁸³ Butera, Karina J., “Neo-mateship in the 21st century: Changes in the performance of Australian masculinity” 2008, p. 269.

⁸⁴ Violence against women. Let’s stop it at the start, Australian Government, The issue - Disrespect and violence against women, respect.gov.au retrieved 10/12-18, link in list of references.

⁸⁵ Department of Social services “Reducing violence against women and their children - research informing the development of a national campaign”, commissioned by the Australian government, november 2015, retrieved 14/12/18, link in list of reference.

women, all violence against women begins with disrespecting women. This is, at heart, an issue where there needs to be cultural change.”⁸⁶

Not only does Turnbull allocated most responsibility to men, but he also brings up the question of culture. I think cultural change is needed for the VAW issues to truly be resolved. What Turnbull is suggesting is that it is considered acceptable in Australian culture for men to disrespect women. This is in line with the exclusiveness of mateship as described by Holland and Wright. Respectful behaviour towards women and being part of Australian mateship is not compatible, and this is why Turnbull proposes cultural change as the solution. In Response 6, Turnbull makes this clear when he says “Respect for women must be at the very heart of what it means to be an Australian...”⁸⁷ and again in Response 4 when he says that “violence against women... is one of the great shames of our nation.”⁸⁸I believe he is attempting to redefine mateship, rather than masculinity which Abbott had previously tried.

The connection between masculinity and nation could be explained by Connell as masculinities are defined and created collectively. A nation may well be the bearer of a hegemonic masculinity kept strong by its citizens. This is particularly visible in Australia, where mateship values are strong. Men as the participant of masculinity and mateship should therefore claim more responsibility than others to tackle VAW as they are the ideal candidates for the hegemony.

Connell discusses if men really should be at the forefront when it comes to combating VAW. Men as a group have are not oppressed and cannot comprehend what the situation is like for women. Being part of the hegemonic masculinity is not a disadvantage, quite the opposite. But seeking unity among these men only further emphasizes the differences between men and women. That follows that fighting for gender justice is essentially doing the opposite of what would create a ‘men’s movement’. One should not aim to unite masculinity (and mateship which follows) in order to increase gender justice. I claim that it is needed that men open up their exclusive forums, rather than create more unity within them. Of course, it is vital for men to show solidarity to victims of VAW, Connell says, but a mobilization of

⁸⁶ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25/11/2015, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁸⁷ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 05/12/2017, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁸⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25/11/2015, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

men (which one could argue that Turnbull is suggesting) is not efficient. This is because men will inevitably lose a privileged position in society when dismantling hegemonic masculinity.

89

This explains why Abbott and Turnbull speak of ‘duties’: by doing so, the gender norm is addressed without changing gender inequality, meaning they will stay on the same positions as previously even though the solution to the problem may require them to step down. Abbott and Turnbull are thus taking advantage of the fact that masculinities are dynamic, but their goal is not to alter masculinities as whole. Rather, Connell would claim, they aim to challenge the hegemonic masculinity, replacing it with one that is more respectful of women. The result is, however, that the hierarchy among masculinities still persist and remain exclusive. Interestingly enough, it could be that Abbott’s goal is to redefine the hegemonic masculinity, while Turnbull wants to redefine mateship. In their view, that would lead to the same goal of eliminating VAW in Australia. In my opinion, both ideals need to be redefined for this point to be efficient.

The focus on respect combined with mateship I believe creates a dangerous position for combating VAW. Right now, the hegemonic order that Turnbull represents demands that women ought to be treated as equal to men. But as any part of society, values change. It could be concerning if these values change, allowing mateship to dictate the hegemony if for example mateship began to state that men have more rights than women. Another problem is that claiming that all people are just ‘good mates’ may contribute to a culture of impunity. No one would ever dream of hurting one another in such a culture, and thus there can be no victims or perpetrators. In the end, any actions could be deemed ‘accidents’ or ‘jokes’, potentially excluding those hurting. In fact, this exclusiveness is enforced even more by the PMs wishes to create unity in parliament over the issue.

Uniting parliament

The question of unity or solidarity within parliament is also a relevant aspect to cover in this analysis. In all Responses except one (response 3), the PMs mention how people are, or should be, united to tackle VAW. One example is from Response 1:

⁸⁹ Connell *The men and the boys* p. 209-210.

“This is a big issue; it is an issue that all of us should be concerned about; it is an issue that all of us are concerned about; it is an issue that could easily unite, and should unite this parliament. I am very happy to agree to sit down with the Leader of the Opposition to discuss what both of us, and what all of us, can do to ensure that we get better outcomes on this issue.”⁹⁰

Parliament is key for unity and it is clear that everyone is onboard in this matter, as Turnbull says in Response 4 “to stop violence against women and their children is a national, totally bipartisan priority”⁹¹ and in Response 5 very similar “addressing domestic violence is a priority for all of us.”⁹² This could be seen as another attempt to collectively redefine the hegemonic masculinity (or mateship). Turnbull’s response 6, interestingly, stands out. At first he says “... we both (Turnbull and Shorten) made the commitment, yet again, to bring an end to violence against women.”⁹³ He and Shorten stand united. Turnbull then addresses that Shorten visited the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) after a scandal where union officials conducted demeaning and threatening behaviour towards women.⁹⁴ Turnbull is interrupted by Burke on the point of direct relevance to the question (domestic violence leave), and Turnbull replies:

“... you have got members of the CFMEU threatening domestic violence, and does he condemn it? Oh on. His (Burke’s) leader goes to show his solidarity (with the members). Let me say this to you: it’s about time the Leader of the Opposition stood up for something. He could stand up for respect for women. He could stand up for Australia. He could stand up for the security of our country.”⁹⁵

Turnbull makes a 180° turn and now slams the leader of the Opposition, accusing him of being a hypocrite for talking about respecting women while supporting a group doing the contrary. As Turnbull just proclaimed that the leaders were united, this quote is interesting to analyse. By saying that Shorten should condemn the behaviour for the sake of Australia, he

⁹⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 04/03/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

⁹¹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 25/11/2015, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁹² Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 23/11/2016, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁹³ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 05/12/2017, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

⁹⁴ Rachel Baxendale “CFMEU members not sexist insists ACTU boss Sally McManus” *The Australian* last updated 08/03/2018, retrieved 12/12/2018, link i list of references.

⁹⁵ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of Representatives, 05/12/2017, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

wishes to exclude Shorten from mateship, as he is not acting like a ‘true Australian’ according to the hegemonic order.

Turnbull is likely to be disappointed of Shorten’s behaviour but he also uses the opportunity for political gain. Here, he demonstrates how Shorten does not take the issue seriously. But at the same time, this is an expression of masculinity. Connell writes that some men only side with less advantaged people if it is in their own interest.⁹⁶ Using VAW or disrespect of women as a tool to gain voters does not necessarily help victims of VAW, but it does help Turnbull to win an upcoming election. The question of personal interest is discussed further below.

Creating unity in parliament is one way to achieve a hegemonic position. With a consensus, an arena for masculinity is created. It thus becomes impossible to be on the contrary. As Connell says, those diverting from the hegemonic order are subject to exclusion, creating a need for all men to join the majority.⁹⁷ The politics themselves are made hegemonic, and with it follows masculinity. Unity in parliament therefore cements masculinity as anyone wanting another solution or option than the suggested masculinity may be marginalised. But creating unity in parliament also becomes a balancing act for the prime ministers to create unity while not dismissing their voters. They must distinguish themselves from other politicians. I believe that the egalitarian values of mateship could be possible way to do so, but neither Abbott or Turnbull can or will afford to take the risk to criticise mateship in case that would lose them votes. It is therefore politically safer for the PMs to refer to the consensus and criticise culture in general, and not mateship specifically in case that may upset their voters. Unless it is used as Turnbull does - against the political opponent.

Personal relationships with women

“But one of the most important things we have to do, as parents or grandparents, is say that it is our responsibility to make sure our sons and our grandsons grow up to respect the women in their lives, beginning with their mothers and their sisters—those most close to them. That is critically important. It is a point my wife, Lucy, has often made—it is a powerful one. That role of leadership is driving cultural change.”⁹⁸

⁹⁶ Connell, *The men and the boys* p. 210.

⁹⁷ Connell *The men and the boys* p. 10-11.

⁹⁸ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 23/11/2016, Malcolm Turnbull, Prime minister.

In some of the responses, Turnbull and Abbott bring up their own relationships with women. In the quote above, it is likely that Turnbull is not referring to his own sons and grandsons, but to the whole people. He also says the idea of young men and boys growing up to respect women is not an idea from himself, but by his wife. It is questionable however, why it is relevant to bring up that it was in fact his wife who said this. As he talks about being role model, it is important to give people credit for what they have said, and not claiming it yourself. Turnbull therefore mentions his wife to show that women say 'powerful' things. It also strengthens his argument because Turnbull himself is seen as listening and empathic (although on the verge of paternalistic).

Connell claims that the personal connection or interest is important if men want to make a difference to less advantaged peoples' situation. It is less likely for men to highlight women's experiences if it does not fill a purpose for themselves. Therefore, mentioning how women make a difference or have a position in men's lives through personal interest justifies a better treatment, and thus becomes an expression of masculinity.⁹⁹

But having personal relationships with many women also explains why one would care more about VAW. This is expressed in Abbott's Response 2 when he says "As a husband, as a brother of three sisters and as the father of three daughters, I find any violence against women and children absolutely abhorrent."¹⁰⁰ Abbott cares about VAW because he can personally relate. It could be his sisters, daughters or wife who is affected. This is an interesting expression of masculinity because the difference between himself and the women in his life is made very clear. As previously said by Connell, an effective movement would instead focus on the things in common. I think this could have been their common humanity, or an interest for all people to live safely and freely. In reality, the fact that Abbott is related to many women is not really relevant for his commitment to fight VAW.

I believe this is a way for Abbott to appeal to voters. Mentioning his own relationships with women could be a way to show that he is a 'good mate' or a loving husband. It also gives him an opportunity for him to redeem himself from multiple accusations of sexism and misogyny. Here, I feel obliged to mention former prime minister

⁹⁹ Connell *The men and the boys* p. 203.

¹⁰⁰ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 03/06/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

Julia Gillard confrontational speech which gained international attention and praise in 2012, where brought up countless examples of Abbott's inappropriate behaviour.¹⁰¹ Gillard's speech was heavily criticised, and interestingly Gillard was branded *un-*, and even *anti-Australian*.¹⁰² She faced intersection of mateship and gender too, which I claim is prevalent in the responses analysed as well even though the topics differ. After the speech and winning the prime ministership, Abbott had to appeal to a larger audience. That explains why he uses his own relationship with women to prove that his own conduct is respectful. I believe this point is interesting because it questions the seriousness of his commitment of combating VAW.

Lack of reference to mateship

As the PMs do not mention the word mateship explicitly in any responses, I cannot provide any citations here. However, I wish to discuss the lack of reference to mateship. One could claim that the notion of mateship is so fundamental that it is expressed subtly when Abbott and Turnbull talk about cultural change. I wonder though, if their message regarding mateship would have been clearer if they did refer to mateship, as this could provide a common ground. Reference to mateship culture could lead to of expressions of masculinity but I believe this aspect has many sides. On one hand, the exclusiveness of mateship mean that hegemonic masculinity thrives. That in turn would not benefit the struggle against VAW because it enforces gender inequality and excludes women from the rest of society. On the other hand, not addressing the core issue, which Turnbull himself has said is cultural change, does not improve the situation regarding VAW. But by criticising mateship, the PMs may be accused of being 'un-Australian', possibly risking their political reputation, similarly to what happened to Gillard. Reference to mateship can be expression of masculinity with different aspects.

Former PM John Howard, whose government was largely responsible for the degendering of VAW, used the term mateship frequently. He is claimed to have made

¹⁰¹ Anna Worth, Martha Augoustinos, & Brianne Hastie, (2016). "Playing the gender card": Media representations of Julia Gillard's sexism and misogyny speech. *Feminism & Psychology*, 26(1), p. 53.

¹⁰² Holland & Wright "The Double Delegitimation of Julia Gillard: Gender, the Media, and Australian Political Culture" p. 597.

mateship the hegemonic values of Australia.¹⁰³ Abbott and Turnbull may want to distance themselves from him, wanting to make their own mark on Australian politics. This contributes to mateship remaining as the hegemonic masculinity in society since it is not challenged. The PMs investigated may not actively contribute to the hegemonic order, but they are what Connell would describe part of the complicit masculinity.¹⁰⁴ It could mean that the most strategic move in terms of their political position for the PMs is not to mention mateship, but it also means that the situation for VAW in Australia does not improve as gender inequality is not addressed.

2.2 Discussion - Connecting masculinity and mateship

The purpose of this study is to examine what and how masculinity and mateship are expressed in Questions without notice by Australian PMs. The analysis shows that different expression of masculinity occurs, which go in line with Connell's seven starting points of masculinity theory, and her four fold model of structures in gender relations. All the responses include some form of expression of masculinity but it is not necessarily the same form. The most common expression were that of men's role and responsibility in combating VAW. Their role was then problematized by Connell who claimed than men should not take up too much space in the struggle. The results also show that mateship is not expressed explicitly but does act as underlying values. Its exclusiveness contributes to the difficulties in tackling VAW. Now, I aim to demonstrate the connection between the masculinity demonstrated and Australian mateship.

Turnbull talks about cultural change in most of his responses. He believe that VAW is connected to a culture of respect - and it needs to change, only then will the issue resolve. Mateship is a cultural phenomena which is mostly found in Australia and Aotearoa/New Zealand and hold loyalty and bonding as strong values. But as explained earlier, mateship is accused of being too masculine.¹⁰⁵ Can women be part of such a culture? Men have a natural place in here but women are shown to the side lines. Men control the game and are the ones

¹⁰³ Dyrenfurth, Nick, "John Howard's Hegemony of Values: The Politics of 'Mateship' in the Howard Decade." *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 42, no. 2, June 2007, p. 211.

¹⁰⁴ Connell, *The men and the boys* p. 31.

¹⁰⁵ Holland & Wright "The Double Delegitimation of Julia Gillard: Gender, the Media, and Australian Political Culture" p. 588-602.

in charge. The male norm is indeed part of the patriarchy that Connell describes in structures of gender relations. One could therefore claim that Abbott and Turnbull only attempt redefine masculinity, but mateship as well. It is a momentous task, and the results may not be visible for a very long time as culture changes slowly.¹⁰⁶

Many men struggle to have meaningful emotional relationships, and mateship is a comfort where men get support and the sought after bonding experience they wish to have. Mateship becomes a way for men to console their masculinity in an accepted way. The problem is that those who seek community in mateship culture must still fit the part; the norm of what is considered a man. VAW can become a way to prove that masculinity in order to take part in mateship. As the perception of mateship is largely positive, it has transformed into the hegemonic masculinity. Being a man also implies being a mate: a part of mateship, and being a mate makes you Australian. If you are a woman, your membership in mateship cannot be guaranteed. The concepts are thus fundamentally intertwined.

This makes it difficult for Abbott and Turnbull to create real change in terms of tackling VAW: when they challenge the hegemony, they themselves may be marginalised from their own actions. By dismantling the current hegemonic masculinity, they may be accused of not understanding Australian culture. Mateship attitude is about being laid-back - not addressing serious issues.¹⁰⁷ After all, much of the disrespectful behaviour Turnbull refers to, were only intended as jokes. As such, sticking to the mateship formula would make them better representatives of and more appealing to the people, but this contributes to a society where gender inequality remains a problem.

As for these perspectives on anti-VAW statements, the connection exists though it may not be as visible as expected before conducting this study. I do believe the analysis show that the PMs are conflicted in their view of Australian men: they would want to think that Australian men are respectful of women and that mateship contributes to men treating *all* people as ‘good mates’. It is therefore surprising to hear that there seems to be such a large extent of accepted disrespect of women. As stated earlier, the survey released at the launch of

¹⁰⁶ Connell *The men and the boys* p. 211.

¹⁰⁷ Butera, Karina J., “Neo-mateship in the 21st century: Changes in the performance of Australian masculinity”, p. 269.

the anti-VAW campaign in 2015 showed that one in four Australians thought that it was not a serious problem if a guy slaps his girlfriend when he is drunk and they are arguing.¹⁰⁸

The responses show that Australian VAW is described as a national and great shame of Australia by the former PMs. But mateship could be used as a force for good in this matter. The difference is it must include women. If mateship expanded to include women, the loyalty and bonding which presently connect Australian men would also benefit women. Then, loyalty among humans as human beings and not gender would create a dismissal of a culture of violence, and respect for each other would be the norm. The problem is that social structures such as masculinity and mateship change in slow-motion. Some benefit from them persisting in society and men do not wish to give up being the norm. It is possible to change mateship, but this requires for it to be explicitly addressed, rather than hinted.

An efficient way to mask change is then to change gender norms so that they are seemingly more equal, without fixing gender inequality. Campaigns which target to alter gender norms, such as the ones mentioned in Slater's article, endorse gender inequality by emphasizing on the differences between men and women. When Abbott says that "anyone who strikes a woman is not a real man"¹⁰⁹ the same problem occurs. This difference is then further cemented by mateship in which women are not included. Not only is violence in Australia a gendered issue in terms of masculinity, but it is also affected by mateship. In a sense, this means the de-gendering of VAW during the Howard government was largely already done prior to Howard's initiatives because of hegemonic mateship.

The conservative aspect of mateship and masculinity is another point of discussion. As Phillips write in her article, social-conservatism view the break down of the family as a threat to society. This contributes to that some gender norm must be kept in the responses, even though they actively take a stance against VAW. The exclusiveness of male mateship means there has to be a task allocation between men and women, what Connell describes as a production relation. Abbott's comments on the home as sanctuary for women and children suits his social-conservative convictions. Although the analysis is not comparative, it is interesting to note that Abbott's statement appeal more strongly to masculinity than Turnbull.

¹⁰⁸ Department of Social services "Reducing violence against women and their children - research informing the development of a national campaign", commissioned by the Australian government, november 2015, retrieved 14/12/18, link in list of reference.

¹⁰⁹ Commonwealth of Australia, *Parliamentary Debates*, House of representatives, 14/09/2015, Tony Abbott, Prime minister.

This could be due to that Abbott is a more conservative liberal than Turnbull, who is often describe as a center liberal.

Addressing and combating VAW may become a larger task in Australia than in other countries. Mateship and masculinity are intersected and must be tackled and changed together, an example of this can be found through the criticism of Gillard after her speech on misogyny and sexism. Mateship has become the hegemonic masculinity in Australia, creating a mark on the national identity as 'male'. Human rights violations which disproportionately affect women could then risk being marginalised or not taken seriously because they are only relevant for a certain group. The hegemonic group in power may in the end enjoy impunity as the consensus culture keep them safe from harm, while the victims remain vulnerable.

3. Conclusion

Turnbull and Abbott may be striving to change gender norms, but without gender inequality being addressed, the progress towards gender equality and the end of VAW stagnates. There are connections between mateship and masculinity in Australia which create intersecting and complex problems for addressing and combating VAW. Though Turnbull and Abbott may seem progressive for putting the issue on the political agenda, there is a lack of understanding of what VAW really is. Misconceptions do still exist and they are reinforced with a lack of coherency of use of terms. Abbott and Turnbull are also keen on redefining a new role for men and mateship which concerns their responsibility to fix VAW because men are more likely to be perpetrators, and Australians ought to be 'good mates'. Unfortunately, VAW vanishes in a flood of consensus where everyone agrees on that something needs to be done now, but not what or how. This makes it difficult to suggest other solutions, as they may not be part of the hegemony. VAW is used for political gain, and in another appeal to their own relatives to justify his concern.

A positive note is that the problem is acknowledged and that none of the statements include disbelief or straight out victim blaming. Before conducting the study, my expectations were quite low. The results have been more subtle expressions of masculinity and mateship.

4. Concluding thoughts

My interest in Australian masculinity and mateship began when I saw PM Julia Gillard slam Tony Abbott, the leader of the Opposition, of sexism in a speech in parliament. The speech was globally recognised and appraised but at home, Gillard was subject of massive loads of criticism. Years later came the horrific death of Eurydice Dixon in Melbourne - a city much dear to me. As such, my thoughts and feelings of Australian masculinity and mateship were conflicted, and still are. In the end, these cultures contribute to gender structures which threaten fundamental human rights.

As for further research, many other topics would be of interest to study. When writing this thesis, my interest in masculinity and war has grown. How does hegemonic masculinity or mateship contribute to global conflicts abroad? This is an area Connell aims to explain, too. But also how mateship contribute to other social issues in Australia. Geography, alcohol and sports are just some aspects that could be subject to further studies. Previous research has covered connections between mateship, masculinity and VAW, but politicians roles' in forming these is a point that could be developed extensively. Another perspective relevant for the field in which this thesis is published, is human rights.

VAW is a fundamental human rights violation and I believe the Australian government, and international community, are obliged to combat in order to ensure that “all human beings are free and equal in dignity and rights.”¹¹⁰ Addressing the consequences of the current hegemonic masculinity is a first step towards changing them. We should all “act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.”¹¹¹ However, this ‘brotherhood’, like mateship, shant be exclusive to men. Women are after all, half of the world’s population and are entitled to have their human rights respected, protected and fulfilled. Many steps are needed to be taken to ensure progress, and I am inclined to agree with Turnbull that respect is a vital aspect. I do believe though, that change must come quicker, and that requires a larger commitment from men to change their behaviour.

¹¹⁰ United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 10 December 1948, 217 A (III), article 1, retrieved 19/12/18, link in list of references.

¹¹¹ United Nations General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, article 1.

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