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MEN, WORK, AND CARE OF THE SELF
HYBRID MASCULINITIES IN FINNISH WORKING LIFE

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DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Men, Work, and Care of the Self: Hybrid Masculinities in Finnish Working Life

Discussions on care of the self have intensified in Finland over the last thirty years. Self-care discourses are produced, for example, in public discussions in which individuals are motivated to become more responsible for themselves under the assumption that the weakening welfare society is no longer able to support each and every individual through difficult times. Concurrently, ideas about caring for and nurturing the self have increased in commercial value. Employers and numerous commercial actors have started to define the proper way to care for the self and to offer individuals means of self-care. For instance, the promotion of mindfulness exercises to deal with work-related stress, various diets as enhancers of physical activity, and the shaping of personal attitudes in response to increased insecurity in the labor market are ways in which individuals are being challenged to shift their gaze to their bodies and behaviors, and shape them to fit the new demands set by working life. Thus, self-care is not a single, undivided social movement, but the site of a struggle wherein disagreements are constituted between interest groups representing different conceptualizations of the proper care of the self.

This dissertation focuses on how men think and talk about their practices of work-related self-care, and the norms and expectations placed on men's work-related self-care. The first empirical dataset of my study consists of interviews with men regarding their conceptualizations, perceptions, and memories of work-related self-care. The second dataset consists of media data from texts addressing men's work-related self-care.

The context of the present study is post-industrialized working life in Finland, where men's job opportunities lie increasingly in the knowledge-intensive sector, social services and healthcare, and service-based jobs. The changes in the labor market and the ethical deliberation on self-care in both public discussions and workplaces problematizes those masculinities that have traditionally been idealized in the Finnish socio-cultural context. Many men no longer identify with, and are not expected to identify with, the way of being a man characterized by an ethos of surviving alone, a suspiciousness towards authorities, and a reluctance to monitor one's own health status and emotions. In line with recent theoretical discussions in critical studies on men and masculinities, my study adopts the concept of hybrid masculinity to depict men's incorporation of performances and identity elements previously associated with various femininities. By adopting Michel Foucault's concept of care of the self, the study addresses self-care as a practice that is enabled and constrained by institutions and norms. Theoretically and

methodologically, the dissertation draws from poststructuralist theorizations.

The results indicate that contemporary men identify with masculinities that include performances and behaviors previously associated with femininities. The participants in my study conceptualized their bodily and mental health as partly imperfect and malleable material, which they wanted to and were able to shape and refine. They associated their way of participating in working life with genderless worker citizenship, in which self-reflexivity, adaptability, and responsibility for the productivity of one's work are the guiding principles in life. Concurrently, the men in the study aimed to maintain their personal health and wellbeing as well as a balance between work and non-work. As a part of their self-care, they expressed a desire to heal from traditional masculinity. This means an intention to abandon the positive male identity achieved through success at work and sacrificing oneself for work.

The media addresses work-related self-care in a way that reproduces persistent discursive interrelations between men and paid work. Media texts present self-care aimed at maintaining or increasing work performance in a favorable light. Personal wellbeing is subordinated to workplace productivity in media texts.

The masculinities present in the speech of the participants and the idealized masculinities produced by the media have been hybridized, albeit based on different aspirations and problematizations. The participants prioritized their personal wellbeing and the meaningfulness of their lives in ways that escaped the external pressures placed on them. In contrast, the concerns and aspirations voiced in the media highlighted the idea that men should focus purely on their abilities to work effectively, avoid illness, and aim to prolong their careers. My study reveals tensions in the contemporary developments of masculinities in relation to both men's health behavior and their ways of participating in working life.

Tiivistelmä (abstract in Finnish)

Miehet, työ ja itsestä huolehtiminen: Hybridimaskuliinisuudet suomalaisessa työelämässä

Itsestä huolehtimista koskeva julkinen keskustelu on kiihtynyt Suomessa viimeisen kolmenkymmenen vuoden aikana. Itsestä huolehtimista koskevia puhetapoja tuotetaan esimerkiksi julkisessa keskustelussa, jossa yksilöitä motivoidaan ottamaan aiempaa enemmän vastuuta itsestään. Pyrkimyksen taustalla vaikuttaa oletus heikentyvästä hyvinvointivaltiosta, joka ei enää jatkossa kykene kannattelemaan jokaista kansalaista vaikeiden aikojen yli. Samanaikaisesti itsestä huolehtimista ja itsen hoivaamista koskevien ideoiden kaupallinen arvo on kasvanut. Työnantajat ja lukuisat kaupalliset toimijat ovat alkaneet määritellä oikeaa tapaa huolehtia itsestä ja tarjota välineitä itsestä huolehtimiseen. Yksilöille tarjotaan esimerkiksi mindfulness-harjoitteita työstressin selättämiseksi ja erilaisia erikoisruokavalioidia fyysisen toimintakyvyn parantamiseksi, minkä lisäksi heitä rohkaistaan muovaamaan omia asenteitaan, jotta he voisivat paremmin kestää työelämän lisääntynyttä epävarmuutta. Itseen kohdistuva huolenpito ei siten ole sisäisesti yhtenäinen yhteiskunnallinen liike, vaan keskustelun ja kamppailun kenttä, jossa moninaiset intressiryhmät muotoilevat oikeaa itsestä huolehtimisen tapaa keskenään ristiriitaisin tavoin.

Väitöskirja tarkastelee miesten tapoja ajatella ja puhua työhön liittyvästä itsestä huolehtimisesta sekä normeja ja odotuksia, joita miesten harjoittamalle itsestä huolehtimiselle asetetaan. Tutkimukseni ensimmäinen empiirinen aineisto koostuu miesten haastatteluista, jotka käsittelevät käsityksiä, kokemuksia ja muistoja työhön liittyvästä itsestä huolehtimisesta. Tutkimukseni toinen aineisto on media-aineisto, joka koostuu teksteistä, jotka käsittelevät miesten tapoja huolehtia itsestään työelämässä.

Tutkimukseni konteksti on jälkiteollistunut suomalainen työelämä, jossa miesten työmahdollisuudet sijaitsevat entistä enemmän tieto-, hoiva- ja palvelutyössä. Muutokset työmarkkinoilla ja itsestä huolehtimista koskeva eettinen keskustelu tiedotusvälineissä ja työpaikoilla problematisoivat ne maskuliinisuudet, joita Suomen sosiokulttuurisessa kontekstissa on perinteisesti pidetty tavoiteltavina. Useat miehet eivät enää samastu, eikä heidän odoteta samastuvan, miehenä olemisen tapaan, johon kuuluu yksin selviämisen eetos, epäluuloisuus auktoriteetteja kohtaan ja haluttomuus tarkastella omaa terveydentilaa ja tunteita. Olen omaksunut viimeaikaisesta kriittisestä miesten ja maskuliinisuuksien tutkimuksesta käyttöni hybridimaskuliinisuuden käsitteen. Hybridimaskuliinisuus viittaa miehenä olemisen tapaan, johon sisältyy aiemmin moninaisesti feminiinisyysiin liitettyjä käyttäytymisen ja identiteetin osasia. Hyödynnän Michel Foucault'n itsestä huolehtimista koskevaa teoretisointia, jonka avulla tarkastelen itsestä

huolehtimista instituutioiden ja normien mahdollistamina ja rajoittamina käytäntöinä. Teoreettisesti ja metodologisesti väitöskirja ammentaa poststrukturalistisista teoretisoinneista.

Tutkimuksen tuloksista käy ilmi, että tällä hetkellä miehet samastuvat maskuliinisuuksiin, joihin sisältyy tekoja ja käyttäytymistä, jotka on aiemmin yhdistetty feminiinisyyskäsitteisiin. Haastateltavat käsitteellistivät ruumiillisen ja henkisen terveytensä osittain epätäydellisenä ja muovattavissa olevana materiaalina, jota he halusivat ja jota heidän oli mahdollista muokata ja jalostaa. Haastateltavat samastivat tapansa osallistua työelämään sukupuoleettomaan työntekijäkansalaisuuteen, jossa itserefleksiivisyys, mukautuvaisuus ja vastuu oman työn tuottavuudesta ovat yksilön elämää ohjaavia periaatteita. Samanaikaisesti haastateltavat pyrkivät ylläpitämään henkilökohtaista terveyttään ja hyvinvointiaan sekä työn ja muun elämän tasapainoa. Heidän tapansa huolehtia itsestään sisältyi pyrkimys parantua perinteisestä maskuliinisuudesta. Tämä tarkoitti tietoista pyrkimystä päästä eroon sellaisesta myönteisestä miehen identiteetistä, joka saavutetaan työssä menestymällä ja uhraamalla itsensä työlle.

Media käsittelee työhön liittyvää itsestä huolehtimista tavalla, joka uusintaa miesten ja palkkatyön välistä pitkäkestoista diskursiivista yhteyttä. Itsestä huolehtimista, joka tähtää suorituskyvyn ylläpitämiseen tai kasvattamiseen, arvioidaan myönteisesti. Henkilökohtainen hyvinvointi on teksteissä alisteista työn tuottavuudelle.

Miesten puheessa läsnä olevat maskuliinisuudet ja mediassa ihannoidut maskuliinisuudet ovat hybridisoituneet eri syistä ja toisistaan poikkeavien päämäärien saavuttamiseksi. Haastateltavat asettivat henkilökohtaisen hyvinvointinsa ja elämänsä mielekkyyden etusijalle, minkä vuoksi he kokivat osin pakenevansa heihin ulkopuolelta kohdistuneita paineita. Mediassa ilmaistut huolet ja toiveet korostivat sitä, että miesten tulisi keskittyä kehittämään mahdollisuuksiaan työskennellä tehokkaasti, välttää sairastumista ja pidentää uriaan. Tutkimukseni osoittaa, että maskuliinisuuksien tämänhetkisiin kehityskulkuihin liittyy jännitteitä, jotka ovat seurausta miesten terveystyöskentymiseen ja miesten työelämään osallistumisen tapoihin liittyvistä ristiriitaisista odotuksista.

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In spring 2015, the Eating Disorder Association of Finland showed unrestrained open-mindedness by helping me to reach men affected by eating disorders. These interviews were the basis of my master's thesis, and a starting point for the research process leading to this dissertation. After finalizing my master's thesis, I focused my research interest on men's health at work. I am deeply grateful to all of the individuals, organizations, and trade unions who spread the word of my research project to potential participants in 2017–2018. Those to whom I am most grateful, I cannot name: the participants, who made the present study possible, are anonymized in it.

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No man is an island, not even the one studying men and masculinities critically. I have received much support from friends and loved ones, and they all deserve my warmest thanks.

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Henri Hyvönen

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LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

This dissertation is based on the following publications:

- I Hyvönen, Henri (*forthcoming* 2021). Perinteisestä maskuliinisuudesta parantuminen ja työntekijäkansalaisuus. In Kristiina Brunila, Esko Harni, Antti Saari & Hanna Ylöstalo (Eds.) *Terapeuttinen valta: Onnellisuuden ja hyvinvoinnin jännitteitä 2000-luvun Suomessa*. Tampere: Vastapaino.
- II Hyvönen, Henri (2020). Care for the Self – But Not for the Career? Men’s Perceptions of Work-related Self-care. In Kadri Aavik, Clarice Bland, Josephine Hoegaerts & Janne Salminen (Eds.) *Men, Masculinities and the Modern Career: Contemporary and Historical Perspectives* (pp. 15–34). Berlin: De Gruyter Oldenbourg.
- III Hyvönen, Henri (2020). Care of the Self, Somaesthetics, and Men Affected by Eating Disorders: Rethinking the Focus on Men’s Beauty Ideals. *Journal of Somaesthetics*, 6(2), 64–81.
- IV Hyvönen, Henri (2019). Men’s Work-related Self-care in the Finnish Media. *Research on Finnish Society*, 12, 7–22.
- V Hyvönen, Henri (2017). Itsestä huolehtiminen nuorten miesten työntekeä ja opiskelua käsittelevissä sanomalehtiteksteissä. *Sukupuolentutkimus–Genusforskning*, 30(4), 39–53.

The publications are referred in the text by their respective roman numerals.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The largest subscription newspaper in Finland and the Nordic countries, *Helsingin Sanomat*, publishes weekly a special section dedicated to life, food, and health. In the early days of the current decade, the paper published a column in this section that critically addresses the current trends of self-care:

When did wellbeing become an accomplishment? When did skills of the mind turn into a successful product? When did the social media presences of individual people become a model for others to imitate to the point of exhaustion?

The unreasonable expectations and strict demands of our contemporary era have been extended to the areas of wellbeing and the mind. It is important to take good care of oneself, but there is a huge difference as to whether this activity stems from deep self-discipline or from more flexible nurturing care. Many people represent themselves in the social media as super-human individuals who starts every day with meditation, after which the day continues briskly until evening.

Wellbeing performance attached to the super self is often too good to be true. A human being cannot be turned into a superman, and life cannot be controlled by dieting or applying the “hour of power” technique. If one pursues wellbeing, one must surrender to humanity. A wellbeing mind can also hold indisposition, flexibility, and compassion. It is normal to sleep poorly at times. It is human to be helpless at times. It is natural that one does not always remain in top control of one’s life, although it can be greatly influenced by the self.

If the problem is at the level of maca powder, it is ok to answer it with maca powder. The problematic situation arises when disciplined wellbeing performances seek to address the structural pillars of wellbeing. Then, perfect wellbeing becomes a goal or a technically accomplished ideal.

(Helsingin Sanomat 23.1.2020, C9; translation HH [Henri Hyvönen])

Based on the viewpoint outlined in the column, contemporary Finnish society is characterized by a competition between authorities on health and wellbeing. The text questions the legitimacy of some of these authorities, and it warns the readers not to be led astray. The column, despite refraining from making normative statements on how individuals should actually care for their individual health and wellbeing at the level of concrete action, suggests that readers should be aware that certain forms of self-care are illusory and

do not lead to the intended results. The newspaper, a commercial product offering information on healthy lifestyles, advises individuals to critically evaluate other commercial health-promotion products. It here conflates activism, an attempt to influence public opinion and prove some political goals untenable, with marketing, an attempt to make one's own message desirable in the eyes of potential customers. The ethics of care of the self, by which I refer to the question of how to care for oneself and one's own health and for what purposes, is rendered highly important in the text.

Pekka Sulkunen (2009) argues that the proper regulation of choices requires a moral authority. The nation-state, which used to be the locus of authority a few decades ago, is decreasingly capable of exercising such authority today. The freedom of choice over one's life-course, which used to be a distant ideal for the unseeable future, is now a reality. The unifying social control over public health, the outspoken and mostly welcomed goal of the public health initiatives regulated by a welfare state, has been compromised. Instead of a network of co-operating authorities that constitute a seamless network of health education, numerous mutually competing entities have now claimed authority over matters of individual health. Here, health citizenship, understood as internalized individual responsibility and an understanding of what one should do to stay healthy (Helén & Jauho 2003), is replaced by individuals who conceive of themselves as clients or customers of the services providing information on health.

This understanding of health information as a cluster of mutually incompatible ideas competing in a free marketplace has also affected working life. Organizations are no longer aligned as subcontractors for the health education being controlled, facilitated, and authorized by a state. Instead, employers perceive themselves as customers too. In working life, individual health has been rendered important by utilizing the vocabulary of the free market and increased possibilities for freedom and choice. By pursuing healthiness, individuals make themselves into a desirable product for their current and potential employers (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Kelly et al. 2007). By purchasing health-related products and services, employers seize full advantage of their employees (Dailey et al. 2018; James & Zoller 2018). Occasionally, though, the interest in one's own health turns against the immediate needs of working life, as individuals start to prioritize individual wellbeing over the needs of work (Biese 2017; Salmenniemi et al. 2019; McKie & Jyrkinen 2017).

In discussions of working life as both a field of various performance and appearance requirements (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Kelly et al. 2007; James & Zoller 2018; McKie & Jyrkinen 2017) and a socio-cultural context increasingly causing indisposition and dissatisfaction (Biese 2017; LaPointe & Heilmann 2014; Salmenniemi et al. 2019), the self has become important as a proactive and reflective source of lifestyle choices. There is a seemingly widespread consensus that concern for and care of the self are both justified and necessary to cope with contemporary working life. However, the

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questions of how one should practice care of the self and to what ends remain open for debate.

Even before the current discussion on the ethics of care of the self, critical accounts of men's health-related beliefs and behaviors slowly began to gain ground. James Harrison (1978) argued that men's bad health originated from a psychosocial male sex role constituted by the types of expectations placed on men's behavior. In the early 2000s, other scholars located the problematics of men's health in the comparative and contentious relations between men, in which not asking others for help and exhibiting emotional restraint and resilience were part of men's normative gender performance (Courtenay 2000). Ilkka Pietilä (2008, 149) argues that in Finnish society, fatigue, stress, and health problems as well as paid work in the public sphere, professional knowledge, and experience have all historically been parts of men's identity work.

In many respects, though, this notion of masculinity actively conflicts with the expectations placed on men in contemporary Finnish working life. Maintaining control of one's own health and wellbeing is increasingly viewed as part of one's professionalism (Aho 2019; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Niemistö et al. 2017; Ylöstalo et al. 2018), and therefore, it is also conflated with the role of provider traditionally associated with men. Once again, "crisis tendencies" (Connell 1995, 81–86) are apparently threatening the contents of normative masculinity, which needs to be revised and transformed to better match the ascendant need for care of the self.

In this dissertation, I focus on how men think and talk about their practices of work-related self-care as well as how the media portrays and constructs the norms surrounding men's work-related self-care. In employing the concept of work-related self-care, I am referring to a set of practices whereby individuals decide to take action to support their mental or physical health as a reaction to current or anticipated problems in working life. The concept of men,¹ for its part, refers to a material-discursive and, to a lesser extent, an identity-orientated social category of individuals who are recognized as men or identify themselves as men. I understand this category as volatile: individual gender identity as well as individual possibilities of being recognized as a man vary over a person's lifetime.

The remainder of this introductory chapter is structured as follows. I begin with a brief discussion of the national pasts and the present of men and masculinities in Finland. Thereafter, I discuss the ways in which men are inventing themselves in contemporary Finland. I end by describing the structure and main contributions of the dissertation.

¹ So as not to further enhance the exclusionary categories of "men" and "women," I put forward the concept of non-men to denote individuals who do not belong to the social category of men.

1.1 NATIONAL PASTS AND THE PRESENT OF MEN AND MASCULINITIES IN FINLAND

Deborah Thien and Vincent Del Casino (2012) acknowledge that there are certain standards for men's behavior in most social contexts and that highly respected masculinities are in dialogue with the practical constitution of masculinities as part of men's ways of living and surviving in everyday local circumstances. However, Thien and Del Casino also suggest that the conception of a singular, dominant masculinity should be refuted by tracing the multiple processes by which gendered practices and discourses intersect to define men's bodies and spaces. The authors point out that there is no single standard for men in all socio-cultural contexts, and that not all men in every single social context find these standards meaningful. Thien and Del Casino draw from the argument made by Lawrence Berg and Robyn Longhurst (2003), who suggest that in the early work of R. W. Connell (1995), which informs many of the critical gender approaches to men's health (Courtenay 2000; Dolan 2011; Lohan 2007; Robertson 2007; Robertson et al. 2016), the temporal contingency of masculinity is seemingly acknowledged, but masculinities are not explicitly discussed as geographically specific phenomena.

In line with Thien and Del Casino, I follow Sara Ahmed (2000; 2004; 2006) in arguing that gender is constructed through beliefs and expectations arising from the interpersonal encounters that take place in specific circumstances. Therefore, men's health behaviors can also be located in variegated socio-spatial practices. Drawing from Thien's and Del Casino's (2012) perspective on men's health and the geographies of health, I offer an overview of the cultural elements affecting men's work-related self-care in Finland in the following discussion. I do not aim to interpret an internally cohesive Finnish culture that produces a singular dominant masculinity. Instead, I focus on how separate cultural flows are present in the localities that shape men and masculinities in Finland. In line with Pirjo Markkola et al. (2014), I suggest that especially the entity called the *Finnish man*, a concept associated with several powerful meanings, should be deconstructed and seen as a potentially internally contradictory structure stemming from numerous lines of historical development.

Timo Aho (2019, 40) argues that the existing research on men and masculinities in Finland focuses keenly on working life and that analyzing masculinity within the context of work easily renews the idea of an intimate union between men and paid work. I acknowledge this risk of an overly narrow perspective. Although working life is one of the core subject matters of the present study, I also consider the cultural specificities that influence men's actions in working life without directly relating to paid work. I begin my overview by focusing on the various aspects of Finnish society that enable men to identify with certain masculinities that contribute to men's low interest in their own wellbeing and health. Thereafter, I focus on the factors

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in Finnish society that challenge the idea of risky behaviors as a hegemonic ideal for men. I conclude by discussing potential outcomes of the simultaneous presence of these relations of power.

Finland is one of the Nordic countries, a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe that also includes Denmark, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. Finland differs from other Nordic countries because of its slower pace of industrialization, its history of national awakening, and its history of conflict. Finland industrialized later than the other Nordic countries and is still less urbanized than the other Nordic countries (Hannikainen & Heikkinen 2006; Kananen 2014; Kettunen 2019). Societies that industrialized earlier than Finland, such as England and Germany, maintained gender divisions by excluding women from the public sphere. Contrary to a popular belief cherished in Finnish society (see Aalto 2012, 65–72), the male breadwinner–female caregiver model never became a typical feature of Finnish working life, as the relative poverty and late modernization of the country forced both men and non-men to contribute to the household's survival (Koskinen Sandberg 2016, 23–24; Löfström 1999, 173–185). However, the greater value placed on men in the workforce and the tasks done by them have been a constant feature of Finnish society since at least the 19th century. During both agrarian times and the industrialization period, the public discussion in Finland stressed men's vital role in performing hard manual labor, a role helping prop up society and the reproductive work done in households (Aalto 2012, 65–72; Bergholm 2015, 47–73; Koskinen Sandberg 2018; Löfström 1999, 181; Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012).

Working to the point of exhaustion and the tragic struggle against a hostile external world are a part of the Finnish national identity. Arto Jokinen (2019) points out that Finnish ethnicity and nationality have been shaped by the literature published during the Finnish national awakening, such as the *Kalevala* (1835; 1849) compiled by Elias Lönnrot, *The Tales of Ensign Stål* (1848; 1860) written in Swedish by the Finland-Swedish author Johan Ludvig Runeberg, and *The Book of Our Country* (1875) by Swedish-speaking Finnish author and journalist Zacharias Topelius. This literature has been read with an emphasis on its violence and male characters as perpetrators of violence. Here, the type of violence depicted both distinguished Finland from other nations and later guaranteed the independence of Finland.

Mikko Lehtonen (1995, 95–114) and Arto Jokinen (2019, 74–79) argue that in the above-mentioned literature, Finnish subjectivity, *Finnishness*, implicitly takes shape in the form of a man who is characterized by modesty, cold nerves, and slowness to speech as well as an aptitude for hard manual labor. Finns are not represented as being as warlike as Swedes, but if necessary, Finnish men fight harder and more skillfully than, for example, Swedish or Russian men. Jokinen suggests that here Finnish men are identified with workhorses that complete the tasks given to them without

expressing personal needs. This dedication to shaping the external world, which in the Finnish context repeatedly proves to be a cruel and inhospitable place, symbolically distances Finnish men from men of other nationalities, especially those from the other Nordic countries (Charpentier 2001, 94–96; Jalava 2012; Jokinen 2000, 161; Lehtonen 1995, 109–114). Jokinen (2000; 2019) points out that the geographical position of Finland in between Sweden and Russia has also contributed to the history of conflict in Finland. The cultural environment that shapes masculinities in Finland shares certain traits not only with other Nordic countries but also with Eastern Europe (Jalava 2012; Jokinen 2000, 20–21; Kettunen 2019; Koivunen 2012; Meinander 2012).

The Finnish Civil War of 1918 generated tensions between the owners of estates and industry and the workers. The winning side in the war, the Whites, which consisted of members of the property-owning social class, viewed the opposing Reds as violent criminals incapable of self-regulation. In communities where the owners of estates and industry controlled access to jobs, the former Whites exercised a great deal of power over former Reds and the conditions under which such men could rejoin the community as full members. Matias Kaihovirta (2014) argues that through a process of selecting and favoring men who welcomed private ownership over the means of production, community leaders encouraged working men to learn stoicism, independence, and self-reliance. Concurrently, the Finnish media and education also celebrated such ideals of masculinity, which greatly supported the agenda of the winning side after the Civil War (Jokinen 2019, 129–131).

In contrast, the militarization of masculinity and understanding of compulsory military service as a “school” for indoctrination into manhood took place in Finland relatively late. Anders Ahlbäck (2014) argues that after decades of not having a defense force or compulsory military service, the discussion in the parliament of the newly independent Finland revealed conflicting views on how national defense should be organized and its function in Finnish society. In the interwar period of 1918–1939, masculinity was militarized through military service, which was made compulsory for every man and excluded all women. The process progressed through a series of compromises by which the military aimed to curb abusive treatment and excessive discipline (Ahlbäck 2010; 2014). Eventually, the idea of growing through hardship was adopted by those men who had done their service: although some criticized the state-driven ideology of militarized masculinity, surviving “the place where men are made” ultimately contributed to a positive self-understanding of men (Ahlbäck 2010, 303–304).

During the post-WWII era, the Finnish Man became a cultural icon that both improved the self-esteem of Finnish men through positive self-understanding and placed demands on men’s behavior and way of being (Jokinen 2000; Lahelma 2005a; Lehtonen 2015; Lehtonen 1995; Pöysä 1997; 1999; Siltala 1994b; 1994c; Tallberg 2000). Ville Kivimäki (2014) argues that

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this construction was stripped of political commitments: *The Unknown Soldier* (1954) by Väinö Linna, considered one of the most iconic representations of the Finnish man, attached positive attributes to men coming from varying socio-economic backgrounds in a way that also integrated the former Reds back into the sphere of honorable masculinity. Concurrently, a lumberjack (in Finnish *jätkä*), an uneducated and indigent man working away from his home in nature, became a dominant cultural theme in Finnish folk narratives and the media during the early and mid-20th century (Pöysä 1997).

Jyrki Pöysä (1997, 438) argues that the common foot soldier who does not seek favor by flattery and the lumberjack have an affinity with one another. As Kivimäki (2013; 2014) and Jokinen (2019) point out, being a Finnish man is not only about nationalism or loyalty to superiors, but also about independence, self-confidence, and stubbornness, all of which guarantee a man's survival in challenging circumstances. Jokinen terms this "armored masculinity." Jokinen states that

instead of listening to himself, a man hurries around and loses himself in the noise of his own doing. [...] Men tend to develop an armor in between themselves and their emotions. Men may experience their emotions or bodies as their own enemies. Emotions are identified with weakness, passivity, and femininity, and men try to repress them or outsource their emotions.

(Jokinen 2000, 43–44; translation HH)

Concurrently with the cultural studies on men being conducted in Finland in the 1990s, there emerged sociological studies on men's subjectivity and their social interactions especially in working life. In the early 1990s, Finnish sociological research on men and masculinities focused on the concept of honor. Juha Siltala and Matti Kortteinen argue that in Finland, the ethos of survival alone, a struggle for credibility in front of other people, and fear of shame constitute a psychological structure that regulates men's behavior in working life:

By surviving through a "test of manhood" set up by others, a young man reclaims a living space, a right to do his work in his own way without others intervening it. Through work accomplishments, a professional man conquers his own undisturbed territory, from which he can connect to the external world within acceptable forms of interaction. One creates at least an imagined order from chaos. I interpret working life research by Kortteinen in that the inner motive for work is to expel malicious intrusion.

(Siltala 1994b, 122; translation HH)

An external threat is directed at one's own manhood, integrity, capability, acknowledged position as a self-contained man. Concurrently, individuals think that although world is harsh, it is harsh for everyone.

(Kortteinen 1992, 60; translation HH)

Cultural studies on the Finnish man as a part of Finnish national identity and sociological research on men's subjectivity and the social relationships between men refer to two different types of phenomena. Numerous authors argue that each enhances the other (Jokinen 2019; 2000; Koivunen 2012; Lehtonen 1995) and contribute to a shared cultural code of men's behavior (Lahelma 2005a; Lehtonen 1995; Siltala 1994c; Tallberg 2000).

Finland has also followed the same line of development as other Nordic countries, which share a widespread and widely accepted discourse on gender equality that prioritizes gendered viewpoints in numerous public and private discussions (Holli & Kantola 2007; Juvonen 2015; Järviö 2018; Kettunen 2008, 128–171; Kjaran & Lehtonen 2018; Lahelma 2014; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio 2017) and a reputation as one of the most equal countries in the world (European Institute for Gender Equality 2019; World Economic Forum 2019). Gender equality as an outspoken value is today an integral part of the national identity of the Nordic countries, even among men (Aarseth 2009; Eerola 2015; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Neuman et al. 2017).

As a part of an intentional gender equality policy, the Nordic countries have shaped their working life towards what is now repeatedly termed the *Nordic model* (Heiret 2012; Kasvio et al. 2012; Kettunen 2012; 2019; Nyberg 2012). Anita Nyberg (2012) describes the Nordic model as a combination of the right to part-time work, publicly financed childcare, parental leave, tax deductions for domestic services, and the individual right for fathers to parental leave. Nyberg argues that since the 1970s, this policy of the dual-earner and dual-career model has, at least partially, challenged the gender order in which men are supposed to orient themselves towards visible activity in the public sphere and continuously aspire to shape the external world. A combination of paid labor and domestic work within the family has become increasingly possible for all regardless of gender (Eerola 2015).

However, Paula Koskinen Sandberg (2016, 23–24) argues that due to relative poverty and late modernization, women never particularly entered the labor market in Finland. Instead, they have maintained their “social motherhood” in paid labor done outside the home. The expansion of the public sector in Finland in the 1970s created a new labor market for women, who still tend to work for either the Finnish welfare state or the private service sector (Koskinen Sandberg 2018). These fields of work soon earned a status as a subordinate sector of working life in comparison to a primarily male-dominated labor market in the private sector (Koskinen Sandberg 2016, 24–26). Finnish society has ended up maintaining the hierarchy

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between men and non-men through strong gender segregation in the labor market and unequal pay (Koskinen Sandberg 2018; Saari 2016).

Hanna Ylöstalo (2012) suggests that many Finns are attached to the conception of Finland as a country where gender equality is already a reality, which cannot and should not be further advanced by initiatives promoting gender equality. In comparison to other Nordic countries, Finland has developed a rather troubled relationship to the concept of feminism: in one widespread Finnish discourse, feminism is understood as hostility towards conventional masculinity and femininity. This has enhanced support for the idea of apolitical equality, understood as the right of equal individuals to operate in the free market and an explicit rejection of feminism (Brunila 2009, 148–155; Juvonen 2015, 344–345; Ylä-Anttila & Luhtakallio 2017; Ylöstalo 2012, 171–172). Higher salaries for men and men being primarily responsible for supporting the household in Finland are repeatedly justified by the fact that women either naturally or habitually end up working in the public sector in low-paying feminized jobs (Koskinen Sandberg 2018; Ylöstalo 2012).

Although the public discussion on gender equality has not always problematized gendered expectations and the gendered division of labor, the viewpoint of inequalities between genders has nevertheless been adopted in public debate and research addressing men's position and status in society. Anu Koivunen (2012) argues that oftentimes the gender equality discourse has been perceived as a social movement of women producing talk about women by women, and therefore, the focus should be re-targeted at men's gendered problems. In their review of existing research on men and masculinities in Finland published before the early 2000s, Jeff Hearn and Emmi Lattu (2002, 54) term some of the most cited works "misery studies." In those texts, men are portrayed as antiheroes who fight against the shame of failing as a man by any means necessary. In other words, men are portrayed as prisoners of their narrow social role as both provider and protector (see Jokinen 2000; Kortteinen 1992; Lehtonen 1995; Siltala 1994b; 1994c). The discussion stresses gender equality problems that particularly affect men, such as homelessness, alcoholism, unemployment, loneliness, and bad health:

Some studies can be seen to contribute to the cultural stereotype of the "miserable Finnish man", complementing the "strong Finnish woman", despite men's structural domination of Finnish society.

(Hearn & Lattu 2002, 56)

In Finland, institutions that exercise power over men, such as healthcare, increasingly view men's gender performances as intrinsically problematic (Lahelma 2014; Koivunen 2018; Slutbäck 2018; Sulkunen et al. 1997; Valkonen & Lindfors 2012). Here, men are encouraged to assess themselves critically in an effort to circumvent patterns of behavior that are

characteristic of men and concurrently harm both them and the people around them. Recent theoretical discussions in critical studies on men and masculinities have focused on how intense public debate on men's social role affects the gender performances of men. Scholars argue that the gender equality discourse empowers at least some men and destabilizes men's faith in traditional ways of being a man (Anderson 2009; Bridges 2014; Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Waling 2017). In Finland, this development has contributed to men's increased willingness to care for their own health and co-opt self-care practices previously considered feminine (Ojala 2016; Ojala et al. 2016; Pietilä 2008; 2013).

Ásta Jóhannsdóttir and Ingólfur Gíslason (2018) argue that there are clear indications that in the Nordic countries, masculinity is more broadly defined than before and more things are permissible for men. This does not, however, necessarily put an end to the expectations traditionally placed on men. Instead, the ascending gender equality discourse seems to lead men to express uncertainty regarding what is expected of them as men. Ilkka Pietilä (2008; 2013) and Hanna Ojala et al. (2016) describe an ideological dilemma between a healthy lifestyle and being a man. Pietilä (2008; 2013) argues that identification with the Finnish male archetype offers men in Finland discursive resources to mock help-seeking and perform their masculinity through intentional indifference to, for example, bodily signals and emotional needs. Concurrently, bad health and self-destructive lifestyles associated with men in Finland are not only a normative code of conduct but also a national stereotype that Finnish men find both foolish and laughable as well as threatening and personally burdensome (Ojala et al. 2016; Pietilä 2008; 2013; Simonen 2012; Virtanen & Isotalus 2014). As stated in the beginning of this section, I do not aim to outline a singular Finnish culture that shapes men towards a particular masculinity that is dominant or even widely idealized in Finland. Instead, I suggest that the gender equality discourse and talk about the stoic Finnish man are some of the mutually contradictory cultural flows that affect men's behavior.

Recent studies on men and masculinities in North America and Europe, including the Nordic countries, locate men's increased distance from aggressive behavior and an emotionally detached masculinity in urbanized areas (Bridges 2014; Eerola 2015; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Whitmer 2017). In line with Pietilä (2013), I suggest that localities are insufficiently taken into account and extremely important in research focusing on men's health in working life. The work available to men and the way it is organized in a certain locality impacts the physical and mental performance required to be able to function fully in the labor market. These localities are not stable but always changing. Moreover, Jeff Hearn and Marina Blagojević (2013, 1) argue that local and national cultural patterns are increasingly "shaped by global and transnational processes, even when they define themselves through resistances."

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In the following section, I describe how increased possibilities and pressures to examine the self affect men in Finnish society. I do not suggest that men who present “armored masculinities” (Jokinen 2000) have no self-aware, intentional, and explicit relation to themselves at all. Rather, I suggest that men socialized into this kind of masculinity indeed examine themselves and experience concern for themselves in relation to external expectations and the risk of not fulfilling them. Siltala (1994b; 1994c) argues that this collective system of coercion does not allow for individuality other than differences in power and success between individuals similar to each other. On the other hand, “an insistence on the constant interior labor of self-examination” that once was part of practices of Protestantism (Cederström & Spicer 2015, 64), including those forms of Protestantism that now constitute mainstream Lutheranism in Finland (Siltala 1992), is now part of the contemporary regimes of self-care, which call for self-discovery and individuality.

1.2 MEN INVENTING THEMSELVES IN FINNISH WORKING LIFE

The Nordic countries in particular have often been perceived as forerunners in both gender equality (Kettunen 2008, 128–171) and in the post-industrialization of working life (Kananen 2014, 155), a movement away from agrarian and industrial work and towards knowledge-intensive work, service jobs, and care work as well as a more precarious labor market. Siltala (2017, 54–63), based on a comprehensive review of literature on the subject matter, argues that between 1995 and 2009, 10% of the average wage jobs in industry disappeared, whereas 100,000 jobs were lost in Finnish manufacturing between 2007 and 2017. Concurrently, the use of temporary staff has doubled in the 2010s, and more than half of employers in Finnish industry used temporary staff in 2016 (Anttila 2018).

Post-industrialization has also affected the political discourse, in which the emergence of a low-paid service sector in Finland has been considered inevitable and even desirable in order to improve national competitiveness and still save some of the functions of the welfare state (Kananen 2014, 154–161; Kettunen 2012; Siltala 2017, 61–69). Post-industrialization has often been associated with the idea of the feminization of working life, where men, due to a lack of industrial work, must enter previously female-dominated sectors and adopt skills understood as feminine (Adkins 2001; Morini & Fumagalli 2010). Nevertheless, the strong level of gender segregation has fared well in Finland despite gradual post-industrialization (Koskinen Sandberg 2016, 19–21; 2018). High employment capacity in the social service and healthcare sectors and in other service-based jobs will likely only be realized in Finnish working life in the future (Siltala 2017, 59).

Hearn (2019) argues that despite some continuities, men's participation in contemporary working life is increasingly characterized by discontinuities caused by globalization, information and communications technology, and robotization. The feminization of working life has proceeded gradually and is also affecting an increasing number of men in Finland. The number of emotionally demanding, service-based jobs is increasing, albeit slowly. Job insecurity is increasing in many pre-existing fields and jobs; many individuals are now being subjected to an assessment of their personal market value based on appearance to avoid future costs resulting from sickness absence and rehabilitation (Huzell & Larsson 2012; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Koivunen et al. 2015; Meriläinen et al. 2015). The persistent discursive interrelationship between men and security is increasingly being commodified, and men are being steered towards certain appearances and masculinities to ensure a pleasant customer encounter (Connell 2013; Mears 2014; Monaghan 2002; Nikunen 2016). Moreover, Aho (2019) argues that discontinuities in male-dominated blue-collar jobs are constituted by the devaluation of hard-earned practical experience, manual skills, and professional capacities due to the increased use of technology to monitor and synchronize work performance.

Post-industrial working life requires greater individual flexibility due to an increase in the number of emotionally demanding, service-based jobs, thereby blurring boundaries between work and non-work as well as inter-professional mobility (Adkins 2001; Cottingham 2017; Fleming & Spicer 2004; Morini & Fumagalli 2010; Mäkinen 2012; 2013), which also affects the gender performances of men and gendered expectations placed on men (Beasley 2013; Bell 2013; Cottingham 2017; Whitmer 2017). In this socio-cultural context, individuals are increasingly tempted to be the optimal version of themselves in any given situation rather than typical representatives of their gender and socio-economic background (Grénman 2019; Mäkinen 2012; 2013). Nikolas Rose (1998) suggests that this socio-cultural setup encourages individuals to pursue an ethic of the free, autonomous self that makes choices based on individual judgement and the expertise available. Rose terms this *inventing our selves*.

Anthony Giddens (1991) argues that traditional referents for the self – family, place, and religion – have ceased to determine the orientation of individuals. He suggests that due to changes in individual wealth, an increased appreciation of worker mobility, and the availability of expertise, individuals are now able to create, maintain, and revise their own biographical narratives, social roles, and lifestyles. Here, one's own health and the lifestyles that affect it are not understood as preordained but as aspects of oneself that can be changed. Giddens argues that increased media usage and the increased availability of expertise on health and disease cause individuals to look at life as a project and as the outcome of a particular lifestyle. This leads to increased awareness of the risks and ontological insecurity of the self and existential anxiety.

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At first glance, this social movement emphasizing a focus on self seems to promise emancipation, detachment, and liberty. However, I suggest that it has not liberated individuals from power relations but has instead enabled new ways to influence individuals. The power relations pressuring individuals to practice self-care have intensified since the 1980s and especially after the turn of the millennium. Without trying to provide an all-encompassing explanation for this phenomenon, in Finnish society it can be connected to the end of the growth and even curtailment of the welfare state (Helén 2016; Kananen 2014; Kettunen 2012; 2019; Sorsa 2017), the increase in the commercial value of wellbeing and wellness (Bergroth & Helén 2019; Grénman 2019; Salmenniemi 2019; Sointu 2012; Sulkunen 2009), and the growth in how intensively organizations related to education and work promote health as a meaningful social category (Brunila 2012; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Karjalainen et al. 2019; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Saari & Harni 2016). Although these mutually separate lines of development are not necessarily interdependent, they all provoke individuals to do work on themselves and especially on their wellbeing, health, and illnesses.

The knowledge of how one should take care of the self is actively produced in, for example, workplaces, media, and the healthcare sector (Davies 2015). Care of the self is often practiced in the context of consumption: individuals purchase information, coaching, devices, and medication (Bergroth & Helén 2019; Cederström & Spicer 2015; Heyes 2007; Kristensen & Ruckenstein 2018; Lupton 2014; Sanders 2017). In addition to the consumer market, services are also marketed to employers as a means of shaping their employees' thoughts, actions, and beliefs. Heather Zoller (2003) argues that through the persistent work of health and human resource professionals who consult with businesses, workplace health promotion has become a common frontier between employers and health professionals, one where managerial values and health expertise are intertwined.

It is noteworthy that contemporary working life in Finland differs from the working lives addressed in studies conducted in the Anglophonic socio-cultural context, in, for example, the United Kingdom, United States, and Australia. Based on findings by Carl Cederström and André Spicer (2015), I suggest that the difference in how intensively work-related self-care practices are marketed to individuals in the Nordic countries and in Anglophonic socio-cultural contexts is gradual rather than extremely radical. The authors suggest that there are no real disincentives to commercial activity and the spread of different narrative traditions from one country to another. For instance, in Finland mindfulness programs are rapidly emerging within organizational settings (Karjalainen et al. 2019; Saari & Harni 2016), the market is growing for coaching that enhances an individual's capabilities and desired attitudes (Brunila & Siivonen 2016; Grénman 2019; Mäkinen 2012; 2013; Salmenniemi 2019; Sointu 2012), and interest is growing in improving physical fitness to meet the increasing demands of work (Karjalainen et al. 2016; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Niemistö et al. 2017; Ylöstalo et al. 2018).

Health is ostensibly apolitical. As numerous social studies on health point out, it is hard to argue against attempts to improve individual health in one's own life or in, for example, the workplace (Brunila 2012; Dailey et al. 2018; Islam et al. 2017; Rose 1998, 45–46). Nonetheless, health has also become a way of expressing professionalism, loyalty to the organization, and commitment to the workplace. This has not gone unnoticed by researchers on working life, who argue that the intensified cultural meanings of health orient individuals towards self-governance and mutual competition in ways that do not allow them to express negative emotions towards self-care (Cederström 2011; Cederström & Spicer 2015; James & Zoller 2018; Zoller 2003). Individuals signaling unhealthy lifestyles through their bodies and attitudes are increasingly stigmatized (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Huzell & Larsson 2012; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014).

Suvi Salmenniemi (2019) argues that the conventional conception of increased health awareness as a depoliticizing force that compels individuals to engage in mutual competition is only a half-truth. She points out that those cultures that emphasize responsibility for one's own health do not necessarily align with the needs of contemporary capitalism. So long as health and the ability to work remain conceptually separate, a mindset emphasizing the importance of health offers opportunities for resistance: from the viewpoint of health and especially individual wellbeing, one can speak out about suffering and injustices that may remain unarticulated within the context of working life and work organizations.

I make this point relevant for the present study by stating three arguments. First, voluntary organizations and commercial actors can also potentially animate a type of political engagement that aims to criticize the needs of working life (Biese 2017; LaPointe & Heilmann 2014; Salmenniemi et al. 2019). Second, highly visible organizational health discourses can potentially form a site of resistance to an organization's power over employees. Critical attitudes regarding such practices are provoked if employees do not perceive the practices as an authentic part of their lifestyle (Fleming & Spicer 2003; James & Zoller 2018). Third, increased awareness of the mechanisms that affect individual health and perceived wellbeing coincide with increased anti-traditionalism in Western societies (Binkley 2014; Davies 2015; Giddens 1991), which also includes an increased awareness of gendered patterns and men's social role as being socially constructed and maintained (Eerola 2015; Frisk 2016; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Waling 2017).

In contemporary socio-cultural setups, health is understood as a highly meaningful theme in the context of working life. However, as discussed above, this meaningfulness is constituted by mutually incompatible and competing cultures that individuals may co-opt, resist, or otherwise make use of. Post-industrialization contributes to the feminization of working life, by which I mean an increase in the types of work assignments, working styles, and workplace identities that have been previously understood as feminine

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(Adkins 2001; Cottingham 2017; Fleming & Spicer 2004; Morini & Fumagalli 2010; Ylöstalo et al. 2018). Masculinities that are simultaneously hard, aggressive, competitive, and insensitive are increasingly devalued and made less meaningful in societies affected by post-industrialization and gender equality discourse (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). The effects of this situation on men's lives have not yet been fully addressed in previous research.

Earlier research on men's work-related self-care has addressed competition in working life through the stigmatization of unhealthy bodies and men's engagement to practices that increase individual bodily performance (Connell & Wood 2005; Johansson et al. 2017; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Kelly et al. 2007; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014; Thanem 2013). Echoing Noortje van Amsterdam and Dide van Eck (2019), I suggest that this research has hitherto focused too keenly on hierarchy and competition between men with a relatively high socio-economic status in knowledge-intensive fields of work. In addition to these sectors, men's endeavors at maintaining a muscular appearance and bodily performance have been addressed in some context of manual labor, mainly in the security sector (Kotzé & Antonopoulos 2019; Monaghan 2002).

I draw two conclusions. First, I suggest that all practices in which individuals examine themselves and intentionally decide to positively affect their mental or physical health and wellbeing to resolve current or anticipated problems in working life have not been rendered as meaningful in men's lives. Second, I argue that both working life research and critical studies on men and masculinities lack explicitly gendered research on men's agentive encounters with numerous, mutually incompatible products, cultures, and practices related to self-care at work.

As demonstrated in the previous section, in various Finnish localities certain masculinities are idealized at the expense of others. Although I reject a strong hierarchy of masculinities and competition between men as an explanatory factor for men's health behavior, I acknowledge that texts and storytelling have historically produced idealized masculinities in Finnish society. Echoing earlier Finnish critical studies on men and masculinities that draw from poststructuralist perspectives to analyze texts (Ahlbäck 2010; Frisk 2016; Jokinen 2000; Lehtonen 1995; Rossi 2003; 2015, 91–107), I also find it important to continue this research tradition by focusing on how self-care is intertwined as a part of idealized images of masculinity that still guide how men are raised and act in society.

1.3 CONTEXT, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

Within the discipline of gender studies, this dissertation is situated at the intersection of the sociology of men and masculinities (Connell 1987; 1995; Hearn 1987; 2004) and sociology of gendered working life (Acker 2006; Witz

et al. 2003). Within the field of sociological research focusing on men, I position my research in the tradition of *Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities*. My research is critical in that I do not approach men as a natural and self-explanatory entity, but instead as a situated and unstable social category (Hearn 2014) and a significant social category in numerous exercises of social power (Connell 1987; 1995; Hearn 2004; Petersen 1998; Whitehead 2002). Since I focus on men as both individuals who exercise power (Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Hearn 2004) and as subjects for exercises of power in which their subjectivity and identity is constructed (Berggren 2014; Petersen 1998; Waling 2019; Whitehead 2002), I align my research within feminist and poststructuralist theorizations on gender.

Hearn (2015b) argues that those scholars working on men's health who position their research within the context of "(pro)feminist Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities" (ibid., 302) must elaborate this position further, as a project based on a concern for men's health does not self-evidently contribute to gender equality or any other feminist project, even if it claims to do so. To answer this challenge, I argue that the present study is not merely a work on men's health in which the social practices that undermine men's health are recognized and the possibilities for improving it are outlined. Instead, I contribute to feminist inquiry by focusing on men's subjectivities and identities, which are now, at least partially, constructed through exercises of power in which men must deal with the ascending ethics of care of the self.

First, I suggest that intensified work-related self-care carries with it the potential to both deconstruct and maintain certain discursive interrelations between men and work. The change in behaviors of men, many of whom occupy the dominant positions in working life (Hearn 2014; 2015a; 2015b), also affects the living conditions of other people, namely non-men and children. Second, I suggest that there are differences between men as well as between men and non-men: men and masculinities are plural rather than a single cohesive whole (Hearn 2015b, 305–306), and men's capabilities to participate in and benefit from work-related self-care differ from each other and from those of non-men. Previous research on men's work-related self-care has largely ignored spatial and socioeconomic differences between men, focusing instead on men who pursue an ascending career path in knowledge-intensive work.

As a point of departure from *Critical Studies on Men* (Hearn 2004), I focus my critical gaze also on multiple masculinities. Numerous authors have questioned the relevance of the concept of masculinity in critical studies on men. To put it briefly, the target domain of the concept has been considered vague by some (Beasley 2008; Clatterbaugh 1998; Griffin 2018; Hearn 2004; Howson 2009; Nieminen 2006), and the value of the concept in research addressing men has been considered dubious (Aalto 2012; 2016; Collinson & Hearn 1994; Hearn 2004; Koivunen 2018; Slutbäck 2018). Despite such productive points of criticism, I maintain that masculinity, understood as a

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“way of being a man,” and especially the focus on multiple masculinities and hierarchies between different masculinities (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 848), can be used to delineate differences within the social category of men. Therefore, they are useful theoretical tools for understanding both changes in men’s behavior and texts that represent norms and ideals concerning men.

I differentiate my position from relational takes on men and masculinities that focus on power and hegemony that certain groups of men hold at the expense of others (cf. Connell 1987; 1995). Instead, I use the concept of masculinity to denote behavioral patterns produced in disciplinary institutions (Ahlbäck 2010; Jokinen 2000) as well as the imaginary positions in which men position themselves (Wetherell & Edley 1999), which are occasionally produced through repetitive uses of language (Reeser 2010). Hence, I reinterpret the gender category term *masculinity* in order to address the fluidity across and within men’s subjectivity and to connect my research with the critical takes on identity that characterize more contemporary feminist theory (Beasley 2005; Gill & Elias 2014; Heyes 2007; Irni 2013b) and critical studies on men and masculinities that apply such theorizations (Berggren 2014; Reeser 2010; Waling 2017; 2019). I elaborate my take on the concepts of men and masculinities further in the following chapter.

The contributions of this study to the field of critical studies on men and masculinities are both theoretical and empirical. Theoretically, I draw from poststructuralist theorizations on men and masculinities (Beasley 2012; 2015; Berggren 2014; Halberstam 1998; Hearn 2014; Petersen 1998; Reeser 2010; Waling 2017; 2019; Whitehead 2002) to challenge the idea that a societal hierarchy of different masculinities and men’s competition for power and honor satisfactorily explain men’s behavior in relation to working life and health. This is a position that expands or outright disputes explanatory frameworks focusing merely on men’s ownership and the social relations of production. The present study challenges scholars in the field of critical studies on men and masculinities to focus their analytical gaze on men’s agency and emotional reflexivity, understood as the capacity for one to act in a particular environment consisting of a variety of constraints and relations of power without reproducing pre-existing models of masculinity. In line with Andrea Waling (2019, 102), I suggest that “a return to feminist theorizing” is necessary to account for issues of agency and the emotional reflexivity of men who are increasingly aware of masculinity as something they perform and which they can abstain from performing.

The present study contributes empirical data to the discussions on men’s health behaviors and men’s subjectivity in working life. Although contemporary cultures that emphasize the importance of work-related self-care and provide knowledge on the correct way to practice work-related self-care seemingly create hierarchies between individuals, such hierarchies are not central to my study. My approach is somewhat different from previous research on men’s health in working life, which emphasizes competition

between men through either healthiness and bodily performance (Connell 2013; Connell & Wood 2005; Johansson et al. 2017; Kelly et al. 2007; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014) or more general men's health research, in which men are seen to perform masculinity through neglecting their own health (Courtenay 2000; Dolan 2011; Gough 2006; Lohan 2007). Instead, I focus on how men co-opt, resist, or otherwise make use of the discursive elements and knowledge that these cultures provide them. Second, I focus on how these elements are intertwined as parts of different, either idealized or subordinate, masculinities in men's speech and in representations of men.

The focus on men's subjectivities in the intersection of health and working life means that other discussions found in working life studies will not be addressed in the present study. It is noteworthy that signs exist in contemporary Finnish society of several major trends shaping the labor market and working life; such signs inform the context of the present study and outcomes that it at least partially addresses. First, there are indications of a shift from a strictly delimited working time to a dissolution of working time and free time in both prestigious knowledge-intensive work (Karjalainen et al. 2016; Niemistö et al. 2017) and in the ascending labor markets of service-based part-time and temporary jobs (Anttila 2018; Jokinen 2018; Ylhäinen 2018; Ylöstalo et al. 2018). Concurrently, a number of efforts have been made by employers, workers, and promoters of wellbeing at work to save individual wellbeing against a disintegration of the conventional terms and conditions of employees, with self-realization and pleasure being emphasized as goals of paid labor (Nikunen 2016; Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 107–111; Ylistö 2015; Ylöstalo 2014), and the challenges, difficulties, and despair that individuals face being increasingly psychologized, conceptualized as personal problems, and subjugated to an individual's own self-determination (Brunila 2012; 2013; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Karjalainen et al. 2019; Mäkinen 2012). Siltala (2017, 281–301) argues that these two sets of attitudes exist side by side in the current Finnish labor market and working life, creating both hopes and fears for the lived experiences of individuals.

I find that the way in which current discussions on the participation of individuals in working life are organized can serve as an extremely important socio-cultural background that makes work-related self-care meaningful. Nevertheless, I limit my remarks on and analysis of this background to how the discussions emerge in the projects and cultural flows affecting men's work-related self-care and their subjectivity. Therefore, I would like to clarify my point of view by stating that the present study addresses men, masculinities, and men's subjectivities as they have changed as part of Finnish work culture. Therefore, I do not focus on or draw conclusions about those changes in Finnish work culture and how they have contributed to changes in men and masculinity.

Introduction

This dissertation is the outcome of a process in which men's speech on work-related self-care produced in interviews and the Finnish media addressing men's work-related self-care have been analyzed and reported in five empirical articles. The research questions of this dissertation, which have been further clarified during the process, are as follows:

- 1) How do men discuss and negotiate work-related self-care and justify their choices and behavior? (Articles I; II; III)
- 2) How do men experience the surrounding norms, either as limiting or enabling their self-care, and how do they react to such norms? (Articles I; II; III)
- 3) How are the relationships between men, masculinities, and work-related self-care discursively constructed in the media? (Articles IV; V)

The research questions, methods, and main contributions of the publications to the dissertation are summarized in table 1. The structure of this dissertation is as follows. In chapter 2, I describe my take on men and masculinities. In chapter 3, I focus on the concept of care of the self. I explore it first as a theoretical concept in relation to power. Then, I describe the cultural flows that affect work-related self-care in contemporary Finnish working life. In chapter 4, I address the methodological and ethical aspects of the study as well as the empirical data analyzed in the articles. In chapter 5, I review the contributions of the original articles. Chapter 6 draws conclusions regarding the main theoretical and empirical contributions of the study.

Table 1. Summary of the research articles and research questions, methods, and main contributions of the publications to the dissertation

Article	Original research questions	Data and method	Main findings and contributions
Article I Perinteisestä maskuliinisuudesta parantuminen ja työntekijäkansalaisuus [Healing From Traditional Masculinity and Worker Citizenship]	How is the therapeutic ethos manifested in men's speech regarding work and personal health?	18 semi-structured interviews conducted with men in different work sectors: media, social services and healthcare, and logistics; thematic analysis.	Participants engaged in a study to resolve the conflict between being a man and taking care of one's health by appealing to its history of origin. The participants identified themselves with worker citizenship, which was characterized by self-reflexivity, adaptability, and responsibility. Concurrently, they expressed a desire to seize the greatest benefits and joy for their own lives.
Article II Care for the Self – But Not for the Career? Men's Perceptions of Work-related Self-care	How do men care for themselves in the context of work and careers and with what goals? How do men experience the surrounding norms to limit and enable their self-care and how do they react to such norms?	18 semi-structured interviews conducted with men in different work sectors: media, social services and healthcare, and logistics; thematic analysis.	The most prevalent aim of self-care was personal wellbeing and striking a balance between work and non-work. The study shows how men practice resistance when they navigate their way through the expectations surrounding working life.
Article III Care of the Self, Somaesthetics, and Men Affected by Eating Disorders: Rethinking the Focus on Men's Beauty Ideals	How do men affected by eating disorders make their eating habits and exercise meaningful in relation to other people and their social surroundings in autobiographical speech?	6 semi-structured interviews conducted with men affected by eating disorders; thematic analysis.	The participants reported that they had found their eating and exercise as meaningful practices that had either supported them in remaining at a particular job or helped them to pursue a certain career. These jobs or career aspirations supported their self-stylization and gave them credibility in front of other people.
Article IV Men's Work-related Self-care in the Finnish Media	What goals of work-related self-care are represented as desirable? How are work-related self-care practices and the men practicing them evaluated?	30 journalistic interviews related to men's work-related self-care; discourse analysis.	Self-care practices that aim to either maintain endurance or increase performance at work are presented in a favorable light. Personal wellbeing is portrayed as secondary to productivity.
Article V Itsestä huolehtiminen nuorten miesten työntekoa ja opiskelua käsittelevissä sanomalehtiteksteissä [Care of the Self in Newspaper Texts Addressing Young Men in Work and Education]	What kind of self-care is present in the texts? What are the goals of self-care? How are men and gender portrayed in the texts?	25 newspaper texts related to work and education addressing young men taking care of themselves; discourse analysis.	Newspaper texts express expectations about increasing productivity and decreasing the need for seeking external help from society.

2 MATERIAL-DISCURSIVE TAKE ON MEN AND MASCULINITIES

In the early stages of the research process, I decided to contribute to the theoretical discussions surrounding critical studies on men and masculinities by differentiating my study from the relational analyses of men (cf. Connell 2012). In the present study, I have drawn from discussions in other fields of feminist research to constitute a theoretical framework that fulfills the following three conditions. First, I analyzed men's accounts of their lived experiences and their emotional reflexivity (Articles I; II; III). Here, my focus is on subjectivity and agency of men. By focusing on men's selves, I assess work-related self-care not as means of competition between men resulting from changes in how health is valued, but as practices that men co-opt as an outcome of agentic and emotionally reflective processes. I do not approach men's work-related self-care mainly as practices that, from the perspective of an outside observer, grant men possibilities to climb the career ladder or advance in some other hierarchy of men (cf. Connell & Wood 2005; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Monaghan 2002; Riach & Cutcher 2014; Thanem 2013).

Second, I wanted to acknowledge inequalities in power and credibility among men in general and between men and non-men. Therefore, I decided not to abandon the idea of a hierarchy of men, or masculinities, as a target of analysis. Instead, I formulated epistemological reservations that bind such hierarchies to certain systems of thought. Therefore, these hierarchies are unstable, subject to change, and plural in nature, with many simultaneously existing within a single society. Especially by focusing on representations of men in the Finnish media (Articles IV; V), I aim to show that certain expectations are placed on men's work-related self-care in Finnish society. However, I do not suggest that the norms involving men or the hierarchies between men thoroughly govern men's actual capabilities to act.

The two previous conditions place my research squarely in the field of postmodernist feminist thought. By fulfilling them, I put much weight on individual experience, individual actions, and individual capabilities to refuse to reproduce certain power relations. However, with individual health and men's bodies being core subject matter of my dissertation, I acknowledge that an overly keen focus on subjectivity and self-defined identity may end up obscuring the materiality of men's bodies and the differences between them. Third, I seek to concurrently align myself with postmodern feminist thought regarding individual subjectivity and still refer to the material world and the men dwelling in it.

In this chapter, I formulate my take on men and masculinities. Echoing Hearn (2014), I describe my take as a material-discursive approach. To justify my use of a material-discursive approach, I present a comprehensive

review of a dialogue between the relational analyses of men and masculinities and contemporary poststructuralist perspectives as well as their mutual theoretical disagreements. The material-discursive approach is profoundly poststructuralist while still focusing attention on some of the important social issues revealed by relational analyses of men and masculinities. Finally, I discuss the compatibility of this approach with two major subjects in contemporary research on men, namely the concept of hybrid masculinities and agency of men.

2.1 PROBLEMATIC HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY

Critical Studies on Men and Masculinities (CSMM) has developed as a subfield within feminist women's studies. Women's studies, which are increasingly being termed gender studies, now includes such subfields as women's studies, queer studies, sexuality studies, and CSMM. CSMM defines itself in relation to a pro-feminist perspective: the reference to "critical" in CSMM centrally concerns questions of gendered power, which makes men dominant in most spheres of life and limits the range of acceptable behaviors for men. The strong relationship between CSMM and feminist thought has been outlined, for instance, by R. W. Connell (1987; 1995), Jeff Hearn (1987; 2004), Stephen Whitehead (2002), Bob Pease (2000), Richard Pringle (2005), Tristan Bridges (2014), and Chris Beasley (2015). By labelling itself critical, CSMM aims to emphasize its focus on gendered power relations and differentiate itself from other kinds of studies on men, studies which are either indifferent to feminist concerns or even anti-feminist (Hearn 2004).

Although CSMM and the other subfields of feminist research once shared a sound modernist theorization of gender, this is no longer the case. Instead, other subfields of gender studies have increasingly moved towards postmodernist and poststructuralist theorization. These concepts refer to a movement away from fixed or essentialist gender identity towards a fluid, historical individual without a core, and positioning subjectivity, rather than relations between groups of men and women, at the center of feminist research (Ahmed 2004; 2006; Beasley 2005; Hemmings 2011; Pulkkinen 2000; Weedon 1997). As several scholars have pointed out, postmodernist or poststructuralist theorizing is by no means conventional, let alone certain, in CSMM research (Beasley 2012; 2015; Berggren 2018; Pease 2000; Waling 2019; Whitehead 2002). Although many CSMM scholars keep positioning themselves with feminisms and feminist theory, it has nonetheless become "the odd man out" in academic research on gender and sexuality (Beasley 2015, 569).

In the late 1990s, CSMM researchers engaged in an open dispute between modernism and postmodernism, a dispute which continues to this day (Connell 2001; Pease 2000; Petersen 1998; Wetherell & Edley 1999). Beasley (2012; 2015) understands this dispute as a fundamental indecisiveness as to

whether CSMM should further develop its characteristic theoretical discussion by focusing on social hierarchies between men or whether it should engage with contemporary feminist theorizations challenging and deconstructing gender categories, gender identities, and gendered subjectivities. More precisely, this dispute focuses on the essence of power and how power operates. The dispute has been set up in between two contrasting poles, the first of which is constituted by the theory of gender order and the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987; 1995) and its numerous applications (see Connell & Messerschmidt 2005) and the second by postmodern and poststructuralist theorizations of gender (Bordo 1993; Butler 1990; 1993; Heyes 2007; Irni 2013a; 2013b; Pulkkinen 2000) and their applications in CSMM research (Bordo 1999; Pease 2000; Petersen 1998; Reeser 2010; Waling 2017; 2019; Wetherell & Edley 1999; Whitehead 2002). In the following paragraphs, I discuss the differences between these two theoretical families in greater detail.

According to Whitehead (2002), the sociology of men and masculinities has been characterized by three main waves of development: 1) theories of sex roles, 2) the theory of gender order focusing on the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and, most recently, 3) poststructuralist perspectives. As Kalle Berggren (2014) points out, this historiography downplays the significance of psychoanalytical perspectives, which were relatively popular in the Finnish discussion on men and masculinities in the 1990s (Hearn & Lattu 2002; Sipilä 1992; Tuohinen 1996; for psychoanalytical perspectives, see Hoikkala 1994; Kylmänen 1995; Lahti 1992; Siltala 1994a; 1994b; 1994c). However, as Jiri Nieminen (2006) and Ilana Aalto (2016) point out, the concept of hegemonic masculinity also became a central point of reference in Finnish CSMM research in the middle of the 1990s (e.g., Herkman et al. 1995; Lehtonen 1995; Sipilä 1994).

Connell's (1983; 1985) theorization of gender was a countermove against the idea of a "sex role," a singular collection of social expectations affecting just half of the gender binary and a feminism focusing on mere power relations between two distinctive genders, namely men and women. In turning the analytical gaze onto the social relations between men, Connell (1987, 183–186) argues that an ordering of various versions of femininity and masculinity appear throughout all society and that, due the structural power differences between men and women, a hegemonic masculinity is constructed in relation to various subordinated masculinities and women. Connell (ibid., 184) engages here with Antonio Gramsci's analyses of class relations, in which "hegemony" refers to a social ascendancy achieved through a play of social forces that persuade, rather than rely on mere violence.

Connell suggests that the power of men complying with hegemonic masculinity works through their moral and intellectual leadership. It rests on the dominance of men in public life, politics, and business, the gendered division of labor, the economic consequences of this division, and the

bourgeois ideology of separate life spheres for men and women (Connell 1995, 68–76). Within this bloc of men, moral and intellectual leadership is granted to certain men who then rule out representatives of marginalized ways of being a man, for example gay men. Connell (*ibid.*, 78) argues that this marginalization process occurs in the form of an oppressive power that is exercised by members of the ruling class, men successfully complying with hegemonic masculinity, through political and cultural exclusion, cultural abuse, legal violence, street violence, economic discrimination, and personal boycotts.

Gramsci's theorization can be interpreted as a detachment from Marxian thought in that he does not see hegemony as solely dependent on economic modes of production (Pringle 2005, 258–259). Nevertheless, feminist applications of Gramsci's work have been viewed as an extension of the neo-Marxian radical feminist project, in which gender is defined in terms of inequality and men and women are seen solely in the form of categories of domination and subordination (Berggren 2018; Pringle & Markula 2005). Connell's closeness to the Gramscian concept of hegemony locates her in the tradition of modernism, which informs Connell's take on power and subjectivity (Beasley 2012; 2015). In line with Gramsci, Connell (1995, 74) makes a sharp distinction between the rulers and the ruled by attaching great interest to the forms of "patriarchal power" through which men dominate women.

Although hegemonic masculinity in its purest form is a "cultural ideal" that most men cannot embody, there is some correspondence between this ideal and collective institutional power (Connell 1995, 77). Since the concept refers "patterns of practice and political relations in historical context" rather than to mere cultural fantasies (Connell 2001, 8), it constitutes a set rules for competition between men and a way to reinforce hierarchical relationships between men. For example, sufficient compliance with hegemonic masculinity unites most men and grants them power in, for example, corporate settings (Connell & Wood 2005). Therefore, Connell (2012, 1677) ends up terming her theory of gender order a relational theory, one which "gives a central place to the patterned relations between women and men (and among women and among men) that constitute gender as a social structure."

Although for Connell power in its Gramscian sense is also productive in that it, for example, motivates men to comply with hegemonic masculinity and appear non-feminine (Pringle 2005, 259), she is also inclined to view power negatively as oppression and deprivation (Beasley 2012, 749–750). On the other hand, Connell (1995, 153) is attached to the humanist model of an autonomous subject who is colonized by a patriarchal ideology but can also be liberated from it: for gay men, whose identities as both "men" and "gay" she sees as innate traits, coming out as gay constitutes a "freedom" that "cannot be dismissed as false consciousness." Because of this drive to liberate subordinated groups, Connell (2012, 1676–1677) expresses an explicit

hostility to postmodernism and poststructuralist thinkers such as Judith Butler, who cannot “produce new policy agendas, since policies are precisely normative statements that authorize or prescribe actions.”

The concept of hegemonic masculinity and its derivatives have been a central point of reference in CSMM research since the early 1990s (Beasley 2015; Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Hearn 2004; Matthews 2016; Reeser 2010). This is due to its clear benefits: differing from the static model of a sex role that assumes a fixed male essence, hegemonic masculinity is an end-product of social negotiation and thus open to change (Bridges 2014; Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Connell & Wood 2005). Due to its dynamism and explanatory power, the concept of hegemonic masculinity is versatile in its scope of application. In Finnish CSMM research, applications of the hegemonic masculinity concept eventually incorporated certain psychoanalytic perspectives: honor as a control mechanism that unifies men’s behavior (Siltala 1994b) was understood as an example of how hegemonic masculinity works among men (Herkman et al. 1995).

Especially in research on working life and management (Aavik 2015; Elias & Beasley 2009; Tanquerel & Grau-Grau 2020) and men’s health (Courtenay 2000; Dolan 2011; Drummond 2002; Hyvönen 2016; Robertson et al. 2016), which comprise the core subject matters of this dissertation, scholars have energetically employed the concept of hegemonic masculinity. For example, Kadri Aavik (2015) focuses on the Estonian labor market to argue that by complying with “discursive ideals” of hegemonic masculinity, especially the orientation towards career, nationalism, and externally identifiable markers of Estonian ethnicity, certain men gain power through access to informal networks of men that boost their career development. Moreover, these networks operate in gender-separated material spaces, such as saunas.

In the early 2000s, men’s health research adopted an explicit critical gender approach that was strongly inspired by the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Courtenay 2000; Lohan 2007), an approach widely cited and highly influential among scholars of men’s health, who subsequently began to adopt critical gender approaches (Crawshaw 2007; Dolan 2011; Gough 2006; Noone & Stephens 2008; Pietilä 2008; Robertson 2007). Will Courtenay argues that men use risky health behaviors, such as emotional restraint, a reluctance to acknowledge pain, and a reluctance to help-seeking, in daily interactions to socially structure their gender and power. According to him,

The systematic subordination of women and lower-status men – or patriarchy – is made possible, in part, through these gendered demonstrations of health and health behaviour. In this way, males use health beliefs and behaviours to demonstrate dominant – and hegemonic – masculine ideals that clearly establish them as men.

(Courtenay 2000, 1388)

However, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has not been immune to criticism, both theoretical and empirical. Despite Connell's (1995, 71) suspicious attitude towards biology determining the social constructs of masculinity, she does not address the origins of manhood itself. As Alan Petersen (1998, 17) insistently notes, Connell does not aim to answer the question of how one becomes a man, the bearer of a particular gender identity. Waling (2019) argues that although categorical and relational analyses successfully describe societal power relations between different groups of men and women, this theoretical tradition does not illuminate men's agentic and affective encounters with gendered expectations. With respect to notions of hegemonic masculinity, the subject tends to be "absent" (Whitehead 2002, 99). According to my interpretation, applying the hegemonic masculinity concept begs the question, just what is the target domain of the concept of power? I suggest that an "the approach that gives a central place to the patterned relations between women and men (and among women and among men) that constitute gender as a social structure" (Connell 2012, 1677) is not a valid theoretical tool for examining all forms of power exercised on men.

Moreover, empirical research on men has also repeatedly raised the question, how does hegemonic masculinity function in men's lives? Empirically, the concept of hegemonic masculinity has faced criticism especially in the field of men's health research. As regards men's risky health behavior, Genevieve Creighton and John Oliffe (2010), Christopher Matthews (2016), and Brendan Gough (2018) have all acknowledged that the idea of men's struggle for status being the motivator for certain risky behaviors is empirically adequate to a certain extent. Nevertheless, these authors criticize it from neglecting different functions of health behavior within the context of a variety of intersecting identities. All criticize Courtenay (2000) for proposing a single, unitary masculinity that individual men aim to "prove" through risky health behavior in the United States. Moreover, this idea has later been generalized by Maria Lohan (2007) to apply to all "Western" contexts without problematizing regional differences and differences between men in a single socio-cultural context. Here, other functions embodied by health behaviors, such as muscularity and fitness as recurring indicators of manliness (Bordo 1999; Drummond 2002; Gough 2018), as well as identity projects in which men who identify with a high socio-economic class intentionally aim to differentiate themselves from the stereotypical behaviors of working-class men (Farrimond 2012; Meriläinen et al. 2015), go unrecognized.

I could maintain that the contents of hegemonic masculinity are in constant flux and that work-related self-care has been incorporated into the practices of some of ruling-class men and men complying with this form of hegemonic masculinity. I could also constitute numerous hegemonic masculinities for the needs of different contexts of working life. For example, I could refer to "hegemonic working class masculinity" (Dolan 2011) and "a

new pattern of hegemonic masculinity, found particularly among globally mobile managers” (Connell & Wood 2005, 347) in order to analyze the differences in how moral and intellectual leadership is granted to different kinds of men in different situations. This framework would also be in line with Connell’s own self-criticism of the concept of hegemonic masculinity, which she has rethought during the 2000s to suit local perspectives (Connell 2012; 2014), rather than “to locate all masculinities (and all femininities) in terms of a single pattern of power, the ‘global dominance’ of men over women” (Connell & Messerschmidt 2005, 846).

Even more radical attempts to save the concept from excessive criticism have taken place. In my previous work addressing men’s lived experiences of dominant masculinities in the school environment (Hyvönen 2016), I referred to Tony Coles’s idea of numerous distinct struggles between men in different socio-cultural contexts, due to which a separate hegemonic masculinity emerges in the yard of each school. Coles (2009), drawing from the work of Pierre Bourdieu, argues that hegemonic masculinity as the culturally dominant ideal constitutes a field of masculinity that allows multiple dominant masculinities to exist within subordinated positions. Within each subfield, a dominant masculinity consists of locally valued capitals mirroring some elements of hegemonic masculinity, and according to Coles (ibid., 39), “those men in subordinated positions in the field of masculinity may not see their masculinity as subordinated or marginalized, particularly if they operate in social fields and domains in which the actions and dispositions of other men are similar to their own.” Ben Griffin (2018) has developed the Bourdieusian take on hegemonic masculinity even further. He suggests that plural hegemonic masculinities are constructed in plural communication communities that overlap or are nested inside one another. When operating within several overlapping communication communities, men are forced to “negotiate potentially conflicting identities, loyalties and values” (ibid., 387). Here, Bourdieu’s concept of habitus constitutes “a way of describing how individuals subconsciously develop a level of cultural competence that allows them to behave appropriately in different social settings” (ibid., 392).

I acknowledge that Griffin’s focus on how men’s subjectivity is constituted within overlapping normative models is a necessary step towards taking men’s subjectivity and agency seriously in CSMM research. However, even Griffin (2018, 394) explicitly defends “the idea that it is meaningful to take as the subject of historical inquiry power relations between masculinities.” I suggest that endeavors to theoretically develop or save the concept of hegemonic masculinity end up reducing men’s lived experiences solely to “men’s lived experiences of masculinity” (Coles 2009, 39) and men’s identities solely to “male identities” (Griffin 2018, 378). I conclude this section by proposing two arguments. First, I suggest that the hierarchy of men and the aspiration to moral and intellectual leadership is not *a priori* an exhaustive explanatory framework for men’s behaviors. Second, I suggest

that the concept of hegemonic masculinity contributes very little to the discussions on men's subjectivities outside of research designs where power is viewed as an unevenly distributed commodity that most men want more of so as to avoid delegitimizing their masculinity. It follows that even in its rethought forms, the concept of hegemonic masculinity retains the idea of an autonomous subject colonized by the patriarchal ideology that forces men to seek recognition as men.

CSMM research that openly criticizes Connell's account of masculinity aims to scrutinize men and masculinities from a standpoint that does not reproduce this narrow focus on a single aspect of men's lives. Instead, it focuses on men's capacity to act in a particular environment that consists of a variety of constraints and relations of power without reproducing pre-existing models of masculinity (Berggren 2014; Hearn 2012; Petersen 1998; Waling 2019). Here, men are not analyzed only as men and not only from the viewpoint of their respectability inside the social category of men. In line with Pease (2000, 28–30), I aim to contribute to research on men's health within the context of working life by deconstructing men to better identify the components of men's subjectivity.

2.2 THE CHALLENGE OF POSTSTRUCTURALISM

In the early 1990s, due much to the popularity of the writings of Judith Butler (1990; 1993), gender studies shifted from engaging in modernist, neo-Marxian radical feminist theorization to engaging with postmodernism and poststructuralism (Berggren 2018). This resulted in a broadscale academic movement of abandoning theorization based on the conception of power as a commodity that can be held in favor of rethinking gendered issues from the viewpoint of an individual subject that is formed, rather than colonized, through a series of circulating relations of power (Ahmed 1998; Bordo 1993; Halberstam 1998; Heyes 2007; McWhorter 1999; Petersen 1998).

Tuija Pulkkinen (2000, 37) underscores that “the modern” and “the postmodern” are not historical periods or forms of society, but modes of thought instead. Therefore, the target domain of postmodernist analyses is not tied to any specific time period. On the other hand, I echo Whitehead (2002, 100–103) in suggesting that postmodernism is a theory about and inspired by the late modern era. It has gained relevance through its critique of dominant knowledge forms, such as the increased presence of medical information in industrialized societies, and an increased interest in subjects as a part of their social networks. Since the 1970s, postmodernism has constituted a countermovement against general, universalizing theories positing grand narratives of development for societies in terms of progress and liberation (Beasley 2005; Pease 2000; Pulkkinen 2000; Weedon 1997).

Chris Beasley (2005, 25) and Chris Weedon (1997, 170) point out that the terms “postmodernism” and “poststructuralism” are often used

interchangeably. I suggest, however, that these concepts can and should be separated: the postmodernist pessimism about dominant knowledge forms in late-modern societies has enabled the application of poststructuralist theoretical tools. The term “poststructuralism” is contested and does not have a single fixed meaning (ibid., 12), which is why I find it important to specify the theoretical tools referred to and made use of in the dissertation. I argue that within the field of CSMM, poststructuralism has questioned two established structuralisms present in its discussions. First, it refutes Connell’s relational approach in which patterned relations between different social groups are interpreted as a source of social structures, in which some groups gain benefits while other groups are oppressed (Beasley 2012). Second, poststructuralism abandons the idea that linguistic categories, such as the social category of men, refer to an ontologically equivalent category and come into existence only as part of a particular structure, in which they differ from and are opposed to other categories such as boys and women (Reeser 2010, 11–14). The terms “man” and “masculinity” are here understood as signs that depict certain bodies, groups of individuals, or behaviors without any necessary essence or ontology.

Whitehead illuminates the tension between Connell’s take on power and poststructuralism as follows:

For despite their allusion to resistance and agency, critical structuralist perspectives ultimately subsume the individual (subject) under a cognitive, strategic and assured deployment of power by rational actors, individuals who are themselves somehow excluded from the ideological forces that ‘they deploy’. Consequently, complex gendered power relations are reduced to an ‘oppressor-victim’ dualism, in which multiple subjectivity and self-identity processes are made invisible by the power of political categories of gender and sexuality and their ideological and material forces.

(Whitehead 2002, 99)

Poststructuralist CSMM research focuses on individual men and their subjectivity instead of groups of men and their relations and differences as the central point of analysis, meaning essentially the diverse power relations in which that individual is involved. As the interest in “multiple subjectivity and self-identity processes” increases, so too does skepticism about the possibility of an apolitical social space in which individuals can be located outside the exercise of power. Poststructuralist CSMM research does not view men as participants in political processes and users of political power; rather, the social category of men and men’s identification with this particular social category are outcomes of exercises of power.

In line with Beasley (2005, 62), Pulkkinen (2000, 36–38), and Whitehead (2002, 104), I suggest that the main principles of poststructuralist theorizing, including those informing this dissertation, are as follows: poststructuralists

understand power as constitutive and productive, namely that identity, subjectivity, and the self are constituted rather than repressed in exercises of power. As such, poststructuralist theorists of gender and the postmodernist philosophical movement more broadly refuse notions of a true self that can be liberated. Postmodernism is profoundly anti-foundationalist in that it refuses the idea of a basic core that only becomes visible when society becomes more liberated or self-conscious of difference. It follows that subjectivity is also understood as precarious, contradictory, and in process, constantly being reconstituted each time we think, speak, or act. Here also identities, for example identifying oneself as a man, are understood as outcomes of certain subjectivities constituted by power relations.

As Weedon (1997, 104–111) and Whitehead (2002, 99–110) point out, these poststructuralist ideas originated in Michel Foucault's work on discourses: understood as ways of thinking and producing meaning, discourses constitute, realize, and organize the body, thoughts, and feelings (Foucault 1972; 1994). In the Foucauldian theoretical framework, power is understood as something that is omnipresent and exercised in individual life rather than possessed, as well as an outcome of contingent historical conditions that institutionalize discursive formations (Kusch 1991, 122–123; Olssen 1999, 19). Foucault argues that

Power comes from below; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations, and serving as a general matrix – no such duality extending from the top down and reacting on more and more limited groups to the very depths of the social body. One must suppose rather that the manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, limited groups, and institutions, are the basis for wide-ranging effects of cleavage that run through the social body as a whole.

(Foucault 1978, 94)

In line with Whitehead (2002, 102–103), I suggest that it becomes less meaningful in poststructuralist theorization to view individuals as holders of moral and intellectual leadership, as even individuals occupying the leading positions within society are constituted through power relations they do not own or control. Poststructuralism differs from the prevailing tradition in CSMM research of locating power in an elite class. Poststructuralist theorization no longer views gender as a stable constituent of an individual's position in the social structure. Instead, an individual's gendered selves and the possibilities to conform to or resist power through everyday actions are taken into consideration. Therefore, poststructuralism serves as a fruitful theoretical starting point for the present study.

Connell (1995, 152–153) argues that postmodernists and poststructuralists are paranoid in that they see “social regulation”

everywhere and therefore understand obvious demonstrations of emancipation to lead to a “collective identity” and consequently “oppression.” It is true that Foucault as a postmodernist rejects the core ideas of Marxian existentialism in which individual conscious experience of the world occurs prior to its participation in social institutions, thereby enabling individuals to use their freedom to transcend their current circumstances and break away from harmful ideologies (Engels 2019). Indeed, Connell (1982; 1995) has been sympathetic to a combination of the Gramscian take on power and Marxian existentialism as an ontological and theoretical framework throughout her career, which makes CSMM a meaningful and sensible project for her (Wedgwood 2009). However, I suggest that Connell makes a mistake by arguing that poststructuralists see power as an infinite source of false consciousnesses. The shift from an understanding of power as mainly oppressive to an understanding of power as productive is not merely a shift in the target domain of the concept of power; it also means a fundamental shift in researchers’ relations to power, which they no longer just view negatively (Beasley 2012; 2015). It follows that researchers cannot make a distinction between false and authentic consciousness.

This difference has been profoundly illustrated in the work of Cressida Heyes (2007, 67–88). She uses Weight Watchers, a global company that sells products and services to assist in weight loss and maintenance, as an example. From the standpoint of a relational analysis of patriarchy, Weight Watchers can be understood as women complying with social structures whereby they gain instrumental benefits from being “fit.” In the absence of this relation of power, people trying to lose weight would then spend their personal time and resources on projects more beneficial to them in the long run. However, from the Foucauldian poststructuralist viewpoint, Weight Watchers creates slimmers or *Weight Watchers*, that is to say, individuals who have certain capabilities for doing work on themselves and who perceive meaning in their actions and have a conception of what they should be doing in the future.

From this perspective, no authentic self exists outside of power relations. Thus, removing Weight Watchers and its message from a person’s life would not necessarily lead to liberation, just to individuals subordinating themselves to other power relations instead. On the other hand, poststructuralist scholars view the workings of power as unruly and unpredictable. For example, women trapped in pink-collar jobs with little space for personal accomplishments may transfer the capacity to treat one’s body and wellbeing as a project learned in Weight Watchers to other areas of life and even reject the relation of power through which they were initially subjected to this mode of thought in the first place (Heyes 2007, 78). This point has been captured by Foucault (1978, 95) in the following claim: “Where there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.”

Contemporary CSMM research has developed and retained an uneasy relationship with poststructuralism, while not entirely rejecting it. Beasley (2012; 2015) notes that CSMM scholars repeatedly employ modernist approaches to masculinity while simultaneously referencing poststructuralist vocabularies and concepts. Although they increasingly apply Foucauldian theorizing in their work, the Gramscian-inspired concept of hegemonic masculinity has concurrently remained dominant. Moreover, Pringle (2005), Beasley (2012; 2015), and Berggren (2018) have all pointed out that it is troublesome to combine Gramscian structuralist concepts and Foucauldian poststructuralist concepts without seeing through the deceptive similarity in their terminology and vocabulary, and thus, acknowledging the fundamental theoretical differences between them.

As numerous authors (Beasley 2012; 2015; Matthews 2016; Pringle 2005; Robertson et al. 2016), including myself (Hyvönen 2020), have pointed out, due to the widespread usage of the concept, hegemonic masculinity has partially ceased to refer to its original field of scope, which encompasses certain men's institutional power and the hierarchy between masculinities. Increasingly, the concept has been applied to near about all that is viewed as toxic within men: hardness, self-reliance, and the ruthless competition that harm men and the people around them. Hegemonic masculinity has slowly turned into an individual psychological fixed character type and not a "configuration of gender practice" (Connell 1995, 77) in which power is granted to certain men through social interaction. Steve Robertson et al. (2016) criticize this theorization for turning the social construction of gender on its head: instead of being an end result of relations between men, certain approaches find hegemonic masculinity, understood as a discursive ideal, to be the "cause" of men's behavior.

This use of the hegemonic masculinity concept is characteristic of, but not limited to, CSMM research in Finland for three historical reasons. To begin with, Finland has a long national tradition of "misery studies" (Hearn & Lattu 2002), in which men's lives are understood as an unhappy and stressful adaptation to externally dictated norms. Here, normative masculinities internalized and performed by men are rendered as an equality problem for them. On the other hand, such takes on men have been challenged since the 1990s via a focus on men's dominant position in, for example, the Finnish labor market (Aalto 2016). According to my interpretation, the concept of hegemony has been found to be a flexible way to address both of these societal problems concurrently: men stand in relation to some sort of hegemonic masculinity from which they both benefit and suffer. I have argued in a previously published historiography on the theoretical developments of Finnish CSMM that one problem when analyzing both the power that men hold and the norms to which they must submit themselves is that hegemonic masculinity is often understood as a set of normative expectations, ideals, fantasies, and stereotypes without being clearly

connected to collective institutional power and hierarchical relationships between men (Hyvönen 2020).

The third issue contributing to this conceptual confusion was the rapid adaptation of poststructuralist theorizations on gender in the early 1990s. Marianne Liljeström (2015) argues in her historical review of how Butler's *Gender Trouble* (1990) has been applied in Finland that the Butler's work received an almost immediate, positive reception and very quickly became a central part of the feminist methodological toolkit. I find that the interest in both Connell's (1987; 1995) and Butler's (1990; 1993) work arose in Finland concurrently. For example, in his seminal work on the interrelations between masculinities, the military, and violence in Finnish society, Jokinen (2000, 209–211) claims that being a man is a performative activity in which men constantly repeat five expectations regarding ideal Western notions of manliness: power, strength, prosperity, control of emotions, and heterosexuality. By explicitly drawing from the “poststructuralist tradition” (ibid., 111–112), Jokinen argues that gender is “inscribed in bodies and on the surfaces of bodies,” rendering it a “social performance and style programmed by culture, rather than anything in the fields of biology or even identity” (ibid., 205). After introducing the concept of cultural masculinity within this theoretical framework, he uses the concept of “Gramscian-Connellian hegemonic masculinity” to answer the question of why men perform these masculinities and how men's gender performances are regulated by men's mutual group discipline (ibid., 213–217).

Since Jokinen, numerous researchers in Finland have continued to pair Gramscian and Foucauldian theoretical tools (Hyvönen 2020). Lucas Gottzén (2018) argues that the keen attachment to modernist viewpoints in CSMM research has been a result of sociologists' skepticism of poststructuralism, which they characteristically understand as a project of humanities. However, this does not fully explain the attachment of Finnish CSMM scholars to the concept of hegemonic masculinity. Poststructuralist applications of the concept that draw from Jokinen's work have been used in, for example, sociological research on men's health (Hyvönen 2016), school analyses (Huuki 2010), and the political sciences (Nieminen 2006).

Based on my critical review, I argue that the concept of hegemonic masculinity does not simply refer to a dominant form of masculinity in the poststructuralist sense (Beasley 2012; 2015; Pringle 2005; Reeser 2010; Whitehead 2002). It is possible to argue, as I have done in Article IV, that the collective discursive reproduction of positive evaluations of certain masculinities turns them into idealized masculinities. By repeating them often enough, these masculinities may become “hegemonic norms” (Butler 1993, 107) or “hegemonic subject-positions” (ibid., 112) that seem natural and uniform without visible alternatives.

However, the very act of terming conventional or outright idealized masculinities “hegemonic” masculinities does not make them hegemonic in the sense of Connell: bare repetition does not guarantee the dominant

position of certain men and the subordination of women (cf. Connell 1995, 77). Poststructuralist scholars tend to also analyze men as subjects of numerous exercises of power: texts and standards of activity within, for example, the context of the military (Jokinen 2000) shape men and reshape their subjectivity: men do not so much exploit their hegemonic power as they are forced to perform hegemonic discourses in their own lives. The pairing of structuralist and poststructuralist theoretical tools blurs the meaning of the concept of power, as the Foucauldian conception of power as a general matrix motivating individuals towards certain actions and the conception of power as a commodity that can be achieved and held are mixed and unnoticed.

I conclude this section by suggesting that in CSMM research, especially in research settings focusing on men's subjectivity, there is an honest need for theoretical tools that describe the ways in which being a man are publicly and visibly idealized (Pringle & Markula 2005; Reeser 2010), that account for how men differ in their self-assessed possibilities to perform these masculinities (Waling 2017; Wetherell & Edley 1999), and that recognize the fact that men find certain behaviors necessary to gain certain social benefits (Dolan 2011; Gough 2018; Robertson et al. 2016). The concept of hegemonic masculinity has sometimes been co-opted and turned into a self-evident and self-explanatory tool to describe masculinities that are idealized, normalized, or even fetishized. Thus, it is used as an expansion pack for other contemporary feminist theorization efforts at stressing subjectivity and affectivity.

The present study focuses on men's accounts of their lived experiences of the norms limiting and enabling work-related self-care (Articles I; II; III) and the expectations and norms placed on men's work-related self-care in the media (Articles IV; V). My research process has revealed a strong demand for a theoretically robust combination of the insights on the inequalities between men provided via the concept of hegemonic masculinity and poststructuralist theorization, which has emerged as a means to criticize modernist understandings of gender. I term this combination a material-discursive take on men and masculinities. In the following section, I show how certain Gramscian aspects of the earlier theorizations in CSMM research can and should be imported to the poststructuralist theorization on men and masculinities, which constitutes the theoretical background of this dissertation.

2.3 TOWARDS A MATERIAL-DISCURSIVE APPROACH

In line with Beasley (2012), I suggest that theoretical diversity in CSMM research should by no means be discouraged. I agree with Waling (2019) in that the concept of hegemonic masculinity has done well when theorizing about certain power relations and equality issues between groups of men and between men and non-men. Therefore, I follow Clare Hemmings (2011) in

that I adopt a cautious stance towards understanding the shift from the theory of a gender order towards poststructuralism as “progress.” My poststructuralist, material-discursive take on men and masculinities enables me to focus on men as both the subjects and exercisers of power. This more complex and diverse approach to the plurality of power relations affecting men’s lives, rather than a mere focus on the relational and structural conceptions of power, enables me to analyze men’s reflexive subjectivity and agency, a viewpoint that is missing from the concept of hegemonic masculinity.

It follows that I am not hostile to the viewpoints and findings of CSMM research stemming from the modernist tradition, for example works by Connell and Hearn, which are characterized by “adaptations of Marxist theories to gender relations” (Berggren 2018, 332). Therefore, the research process informing this dissertation has been characterized by a need to find possibilities for dialogue between relational and poststructuralist CSMM research traditions. My position on the concept of masculinity and hegemonic masculinity has changed during the research process. I began by endeavoring to fit the concept of hegemonic masculinity into the poststructuralist theoretical framework, stating that it is a construction that “can become an ideal governing men through long-lasting collective repetition” (Article V, 49). As noted in the previous section, this conceptual conflict is apt to obscure the meaning of the concept of power.

Regarding my later work, I am of the opinion that the problem stated above has been resolved. In these works, I have considered more carefully my epistemological position as a researcher with respect to the data being analyzed. Therefore, I have refrained from drawing conclusions that contribute to relational discussions on masculinity based on an analysis informed by a poststructuralist theoretical framework. In the empirical studies (Articles I; II; III; IV), the choice of a poststructuralist approach at the expense of a relational approach has been informed by my research interest in men primarily as subjects of power and participants in the matrixes of power rather than in men’s position in relation to moral and intellectual leadership. Despite the conceptual shifts, the material-discursive take described here articulates together the theoretical choices made during the research process.

Although I have adopted the concept of material-discursive from Hearn (2014), I will present my theorization in isolation from his work and do not suggest that our aims and conclusions are the same. Hearn’s starting point is that men are material; he understands men as bodies consisting of biological matter (Hearn 2012), located at a particular point of time and in a certain spatial location, for example a particular workplace. They employ certain resources and comply with certain boundaries in such times and places. As representatives of a certain social category, men hold most of the leading positions in working life and they, in decreasing numbers, do less domestic and care work than non-men (Hearn 1987; 1991). Since the early 1990s,

Hearn has acknowledged that men should also be studied from a discursive standpoint. In *Men in The Public Eye* (1992, 93), Hearn draws from poststructuralist theorizations when he suggests that men and their social position in contemporary societies is also constituted through “discourses, signs, and symbolizations; patterns of agency, psyche and praxis.” This aim to analyze men as both material and discursive entities is the conceptual base we share.

Berggren (2018), however, points out that Hearn’s commitment to a critical material analysis of men’s dominance undermines possibilities for understanding the formation of men’s subjectivities as a meaningful subject of research. By arguing that “post-structuralism [...] can be interpreted, not as a specific critique of materialism, but rather as an expansion of materialism” (Hearn 2014, 6), Hearn maintains that men represent a meaningful category only in terms of dominance and subordination. Men constitute “a true class” (Hearn 2015a, 3). At this point, our theorizations diverge. I employ a material-discursive take on men and masculinities that places the material and discursive approaches in a symmetrical relationship. It involves five theoretical claims.

First, bodies that are most likely recognized as men based on external examination have certain material features. Here, I aim to answer to the critiques of poststructuralism, according to which poststructuralist feminist theory has accorded language too much power at the expense of biological matter (Barad 2003). Echoing Whitehead (2002, 207–208), I suggest that certain bodies are recognized and marked as men through discourse. Through sexed development, these bodies have achieved certain physical characteristics, such as deepened voice, shape, and muscle growth (Hearn 2012). Such bodies are typically externally marked as male and such individuals will also most likely experience themselves as men (Berggren 2014), although this is not the case on every occasion. As Petersen (1998, 113–119) points out, naming oneself a man and submitting oneself to certain social expectations for men occur at a certain time and place while being a contingent state of affairs. It is still somewhat safe to say that from a statistical standpoint, men, on average, differ materially from other genders. Through a process of discursive recognition, those in the social category of men become subjects to all the privileges and expectations that this identification entails as well as gendered differences in behavior and body capabilities.

I take seriously the materialist critiques of poststructuralist theorizations in CSMM research, which accuse poststructuralists of neglecting men’s positions in society. I do not neglect, let alone repudiate, the empirical findings presented in previous CSMM research on men’s material positions as leaders in working life, men’s majority representation in certain fields of work, and their distance from domestic and care work (Aavik 2015; Connell 2013; Hearn 2014; 2015a). Instead, I call for rethinking how power works in constituting the material practices that lead to material inequalities. Here, I

suggest that men should be considered as both the subjects and exercisers of power. Although some researchers in the field of CSMM (e.g., Connell 2001) have dismissed Foucault, a founding figure of poststructuralism, as an extreme idealist, I suggest that both Foucault and Gramsci were materialists who recognized the importance of the workings of language and discourse in the formation of social realities (Olssen 1999; Pringle 2005, 259; Whitehead 2002, 103).

In line with Aho (2019, 47–55), I suggest that not only a division of labor in the reproductive arena (Connell 1995; Hearn 1991) and material ownership (Hearn 2004) limit individual actions, but also that material objects in everyday life, such as tools and workspaces, constitute an important subject of analysis in CSMM research. I follow Sari Irni (2013a; 2013b) in suggesting that the material becomes available for analysis through language. To make the material matter, my analysis also focuses on perceptions of the material as producing “the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface” (Butler 1993, 9), thereby limiting individual actions. Therefore, although the focus of Articles I–III is on the lived experiences of men, such experiences have a context that men perceive as being non-negotiable.

Second, gender, including being a man, is performative. Here, I participate in a poststructuralist understanding of gender as the result of performative acts in which the power of discourse produces gendered individuals, and these subjects reproduce that power through their everyday activities (Butler 1990; 1993; 1997b). While the existence of gender depends on individual acts and omissions, gender is not a voluntary task. Instead, I suggest that through external recognition processes, individuals become subjects: collections of self-beliefs and obligations. This repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts, takes place within a highly rigid regulatory framework (Butler 1990, 33).

As Moya Lloyd (2007, 42) points out, according to the theory of gender performativity subjects do not precede the act of doing, but rather are created through repetition. Lloyd undermines critiques of gender performativity that view it as a garment that one chooses to wear and then voluntarily throws away (see Butler 1993, x). Instead, the power relations that regulate and constrain gender performatives include cultural intelligibility and the variety of identities one can imagine (Butler 1990, 16–17), an awareness of the possibility of punishment (Butler 1997b, 83–105), and especially the productive aspects of power. In other words, the power relations impacting gender performativity shape strong societal ideals regarding what individuals should be like, and individuals participate in such relations throughout their lives (Butler 1997a).

Although I acknowledge the role of interpersonal and group relationships as one of the key mechanisms through which gender is regulated, I do not reduce gender merely to these relations (cf. Connell 2012). Instead, I follow poststructuralist analyses of interpersonal relationships (Heyes 2007; Rose 1998; Taylor 2009) in terms of how they give relatively stable ontological

status to the norms, standards, and protocols through which one individual governs others. Here, poststructuralists echo Foucault's (1978, 94–95) understanding of power relations as “both intentional and nonsubjective”: even if power is never exercised without an aim or an object, it does not necessarily result from the choice or decision of an individual subject, and no central headquarters or command post exists to preside over the rationality of relations of power, which is already internalized by those who exercise power. To illuminate this point, Dianna Taylor (2014, 183–184) cites the relationship between a physician and patient as an example: the physician does not simply possess and use power to subjugate a patient; rather, the physician gains and maintains access to authority only through adhering to norms and practices within the healthcare system, which both enables and constrains their ability to act.

*Third, I retain R. W. Connell and James W. Messerschmidt's (2005, 832) definition of masculinity as a “way of being a man.”*² Although I use multiple masculinities to depict temporal and local variability within the social category of men, I do not focus on how different groups of men behaving in certain ways end up in either hegemonic, compliant, marginalized, or subordinated positions (cf. Connell 1995). I follow Todd Reeser (2010, 18–19) in his critique of Connell's conception of the hierarchies between masculinities. Masculinity is not owned by men or produced only through the endeavors of men. Instead, I stress that several institutions, such as the state, religious groups, school, military, and employers, have a self-interest in masculinity: they promote certain ways of being a man for men and the people educating them to achieve certain ends.

In highlighting this line of theorization, I do not aim to present masculinities as worldviews with designated behaviors, practices, morals, and goals, which are either adopted or completely rejected by men (Waling 2019). Instead, I echo Jokinen (2000) and Ahlbäck (2010) in that I understand most masculinities as tacit, automated patterns of behavior produced by normative disciplinary institutions. Second, some idealized images of masculinity provide opportunities for identification that can also be partial and temporary (Wetherell & Edley 1999). Moreover, men's agency and emotional reflexivity, understood as the capacity for one to act in a particular environment that consists of a variety of constraints and relations

² I acknowledge that this definition enhances rather than deconstructs a strong relationship between men and masculinity. Therefore, it seems to exclude and outright reject the possibility of masculinities performed by non-men. This remark has been repeatedly put forward by queer critiques of CSMM research (Aalto 2016; Halberstam 1998; Frisk 2016; Petersen 1998; Rossi 2003, 2015; Kondelin 2016), including myself (Hyvönen 2020). Nevertheless, I follow Beasley (2012) in that I call for agonism rather than consensus in CSMM research, and therefore, I suggest that heterogeneous theoretical frameworks in studies on men and masculinities should be welcomed. This use of the concept of masculinity is essential for the present study, but I do not aim to claim that the concept should not be defined and applied otherwise in other contexts.

of power, enables men to act without reproducing pre-existing models of masculinity (Petersen 1998, 117; Waling 2019). Thus, I understand masculinity as one of the many resources affecting men's behavior. In line with Petersen (1998), Hearn (2012; 2014; 2015b), and Waling (2019), I suggest that manliness, manhood, maleness, and masculinity have no fixed content and that these social categories are not even a necessary part of men's self-understanding. I return to men's increased possibilities for lifestyle choices, emotional reflexivity, and agency in the following section.

Fourth, terms such as "men's hegemony" or "hegemonic masculinity" are no longer useful as concepts. Instead, certain men and certain masculinities gain normative status, popularity, honor, and exaltation in different ways, in different contexts, and for different purposes. I do not mean to imply, though, that men's dominance, men's striving for dominance, or the power that men exercise are not important subject matters in all CSMM research, including this dissertation. Therefore, it does not seek to deny the value of the idea of multiple masculinities and a hierarchy between them, let alone certain men's privileges compared to those of certain other men and non-men.

Theorization stemming from the concept of hegemonic masculinity neglects the question of how men manage to develop knowledge about themselves (Petersen 1998; Waling 2017; 2019; Wetherell & Edley 1999). I suggest that numerous incommensurable social hierarchies exist in which different masculinities are presented in a favorable light. Creighton and Oliffe (2010, 413) suggest that if the embodiment of "hegemonic masculine ideals" is to be understood as an explanatory factor for men's health behavior, its mechanisms of action in men's lives should be examined more carefully. They point out that men attempt to embody masculine ideals through various health behaviors. These ideals should be understood as local and produced in a certain social context (Gough 2018; Matthews 2016).

Masculinities are endlessly reproduced through copying and modifying previous masculinities. Instead of the concepts of hegemonic masculinity or hegemonic masculine ideals, I use the concept "idealized masculinity" to refer to a way of being a man that is marked as positive, desirable, and credible in a certain context (Pringle & Markula 2005; Reeser 2010). The context-bound nature of masculinities is worth emphasizing here: rather than referring to a wide-scale social dominance granted by performing a certain masculinity, I focus on individual acts of idealizing certain masculinities. Through these acts, which take place in various contexts in both public discussion and in individual lives, idealized masculinities are constituted as, for example, a solution to a certain problem that requires a change in men's behavior. They answer such questions as "What kind of man do I want to be?" and "What kind of men are useful for society?" (see Reeser 2010, 15). This does not exclude the possibility that, over time, some idealized masculinities become more common at the expense of others in a certain socio-cultural context. On the other hand, where Connell (2001, 7)

cautioned against reading hegemonic masculinity “simply as a cultural norm,” I purposely read some masculinities not only as discursive norms but also as cultural fantasies yet unrealized.

Fifth, material bodies and discourses affect each other. This is by no means a new idea in CSMM research. Connell (1995, 59) refers to it as “body-reflexivity”: she argues that discursive theories have previously addressed bodies as objects of symbolic practices, not as participants. As a countermove, Connell (*ibid.*, 60) shows via a case study how an unprecedented and unpredicted bodily pleasure affects a man who decides to use his body differently in the future; in other words, the material affects the discursive. In line with Hearn (2012), I want to point out that discursive phenomena are again looped back to affect the material level through, for example, neuroplasticity: for humans, surges in testosterone occur in stressful societal conditions.

In line with Richard Shusterman (2000; 2006; 2012), I call for and aim to practice a postmodern theorization that takes materiality and especially the individual human body, “a tool of tools” (Shusterman 2012, 3) prior all actions, seriously. Although the body as “a central locus where life’s interests, pleasures, and practical purposes are realized” (*ibid.*, 2) is obviously affected by discursive power relations, I suggest two additional points should be made on the significance of materiality in addition to the concept of body-reflexivity. First, bodies have only certain capabilities through which they can pursue certain goals, which may lead to redefining the meaning of certain discourses in an individual life. For example, one can give up a certain profession due disability. Second, certain bodies are rendered as carriers of certain potentials from outside, which then shapes their social environment and orients them towards certain actions. In feminist discussions, this has been deemed a profound source of inequalities (Ahmed 2006; Berggren 2014).

On a societal level, poststructuralist and queer scholars have shown that discursive regulatory regimes are continuously used to shape the material realm. For example, certain bodies that medical professionals do not feel meet a recognized standard can be surgically altered to better live up to the ideal of two distinct types of sexed bodies (Butler 2004). More profoundly, bodies may be shaped into forms that are not currently recognizable: through advances in medicine, which increase opportunities to modify and improve individual bodies, discourses steer the development of human bodies (Haraway 1991, 43–68; Reeser 2010, 100–101; Rose 2007).

I apply these five theoretical precepts throughout this dissertation. In summary, the material-discursive approach reveals the numerous traditions, public discussions, and control mechanisms affecting men and their self-assessed possibilities to practice work-related self-care. Men are material in that they can only do what their material resources and bodies enable them to do. Men’s material bodies and their activities in the material world may also be punished materially and bodily. However, men are also discursive in

that the images of men, idealized masculinities, and expectations for men's work-related self-care are shaped discursively in a way that can by no means be reduced to the realities of the material world. In the following section, I focus on how idealized masculinities have developed towards greater compatibility with self-care through recent social changes.

2.4 PLURAL HYBRID MASCULINITIES AS A SITE OF AGENCY FOR MEN

In this section, I discuss the compatibility of the material-discursive approach with two major subjects in contemporary CSMM research, namely the concept of hybrid masculinity and the agency of men. I begin with a brief review of the emergence of hybrid masculinities at both the material and discursive level and the reasons behind the changes in idealized masculinities and in the subjectivities of men. To begin with, I suggest that the diversity of masculinities, which differ from traditionally idealized masculinities, constitutes an incoherent and internally contradictory socio-cultural context for being a man in contemporary Finland. Thereafter, I focus on the interrelations between the concept of hybrid masculinity and the increased interest in men's agency in CSMM research. I conclude by focusing on how the concept of hybrid masculinity and the emphasis on men's agency contribute to the present study on men's work-related self-care.

Even Connell (1995, 81–86) argues as a part of her critique of notions of static sex roles that gender and the relations between genders transform over time. CSMM research almost universally agrees that the components of masculinities, for example notions of fatherhood (Aalto 2012; Eerola 2015; Randles 2018), men's sexualities (Anderson 2009; Bridges 2014), and ways of participating in working life (Bell 2013; Cottingham 2017), are in constant flux. To position hybrid masculinities as the newest link in this chain of changes, I use the notion of traditional masculinity as a springboard.

I have argued above that certain masculinities were idealized in Finland during the period that began with the late nineteenth-century national awakening and continued throughout the post-WWII era. In an agrarian and industrializing society, they included such elements as independence, emotional restraint, intrinsic strength, resilience, and an orientation towards paid work. It has been argued that honor worked as a control mechanism that forced men to perform these masculinities: the elements informing certain masculinities helped men construct a sense of honor, which they could then either maintain or lose (Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b; 1994c). The relative unity of these masculinities was confirmed by the shared war experience: reconstruction occupied a space in men's lives that could otherwise have been devoted expressing their own needs, which over time became a model for how to be a man for future generations (Aalto 2012; Hoikkala 1994; Kivimäki 2014; Siltala 1994b; 1994c; Turtiainen 2014;

Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012). Finnish researchers have located signs of a devaluation of these traits as early as in the 1960s (Jokinen 2019, 262–263; Koivunen 2012; Lehtonen 1995; Siltala 1994a) and more extensively beginning in the 1990s (Aalto 2012; Lahti 1992; Sipilä 1994; Tigerstedt 1994; Tuohinen 1996).

The continuity of change is worth emphasizing. Aalto (2006; 2012) argues that the strong cultural belief in a sudden transition in the late 20th century towards a new, softer, more liberated, and more inclusive masculinity in societies perceived as progressive and equal, such as Finland, is an oversimplification. She suggests that such a belief reduces traditional masculinities to a uniform and static surface of cultural expectations, largely because of temporal distance from the pasts being described. Based on this remark, I focus my review on certain empirically verifiable recent changes in idealized masculinities in Europe and North America.

Tristan Bridges and C. J. Pascoe (2014, 246) define hybrid masculinity as “men’s selective incorporation of performances and identity elements associated with marginalized and subordinated masculinities and femininities” and use it as an overarching concept to refer to changes in masculinities available to most men in Anglophonic societies since the late 20th century. The concept of hybrid masculinity has been previously used in numerous, mainly North American, contexts to describe, for example, heterosexual men who identify some aspects of themselves as being “gay” and yet still retain a heterosexual identity (Bridges 2014), men’s increased presence in jobs understood as feminine (Cottingham 2017), the “new fathering” movement (Randles 2018), and men’s increased interest in consumption culture (Whitmer 2017). Although the concept is not widely used in studies conducted in sociocultural contexts outside of North America (cf. Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018), I suggest that the concept is applicable also in the context of Finland. The widespread criticism of men for distancing themselves from the emotional core of the family (Eerola 2015) and the feminization of working life (Aho 2019; Kananen 2014; Mäkinen 2012; Ylöstalo et al. 2018) have placed new norms and expectations on men’s behavior.

In their review of the research on hybrid masculinities, Bridges and Pascoe (2014) focus on how the changes should be understood and on their material and social implications. Scholars applying the concept suggest that hybrid masculinities should be interpreted from the viewpoint of social realities in which men perform hybrid masculinities for their own benefit to legitimate the current gender order in which men remain dominant. In this discussion, the concept of hybrid masculinity appears as a competitor to the concept of inclusive masculinity, which, according to Eric Anderson (2009), is an outcome of the progress of social movements that aim to achieve gender equality and seemingly resolve problems associated with the narrow spectrum of gender performances acceptable for men.

Men have fewer possibilities to do manual labor in the contemporary labor market: here “geek masculinity” (Bell 2013) and the “emotionally adept man” (Cottingham 2017) become valuable. Matthews (2016) suggests that hybrid masculinity is also an effectual theoretical tool in men’s health research. He argues that although the most honored way of being a man may in some socio-cultural contexts include risk-taking and neglect of one’s health, these values should not be understood as fixed, but instead reliant on other social expectations targeted at men. Amsterdam and Eck (2019) argue that although the somatic norms are still stricter for women, men are no longer immune to the effects of health talk. Several studies demonstrate that individual responsibility for one’s own health and a body signaling healthiness have been constructed as desirable for both men and women in workplaces (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Connell & Wood 2005; Gough 2018; Johansson et al. 2017; Kelly et al. 2007; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014; Thanem 2013).

Lisa Adkins (2001) argues that the cultural feminization of working life and economic life increases hybridity, fluidity, and mobility of individuals and problematizes boundaries between classes, genders, ethnicities, and sexualities. However, echoing Adkins, I aim to avoid an oversimplification of and excessive optimism regarding this subversion of identities. Instead, the hybridization of accepted, idealized, and normative masculinities creates new social and symbolic boundaries in ways that may create new forms of inequality and social hierarchy (Bridges & Pascoe 2014).

Bridges and Pascoe (2014, 256), however, draw from Connell’s terminology to understand the ascendance of hybrid masculinities as a “process of transformation among groups of men who hold concentrated constellations of power and authority in the current gender order.” If hybrid masculinities constitute a new stage of development in the history of unstable hegemonic masculinity, it seems to beg the question of how one can discuss hybrid masculinities within a theoretical framework in which the concept of hegemonic masculinity is being refuted. To begin with, masculinity, hierarchies of masculinities, and a process of marginalizing certain masculinities can be formulated using poststructuralism, as I demonstrated in the previous section. It follows that an understanding of social realities as a compelling reason for why men choose to alter their gender performances does not require a Gramscian understanding of power as a precondition: instead, these actions can be analyzed from viewpoints that do not contribute to the discussions of hegemonic masculinity.

Previous research on hybrid masculinities has given some attention to men’s subjectivity, mainly by focusing on their reactive efforts to maintain their moral and intellectual leadership in the current gender order. This research tradition focuses namely on how men “perceive masculinities as they orient themselves in surroundings” (Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018, 3), which in turn leads to “men’s selective incorporation of performances and identity elements” (Bridges & Pascoe 2014, 246). Although I find these takes

extremely valuable, I follow Jennifer Randles (2018) in that I also find it important to focus on how hybrid masculinities and their utility are produced to achieve certain political ends.

The starting point for my argumentation is “the understanding of performativity not as the act by which a subject brings into being what she/he names, but, rather, as that reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993, 2). I suggest that through discursive exercises of power, such as advertising (Whitmer 2017) and political programs (Randles 2018), hybrid masculinities become “intelligible notions of identity” (Butler 1990, 16–17). As such, they open subject positions for men. The binary opposition of men and women is no longer the only or even the most desirable outcome of communication. Instead, a stylized repetition of masculine and feminine gestures through representations may also serve other purposes: to express tolerance (Bridges 2014; Taavetti 2018), to market new consumer identities (Hall et al. 2012; Rossi 2003; 2015; Whitmer 2017), and to consolidate new family forms (Aalto 2012; Randles 2018). Moreover, the same representations can be read and cited from more than one perspective, which has led to a political dispute over the meaning of some representations of Finnish men (Taavetti 2018). I participate in discussions on the norms and expectations placed on men’s work-related self-care in Articles IV and V.

Waling (2019) argues that research focusing on men’s subjectivity is a necessary step away from categorical, typological, and merely relational analyses of masculinity, but it does not necessarily lead to considerations of agency, by which she refers to men’s agentive engagement with external discourses. The notions of men’s incorporation of performances (Bridges & Pascoe 2014) and men’s orientations towards certain masculinities (Berggren 2014; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018) beg the question of “how this orientation occurs, what the process of this orientation looks like, and how men actively negotiate this orientation” (Waling 2019, 96). The discussion of hybrid masculinity has been brilliantly successful in overturning the idea of normative masculinity as essentially an avoidance of femininity. Concurrently, this notion does not in itself challenge the framework in which men are purportedly colonized by a patriarchal ideology that entices them to comply with the current, now hybridized, hegemonic masculinity.

Two remarks can be made about the status of CSMM research. First, I suggest that men’s subjectivity has remained “absent” (Whitehead 2002, 99) from CSMM research, stemming as it does from the concept of hegemonic masculinity, and therefore men’s agency also remains undertheorized in its discussions (Waling 2019). Second, and unrelatedly, I suggest that men’s agency has also increased in the presence of hybrid masculinities, and therefore, now constitutes a more fruitful subject of research. The theory of gender order was not only theoretically but also empirically informed by a pessimistic view of men not having much free space to move within the social

category of men, with their imagination having been monopolized by hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995, 186–203).

Waling (2019) argues that as masculinities based on a sharp gender difference are increasingly stigmatized and considered unethical within contemporary social norms in societies affected by the ideal of gender equality, men are becoming aware of masculinity as something they do and perform. However, I do not view one of the outcomes of this development, hybrid masculinities, as a liberation of men, but as a change in the subjectivity of men. Here, I draw from queer studies, a subfield of gender studies in which poststructuralist theorization is a shared premise. Nikki Sullivan (2003, 136–150) points out that even social projects that define themselves through emancipation are organized around a shared goal that unifies and normalizes behaviors in “a body of people organized into a political and social unity.” The notion of unethicity is not so much the withdrawal of certain social pressure as it is intertwined with notions of how men’s gender performances should develop and why.

Hybrid masculinities have enabled men to feel, evaluate, and work with their emotions more than before. Waling (2019), echoing Mary Holmes (2010), points out that men increasingly draw on emotions when assessing themselves and their lives. I suggest that emotions have also become a vehicle by which men internalize power relations. In men’s lives, their personal goals are shifting from performing one’s gender conventionally towards, for example, helping engage with a more sustainable and equal society, more responsible fatherhood, and better health in working life. Concurrently, men’s subjectivities under the current hybridization of masculinities are characterized by a hostility towards emphasizing one’s own gender and taking it seriously. Goals, fantasies, and ideals constructed on the bases of rationality and usefulness are enhanced by the emotions of pride and loathing. For example, Hannah Farrimond (2012) argues that men with a higher socio-economic status, who value health as a form of social achievement, draw on the stereotype of the “Neanderthal Man” who avoids help-seeking to construct their own self-care in terms of being responsible, problem-solving, and in control.

At this point, it becomes evident that hybrid masculinity is most often an identity project of middle-class men with a relatively high socio-economic status (Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Whitmer 2017). By contrast, hybrid masculinities are by no means limited to such men: for example, employment in a field of work with a female majority (Cottingham 2017) may position men in relation to these ways of being a man. Moreover, although socio-economic class is relevant in the context of hybrid masculinities, men who practice hybrid masculinities also participate in more widescale networks of power: they, for example, act as superiors in organizations in which hybrid masculinity may become a social norm that binds all men within an organization, despite their possible indifference towards it or their personal attachment to another type of masculinity (see

Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Connell 2013; Johansson et al. 2017; Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 107–111).

David Morgan (2005, 173–175) argues that finding distinct class-based masculinities has become more difficult in post-industrial societies, as the wide-scale reorganizing of work has blurred the boundaries between occupational groups. For example, because of digitally monitored driving and working times with real-time fleet management systems, men working in the field of logistics in Finland have been forced to adapt to practices specific to knowledge-intensive work. This development has decreased men's possibilities to perform respectable working-class masculinity, which largely stems from autonomy of work as well as mental and spatial distance from management. (Aho 2019) Although I have, up to this point, discussed hybrid masculinities as the outcome of an overarching network of power relations affecting all Finnish society, I suggest that socio-economic differences and social groups separated from each other should be acknowledged in this theoretical framework.

Instead of emphasizing social class as a source of men's identities and their orientation towards, for example, gender equality discourse and health education (cf. Connell 1995, 35–36; Dolan 2011; Farrimond 2012), I am in favor of focusing on the different social realities that appear in different fields of work and in different workplaces. Competition between men with bodies signaling health (Riach & Cutcher 2014), men's increased presence in female-dominated fields (Cottingham 2017) with a strong organizational culture that seeks to guide individuals to fight burnout (Bressi & Vaden 2017), as well as men's increased exposure to health education and workplace health promotion, even in male-dominated fields with low requirements for formal education (Aho 2019), motivate men to co-opt performances and identity elements previously associated with femininities for various, but mutually separate, reasons. Therefore, I suggest that the hybridization of masculinity can also be understood as the outcome of a social reality in which men dwell and something that happens to men, rather than as an identity project co-opted by men.

In light of the above considerations, I maintain that men's awareness of gender and public discussions on gender has increased throughout Finnish society. Nevertheless, this awareness does not necessarily align with a discourse emphasizing gender equality. Instead, a shared understanding of the changes and challenges to ways of being a man, perceived not only as traditional but also as natural and necessary for personal wellbeing, can also provoke resistance. Tuukka Ylä-Anttila and Eeva Luhtakallio (2017) argue that traditionalism has become more appealing for some men because of the current situation in Finnish society where feminist projects and gender equality discourse have become intertwined with the functions of the welfare state. This has generated an understanding of gender equality as an overwhelming hegemonic discourse that deprives men of living space,

especially if they feel that the gender equality discourse or expansion of the range of acceptable behavior for men has nothing to offer to them.

Resistance becomes apparent in Aho's (2019) study, whereby he suggests that some men in blue-collar jobs still experience nostalgia for respectful working-class masculinity and treat it as a source of shared ethos and group identity. Men's awareness of their masculinity and allusions to the inappropriateness and outright unethical nature of that masculinity in current working life may also encourage such men to negotiate their identities as men in terms of resistance and conservatism. As brought out by Alan Dolan (2011), even working-class men who welcome the gender equality discourse and its critique of men's dangerous health behaviors end up negotiating their personal life choices under the influence of conflicting discourses, where engaging in risky behaviors also offers experiences of agency and dignity as well as possibilities to avoid discrimination from others.

To clarify my take on how hybrid masculinities affect men's subjectivities, I want to emphasize men's situatedness. I suggest that no single subject position can be attached to any single hybrid masculinity. Instead, I suggest that plural ways of being a man, which I have termed hybrid masculinities throughout this section, are characterized by an aversion to and doubting of traditional masculinities and sharp gender difference. Some of these hybrid masculinities, for example those oriented towards entrepreneurialism, self-promotion, and upward mobility (Cottingham 2017; Whitmer 2017), as well as those pressuring fathers to be near the emotional core of the family (Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2017; Randles 2018), may be mutually contradictory in their values and aspirations. I suggest that the mere perception of hybridized masculinities, let alone performing their elements, put men in contact with their emotions and orientate them to at least perceive, if not criticize, traditions and normativity in their surroundings. This situation makes men's subjectivities more precarious and contradictory. Therefore, contemporary men, especially men performing hybrid masculinities, have more ways of navigating power relations.

In this section, I have discussed the relation between the concept of hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe 2014) and multiple discursive idealized masculinities (Reeser 2010). I have also shown how the emergence of plural hybrid masculinities stems from both public discussion on men's social roles and changes in working life. I argue that men now have intelligible subject positions through which they can participate in work-related self-care, either through articulating it as a part of their identities as men or by neglecting masculinity as a part of their self-understanding. In the following chapter, I focus on the power relations affecting the goals and means of practicing work-related self-care in Finnish society.

3 CARE OF THE SELF

In this chapter, I outline the theoretical framework through which I analyze work-related self-care. The first chapter of the dissertation focused on men's subjectivities, with an explicit interest on work-related self-care as a phenomenon limited and enabled by existing norms. Therefore, I also discuss work-related self-care from the postmodernist standpoint. I am not interested in questioning how much self-care contributes to men's health or what self-care practices are best for men's health; such interests refer more to modernist understandings of men's health as a social problem and a measurable quantity that can and should be primarily improved (Robertson 2007, 21–36). Although I find these endeavors to be neither unethical nor based on false claims, the present study focuses on a completely different subject matter. The present study focuses on how and where health is defined and how men are motivated to practice self-care in the context of working life. My position is critical in that I scrutinize all power relations affecting work-related self-care as non-essential and contingent.

The study contributes to working life research by challenging the idea that self-care is automatically a liberating or progressive practice in comparison to a situation where self-care is not practiced. Moreover, it shows that plural self-cares exist in different contexts of contemporary working life, differing from each other in the types of problematizations they are based on. I contribute to CSMM research by rethinking the relationship between contemporary ethics of care of the self in working life and men and masculinities, showing that they contribute to each other in many ways through the processes by which men's subjectivities take shape. Work-related self-care cannot be reduced to a means for competition or a threat to male identity.

Herein lies the serious risk of two types of misunderstanding. First, in adopting the postmodernist viewpoint the study seeks to avoid making strong normative statements on how individuals should practice self-care. Therefore, my critical stance does not reveal any purely negative outcomes of self-care. I do not approach norms and control mechanisms as sources of false consciousness, indisposition, or alienation, notions arising from the modernist philosophy of technology, mainly in works by Karl Marx and Martin Heidegger (Ferré 1988, 54–69).

Second, postmodern thought has raised accusations of relativism in both CSMM research and men's health research. Scholars have argued that postmodernism excludes the possibility of true or false statements, as everything is relative and only dependent on a speaker's viewpoint (Connell 2001; Pease 2000; Robertson 2007, 30–32). I maintain that although postmodernism relies on epistemological relativism, this relativism is not self-defeating. I follow here Foucault, who maintained throughout his career

a philosophical position claiming that statements have a truth value of being either “true” or “false,” but only against a criterion of rationality set within a framework of rules, practices, and standards that change over time (Foucault 1994; Kusch 1991, 210–213; Olssen 1999, 74–75). Moreover, these knowledge-defining frameworks support certain systems of social power, which for their part sustain, reinforce, and profit from the knowledge produced. Foucault essentially focuses on the question of what truths are identified and how this information is used. Foucault (1978, 58, 70, 143; 2008, 19) famously calls this “knowledge-power.” The present study focuses on the manifestations of knowledge-power in contemporary Finnish society and not on the truthfulness of the claims belonging to systems of knowledge-power. I return to Foucauldian ideas about the connections between knowledge and power in the following section.

I begin this chapter by discussing Foucauldian conception of self-care as a practice that is enabled and constrained by institutions and norms. I then move on to discuss work-related self-care as an exceptional case in the sphere of self-care and the historical and material contexts in which it has been constructed as a distinct phenomenon. Thereafter, I focus on the regimes of self-care in which work-related self-care is promoted and practiced in contemporary Finnish society. In the last section, I describe the process of becoming a subject who practices work-related self-care.

3.1 SELF-CARE AND POWER

I have defined work-related self-care as a set of practices whereby individuals decide to take action to support their mental or physical health as a reaction to current or anticipated problems in working life. However, this definition leaves open the possibility for several over-simplifications. Moreover, this definition does not account for the construction of subjectivities as the effects of power relations, a viewpoint discussed in the previous chapter. Therefore, I begin this section by outlining what self-care *is not* from the standpoint of my research. I offer two insights. Thereafter, I focus on self-care as a site of power.

First, self-care does not refer solely to practices through which individuals derive pleasure or aim to decrease their suffering. Self-care may include, and it indeed does often include, these practices, but I suggest that in the context of my research this is too narrow a definition. Self-care in this sense is a means for pursuing an essentially desirable and essentially better end than the state of affairs preceding the act of self-care. For example, Jacquelyn Lee and Shari Miller (2013, 96), while outlining a “strong foundation” for the practice of self-care in social work, suggest that self-care “can serve as a means of empowerment that enables practitioners to proactively and intentionally negotiate their overall health, well-being, and resilience.” Their reading of self-care is highly optimistic: self-care empowers

individuals, since it constitutes a tool that increases both productivity and safety at work and also promotes a sense of subjective wellbeing. As such, this understanding does not view either motives or outcomes of self-care critically.

Moreover, the understanding of care as “giving pleasures” or “decreasing pains” does not capture the manifold meanings of “care” in other contexts. In this dissertation, I retain the concept of care due its inclusive nature and its multiple references to labor, which can be physical, mental, as well as emotional. I also stress its referential point to care that is given to patients in social services and healthcare settings. Subjects may find such practices unpleasant, disciplinary, and restrictive, even if they maintain life and increase quality of life. As such, care is also related to concern in that concern, a state of being anxious and worried, motivates care. To reinforce my position, I have chosen to translate the concept of self-care in Finnish as *itsestä huolehtiminen*, in which the verb *huolehtia* can be translated as both care and concern. During the research process, I have used this wording during both the data collection process, such as in the interview situations, and in scientific writings in Finnish (Articles I; V; Hyvönen & Karjalainen 2020). I have purposefully rejected another possible concept, *itsehoiva* (Rokkonen & Lehto 2017), which can also be translated as self-nurture but is not so easily associated with concern, as the Finnish verb *hoivata* is often associated with loving and understanding interaction without expectations or demands.

Second, self-care does not merely emancipate its practitioners. This statement should not be understood as strictly exclusive. It is obvious that through practices in which one monitors the self and aims to break those customary habits that threaten one’s wellbeing, one can emancipate, that is to say, detach oneself from relations of power. This conception of self-care has appeared repeatedly in a certain tradition of feminist writing emphasizing self-preservation against oppressive force, such as patriarchy, racism, and class domination (Ahmed 2017, 237–239). This line of argumentation draws from Audre Lorde (1988, 131), who stated that “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.”

As Ahmed (2017, 236) points out, this understanding of self-care allows spontaneous emancipation only for resilient individuals. Although self-care can be used as a tool against certain oppressive power relations, it also invokes neoliberal agendas, understood as political movements favoring free market trade, deregulation, individualization, and a shift away from communality and solidarity. Therefore, over-emphasizing emancipation obscures the social, economic, and political sources of physical, emotional, and spiritual distress and exhaustion that motivate individuals to practice self-care in the first place (Ahmed 2017; Gill & Elias 2014; Irni & Kyrölä 2017; Michaeli 2017).

It also follows that an understanding of self-care that emphasizes emancipation constitutes a fundamental, natural subject that has been “concealed, alienated or imprisoned” (Foucault 1997, 282) as a result of repressive uses of power. This is the conception of power that I abandoned in the previous chapter as insufficient. Moreover, recent theoretical discussion in feminist research has also taken notice of the problematic surrounding the naïve ideal of emancipation: as individuals are urged to practice self-care through such positive associations as “wellbeing,” “wellness,” and “loving your body,” someone or something is concurrently exercising power over those individuals (Gill & Elias 2014). Therefore, the communality of individuals should not be neglected: self-care as a practice that aims to change certain features of the self aspires to goals that are learned from external sources and other individuals around the self. To illustrate this point, Heyes (2007, 82) turns the focus on how subjectivity is constituted, rather than liberated, in practices of self-care: “That is, we should not understand ourselves as seeking to liberate a self that was always there, but rather to invent ourselves as something new that is not yet imagined.”

Based on these two insights, I approach self-care as a site of power. I draw here from Foucault’s ideas about care of the self (Foucault 1978; 1986; 1988; 1997). The concept of power refers to manifold relationships of force that take shape and come into play in the machinery of production, in families, in limited groups, and in institutions that encourage individuals to practice self-care by generating concern for themselves through them. Foucault (1977, 25) argues that a body, in which subjectivity appears, is always directly involved in a political field: “power relations have an immediate hold upon it; they invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs.” In line with what Martin Kusch (1991, 181) terms the “historical-political study of the body,” the present study on men’s work-related self-care is an investigation into the relations between social power, knowledge, the human body, individual subjectivity, and personal identity.

This “historical-political study of the body” is motivated by a critique of Marxian thought in which ideology is positioned as the opposite of truth (Kusch 1991, 181–182). As Kai Alhanen (2007, 133–134) and Stephen Whitehead (2002, 100–102) point out, Foucault’s theorization of knowledge-power cannot be reduced to a single, distinct source. Instead, it must be coupled with several points in Foucault’s extensive body of work, where he also continuously rethought and clarified the concept. Concurrently, these authors suggest that this theme is discussed in the most concrete and satisfactory manner in *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1977), which is also the starting point for the present review.

To begin with, Foucault rejects the idea that power should be conceptualized as being owned or controlled by a leading group holding cultural and moral leadership (Foucault 1978, 94). This represents a shift from focusing on how a certain group can lead a society to focusing on how society and its constituents aim to defend and prolong their existence.

Although lying or intentional misleading can occur, Foucault's primary interest in his analysis of the workings of power is situations in which power is exercised to solve a particular problem in a particular socio-cultural context (Foucault 1977; 1978; 2003; 2008; 2009). Therefore, Foucault (1977, 27) suggests that "we should abandon a whole tradition that allows us to imagine that knowledge can exist only where the power relations are suspended." By stating that "power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it because it is useful)" (ibid.), Foucault points out that in order for human life to be controlled, the controlling institution must obtain knowledge about both the subjects of control and the best practices to achieve this control. As Taylor points out, these processes of knowledge production are present in studies on the characteristics of the whole population (Taylor 2009) as well as in exercises of power in which individuals are made to produce information about themselves, for example to help health experts diagnose disorders (Taylor 2014).

On the other hand, there is no "knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (Foucault 1977, 27): since knowledge is seldom produced in isolation from interests, new fields of knowledge concurrently constitute fields of power to which control can be extended. At its simplest, this claim becomes understandable in how medicine constantly produces new information about what properties of the human body in general can be subjected to modification and control (Foucault 2009; Rose 2007). In addition, by granting individuals knowledge of abnormalities in their bodies and personalities, knowledge extends the duration and durability of relations of power (Foucault 1978; 1982; 1988). Exercises of knowledge-power make individuals treat themselves as representatives of these abnormal categories even beyond the situation in which the initial observations took place, as they gain the capacity to recognize themselves as, for example, fat (Bordo 1993; Harjunen 2009; Heyes 2007) or homosexual (Sullivan 2003).

Foucault's take on self-care is profoundly critical in that it acknowledges the contingency of history and individuality and focuses on how individual aspirations are formed. However, it is criticism without normativity in that it denies the possibility of "transcendent values and universal rationality" (McWhorter 1999, 96). This approach enables me to distance myself from essentialist and normative stands that suggest what a human being is or should become (Kusch 1991, 221–226). Thus, I do not make prescriptive statements as to which forms of self-care are desirable, nor I do distinguish truer or more genuine forms of self-care from those that are motivated by external power (Heyes 2007, 133–135; cf. Markula 2003). Echoing Hamish Crocket (2017, 36–37) and Brendan Gough (2018, 19–23), I suggest that individual agency does not always demand particularly strong and explicit resistance, but that self-care may also appear to conform with external norms protecting individual wellbeing against distress.

As Foucault (1988, 19) points out, self-care always has something to do with concern for the self. However, the target domain of that concern is always dependent on the current cultural context: one can be concerned about almost anything regarding the self, varying from salvation of the soul in the afterlife to the individual risk of cardiovascular disease. Therefore, as numerous commentaries point out, it is important to find those relationships with the self that are important for a particular subject of research (Alhanen 2007; Heyes 2007; Rose 1996a; 2007; Taylor 2014; McWhorter 1999). All the different forms of self-care share as their initial condition an experiencing and thinking subject with the possibility to work on oneself and a knowledge of what changes in the self would make it better in some sense. As Heyes (2007), Rose (1996a), and Taylor (2014) point out in mutually different contexts, care of the self is always practiced either under an authority, such as a coach, a priest, or a therapist, or following some system of truth, for example an introductory Weight Watchers booklet. Through introspection, reflecting on the past, memorizing learned knowledge, and examining what needs to be done (Foucault 1986, 50), an individual practices a type of self-sacrifice in which she/he abandons the previous self and enters into a new system of beliefs (Taylor 2014).

In this dissertation, I focus on work-related self-care, by which I mean self-care that affects health and is practiced to resolve current or anticipated problems in working life and career. Next, I will show how the social category of health has become the most important aspect of the self to be taken care of in Western societies. I have problematized the concept of the West above due its vagueness in an analysis of the social norms affecting individuals. Here, I use the concept of the West to refer to societies such as Finland, which have been historically affected by Christianity, which have lately gone through a largescale secularization process, and where the scientific worldview strongly influences decision-making and public discussion. The self that is being cared for is stripped of any aspects that visibly refer to certain metaphysical attributes (Rose 1999), and individual quality of life is understood as the healthiness of an observable, somatic body (Rose 2001; 2007). In the next section, I show how care of the self is articulated as an important part of subjectivity in working life.

Healthism has been a longstanding topic of interest in the sociology of health and illness. According to one of the inventors of the concept, Robert Crawford (1980), healthism situates the problem of health and disease at the level of the individual and privatizes the responsibility of individual health, which leads to a lifestyle that prioritizes personal health in every situation. As “a focal, signifying practice” (Crawford 2006, 401), health consumes living space at the expense of other goals in life. As health is increasingly identified with overall quality of life, being “healthy” also becomes synonymous with being “moral” (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Harjunen 2004; Lupton 1995); self-care related to health co-opts certain practices and situations that were previously reserved for the practice of religion (Pelters & Wijmab 2016), and

the experience of being unhealthy becomes a central source of suffering and anxiety (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Kelly et al. 2007).

The very power relations that affect individuals and make them practice self-care also steer subjects to internalize the focus on the risks impeding them during their lifetime. These risks include the personal risk of wasting one's life while not being happy (Binkley 2014), the personal risk of tiredness (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Kelly et al. 2007), and the personal risk of illness (Rose 2007). However, these power relations do not constitute a unifying site of coercion. Instead, they turn healthiness into a site of mutually incompatible discourses. I elaborate on these competing and mutually incompatible meanings of health in the following two sections.

3.2 WORK-RELATED SELF-CARE

My understanding of work-related self-care as a set of practices in which an individual decides to take action to support her/his mental or physical health as a reaction to current or anticipated problems in working life does not emerge as such from previous research. Instead, I use the concept of work-related self-care to refer to numerous health-related practices in which individuals take action. By drawing from different discussions in working life research, I aim to address plural power relations that are relevant in contemporary working life. I suggest that all these different power relations, based as they are on different problematizations and different goals, share some unifying features. These features include an external source of power that affects individual subjectivity and directs it towards practices of self-care as well as a conception of health-related threats that can be avoided by practicing self-care.

By using work-related self-care as an overarching concept for numerous mutually different practices, I show that a favorable state of individual health in working life is contested, rather than a stable or self-evident entity. It is noteworthy that “health” is here an ill-defined concept. This lack of clarity is intentional: instead of delimiting my focus to certain areas of health in working life, I treat health as a meaningful discursive category in itself and map out the contents it fulfills within different contexts. I suggest that although individual health is governed on a different basis on different fields of working life and education, these different problematizations may travel from one context to another and challenge each other. I return to these competing relations of power and their consequences for individual subjectivity in the following sections.

To begin with, I address two distinct goals through which work-related self-care has been justified in previous working life studies, namely the need for work-related self-care as practices that promote work performance and the need for work-related self-care as practices that promote personal wellbeing through regulating the time and effort spent on work. Based on

these two categories, several different understandings of the meanings of the concept of health emerge.

First, individual health should be increased to enhance worker performance and so that individuals are able to carry out their work assignments. This discourse has occurred within organizations seeking to produce more productive employees (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Dailey et al. 2018; Huzell & Larsson 2012; James & Zoller 2018; Johansson et al. 2017; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Kelly et al. 2007; Thanem 2013) and as part of government-funded public health initiatives (Helén 2016, 145–157). Peter Kelly et al. (2007, 269–270) argue that in “The Brave New World of Work,” which is increasingly characterized by competition between individuals, rationalization of work, speed, and multitasking, “New Work Ethics” require individuals to care for their health to increase their work performance and the productivity of their work.

Above, I have defined the Nordic model as a labor market characterized by a strong state instead of markets or civil society and co-operation instead of conflict. In the Nordic countries, including Finland, the Nordic model has, however, been increasingly criticized since the 1990s from the standpoints of national competitiveness and the demands of globalized and financialized capitalism (Kananen 2014; Kettunen 2012). Concurrently, poor health and obesity especially have been increasingly perceived in public discussions as a burden on public finances (Aarva & Lääperi 2005; Kyrölä 2014). Despite rationalization being a key word in enhancing worker performance, healthiness is also a subject of moral intuition and its effects. This ethical viewpoint on health also creates somatic norms. In informal organizational discourse, bodies signaling unhealthy lifestyles, for example by being fat or unmuscular, are increasingly stigmatized (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Cederström & Spicer 2015; Huzell & Larsson 2012; James & Zoller 2018; Koivunen et al. 2015). Visibly working on one’s own health is also widely perceived by employees as a way of expressing professionalism, loyalty to the organization, and commitment to the job.

The ideal of strong work performance plays out differently in different fields and occupations and for different genders, which in turn affects the power relations to which an individual is exposed. Aesthetic labor, a practice of screening, managing, and controlling one’s physical appearance as a part of the work, has mostly been associated with women (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Mears 2014), with the exception of security sector (Kotzé & Antonopoulos 2019; Monaghan 2002). By contrast, men are encouraged to focus on work-related self-care mostly by contextualizing it through maintaining a high level of performance and competitiveness and by dissociating self-care from care pertaining to appearance (Karjalainen et al. 2016; Kelly et al. 2007; Riach & Cutcher 2014; Thanem 2013).

The focus on individual performance does not make personal wellbeing meaningless (Binkley 2014). Instead, wellbeing is here rendered as part of performance: individuals who do not feel good, cannot give their best in their

work (Cederström & Spicer 2015). Conversely, expressions of negative emotion signal an inability to work efficiently (Karjalainen et al. 2016; James & Zoller 2018). Personal wellbeing is thus identified with psychological health, which is made meaningful through its usefulness in a working environment.

Contemporary working life requires that individuals achieve, possess, and cultivate certain attitudes considered healthy. Institutions that exercise power on the current and future work force, such as educational institutes, are increasingly interested in how individuals are able to cope with the demands of current and future working life. Although healthiness is not here directly observable and measurable in a somatic body, it still refers to things that those somatic bodies do and what they are willing to do in the future. Eeva Jokinen (2018) argues that in post-industrial working life, work is increasingly based on the full utilization of human cognitive, affective, and aesthetic potentials. It follows that post-industrialization is not only a new mode of production, but also represents a change in how the market value of labor is formed. Jokinen argues that European labor markets, including the Finnish labor market, are gradually shifting towards bio-capitalism. In her understanding of bio-capitalism, she echoes Cristina Morini and Andrea Fumagalli, who argue that

what is exchanged in the labour market is no longer abstract labour (measurable in homogeneous working time), but rather subjectivity itself, in its experiential, relational, creative dimensions. To sum up, what is exchanged is the 'potentiality' of the subject. Whereas in the Fordist model it was easy to calculate the value of labour according to the average output and professional skills based on workers' education and experience, in bio-capitalism the value of labour loses almost any concrete definitional criterion.

(Morini & Fumagalli 2010, 236)

In the present study, healthy attitudes, namely the ability to become excited about and see opportunities in one's current life situation, constitute the third area of health aside from physical and mental performance. Numerous authors argue that this mindset is in fact a hybrid form of masculine and feminine traits, such as flexibility, modesty, and a willingness to change the self in order to satisfy customer expectations, traditionally associated with femininity, and competitiveness, risk-taking, and autonomy, traditionally associated with masculinity (Adkins 2001; Cottingham 2017; Ylöstalo et al. 2018; Whitmer 2017).

Kristiina Brunila and Päivi Siivonen (2016) argue that the language of disorder, vulnerability, and dysfunction has stepped outside of psychiatry and psychology and entered educational policies and practices. Therefore, I argue that having healthy attitudes and orientating oneself to the external world in the correct way have been, on a discursive level, incorporated into

the need to tend to one's mental health. Healthy attitudes contribute to both performance and personal wellbeing. They ensure that individuals are happy to become involved in situations that require more performance, flexibility, a willingness to step outside one's comfort zone, and an unwillingness to evaluate the self through such restrictive roles as "employee." According to Sam Binkley,

the new discourse on happiness proposes a certain transformation in one's relation to the world and to oneself: as one incorporates the new program into one's outlook, one abandons the world of static states and stable ontologies for one of dynamic possibilities, risks and open horizons. [...] In the wake of this new object, a discourse on happiness has taken shape across a range of professional fields centered on the problematics of human government: in economics, business management, organizational theory, marketing, and public policy, happiness is a thing with distinct contours and a precise internal mechanism, and thus a point of application for programs and policies aimed at the optimization, coordination and integration of human behaviors [...].

(Binkley 2014, 1–2)

Individuals who perceive themselves as entrepreneurial are understood as healthy. Thereby, individuals are encouraged to care of themselves by actively cultivating entrepreneurial attitudes. Brunila (2013) terms this proper control of one's state of mind. In Finland, enterprising selves are constructed through an entrepreneurial education that is provided at every educational level from elementary schools to universities (Brunila & Siivonen 2016; Keskitalo-Foley et al. 2010; Komulainen et al. 2009; Korhonen et al. 2010; Ylöstalo 2014). Entrepreneurial education has been part of the Finnish educational policy since the late 1980s (Harni & Pyykkönen 2018).

I acknowledge that by including the cultivation of healthy attitudes under the concept of work-related self-care, I am expanding the target domain of the concept of health beyond its most common uses, which are, as stated above, increasingly identified with the attributes of a somatic body and discourses in medicine and psychiatry focusing on an empirically observable human body. I suggest that in contemporary working life and education, cultivating healthy attitudes and other forms of self-care to support proper mental health and prevent mental illnesses are not strongly separated. Finnish public discussions have repeatedly connected the good health of citizens to the economic sustainability of society (Aarva & Lääperi 2005; Harjunen 2004; 2017; Kyrölä 2014; Sorsa 2017), in which individual health is not viewed as a personal matter but as an obligation to society. This connects work-related self-care to discussions on the proper attitudes towards one's own capabilities and limitations in a rapidly changing and increasingly insecure working life (Mäkinen 2012). Based on Jokinen's (2013) analysis of increased experiences of insecurity in working life, I suggest that the need to

care for one's bodily and mental health as well as the need to coach the self so as to achieve, possess, and cultivate certain healthy attitudes intersect and are difficult to distinguish in individual lived experience.

Second, individuals find it necessary to protect their individual wellbeing in working life through regulating the time and effort spent on work. Here, wellbeing is understood as the experience of finding the tasks at hand meaningful and the absence of dislike and distress. International working life research has found this discourse visible mainly in the context of social work and healthcare, in which work is seen as potentially harmful to individual wellbeing. In female-dominated fields in the public sector with little upward career mobility, little wage growth as part of career development and the high risk of worker burnout, such as jobs in social services and healthcare (Koskinen Sandberg 2016; 2018; Saari 2016), the discussions on work-related self-care are established and formal: the focus on individual wellbeing, understood as the absence of dislike and distress, is understood as both a moral obligation of the employer offered to employees and a key prerequisite for individuals to keep working in the field.

In the context of social work and healthcare, self-care is understood as a necessary skill for workers and a part of their professionalism (Bressi & Vaden 2017). Therefore, employers and supervisors need to rely on empirically verified knowledge to create practical guidance that steers workers in how best to implement such knowledge (Lee & Miller 2013). Self-care, for example the pursuit of rest, hobbies, and spirituality, is understood as a response to the risk of trauma, which can potentially damage the self and make it less capable of carrying out work assignments in the future (Salloum et al. 2015). It is noteworthy that despite being a centrally planned activity, the individual self is still rendered important based on the idea that contemporary workplaces do not have enough resources to discipline individuals, and therefore, employers are deployed to screen and control their health and wellbeing (Bressi & Vaden 2017). Individuals are steered towards hobbies that give pleasure and help them manage such vital functions as sleep, diet, exercise, and rest (Lee & Miller 2013).

In Finnish society, the need to help individuals protect themselves from the negative health consequences of work has been addressed in multiple sources. First, the need to make individuals regulate the time and effort they spend on their work has been acknowledged in factory communities in which worker morbidity was understood as a continuous problem threatening productivity of work as early as the late 19th century (Koivuniemi 2000, 85). Although power was exercised by managers over the workers by providing them with medicines and medical services, they were also actively turned into subjects who were aware of these services and willing to spontaneously benefit from them. Closer to the present, in the early 2000s a widespread domestic social movement began to question the meaningfulness of submitting the self to the standards of competitive organizations and to assess possibilities to find personal wellbeing by living and working on one's

own terms in environments that persons perceived as personally meaningful, of lower status, and less hectic (Biese 2017; LaPointe & Heilmann 2014; Salmenniemi et al. 2019).

The interest in protecting individuals from the health risks of work has affected men's lives in some fields of work with a male majority, such as industry. However, it is noteworthy that the majority of contemporary social movements that aim to maintain and control the boundaries between work and non-work are directed at and cultivated by women (Biese 2017; Bressi & Vaden 2017; LaPointe & Heilmann 2014). Based on my empirical findings, I suggest that to practice a form of work-related self-care that aims at personal wellbeing at the expense of work performance, a man needs to draw from the ideas of gender equality and perceive men's conventional social role as a social construction (Articles I; II).

Though the goals of work-related self-care discussed in this section constitute certain understandings of the meanings of health, they are by no means comprehensive and pervasive understandings of what specific practices enhance a particular form of healthiness. I suggest that they, rather, create needs for self-care by steering individuals towards perceiving themselves as imperfect, incomplete, and wanting. As such, they set individuals free and enable them to find those self-care practices that best suit their personal needs (Rose 1999, 217–232). Therefore, they also create a need for knowhow that can help individuals achieve their goals. In the following section, I describe the self-care practices available to individuals in Finnish society.

3.3 REGIMES OF SELF-CARE

In this section, I demonstrate that men in Finland live among numerous “regimes of self-care.” The concept regimes of self-care refers to plural social contexts in which men are urged to perceive themselves as objects of a certain kind of processing work. As I argued in section 3.1, self-care cannot take place without a knowledge-power system present. Thus, by outlining regimes of self-care in contemporary Finland and especially in contemporary Finnish working life, I show the cultural flows to which men's current work-related self-care is attached. Although work-related self-care is the focus of the present study, I also want to point out its connections to cultures that either materially or from the standpoint of personal use of time are likely to exist outside working life.

I begin by focusing on the history of the administration of life and health citizenship in the Nordic countries and especially in Finland. Thereafter, I discuss the challenges that this administration has faced and how the institutional framework of how individuals are governed in matters of self-care has changed and diversified in the 2000s. I end the section by

describing four contexts through which individuals come into contact with the regimes affecting work-related self-care.

Foucault (1978; 2003; 2008; 2009) famously argues that since the 18th century, political power in European societies has not been exercised through merely deciding on death for some individuals and the right to let other citizens live. Foucault's biopolitical thesis implies that political authorities, in alliance with experts, exercise power to change the characteristics of a certain population. This form of power is known as biopower. Biopower, through the actions of the state, promotes the health and protects the life of society as a whole. Biopower is a two-phased process consisting of normalization, a process of establishing a norm from the normal curves, and normation, in which subjects are brought into conformity with a pre-determined norm (Foucault 2009, 63; Taylor 2009). Normation occurs through expressing the risks of being abnormal and treating an abnormal condition by means of therapy, medical operations, and medication. Individuals are both subjects to external operations and subjects who are motivated to care for their own health.

Ilpo Helén and Mikko Jauho (2003) argue that in Finnish society, biopolitics took the form of a "social and health state" (*ibid.*, 20) in the 1960s, with a health insurance act taking effect in 1964 and primary healthcare act in 1972. The social and health state was constituted via a comprehensive hospital network and specialized medical care as well as primary healthcare by the state, municipalities, and third sector. The state ensured that these different actors were able to operate in public life. Helén and Jauho (*ibid.*) suggest that in contemporary welfare states such as Finland, biopower practiced by the state has two specific goals: first, biopower aims to constitute "health citizenship," which refers to individual responsibility and internalized understandings of what one should do to stay healthy, and second, biopower classifies and increases inequality between individuals and groups based on their risk of health problems, meaning it results in a hierarchy of citizens with certain citizens viewed as healthy and others marked as sickly. The concept of "health" in this instance refers to an absence of diseases, which enables individuals to work and reproduce.

As a secondary effect, biopower also produces social norms that enhance amenability of individuals to the goals of power (Heyes 2007; Taylor 2009). Social studies of health focusing on experiences of being stigmatized due the breaking of norms often stress the hegemonic nature of certain discourses. For example, fatness constitutes a violation of norms, one punished by multiple control mechanisms, such as healthcare, colleagues, and the media (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Harjunen 2004; 2009; 2016; Heyes 2007; Kyrölä 2014).

During the rise of the social and health state, which in Finland took place in the 1960s, biopower included a separation between those who calculated and exercised power and those who were its subjects. However, even in the context of the social and health state, power should not be understood as

unipolar form of control by leaders over citizens. Helén and Jauho point out that Nordic welfare states such as Finland have historically constituted networks of power in which the state merely makes it possible for the private, public, and third sector to together control individual lives and populations (Helén 2016; Helén & Jauho 2003).

Historically, the biopower practiced in Finnish society has affected men through two significant domains: occupational healthcare and military. Since the 1880s, the social order in Finnish factory communities aimed to actively curb morbidity among workers through health insurance, which enables rest and recovery during acute illness, as well as occupational health and accident prevention (Kettunen 1999; Koivuniemi 2000). As industrialization proceeded rapidly in the 1960s and the wage-laborer class emerged (Hannikainen & Heikkinen 2006), more men were socialized into industrial communities where they became subjects for the biopower facilitated and enabled by an employer. The concept of work time was invented, which led to surveillance and the disciplining of men's use of time, their holiday periods, and their free-time activities (Anttila 2005). Military service is obligatory in Finland for those who are legally designated male and aged between 18 and 30. Even though the number of conscripts has fallen over time, still around 65% of young men born in 1989 did their military service (Puolustusvoimat 2020).

The role of individuals in the workings of biopower has changed gradually during the 2000s. This change has occurred for three reasons, namely because of 1) the expansion of the target domain of health, 2) the somatization of selfhood, and 3) the death of the social. These changes offer vital alternatives to the standardizing of biopower.

First, the target domain of health has expanded, and this has severe consequences for individual subjectivity. Once again, I return to the holistic nature of "health," which is an ill-defined concept in most of its contemporary everyday uses. I do not suggest that one cannot define "health." Instead, I suggest that health is tied to a particular context and different "healths" exist for different purposes. Body mass index, blood pressure, and the Beck Depression Inventory provide information on different aspects of individual health. At the same time, health is almost universally valued.

Crawford (2006, 403) defines medicalization as "expanding the range of social phenomena said to be related to health," through which "medicine extends its institutional and professional power." However, I have chosen not to attach importance to the concept in the present study. I suggest that the discourses and vocabularies stemming from medicine constitute only a part of the exercises of power through which the target domain of health is expanded and health is given importance. The power relations affecting health have expanded from professional knowledge that is used to identify and fix flaws and errors in the human body and mind to encompass a wide range of different products, programs, and doctrines designed to promote

individual health (Binkley 2014; Davies 2015; Heyes 2007; Rose & Novas 2005). Binkley (2007) argues that the everyday lifestyle choices of individuals are now viewed as elements of larger projects of self-development. Instead of merely curing illnesses and restoring a person to a state of healthiness in the form of the absence of illness, the main focus is increasingly on the subjective perception of one's healthiness, to the point where the concepts of "health" and "healthiness" are accompanied by or even replaced by more vague concepts of "wellbeing" and "wellness" (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Grénman 2019; Sointu 2012). I suggest that neither health nor wellbeing enable completeness: they can be measured, but the results of these measurements can increase and decrease endlessly.

Second, selfhood has become somatic in that the vitality, quality, and healthiness of the self are increasingly being cared for through operations on the body. Nikolas Rose and Carlos Novas suggest that through biomedical languages referring to such entities as depression and hormones, phenomena once understood as mental and non-material are now understood through the language of somatic mechanisms (Rose 2001; Rose & Novas 2005). As more aspects of health are understood as somatic and material, it follows that the number of possible "transformations of the flesh" (Heyes 2007, 4) will also increase: in other words, more aspects of the self that can be manipulated through operations promising predictable causal results. Health is increasingly reduced to certain key indicators recording a person's state of health or healthiness score: weight (Harjunen 2009; Heyes 2007), physical fitness (Kristensen & Ruckenstein 2018; Lupton 2013; 2014; Sanders 2017), and mood (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Davies 2015; Helén 2007a) can all now be numerically improved.

It is likely that during a person's lifespan, she or he will be marked as unhealthy via scales used to measure health. Even if a person is not suffering from any health problems now, a degree of risk always exists that health problems will emerge in the future. Hannele Harjunen (2009, 23) employs the concept "pre-ill" for such a situation: even if a person is not ill at a particular moment, she/he may be at some risk of becoming sick in the future, which makes it possible to cure diseases that have not yet occurred. Though numerous ways to measure and promote health exist, individuals are not likely to find themselves in a position where health cannot be further promoted based on information provided by some external system of knowledge. As I will discuss later in more detail, this situation does not necessarily mean that subjects will be constantly concerned about their health. Instead, it merely makes it possible and, together with the expansion of the target domain of health, moves care for individual health away from state-authorized institutions and turns it into a reality that guides everyday life.

Third, the death of the social consumes living space from the social and health state. By "death of the social," Rose (1996b) is referring to the rise of the language of globalization, which affects the contents of national politics.

According to him, society in the sense of a bounded territory governed by its own laws loses its position as a key concern of national politics. Instead, politics competes in global markets and makes adjustments to the national economy to enhance the competitiveness of society. In this socio-cultural context, the language of debt and saving has become more plausible and even alluring also in Finland (Kananen 2014; Kettunen 2012; 2019; Siltala 2007; 2017; Sorsa 2017). This “state-phobia” has been furthermore enhanced by the largescale unraveling of the legitimacy of totalitarianism since the 1950s (Binkley 2011; Foucault 2008, 77–80). Rose (1998, 81–82) suggests that the unraveling of the legitimacy of totalitarianism and the widespread legitimacy of liberalism, democracy, and capitalism have also resulted in a crisis of authority. In such a socio-cultural context, the ideals of expertise and rational decision-making have replaced trust in the uses of power not based on rationality.

Helén (2016, 212–214) suggests that due to this development, the social and health state has stopped growing in Finland and it has started to wither away. Moreover, the contemporary forms of biopower exercised by the state do not primarily focus on social problems and increasing happiness, as such power is increasingly interested only in enhancing productive citizenship (Kananen 2014, 155; Kettunen 2019; Sorsa 2017). Since biopower focuses on survival of the state (Helén 2016, 215), it has less to offer to individual health citizens.

These three changes offer a vital alternative to the standardizing biopower. Biopower, already in the form that was present in a social and health state, aims to constitute subjects that practice self-care spontaneously: thus, it is not merely an apparatus that exercises disciplinary power and conditions individuals to certain codes of behavior. Instead, numerous authors suggest that biopower works through autonomy, freedom, and agency (Helén 2016; Helén & Jauho 2003; Rose 1998; 2007; Taylor 2009). However, I suggest that both intensified healthism and an understanding of health as a subjective right have problematized the workings of the welfare state and its standardizing biopower, while at the same time the relevance of “health citizenship” has not decreased. In line with Rose (1998, 157–161), I suggest that increased possibilities for self-responsibility and self-management have led to a situation in which the subjects of biopower understand themselves as consumers and customers. The knowledge-power of the good life can no longer be found within any material church, health center, or office, but is rather exercised by individuals in their individual lives (Binkley 2014, 19; Heyes 2007, 85–88; Rose 1998, 81–88).

In discussing the three recent changes in how biopower operates, I do not mean to argue that the state has become unable to govern citizens in certain health behaviors. Instead, I suggest that the institutional framework regarding how individuals are governed with respect to self-care has changed and diversified. Echoing Helén (2016, 217), I suggest that individuals have moved away from the careful governance of the state towards more plural

regimes of living. Stephen Collier and Andrew Lakoff define a regime of living as

a tentative and situated configuration of normative, technical, and political elements that are brought into alignment in situations that present ethical problems – that is, situations in which the question of how to live is at stake. Here the word regime suggests a “manner, method, or system of rule or government,” including principles of reasoning, valuation, and practice that have a provisional consistency or coherence.

(Collier & Lakoff 2005, 23)

Collier and Lakoff (2005, 29) argue that the diminishing power of the state constitutes a site for a new kind of citizenship in which individuals and collectives begin to articulate their needs as living beings based on their own lived experience and their personal understanding of the risks they face. Rose (1999, 103) stresses the agency of individuals in this free market: selves are produced through consumption and the selecting of personal lifestyles from among different options. I term these options, internally consistent systems of knowledge-power, *regimes of self-care*. In the presence of numerous regimes of self-care, the separation between those who exercise biopower and those who are its subjects becomes more indistinct.

Helén (2016) uses three concepts, namely citizenship, customership, and activism, to describe how individuals are engaged to put these regimes into practice. First, Helén (2016, 298–308) refers to different forms of *citizenship* to describe politically constituted individual responsibility and an internalized understanding of what one should do and how one should act as a part of society. More detailed notions of citizenships, such as biological citizenship (Rose & Novas 2005), therapeutic citizenship (Nguyen 2005), and health citizenship (Helén & Jauho 2003), have been constituted to explain individual behavior under the various political rationalities that aim to shape and govern individual subjects to cultivate certain aspects in their own health.

However, Helén (2016, 298) finds the concept of citizenship to be too narrow to refer to the ways in which individuals make use of different practices of self-care that are decreasingly institutionalized. In response, he introduces the concept of *customer* to refer to individuals who consider risks and evaluate the setbacks they have already encountered in their lives and decide to purchase products and services that will help them overcome these problems in the future (ibid., 313–318). While customership is keenly tied to texts and images that tell individuals specifically what they should buy and what kind of person they should become, these exercises of power do not provoke a mere sense of duty. I elaborate on Helén’s argumentation by highlighting Binkley’s (2007) understanding of consumer lifestyles that turn everyday lifestyle choices into opportunities to express personal identity and

experience a sense of autonomy, uniqueness, and worthiness in addition to them being projects of self-development and risk management.

To conceptualize ways of practicing self-care outside the contexts of citizenship and customership, Helén (2016, 319–332) argues that *activism* is also a notable way of participating in regimes of self-care. Individuals spontaneously form coalitions centered around a certain medical condition in order to develop and teach techniques for the everyday management of the condition and to seek alternative forms of treatment (Rose & Novas 2005). In addition to subjectivities shaped by citizenship and customership, activists constitute an identity based on their health status and feel a strong connection to a particular interest group (Novas 2006; Salmenniemi 2019).

However, several misunderstandings may emerge based on such an overview. First, I do not suggest that responsibility and concern for one's health have subsided or been replaced by other elements of subjectivity, that is to say, been made less meaningful. In fact, my conclusion is quite the opposite. The growth in individual capabilities and pleasures related to self-care in a free market, where different forms of self-care are peddled to individuals from multiple sources, has actually enhanced the importance of self-care in individual lives. Second, I do not suggest that the regimes of self-care are completely unattached to each other. Instead, I suggest that despite their origins in a multiplicity of sources, such as commercial business, public discussions, and grassroots activism, these cultures are deeply intertwined in such a way that they share elements and co-opt discourses from each other. Third, although the regimes of self-care are highly protean and have numerous applications, most of the contemporary regimes of self-care do not necessarily challenge the meaningfulness of paid labor or essentially work against it. Instead, employers and policymakers actively make use of them to promote the health of the workforce.

In the following paragraphs, I provide illustrations of four social movements through which self-care becomes available to individuals in contemporary Finland, namely 1) horizontal power in organizations and the labor market, 2) the commercialization of health, 3) social movements deconstructing conventional masculinities, and 4) the therapeutic ethos. Since I understand the actual regimes of self-care to be situated configurations that individuals put into practice in their lives differently, I suggest that a list of regimes relevant for the present study would inevitably be incomplete and inaccurate. Therefore, I confine myself to identifying the social movements that motivate individual men to practice work-related self-care and reflect the wider operational logic through which certain aspects of the self are rendered problematic in the individual regimes of self-care. By identifying these four mutually dissimilar contexts, I show how self-care has been made topical in a way that is essentially overdetermined: it is not something that has been innovated for a certain purpose, but instead it is an ethos that uncontrollably abounds throughout Finnish society. The four social movements described here stem from the analyses presented in the

original Articles I–V. The concept regimes of self-care does not stem from the original articles, though. Nevertheless, I find the concept to be helpful in describing the operational logic of the numerous practices of self-care analyzed in the articles.

Horizontal power in organizations and the labor market

Precarization at work refers to a growing transformation from guaranteed, permanent employment to less well paid and more insecure jobs. Despite limited evidence of widespread precarization in the Finnish labor market (Pyöriä & Ojala 2012; 2016), personal experiences of precarization at work have increased in Finnish society since the late 1990s (Jokinen 2013; 2018; Siltala 2007; 2017). In Finland, a discourse stressing the importance of preparing for increased precarization at work overlaps with neoliberalism in its effects on subjectivity: both encourage individuals to work on themselves as a means of being more competent actors the free market (Harni & Pyykkönen 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Ylöstalo et al. 2018). Work-related self-care in the context of concern for one's own future has repeatedly been tied to the concept of neoliberalism. Neoliberalism is the understanding that life is determined by market forces alone, where individuals are actors in the free market and people perceive other people as competitors (Harvey 2005).

Neoliberalism, as presented here, refers to the root causes of self-care rather than to its methods. Nevertheless, I suggest that competitive work cultures constitute idealized images of an ideal worker, which are occasionally expressed via vocabularies stemming from neoliberalism. By complying with these ideals, individuals can organize personal use of their time, for example eating habits (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Connell & Wood 2005; Riach & Cutcher 2014), exercise (James & Zoller 2018; Meriläinen et al. 2015), practices related to mental wellbeing (Karjalainen 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2019), and introspection related to attitudes and emotions that one can and cannot experience as a worker (Kelly et al. 2007; Ylöstalo et al. 2018). Some forms of horizontal power within organizations and the labor market encourage men to engage in behaviors that are not traditionally associated with men: indifference towards one's own health is here replaced by active self-management (Connell & Wood 2005).

Lilli Rokkonen and Iris Lehto (2017) as well as Hannele Harjunen (2017) suggest that the increased interest in self-care in Finnish society is the result of a widespread neoliberal ethos. These authors suggest that in this particular socio-cultural context, individual health is increasingly being evaluated from the viewpoint of rationalization, streamlining, and cutting costs. Although I acknowledge an interrelationship between ascendant neoliberalism in Finland and certain work-related self-care practices, it is also a highly problematic supposition to treat them as equal or draw a straight line between them. I suggest that individuals do not become subjects only in the context of competition. Within organizations and fields that employees repeatedly find to be unrewarding and challenging in terms of their personal

resources, highly anti-neoliberal attitudes and a willingness to regulate the time and effort spent on work, rather than perceiving working life merely as a field of competition, also take place (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Biese 2017; McKie & Jyrkinen 2017; see also Articles I; II).

Commercialization of health

As I stated in the beginning of this dissertation, I am cautious about reading power as something that can be held, a commodity that can be handed over to another person, and a source of material advantage at the expense of others. Nevertheless, I argue that there are certain private self-interests that motivate individuals and organizations to participate in the networks of power affecting self-care. In addition to a neoliberal ethos in which individuals are perceived as actors and commodities within free markets (Harvey 2005), markets in the everyday sense of the word also affect the availability of self-care practices. As such, self-care in the context of working life also constitutes a business that benefits many. The biopolitical governing of subjects to engage in care of the self is increasingly being articulated in the form of risks, problems, and solutions that can be bought in the marketplace (Helén 2016, 192–193).

Deborah Lupton (2014) points out that the commercialization of health has benefitted from the fact that quality of life has been increasingly understood as a quantity that can be measured and increased. Commercialization of health and especially more subjective “wellbeing” manifest themselves in the increased amount of different commodities that can be bought: memberships in clubs centered on weight loss (Heyes 2007); digital self-tracking devices used to monitor, analyze, and share personal health, fitness, and lifestyle data (Bergroth & Helén 2019; Kristensen & Ruckenstein 2018; Lupton 2013; 2014; Sanders 2017), as well as coaching that helps customers to, for example, deal with difficult personal matters or improve their health (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Grénman 2019; Sointu 2012).

By the concept of workplace health promotion, I am referring to education, initiatives, and programs that work from the top down in a way that they are brought into the workplace by an employer to affect the health of employees and advance healthy lifestyles among them (Zoller 2003). Workplace health promotion is often organized by buying a turnkey product that both includes expertise knowledge and facilitates exercise. The particular forms of workplace health promotion include, for example, workplace mindfulness (Islam et al. 2017; Karjalainen 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2019) and group exercise (James & Zoller 2018).

Workplace health promotion is practiced for numerous reasons. First, it is a part of corporate social responsibility: it offers employees the possibility to experience themselves as being cared for by the employer (Dailey et al. 2018). Second, it develops certain mental, physical, and aesthetical attributes relevant for the job (Karjalainen et al. 2019; Lee & Miller 2013; Mears 2014;

Witz et al. 2003). Third, it opens a way for employers to both compare workers through their personal attributes and a willingness to develop them, which connects workplace health promotion to horizontal power in the organizations discussed above.

Although workplace health promotion is brought to workplaces by employers, it is not foisted onto employees as passive subjects. Instead, workplace health promotion works through and among employees, turning them into a central site of power. Workplace health promotion is education that arouses awareness about individual health, creating a motivation to practice self-care, and it also introduces strongly normative forms of self-care:

One health promotion worker recognized that the company ‘cannot command employees to eat properly’. What they can do, however, is to create what the researchers described as ‘far-reaching norms about how they should work but also how they should live and relate to themselves in order to remain healthy and productive’.

(Cederström & Spicer 2015, 38–39)

The above quote once again highlights the interrelationship between self-care and norms: they should not be understood as mutually contradictory, but instead as interdependent. Workplace health promotion includes regimes of self-care that essentially expand individuals’ capacity to work on themselves. With workplace health promotion, phenomena such as stress, lack of concentration, and dissatisfaction with work become recognized and conceptualized, while solutions to these problems are also offered.

In their study of corporate mindfulness practices, Mira Karjalainen et al. (2019) argue that scientization, the applying of scientific evidence and language, as well as instrumentalization, by which mindfulness is viewed as an instrumental tool to achieve specific outcomes, are used to validate introducing mindfulness practices to corporations. I suggest that these discourses make it possible for men to align with commercial health products and workplace health promotion despite the apparent conflict between certain traditional masculinities and self-care.

Social movements deconstructing conventional masculinities

Jemima Repo (2016) argues that gender equality is not a mere success story of the feminist movement. Instead, gender equality policy is deeply biopolitical: gender constitutes an apparatus of power for modifying human behavior in accordance with certain economic and political ends, especially economic productivity that ensures “the social, economic, and personal wellbeing of European citizens” (ibid., 314). Although Repo’s study is about reproductive choices, I suggest that her insight that “the subject of gender equality is a self-examining and self-governing rational-economic subject” (ibid., 323) is also valuable in understanding how men’s willingness to

question traditional ways of being a man correlates with their self-identified rationality with respect to health behavior.

Men in Nordic countries are heavily influenced by the widespread gender equality discourse. Men's selves surface in such a context: gender equality discourse is transformed into regimes of self-care in which it becomes necessary to ask how one can pursue an enjoyable life and what kinds of masculinity performances support operational society. In the context of evaluating the self from the standpoint of breaking down the boundaries of gender, men are increasingly interested in what has been previously understood as feminine. The self-care practices through which meanings can be renegotiated include, for example, the use of anti-age products to control and reduce grey hair, muscle loss, and aggression loss in middle age (Ojala et al. 2016), meditation (Lomas et al. 2016), and diet (Greenebaum & Dexter 2018).

The aforementioned regimes of self-care deconstruct conventional masculinities, although they still contribute to the immediate needs of contemporary working life. However, the ideal of taking responsibility for one's own health within the context of highly competitive organizations and temporary employment contracts may also expand into other directions as well. I suggest that some of the contemporary regimes of self-care have possibilities to challenge the persistent discursive interrelation of men and work. Ingrid Biese (2017) applies the concept of opting out as a way to question the importance of a career and highlight endeavors to live and work on one's own terms. Alternatively, the concepts of voluntary simplicity and downshifting are used to describe attempts at reducing the number of hours worked and applying for less demanding jobs to improve one's quality of life (Chhetri et al. 2009; Kennedy et al. 2013).

Despite being a relatively visible phenomenon in Finnish society, the practice of downshifting and opting out appeal mainly to women (Biese 2017) and representations of downshifters are primarily marketed to women (LaPointe & Heilmann 2014). It is noteworthy that the deep connection between men and work is also constructed through the institutionalized undervaluation of women's work through lower pay (Koskinen Sandberg 2016; 2018; Saari 2016) as well as discrimination towards women in the form of job segregation, wage gaps, sexual harassment, and ageism (Acker 2006; Biese 2017, 39–42; Jyrkinen & McKie 2012; McKie & Jyrkinen 2017). Nonetheless, discourses do exist that help men to align with the ideas of downshifting and opting out. For example, the discursive ideal of responsible and participatory fatherhood has recently challenged men's self-evident complicity in the persistent discursive interrelation of men and work (Aalto 2012; Eerola 2015; Kangas 2020).

Therapeutic ethos

In line with Brunila (2012; 2013) I define the therapeutic ethos as a moral way of being, living, and doing which draws its language from the psy

sciences: psychology, psychiatry, psychotherapy, and psychoanalysis. Rose (1998, 86–87) argues that the social authority of psychology can no longer be found in the social authority of psychologists. In contemporary societies affected by the widespread availability of psy scientific knowledge and its credibility in decision making, techniques of introspection and self-assessment do not take place in clinics but in moments of everyday life (Binkley 2014, 18). Psy sciences are unstinting in that they lend their ways of thinking and acting to other social actors and forums: their vocabulary can be found in education (Brunila & Siivonen 2016), contemporary cultures of management and leadership (Kantola & Kuusela 2019, 109–111), workplace health promotion (Karjalainen et al. 2019), commercial life-coaching (Bergroth & Helén 2019; Davies 2015; Grénman 2019; Mäkinen 2012), and self-help literature (Cederström & Spicer 2015).

The widespread therapeutic ethos has contributed to public acceptance of mental health problems in a way that has also affected how individuals organize their being and experiences. Finnish society has lived in an “era of depression” since the mid-1990s in that the treatment of depression is a hegemonic discourse in the public conversation with respect to mental problems. Helén (2007a, 201) argues that this visible public discourse is not about endless sadness, despair, and a feeling of non-existence – instead, society shares a solid conviction that something can and must be done to mitigate such feelings. To begin with, public health authorities and mental health experts have been solely responsible for defining mental health problems and giving the care guidelines for them: “proper treatment on the basis of accurate diagnosis” (Helén 2007b, 163) has become the professional rationale. These authorities have tried to undermine the stigma of suffering from certain illnesses located in one’s mind and make help-seeking acceptable.

The psy sciences give new credibility to numerous neo-spirituality practices, by which I refer to a wide range of social movements in which the meaning and position of religion has been renegotiated. The concept of neo-spirituality challenges the widespread idea of the diminishing significance of religion as a result of modernization, secularization, and individualization (cf. Luckmann 1967). Instead, research utilizing a neo-spirituality framework has demonstrated that the crisis of authority mentioned above has led to new individualized forms of spirituality that differ from religion as an intergenerational mass movement (Heelas & Woodhead 2005). Within the context of the present study, neo-spirituality becomes relevant in terms of how it is co-opted for the needs of workplace health promotion and therapeutic practices to enhance “subjective wellbeing” through interventions aiming to ameliorate stress, depression, and anxiety. In these contexts, the metaphysical beliefs that such practices are based on are sometimes ignored, as the practices are justified through their psychological effectiveness (Karjalainen et al. 2019; Saari & Harni 2016; Stanley 2012).

In contemporary societies still influenced by Christianity, women are more religious than men on virtually every measure (Miller & Stark 2002; Trzebiatowska & Bruce 2012; Walter & Davie 1998). Also, the fields of therapeutic practice and neo-spirituality are deeply gendered since both have been previously marked as feminine through connecting them to help-seeking, sensitivity, articulating emotions, and acknowledging weakness (Heelas & Woodhead 2005; Swan 2008; Woodhead 2007), including in the Finnish socio-cultural context (Salmenniemi 2019; Sointu 2012). All forms of psychological treatment have typically lacked a particular “masculinities model,” gender-sensitive help-seeking campaigns and clinical practices targeting men (Seidler et al. 2018). However, it is evident that men whose masculinity is not based on a sharp gender difference, but who pursue wellbeing for the needs of, for example, working life, tend to find neo-spiritual practices potentially meaningful and useful (Lomas et al. 2015; 2016; Ojala 2016).

In turn, Finland constitutes an exceptional case in gendered aspects of therapy in comparison to certain other socio-cultural contexts, such as Australia, the UK, and the USA (cf. Swan 2008). Kivimäki (2013, 295–301) points out that psychiatry, the medical specialty devoted to the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of mental disorders, developed in Finland in the 1930s with very limited contact to related Anglophonic discussions until the late 1940s. Instead, Finland was affected by the German perception of mental illness as a symptom of flaws in inheritance and bodily condition (ibid., 319–357). Helén (2007b) argues that in Finland, psychoanalytic ideas and methods did not have the same professional appeal that they had in, for example, the USA from the late 1940s to the 1960s. Finnish society has not engaged in a widespread public dispute on the right way to treat mental health problems. For this reason, psychopharmacological and psychotherapeutic conceptions have been understood as closely connected and allied paradigms rather than as competing paradigms in Finnish society. Mental health problems have achieved a fairly stable ontological status of being the outcome of both unfavorable psychopharmacological characteristics and environmental factors. Therefore, I suggest that their treatment and a personal interest in one’s own mental health has also, at least partially, avoided associations with irrationality and inefficiency in the Finnish socio-cultural context. Thus, Finland constitutes a favorable breeding ground for contemporary endeavors to develop both the reputation and practices of therapy so that they are compatible with men’s supposed desire to control and shape their health from a utility perspective (Valkonen & Hänninen 2012; Valkonen & Lindfors 2012). Article I focuses on the therapeutic ethos as a part of men’s work-related self-care.

3.4 BECOMING A SUBJECT IN CARE OF THE SELF

The fluidity of discourses in plural regimes of self-care has been palpably demonstrated in research on workplace mindfulness. For example, Karjalainen et al. (2019) have focused on the meanings given to the workplace health promotion project of a Finnish knowledge-intensive organization offering mindfulness services to its workers. They argue that the organization, which relies strongly on a neoliberal corporate culture, chose to motivate its employers to care for their own wellbeing in an effort to withstand the pressures related to work. To this end, the organization decided to offer its employers the possibility to participate in mindfulness exercise groups. It purchased the workplace mindfulness program from a third-party commercial operator. Through mindfulness, employers began to view themselves as mentally lacking: they began to focus on their stress and their emotional pain. In this particular case, the regime of self-care organized as part of workplace health promotion draws from the system of thought commodified by a commercial actor. It draws from discourses of neoliberalism, neo-spirituality, and the psy sciences.

I suggest that self-care is not necessarily a singular mode that is either present or absent in an individual's life. Instead, as the possibilities for effective self-care have increased, individuals are now more likely to care for themselves for numerous different reasons. For example, mindfulness exercises, digital self-tracking devices, and jogging routines are not mutually exclusive in an individual's life (Cederström & Spicer 2015). Self-care can also be temporal: it may answer a temporary need, such as an acute stress peak caused by a sudden increase in workload (Bressi & Vaden 2017; Lee & Miller 2013).

Being the subject of numerous exercises of power has several potential consequences for individual subjectivity. First and foremost is the fact that knowledge about self-care helps workers successfully manage their work and even find new kinds of meaningfulness and joy in it, an explicit goal of, for instance, practical guidance on work-related self-care in social work (Bressi & Vaden 2017). Returning to the uses of power over individual health in contemporary working life and the ability of power to constitute subjectivities, I argue that power provides answers to the questions "Who am I?," "Who do I want to be in future?," and "What should I do to achieve my goals?," each of which determines individual action. As such, power constitutes subjects to the point that opportunities for resistance seem no longer to exist.

Up to this point, I have discussed power in terms of "the production of the self by others" (Olssen 1999, 33; see Foucault 1982, 208) by focusing on institutions and authorities that aim to achieve certain political ends through exercises of power. These actors promote a subjectivity that is deferential to them: in practices of self-examination, individuals are persuaded to produce knowledge of themselves and render some of these findings as problematic

(Foucault 1977, 191–192; 1988, 47–49). These errors are then corrected within those same regimes of self-care, some of which I have described in the previous section. Although the degree to which the regimes have been institutionalized varies, their central goal is to make themselves absolute and necessary. Most regimes argue in favor of total self-abnegation, either by representing themselves as the only possible way to achieve personal wellbeing and happiness (Heyes 2007, 68–71) or to defend society as a whole against decay (Foucault 2003).

Throughout this dissertation, I have embraced a mode of thinking that challenges liberal humanist conceptualizations of subjects as autonomous entities. Despite this, in the following paragraphs I show that resistance is both theoretically and empirically possible. Most poststructuralist feminist studies on individual health and the body emphasize Foucault's accounts of disciplinary practices (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Bordo 1993; Harjunen 2009). However, as Heyes (2007, 64) points out, they could be "supplemented by Foucault's own concern, towards the end of his career, that he had emphasized technologies of power at the expense of technologies of the self." To imagine alternative relations with the self that exist outside disciplinary and normalizing power, Foucault (1997, 282) notes that individuals were able to practice self-care even before care-of-the-self practices "were taken over to a certain extent by religious, pedagogical, medical, or psychiatric institutions." He is referring here to societies affected by Christianity, where finding faults within oneself and changing oneself according to instructions by an authority figure provided a set of guidelines for modern biopower (Taylor 2014).

Foucault argues that contemporary practices of therapy and healthcare emphasizing self-examination, truth-telling (Foucault 1988), and making the self knowable and visible (Foucault 1977; 1978) are, albeit hegemonic, only one way of forming a relationship with oneself and others. Numerous thinkers drawing from postmodernism and poststructuralism, for example in the field of queer studies (Sullivan 2003), have pointed out that certain social movements specifically oppose institutional ways of knowing. They draw from the conception of competing and mutually incompatible relations of power (Foucault 1978, 94–97) that are opposed to "situations or states of domination in which the power relations, instead of being mobile, allowing the various participants to adopt strategies modifying them, remain blocked" (Foucault 1997, 283). By forming and allying themselves with communities in which resistance is being exercised, individuals come to question the necessity and usability of certain pieces of knowledge and the power relations through which they are rendered important (Taylor 2014, 178–182). I suggest that this instability of power relations is present in contemporary hybrid masculinities, thus enabling reflexivity and multiple intelligible subject positions for men. Such an instability of power relations has also become possible because contemporary forms of biopower are being constituted

based on numerous competing understandings of the proper way to practice self-care.

Taylor (2009, 51), based on a comprehensive review of Foucault's work, argues that biopower is a two-phased process that consists of normalization, a process of establishing the norm, and normation, in which subjects are brought into conformity with a pre-determined norm. This occurs through discursive repetition of the norm, the exclusion of other norms, and, for example, shaping material environments so that they are compatible with the norm. The process of normalization also creates a sphere for abnormality, a set of behaviors as well as bodily and mental properties that subjects should aim to avoid. However, the normation process must succeed before subjects can be made to comply with such norms, which is not always easy. Weedon (1997, 196–107) argues that abnormal categories do not always work as abject positions that are shunned through social control. Instead, marking something as abnormal or undesirable also summons it to consciousness and makes it possible to refer to it through language, which may eventually lead to questions about its legitimacy. In the context of health, fatness constitutes an example of a category that has been rethought by activists as a disability rather than a pre-illness to be cured (Harjunen 2009). Here, "fat" individuals, although they recognize that their bodies are heavier than others, first stop acknowledging the authority that once helped them to become aware of this truth, and eventually they manage to disconnect knowledge from its functions in the original power relation, that is, efforts to lose weight.

From an empirical standpoint, the possibilities for resistance may be traced to the instability of discourses related to health, which such possibilities having escalated in Western societies since the early 1980s (Crawford 1980; 2006; Helén 2016, 173–178; Rose 1998, 81–82). As I proposed in the previous section, the exercises of biopower have changed in the last few decades. First, discourses expressing norms are being produced simultaneously by more than one source. Thus, individuals repeatedly encounter mutually contradictory discourses. Second, discourses on desirable forms of self-care actively challenge each other, as I have demonstrated in the two previous sections. Although health is widely understood as being important, its contents, that is to say, *what "health" is* in this particular context and how workers should engage in self-care practices, remain open to debate.

Engin Isin (2004, 227–228) argues that the increase in the number of discourses related to healthiness and the mutual disagreements between such discourses constitute a new form of subjectivity. He suggests that increased awareness of the efforts to govern how individuals approach the notion of healthiness has raised questions about the legitimacy of this governance. Therefore, voices critical of intensified self-care efforts become available for individuals. As a result, they start to idealize authenticity and self-determination as the routes to personal wellbeing. Paradoxically, in light

of increased suspicion, they are now less likely to experience certainty about what forms of self-care lead to this goal.

The notion of risk that once used to motivate biopower to govern individuals through instructions on how to engage in certain lifestyle choices based on rationalist notions of causality and effect are now being replaced by a vast expansion in the range of discourses that help individuals observe risks. Risk has become more omnipresent and mobile in that it can even be attached to some discourses striving to reduce individual risks (Binkley 2014, 66). Continuous suspiciousness creates an experience of control: “the neurotic subject is one whose anxieties and insecurities are objects of government not in order to cure or eliminate such states but to manage them” (Isin 2004, 225).

Therefore, affectivity turns out to be an important element constituting a subject’s agency. In the context of management and governance taking place within and being relevant to working life, the notion of affects has been applied to focus on how and why workers adopt external discourses regarding, for example, work-related self-care. Peter Fleming and André Spicer (2003) argue that in addition to 1) identifying with an organization and/or labor market, that is to say, becoming a particular worker type, and 2) actively non-identifying with an organization and/or labor market, that is to say, being explicitly negative towards certain forms of corporate culture, there is a third way to act under power. “Cynical employees” (ibid.) dis-identify with cultural prescriptions of working life, yet they often still perform them to avoid sanctions. In line with these authors, I suggest that one reason to practice self-care is what Hugh Willmott (1993, 535) terms instrumentality: workers comply with corporate demands without internalizing corporate values.

Based on previous readings of the formation of subjectivity in work-related self-care, I echo Heyes (2007, 85) in suggesting that self-care is constituted by “co-optation and resistance.” This notion refers to a wide range of mutually conflicting self-care practices based on diverse conceptions of healthiness available in societies, from which individuals choose their modes of operation. This choice occurs in a particular environment, where subordination to the norms set by other people can also lead to pleasures and benefits despite the potentially painful nature of the process. Individuals evaluate different possibilities for self-care as a means of orienting themselves to a range of threats, sanctions, and possibilities around them. In line with critiques of liberal humanist conceptualizations of subjects as autonomous entities, I do not suggest that individuals are free to resist all kinds of exercises of power, anytime, anywhere. Instead, I follow Carol Bacchi (2005) in suggesting that regimes of self-care both delimit understandings and offer discursive means to criticize and question other regimes.

To conclude this chapter, I want to emphasize three choices I have made in formulating the theoretical background for the present study. These

theoretical contributions have oriented the research process and they separate my research from earlier research on health in working life. First, in the present section on how individuals become subjects who practice work-related self-care, I have suggested that work-related self-care can and should be analyzed from the viewpoint of the lived experience of the individual practicing it. When conducting an analysis from this perspective, the analyst does not define significant agency but instead understands all individual actions as steps leading towards certain goals.

Second, although I maintain that certain forms of work-related self-care may indeed produce negative affects, such as stress and unpleasant experiences of blurring the boundaries between work and non-work, individual resistance to these power relations does not necessarily constitute a resistance to work-related self-care as a whole. By locating the roots of work-related self-care in numerous regimes of self-care, I have suggested that care of the self is a multifaceted phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single goal or social movement. Therefore, when individuals focus on their own health and wellbeing, they exert agency by engaging with a regime different than the one seeking to cultivate their success in the labor market or within a particular organization. It becomes evident at this point that I do not consider work-related self-care part of a certain social phenomenon, such as a neoliberal mindset in the labor market (cf. Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Cederström & Spicer 2015), or a practice present in a particular sort of organization, such as workplace health promotion (cf. James & Zoller 2018; Karjalainen 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2019; Kelly et al. 2007). Instead, I suggest that discussions on the necessary and proper ways of practicing self-care in working life have intensified of late, and these discussions may lead to numerous outcomes in individual lives.

Third, despite my unwillingness to read work-related self-care merely as a function or consequence of a certain distinct work culture, I recognize that it is still subject to numerous societal expectations. Therefore, I decided to focus on representations of men's work-related self-care in the Finnish media in the original Articles IV and V. By focusing on these texts, rather than on, for example, text material related to workplace health promotion within a particular organization, I want to emphasize work-related self-care as subject to cultural meanings and norms that are not created, owned, or controlled by particular organizations. In these representations, certain regimes of self-care and certain goals of work-related self-care are co-opted or resisted in a way that produces and reproduces the cultural meanings of work-related self-care and norms regarding men's participation in working life. Although the power exercised within organizations is relevant for the present study, other social expectations also affect individual subjectivity, which may end up shaping the organizations in alternative ways.

The present study contributes to both working life studies (cf. Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014) and men's health research (cf. Courtenay 2000; Robertson 2007; Robertson et al. 2016) by

Care of the self

focusing on how “power comes from below” (Foucault 1978, 94) through the individual actions and choices of the men interviewed for the research project as well as the discursive characteristics of texts.

4 METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In this chapter, I describe the methodological choices made while conducting the present study. I start by positioning my study within certain methodological and epistemological traditions in the field of gender studies. Thereafter, I discuss the data and the methods used in this dissertation. I end this chapter by presenting some ethical considerations.

4.1 METHODOLOGY AND EPISTEMOLOGY

The present study produces knowledge on both men's subjective accounts of their work-related self-care as a part of Finnish working life and cultural conceptions of men and their social roles in Finnish society. Methodologically, the present study draws from the tradition of qualitative research. According to Svend Brinkmann et al. (2014), qualitative research gained importance in the 1970s concurrently with the emergence of postmodern thought as a reflection of emergent social complexity and multiple competing perspectives that cannot be fully analyzed by applying quantitative methods. I have conducted qualitative research to analyze the "messy, contradictory realm" (Bhavnani et al. 2014, 176) of lived experiences and cultural conceptions. Methodological discussions in the field of gender studies often characterize qualitative research as an escape route from positivism, a conception of social science as an enterprise that produces knowledge that is generalizable and distinct from the researcher (Hemmings 2011; McHugh 2014). However, my understanding of the methods and goals of research suitable for CSMM does not exclude quantitative methods *per se*. Instead, I suggest that qualitative research offers possibilities for future research that may also include, for example, explanation, hypothesis testing, and statistical analysis (Patulny & Pini 2013).

Epistemologically, the present study draws from postmodernist, poststructuralist, anti-foundationalist, and queer conceptions of subjectivity (Beasley 2005; Pulkkinen 2000; Waling 2019; Weedon 1997). This implicates that one cannot achieve knowledge of the internally coherent belief systems that an individual draws from while producing speech of one's own life or texts to be published by the media. Instead, numerous distinct and even incompatible discourses, understood as ways of realizing and organizing the reality, can flow and act through an individual. These discourses control, guide, and restrict individuals as well as constitute a repertoire for several actions and their rationalizations. Therefore, my reading focuses on individual accounts of lived experiences and their complexities, rather than on objective reality or stable identities. Echoing the understanding of queer proposed by Renée Spencer et al. (2014), my analysis

is critical of dichotomies, particularly natural/artificial, healthy/unhealthy, and masculine/feminine dichotomies, which can achieve a level of importance only with regards to earlier research and conceptions expressed in the individual uses of language.

Since subjects are unstable and in a constant state of flux, I do not suggest that my research provides knowledge about the inner world of my participants or the authors of the texts being analyzed. Instead, I approach my data as a display window into certain repertoires of discursive practices through which individuals make their actions meaningful. The present study, as with all qualitative inquiries, is limited to my own structural position in Finnish society. Especially in the case of Articles I–III, which draw from interview data, I acknowledge that I have not listened to the accounts of my participants as an “an unbiased observer” (Pease 2013, 43), but as an individual whose personal traits and previous experiences influenced the accounts being produced (see Bhavnani et al. 2014; Spencer et al. 2014, 92–94). Even though I have produced knowledge that contributes to CSMM research, this information has been produced in a particular location from a particular point of view, one which is no more authentic than other possible perspectives.

4.2 DATA

4.2.1 INTERVIEWS WITH MEN PRACTICING SELF-CARE

The first two research questions introduced at the beginning of this dissertation are the following:

- 1) How do men discuss and negotiate work-related self-care and justify their choices and behavior?
- 2) How do men experience the surrounding norms, either as limiting or enabling their self-care, and how do they react to such norms?

Work-related self-care, as with most forms of health and health behavior, is a multifaceted phenomenon constituted by attitudes, deeds done both at work and during leisure time, as well as intentional inaction, such as abstaining from certain behaviors deemed unhealthy. I suggest that such actions and deliberate inaction cannot be observed by following participatory and ethnographic methodologies. Therefore, I chose to collect the data by interviewing men.

Articles I and II draw from 18 semi-structured interviews conducted between 2017 and 2018 in different work sectors: media (N=7), social services and healthcare (N=7), and logistics (N=4). The participants identified as men and lived in the Greater Helsinki area. The participants were contacted by trade unions in the Greater Helsinki area and through

both the snowballing method via existing study subjects and my personal contacts. Since work-related self-care among men has previously been connected to highly educated workers in knowledge-intensive work, I aimed at broader socioeconomic coverage and representativeness in the data collection process. I focused on three fields with different education requirements, different factors producing work-related stress, and differences in gender segregation. Nevertheless, each of the fields represents the types of jobs available in a post-industrial labor market. All the men worked in fixed-term or permanent employment relationships. Two participants had more than one job, one as an employee in two organizations, and one as both an employee and a self-employed person. Four participants worked in managerial positions. Although the focus on employed men was unintended, it helped me focus my analysis on the social and normative aspects of working life.

Greater Helsinki includes the smaller central urban core of the capital region and the commuter towns surrounding it. I focused my research on this area because it represents more than a quarter of the population of Finland. As the largest urbanized area in Finland, with large internal migration from other parts of the country, Greater Helsinki also represents the greatest variance in working conditions and local Finnish cultures. Greater Helsinki belongs to the region of Uusimaa, where the population is more highly educated than in other parts of Finland, with 37 percent of the population having completed a tertiary level education (Official Statistics of Finland 2019). Helsinki is an example of a post-industrial Nordic region in which industry jobs have been replaced by service-sector jobs to a great extent. Through focusing on this single geographical context, the research captures men's perception of labor markets wherein post-industrialization is of great cultural significance and is understood as a reality that should be taken into account in all individual actions in the labor market.

Six out of seven participants in both the fields of media and care held a bachelor's degree or higher. As the sampling proceeded, I focused on recruiting participants who were not between 35 and 45 years old, heterosexual, highly educated, and white ethnic Finns, as interviews with such men already constituted most of the data. Together with recruiting participants representative of majority of the work force in Greater Helsinki, I supplemented the data by interviewing men working in the field of logistics, which differs from the two previously mentioned fields by being male-dominated and not requiring formal education for many of the positions. All the participants in the field of logistics had only a secondary education, and only one had an education corresponding to his field of work. The data was fairly saturated even before the men working in logistics participated, and their interviews did not significantly add new characteristics to the data. The average participant age was 39 years, with the range being from early 20s to late 50s. With only one exception, all the participants were white ethnic Finns. Although the themes raised by the interviewer did not include

sexuality, three participants mentioned that they lived in non-heterosexual intimate relationships. Most of the participants made references to their heterosexuality by, for example, mentioning their spouses. Two participants reported they had an underlying disease that demanded regular treatment.

The average length of an interview was 84 minutes, with the lengths varying from 43 to 147 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once. Themes covered in the interviews had to do with issues affecting wellbeing in the workplace, the meaning and contents of work-related self-care, the participant's own practices of work-related self-care, and how gender identity influences work-related self-care in both the participant's life and in Finnish society (Appendix I). Participants also chose to focus on several other themes as well, such as impact of workplace health promotion on self-care.

Although broad socioeconomic coverage and representativeness were the explicit aims of the data collection process for Articles I and II, certain limitations should be acknowledged. The speech produced in these interviews does not represent all the thoughts and practices relevant to the lives of the men who are the target domain of the present study, but instead represent a certain collection of expressions limited by the research setting, which includes voluntary participation and semi-structured interviews as a method of data collection. Beverley Skeggs (2004, 119–134) suggests that producing the self through talk is namely a middle-class practice, one not as easily available to and used by people from a working-class background. According to Skeggs, working-class people are often subject to a type of self-disclosure that is either obligatory or at least perceived as obligatory. In contrast, self-disclosure constitutes a natural and self-evident way of being in contemporary society for middle-class individuals. Men with higher education and men who worked in knowledge-intensive fields or in managerial positions were easier to reach, and they produced longer and more detailed accounts in the interview situations in comparison to other participants. Therefore, I must acknowledge the risk of universalizing their accounts to represent all men in Finnish working life.

By focusing on men in employment relationships, I delimited my study to men belonging to a group that Siltala (2017, 7) terms “working middle class,” by which he means people who live by their own work and have a relatively secure position in the labor market. This group excludes, for example, people working as continuing freelancers in the platform economy and making a living from a combination of fees and unemployment compensation (see Ylhäinen 2018). The participants had a sufficiently stable work position that afforded them the time and opportunity to make informed decisions about self-care and share them in an interview. During the preliminary analysis of the data, I noticed that Morgan's (2005, 173–175) claim about the blurring boundaries between socio-economic groups in post-industrial society is true to a certain extent. The participants sympathized with the idea of blurring boundaries between genders and understood hybrid masculinity as a positive and voluntary identity project.

Although I deliberately rejected the notion of class-based masculinities as the main determinants of men's identities and their subjectivities when analyzing men as subjects of numerous power relations, it is noteworthy that these power relations are not the same in all fields and workplaces encountered in current Finnish working life. Based on previous research of work-related self-care and men at work, I suggest that the fields focused on in the present study differ from each other in terms of the intensity of the power relations affecting work-related self-care as well as their intended goals with respect to individual subjectivity. As I have stated above, the fields focused on during the data collection process differ from each other not only in the education requirements but also in terms of the organizational culture related to self-care.

As Simon Goodman (2008) points out, qualitative research is almost never directly generalizable to the extent that reliable results from a representative sample of participants can be applied to a wider population. Although ideas about distinct masculinities inherent in each field of labor and profession as well as the relatively unlimited fluidity of masculinity within the context of work have faced criticism (Morgan 1992), I emphasize that this sample does not cover all occasions in Finnish working life where men's health behaviors are produced. I suggest that the data analyzed in Articles I and II are useful for the present study because the narratives focus on the different contexts and localities of men's practices, while such contexts can be viewed as a whole in terms of what is shared in all the contexts and the unifying features of the men's accounts, even in contexts distant to each other.

Echoing Goodman (2008, 272), the present analysis demonstrates that a discursive strategy can achieve a certain rhetorical accomplishment, and some strategies are used by a range of speakers in a range of contexts to bring about the same rhetorical end. By including men working in the field of logistics in the sample, I demonstrate that although my findings are not generalizable, they are not limited to men whose work has formal requirements for education. Instead, some traces of these rhetorical strategies can also be found in the speech of men from discernably different socio-economic backgrounds.

In the context of interviewing men, Linn Egeberg Holmgren (2013) points out that gender is always actively performed in interviewing situations. An interviewer constitutes an audience for whom the interviewee is adopting certain gender performances to be seen in a desired light. Therefore, the research does not merely produce knowledge about men in a particular situation; it produces knowledge about how the participants want the researcher and others to see them as men. This aim at a convincing performance is not, however, an act of disguising a true self, but instead a form of identity work in which men also negotiate their lived experiences with the surrounding norms and consider their reactions to such norms.

In previous sociological research on both health and working life, this performativity of the participants in research settings has been seen as an essential viewpoint in reviewing the contributions of the research. Pietilä (2008) argues that in interview situations addressing health, some men aim to perform and assert a lifestyle compliance, that is to say, be perceived as health-aware and self-responsible citizens. In the context working life, individuals who are strongly committed to a certain career and organization tend to also perform their workplace roles in interview situations (Hearn 2013, 29). Moreover, the interview situation also affects the style of speech produced. Anssi Peräkylä (1995, 40–41), while reviewing his research on healthcare workers in Finnish hospitals, suggests that the interviewees replicated the dynamics of this working life context even before the interviewer. They repeatedly viewed him as a representative of “understanding” and the “psychologizing” gaze, and the participants produced speech that responded to such a perspective. Thus, it can be concluded that participants inevitably respond to a researcher as someone sympathizing with certain political goals and not with others. In my research, this became apparent in, for example, both statements that sympathized with workplace health promotion and statements that viewed me and the participant as allies against the demands of the employer.

The accounts of the participants should also be read as representations of identity work that extend far beyond the interview situation. Alistair Thomson (2015) argues that in narrating one’s life, a person aims at composure by choosing and shaping the accounts so that they achieve a narrative form that gives meaning to one’s experiences and dignity to the self. In composing such narratives, participants draw on the vocabularies and meanings available in the present. Instead of being a literal interpretation of men’s self-care practices, I understand these interviews as sources of men’s values, men’s experiences, and men’s practices in that they represent men’s understandings of the strategies available to them to deal with the ascending ethics of care of the self in a way that is both culturally intelligible and justifiable as well as personally appealing. Therefore, the present study is not a survey of actual self-care practices based on details about each participant’s daily life as presented in the interviews. Instead, my analytical interest is placed on a more general ethos in the speech, one where, for example, valuing the employer’s innovativeness and criticizing the employer’s exercise of power constitute two separate strategies.

Article III draws from six semi-structured interviews conducted in 2015. They were originally conducted to analyze the meanings men attribute to their eating disorders and the actions connected to them in relation to gender identity (Hyvönen 2016). With respect to this dissertation, actions related to eating disorders are analyzed as work-related self-care. The participants recruited to the original study were people whose commonalities included identifying as a man and an experience of being affected by an eating disorder at some point in their lives. Here, I detached my research

from conditions that can be medically diagnosed as eating disorders. Since the definition of an eating disorder has been widely debated and the diagnostic criteria and uses of the concept vary from one context to another (Bordo 1993; Cohn et al. 2016; Murray et al. 2017), I decided to focus on individuals who felt that their eating behavior was and/or had been harmful to their health.

The participants were ranged from their early 20s to early 50s, with the median age being 40 years. All the research participants lived in southern Finland. They were reached through the Eating Disorder Association of Finland and its member organizations and via my personal contacts. All the participants were white ethnic Finns. Although the themes raised by the interviewer did not include sexuality, four out of six participants expressed their heterosexuality through references to girlfriends, wives, their own children, and sexual encounters. At the time of the interview, one of the participants stated that he wished to be in an intimate relationship, but he did not disclose his sexual identity. Only one of the participants explicitly stated that he had had sex with a man. At the time, he had identified by turns as non-man and woman.

The average length of an interview was 108 minutes, with the lengths varying from 60 to 170 minutes. Each participant was interviewed once. In the semi-structured life-history interviews, men affected by eating disorders produced autobiographical speech about their lives with respect to these illnesses. The themes covered in the interviews included the time before the participants were affected by the eating disorder, the beginning of the illness, thoughts during the illness, the first feelings of illness, and their recovery from illness (Appendix II).

Although no conditions other than those mentioned above were given to potential participants, the selection of participants should not be understood as representative. Due to the narrow understanding of the nature of eating disorders, men find it difficult to talk about their eating disorders and to participate in studies addressing the theme (Robinson et al. 2012; Räisänen & Hunt 2014). Most the participants reported that before recognizing their behaviors as an eating disorder, they first needed to draw on resources provided by their socio-economic position, such as their parents' familiarity with men's eating disorders or occupational healthcare. This limitation is visible also in previous qualitative studies on men's eating disorders, which render such disorders as predominantly a problem of white, middle-class men (Murray et al. 2017). On the other hand, some of the participants reported that they came from a working-class background. Some participants also discussed their past aspirations to work at jobs in the service sector with no formal education requirements.

The participants in this study not only participated in perceived mutual understandings of healthy lifestyles, they also identified as individuals affected by eating disorders, which self-evidently marked their past behaviors as an illness and undesirable behavior. Therefore, it is possible that certain

individuals may behave or have behaved in the same way as these participants without identifying their behaviors as symptoms of an eating disorder. Instead of mere lifestyle compliance (cf. Pietilä 2008), their autobiographical narratives are confessional in that the participants also discussed illogical, irrational, and self-destructive events in their lives. Concurrently, as I have argued in my previous work (Hyvönen 2016), the participants aimed to find their own agency and indications of personal talent in behaviors related to eating disorders. They transformed painful memories into a past they could live with and make sense of, into “a story that deals with the raw and jagged edges of past experience and offers a comfortable and coherent narrative for the present” (Thomson 2015, 23).

I conclude this section by suggesting that despite my aim to recruit participants representative not only of the middle class and the most proficient practitioners of self-disclosure, much of the analysis focuses on accounts from such persons. The interview data was produced in a situation where both my own behavior and communication style as well as the participants’ attitudes shaped the interview situation. This is inevitable in qualitative research that draws from interview data.

4.2.2 TEXTS IN WHICH MEN ARE MADE

The third research questions put forward at the beginning of this dissertation is the following:

- 3) How are the relationships between men, masculinities, and work-related self-care discursively constructed in the media? (Articles IV; V)

For the title of this section, I reuse the title from the article “Texts in which men are made” (in Finnish *Tekstit joissa miehiä tehdään*) by Jokinen (1996). Here, I echo his idea that men are not always and everywhere primarily material (cf. Connell 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005; Hearn 1992). Instead, men can be collections of gestures, behaviors, desires, and goals and sometimes actually made in texts. In his later work, Jokinen (2003) connects his ideas to those of Butler (1990), who argues that gender is performed through a stylized repetition of acts, an imitation or miming of the dominant conventions of gender. Texts constitute representations that both repeat and shape cultural schemes, affecting conventional ways of talking about gender (Butler 1997a; Fairclough 1995; Hearn 1992).

The texts analyzed for the present study carry a referential relationship to actual people and events. Representations focus on people who are considered worth representing. Moreover, within this selected set of individuals and groups, certain attributes are emphasized, certain interpenetrations are made, and certain qualities are simply ignored. Individuals who may indeed identify themselves and be identified on other social occasions with numerous genders and sexualities may be used as a raw

material for men who are made in texts. Although it is evident that no single political goal or singular user of power is affecting such public discussions (Fairclough 1995; Sedgwick 2003, 130; Skeggs & Wood 2012, 139–140), I follow earlier feminist media researchers in suggesting that gender, gendered characters, gendered behaviors, and gender stereotypes can be used to serve certain strategic ends of a text: for example, all can be used to entertain, to arouse, and to make readers laugh. By stating that men are made in texts, I suggest that even in texts with a referential relationship to actual people and events, the men appearing in such representations constitute an entity separate from an individual being interviewed and observed; hence, I focus solely on the contents of the text and not on how they correspond with material reality.

Articles IV and V focus on how daily newspapers in Finland represent men's work-related self-care. I read these texts as descriptions of contemporary working life that are supposed to be informative and/or constructive in that they participate in public debates on how men should behave in Finnish society. Thus, the texts differ from, for example, art or commercial material that use working life only as a raw material for other purposes. I focus on how work-related self-care, a practice previously associated with femininities and marginalized masculinities, is incorporated into the most visible, idealized representations of men, and consequently, which masculinities are marginalized in the process.

Jokinen (2019, 28) argues that literature is a discursive activity that produces representations of masculinity or images of men, which men adopt as ingredients for their gender identity and as a mirror of their self-understanding. For him, representations of men constitute subject positions for men. Although I have previously criticized this viewpoint due to its tunnel vision with respect to numerous uses of texts (Hyvönen 2019), I also acknowledge the importance of this take on texts. It partially answers the question, why analyze texts within the context of CSMM research and research on men in working life in particular? Moreover, this viewpoint on texts once again emphasizes my conception that men do not own the texts in which they are represented and in which subject positions for men are constructed, as no singular user of power is affecting public discussion on this matter. Instead, men are subjects for numerous uses of power through texts (Reeser 2010).

The data analyzed here derives from a wider dataset of 2,555 texts published in the Finnish media dealing with equality and equity in work and education. The texts were published between January 1, 2016 and April 30, 2016 in eight Finnish media outlets (*Helsingin Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat*, *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, *Yle News* website, *Hufvudstadsbladet*, *Kainuun Sanomat*, *Ilkka*, *Tekniikka&Talous*). I participated in the data collection

process as part of the WeAll project³ as an intern and a research assistant along with seven other researchers, who also wrote a report that describes the material, how it was collected, and how it can be later used in qualitative research. The research team read through the articles looking for the number of times in which differentiation occurred in relation to criteria mentioned in the equality legislation or criteria that are otherwise significant, such as socio-economic and regional differences. The research team also collected data on the text types, the themes, and the actors represented in each text. This electronic database can be used to access certain kinds of texts for the needs of further analysis. The data has been transferred to the Finnish Social Science Data Archive, where it can now be accessed by a wider group of researchers (Lehtonen et al. 2017).

In early 2016, my work assignments in the WeAll project focused exclusively on collecting and processing the media data. This period in the recent history of Finland was characterized by a focus in the news coverage on concerns about low employment and the future of the labor market in Finland. Therefore, I was able to begin the research process leading up to this dissertation by focusing on the media through my research interests on issues of concern and care in men's lives.

In the present study, I focused on *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat*, *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus*, and online news by the Finnish public broadcaster *Yleisradio*. According to audit statistics offered by the Finnish print media industry, *Helsingin Sanomat*, *Turun Sanomat*, and *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* are among the four most read Finnish newspapers that are not tabloids (MediaAuditFinland 2017). I chose them to achieve a representative sample of different socioeconomic and cultural settings in Finnish society. The texts analyzed for the study are listed in the original Articles IV and V.

Article IV focuses on representations of individual men who practice work-related self-care. It analyzes what forms of self-care are evaluated positively and what kinds of men's self-care are understood as being desirable. I searched for texts categorized as "journalistic interviews" and focused on men. Within this subgroup of 194 texts, I chose 27 texts on work-related self-care practiced by interviewees that I interpreted as men. Additionally, I searched for texts categorized as "news articles" that focused on men and dealt with health. Within this subgroup of 494 texts, I first performed an initial screening based on their titles and then chose three texts that deal with work-related self-care practiced by the men interviewed in the articles. The data consists of 30 texts published in *Helsingin Sanomat* (N=13), *Turun Sanomat* (N=8), *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* (N=3), and *Yleisradio* (N=6).

³ Social and Economic Sustainability of Future Working Life: Policies, Equalities and Intersectionalities in Finland (WeAll) (2015–2020) was funded by the Academy of Finland (Strategic Research Funding number 292883).

Article V focuses on all kinds of newspaper texts related to work and education addressing young men taking care of themselves. It analyzes the expectations for and normative statements concerning men and the forms of self-care they should be practicing to meet the demands of contemporary education and working life as well as future working life. The data includes columns, opinion pieces, journalistic interviews, and news texts.

I searched for texts that repeatedly and explicitly gendered young people as “boys” or “men,” texts in which the central interviewee was, based on name, photographs, and the content of the text, probably a man, as well as opinion pieces and columns written by men that address the authors’ lived experiences. By also including texts that did not explicitly address gender, the aim was to identify men as men (Collinson & Hearn 1994; Hearn 2014) to better analyze how men perform their gender in contexts in which gender is not recognized as a meaningful social category. The young age of the men addressed in the texts has been assessed on a case-by-case basis: I chose texts in which “young men” are explicitly addressed, texts in which an older man expresses expertise in matters pertaining to young men’s lives, and texts on the education of boys, underage people, education leading to a degree, and inexperience in working life. The data consists of 25 texts published in *Helsingin Sanomat* (N=15), *Turun Sanomat* (N=7), and *Maaseudun Tulevaisuus* (N=3).

4.3 METHODS

Articles I–III employ thematic analysis to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). When employing this methodology, researchers should make an intentional choice between “semantic” and “latent” themes, that is to say, between an analysis of semantic patterns and an analysis of ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations, which may be expressed differently in different contexts (ibid., 84). My analysis follows a strategy focusing on latent themes: I assume that speech expresses attitudes that have material consequences in the lives of participants. I emphasize two viewpoints with respect to my data: speech includes 1) conceptual schemas that delimit understandings and 2) the deployment of concepts and categories to achieve specific political goals (Bacchi 2005). My analysis differs from purely data-driven qualitative methods, such as grounded theory, by being theoretically informed, meaning that the data was read from viewpoints ascending from previous research while the analysis was formulated in such a way that it establishes a dialogue with pre-existing research. This was done to better analyze men’s position in relation to certain pre-known phenomena, such as work-related self-care and increased attention on bodies in working life, not to create a whole new theory based on my participant’s accounts.

The data was read and coded for themes related to certain research questions. The analysis began by coding the data manually via descriptive

content analysis, which meant dividing it into meaning units. One meaning unit consisted of an utterance containing a single thought, opinion, or idea. Thereafter, similar codes were divided into thematic categories. In the final analysis, all resulting categories were reviewed and named. Only themes that I considered strong enough are presented in the articles, namely themes constructed around at least one code that was present at least once at least in half of the interviews in a particular dataset. However, less commonly recurring codes were also included under the specific themes so long as they supported and deepened the ideas of more prevalent codes.

Thematic analysis of the socio-economically representative data in Articles I and II inevitably led to generalizations, with contradictions, dissonances, and discontinuities then being omitted. In addition to the main principle of basing the central findings on strong codes, the articles also demonstrate that the thoughts, opinions, and ideas to which these codes refer were brought up by participants from different socio-economic backgrounds and based on different grounds. My aim was not to suggest that the social realities of the participants are uniform, but to show that some thoughts, opinions, and ideas are so common that they emerge in different situations without the need for a shared sociocultural background or shared lived experiences as background. I return to some of the dissonances and discontinuities in the data omitted from the findings presented in the original articles in the following chapter.

Articles IV and V employ discourse analysis to analyze the data (Cotter 2015; Fairclough 1995; Pietikäinen & Mäntynen 2009). I define discourse as a way of realizing and organizing stories and the reality they represent (Fairclough 1995, 91). Discourse analysis is not merely the thematic analysis of texts (*ibid.*); it also focuses on their interrelationships and how texts relate to attitudes in the surrounding society and either replicate or subvert dominant ways of assigning meaning to certain phenomena. I treated each text as a representation that quotes and applies a pre-existing discourse, a network of similar meanings and traditions of storytelling (*ibid.*, 45).

In both articles, I analyzed the data thematically. In the Article IV, I identified the kinds of self-care presented in the articles and then identified how such self-care, its goals, and its practitioner were evaluated as a part of the representation (see Fairclough 1995, 5). I initially coded self-care practices, the goals of self-care, and evaluations of both self-care and its practitioner in each text. Then, I compared the goals of self-care with the evaluations. As a result, I constructed three discourses, understood as ways of realizing and organizing stories and the reality they represent (*ibid.*, 91). In the Article V, I coded all the passages in the data that deal with self-care, results that can be achieved through self-care, and gender. Then, I merged the representations into four broader discourses. A single discourse viewed the world through similar objects of appreciation and threat (see *ibid.*, 14–15).

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

I begin the following review of ethical choices by positioning myself as a man and as a researcher within Finnish society and in relation to different masculinities and other men. After such positioning and acknowledging its necessary material implications for the present study, I focus on the concrete guidelines that regulated my actions as a researcher.

Feminist research has emphasized empathy, solidarity, and friendship as tools for producing knowledge that contributes to empowering subordinated groups. However, this practice cannot be integrated as such within CSMM research (Flood 2013; Hearn 2013; Pini & Pease 2013). Hearn (2013, 27–28) argues that the process of interviewing must be rethought within the field of CSMM research. A research setting focusing on men begs the question of how, if at all, interviewing men contributes to gender equality. He calls for a particularly careful ethical examination of interview situations in which a man interviews another man, since “male bonding” risks establishing critical distance to conventional ways of being a man and the reproduction of masculinity performances that do not contribute to gender equality.

Concurrently, homosociality between men enables a trustful relationship between an interviewer and a participant that contributes positively to knowledge production and does not carry any unethical implications as such (Bridges 2013). In line with Barbara Pini (2005), I suggest that instead of a keen focus on the gender of the interviewer and participants, the ethics and dynamics of interview situations should be explored by examining the actions of both the interviewer and participants by asking who is doing something, what they are doing, and where they are doing it. I suggest that especially in the case of the present study, which draws from interviews with men who represent plural masculinities, socio-economic backgrounds, and educational backgrounds, numerous mutually differing power relations between the interviewer and the participants were evident. The most distinct power inequality appears when the men being interviewed are working class and the research is an academic professional (Pini & Pease 2013, 9). This is a somewhat inevitable power inequality in academic research.

Toni Kosonen (2016, 62–65), a researcher identifying himself as a man who conducted a research among Finnish working-class men, argues that the professionalism and expertise of people working in academia are not, however, always acknowledged by men who identify with the working class. In these contexts, an interview situation characterized by forced and unnatural self-disclosure offered them the possibility to express pride in doing more real and physically demanding work in comparison to the theoretical desk work done by the researcher. According to my interpretation, some of the participants in the present study disparaged people who do less physically demanding work or who do not otherwise share the same experiences they have had. The interviews empowered my participants in that they were able to position themselves as equal experts in

the interests of the study. One participant in the field of logistics described his attitude to workplace health promotion as follows:

Once a year, they arrange a fitness holiday week at a holiday village. I'm not extremely familiar with these, as they are aimed at certain age and employer groups. Go there to exercise for a week and everything will work out. (laughter) [...] The information is provided in our employer's great and mighty intranet. This is an example of the great gap between the manual laborers and the senior salaried employees. During my ten years of work history, it took six years before I asked for an account to that service, as I had something I wanted to check from there. Compare that to those who sit at computers. They might actually read what is said there. But not us, who are actually doing work. When do we have the time to sit down to browse all the new information that is provided to us?

(Logistics)

Although the participant directed this criticism at his own employer, I also interpreted a tendency to temporarily equate me as a researcher with one of the senior salaried employees who produces discourses on health and wellbeing among their peers without hearing from the other employee groups who might also need these services. By participating in the interview in a sarcastic and aggressive manner, he cleared space for his arguments. This citation clearly illustrates how in my research I dealt not only with differences in socio-economic background, but also with differences in relation to the social category of men (see Kosonen 2016, 64). In trying to account for these differences, I did not always control the interview situation or receive contributions that would have lived up to my expectations at the moment of entering the field.

The question of the researcher's active role in interview situations also invites me as a man and as a researcher to reflect on my own way of performing gender, as it inevitably affects the outcome of the interview situations. Being a man and being perceived as one is not a uniform category, but instead a collection of attributes that are rendered relevant in different ways in different situations. Michael Flood, who conducted a doctoral study on young heterosexual men's participation in safe and unsafe heterosexual sex, analyzed his gender performance in the interview situations as follows:

While I am heterosexual, I have sometimes been perceived as gay because of earrings in both ears; a somewhat feminized body language; my wearing of anti-homophobic and AIDS-related T-shirts; and, of course, my political and intellectual positions. While most of these were not visible or known to the research participants, I wondered if they would assume I was gay as well, and if this might make them uncomfortable or influence their comments on AIDS or gay men or other topics.

(Flood 2013, 72)

While my visible masculinity and the research design of the present study are made up of completely different components, the type of self-reflection inspired by Flood is still relevant for my research. I have often been perceived by my colleagues and students as an “unusual actor” in the field of gender studies, “apparently heterosexual,” and a man echoing the personal traits and behaviors of a stereotypical “regular Joe Six-Pack” or “lumberjack” (in Finnish *jätkä*), a representative of Finnish working-class masculinity that stems from the contexts of a low level of education, manual labor, dislike for the proprietary class, and compulsory heterosexuality (see Pöysä 1997). Being perceived as a representative of this type of masculinity comes with the assumption that I am a white, ethnic Finn, which has also granted me unobstructed access to my participants, most of whom are also white ethnic Finns. The fact that I conducted the interviews in my early and mid-20s negatively affected the possibility for me being perceived as a respectable academic professional. According to my interpretation, this caused the participants to feel both sympathy and contempt for me and my research project.

Although I was able to spontaneously control and not overtly manifest some of my more internalized behavior traits, some of them might even still have emerged in the interview situations. For example, heavy alcohol use has been historically identified with Finnish working-class masculinity (Simonen 2012). Some of the participants, for example one working in the field of social services and healthcare, discussed this habit without reserve:

HH: What kinds of methods do you have for self-care?

Participant: Well, I do quite a lot of sports. I do music. Sometimes, when I'm spending an extreme weekend, I get into very relaxing [state of] drunkenness. [...] There is a circle of friends. You drink beer and play billiard. In those situations, you're free, on the loose.

(Social services and healthcare)

In the field of logistics, one participant felt that, drawing from my appearance, he and I might have some shared experiences as men in Finnish society:

Methodological considerations

Participant: You have that army backpack, and you have, maybe, done military service?

HH: Actually, I have not.

Participant: You haven't. But, in regards to the military, they always say that there is always a hell of a hurry to wait. You've heard this?

HH: Yes, I have. It's familiar to me.

Participant: Yes. Well, we have a same kind of problem [in the field of logistics].

(Logistics)

I suggest that I have benefitted from my gender performance in most interview situations. My implicit affiliation with working-class masculinity, rather than explicitly drawing identity elements from other areas of my life, such as the academic profession, has decreased visible power inequalities between me and the participants, making the interview situation more accessible to men who do not hold social capital in the context of academic knowledge. Producing speech through “blunt and sometimes humorous colloquial language” (Flood 2013, 68) was not as problematic in interviews that addressed their personal life choices and health behavior as it would have been in interviews addressing their relationships to other people and the power inequalities appearing in such relationships.

In the interview situations, I crafted a premeditated role that Bridges (2013, 54) terms “the least-masculine role.” Its purpose is twofold. First, through endeavoring to be perceived as a man, I aimed to turn the interview into a shared project between two men in which the participant’s experiences as a man are valued. Second, I strived not to be perceived by the participant as a representative of any particular shared masculinity: here, I hoped that the participants would explain things that they might not explain to their friends or colleagues. I also asked as many clarifying questions as possible, prompting the participants to justify their claims. I looked for balance between striving for gender equality and displaying an interest in learning more about what men think and feel about self-care.

Echoing Flood (2013), I chose to constitute a set of inner beliefs that I could readily defend in interview situations, including not participating in any masculinity performances that involved sexism, racism, or homophobia and a willingness to refuse giving space for such ideas in the interview situation. However, I never had the need to intervene in the speech of my participants. Although references to such ideas sometimes became visible during the interview situations, I chose not to intervene because they were either mentioned as part of the participants’ past experiences or as part of an expression related to a frustrating life situation. These topics did not come to

the forefront in any of the interviews. In line with Bridges (2013), I ended up legitimating certain inequalities for the sake of knowledge production.

Nevertheless, CSMM research has reported instances in which the researcher is not entirely sympathetic with the research participants (Cowburn 2013; Hearn 2013; Pini 2005; Pini & Pease 2013). In the present study, feelings of discomfort did appear in some of the interviews. Those participants identified with relatively a high socio-economic group and expressed opinions that I found to be firmly tied to their position in their organization and their conception of what kind of an employee is valued in their field. These statements normalized competition, stretching one's body to extreme performances, and disparaging those perceived as weak or ineffectual:

I am really healthy. I was on sick leave the last time probably four years ago. I might rather think that if I have a bit of a fever, I try to sleep well and then I might be able to get to work. Compare that to a mindset in which one thinks, now that I have a fever, I'm ready to tell the boss that I'm not coming in tomorrow.

(Media)

According to Crocket (2017), studies addressing self-care as an empowering practice may focus too keenly on what the analyst sees as structurally significant agency. Thus, I was determined not to challenge the participants' conceptions of what they understood as favorable or functional self-care. Moreover, this choice contributed to my endeavor to focus my study on the lived experiences of men and their repertoires of action instead of on revealing some sort of false consciousness through which men interpret their options. In line with Hearn (2013, 29), I suggest that this "front," by which I mean identifying with a certain kind of ideal worker, should not be dismissed in an effort to discover a hidden, more complete picture. Instead, it is interesting in and of itself, as I suggested at the beginning of this chapter with respect to my epistemological position.

The strong focus on working life and work-related self-care in the data presented in Articles I–II has delimited my possibilities to discuss the area of non-work in the analysis. Article III draws from data focusing mainly on men's bodies and their endeavors to affect them and achieve certain personal goals in, for example, working life. Although the results of the present study indicate that men increasingly find meaningful content in their life from non-work, little can be said about men's values and their commitment to any political goals. The strong focus on men's agency, their repertoires of action, and their spontaneous processes of meaning giving were intentional choices, as was the decision not to challenge the participants on their personal conceptions of self-care. The choices made it more possible to analyze men's subjectivities and the power relations producing and affecting them. In reflecting on my role as an interviewer, I might have on occasion reinforced

rather than deconstructed the discursive relationship between men and work, meaning that I may have lost the possibility to challenge men's conceptions and ask them to justify their actions. While this in no way constitutes an error in the study design, the choices made in the present research process still leave open possibilities for further research.

In line with standard practice for humanities research in Finland, the present study adhered to the ethical principles developed by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (Finnish National Board on Research Integrity TENK 2019). Before conducting the interviews, the participants signed a consent form stating their formal desire to participate in the study, and they were provided with details about the research project. While collecting the data for Articles I and II, I asked the participants for permission to save the data in the Finnish Social Science Data Archive for later use by a wider group of researchers. All 18 of the participants accepted the terms and gave their permission. However, I will decide on how the data may be used in the future after completing the present dissertation. In all 24 interviews, the participants had my contact information and could contact me even after the interview. However, none of them did so. Participation was voluntary.

When the interviews were being arranged, the participants were informed that the interviews were for research purposes only. I told the participants that they could tell me as much as they felt comfortable disclosing. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed environment chosen by the participant. I proposed a group study facility at the University of Helsinki's Main Library, which is located in the center of Helsinki. However, some participants chose to be interviewed elsewhere, for example in their home or at their workplace. The interviews were confidential and dealt with intimate and private issues, such as problematic situations in the workplace or the participant's state of health. The research setting can be threatening to participants when they are asked to discuss stressful or shameful areas of life or reveal stigmatizing or incriminating personal issues (Lee 1993, 4). The interviews were anonymized carefully. In practice, this means making sure that the participants cannot be identified from the interview excerpts. All names are pseudonyms, and new pseudonyms were given to the participants in each article, including those not included in this dissertation (Hyvönen 2016; Hyvönen & Jyrkinen 2020; Hyvönen & Karjalainen 2020).

In the analysis of texts, the following ethical guidelines were followed. Although the present study focuses on men, I acknowledge that the categories of "women" and "men" do not represent the whole spectrum of plural gender identities and that additional genders also exist. Moreover, being recognized as a man is a discursive phenomenon (Petersen 1998), one in which the present study also participates. This begs the question of whether it would be ethical to focus on texts in which either the author's or the interviewee's self-identification as a man is not explicit. Echoing Hearn (2014, 9), I maintain that men are not only an identity-orientated category,

but also a material-discursive category: through a discursive recognition process, men become subject to all the privileges and expectations that this identification brings with it, despite any individual self-assessed gender identity. Therefore, I find it important to *name men as men* (Collinson & Hearn 1994) to better analyze the current contents of this category. I interpreted the people appearing in texts as men mainly based on their names and photographs. Nonetheless, my purpose was to analyze men and masculinities in the current Finnish media landscape and not to analyze the personality or activities of individuals. To avoid inadvertently gendering individuals as men or women, I removed the names of the authors and interviewees from all the text quotes presented in Articles IV and V.

As pointed out by numerous methodologists in the field of feminist research on media, reading texts is inevitably an affective activity, since texts challenge and question the personal, political, and ideological ideas of the researcher even when the researcher seeks to ignore them for the sake of objectivity (Sedgwick 2003; Skeggs & Wood 2012; Rossi 2015, 108–130). For this reason, I tried to avoid what Eve Sedgwick (2003, 130) terms paranoid reading, which is characterized by a strong prejudice towards the data and a form of circularity in which negative feelings tend to reinforce finding details that produce negative emotions like disgust. Therefore, I also actively tried to find arguments and ideas that I might identify with. Concurrently, I acknowledged that my research is motivated by the assumption that speech idealizing self-care may encourage and demand individual responsibility in a way that may prevent recognizing distress and the need for help.

5 REVIEWING THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE ARTICLES

This chapter provides an overview of the main findings presented in the original articles by focusing on their most important results. I briefly describe the data and methods, theoretical background, analysis, and results reported in each article. Sections 5.1–5.5 correspond to Articles I–V.

5.1 MASCULINITY THERAPY

Connell (1995, 206–211) first introduced the concept of masculinity therapy to depict a range of practices focusing on “the healing of wounds done to heterosexual men by gender relations.” She argues that early therapeutic groups for men were at first close to liberal feminism in that they focused their critical and deconstructive gaze on the “traditional male role.” However, since the 1980s masculinity therapy has increasingly rejected the politics of social equality and encouraged men to cherish their real, innate manhood in modern society where natural sex roles are questioned. I draw from the ongoing discussions regarding hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe 2014) and the therapeutic ethos (Brunila 2012) to analyze how contemporary forms of masculinity therapy motivate men to act in accordance with the requirements of contemporary post-industrial Finnish working life.

Article I focuses on men’s agentive encounters with the longstanding discourse on the hard-working, self-sacrificing Finnish man and men’s perceived opportunities to break free from this way of being a man through the therapeutic ethos. The data consists of 18 interviews with men concerning work-related self-care. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). The starting point for the analysis is a recurrent feature in the data: the men being interviewed discussed a masculinity oriented towards work and neglecting personal health using concepts and discourses adopted from the psy sciences. The study addresses the following question: How is the therapeutic ethos manifested in men’s speech regarding work and personal health?

The starting point for the argument presented in this article is the concept of honor, which was a central point of reference in sociological research on Finnish men in the 1990s (Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b). Kortteinen (1992, 60) argues that after WWII and during the period of rapid industrialization, Finnish working life was understood as a “field of glory” for men: men’s honor was built around visual signs of diligence and success in work that had a visible impact on the external world. From the viewpoint of the therapeutic ethos, I approach the desire for honor not as a social norm (cf. Article II), but instead as a psychological trait from which men can heal by practicing the

therapeutic ethos. In line with Waling (2019), I suggest that men are becoming more aware of masculinity as something they do and perform, rather than as something that is essentially a part of them. The participants focused their critical gaze on the notion of Finnish men sharing a multi-generational trauma caused by the Finnish history of conflict that, concurrently with social pressure to participate in the nation-building effort, has caused them to take risks with their health in working life and to be emotionally restrained (Jokinen 2019; Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b). I suggest that men co-opt concepts and discourses from the psy sciences to dismantle and break away from this traditional masculinity.

Theoretically, the article draws from discussions on the therapeutic ethos and worker citizenship. I suggest that the emergence of a therapeutic ethos in contemporary working life should be contextualized within a broader cultural shift in what kinds of management strategies are perceived as beneficial in contemporary working life. Anu Kantola and Hanna Kuusela (2019, 107–111) suggest that Finnish managers, most of whom are still men, have made a large-scale shift from a militaristic and hierarchical *management by perkele* (cursing) towards a carefully constructed strategy of *management by wonder*, the key tools of which are energizing, inspiring, and sparring. The desired result of this strategy is an employee who is enthusiastic about the tasks at hand, committed to achieving organizational goals, and feeling positive about their work. This change in the employer's relationship with employees has resulted in an increase in workplace health promotion (Dailey et al. 2018; Karjalainen 2018) as a way of reducing the costs of sick leave (Huzell & Larsson 2012) and increasing productivity at work (Cederström & Spicer 2015, 16–22). Concurrently, this development has enhanced horizontal power relations in organizations and the labor market, as workers increasingly perceive mental health as but one more competitive edge in working life. In addition to the therapeutic ethos concept, I also put forward the concept of therapeutic tool, by which I refer to 1) conceptual and mental tools mimicking therapy through which an individual can shape her/his behavior (Binkley 2014, 79–80) and 2) material and spatial practices that seek to affect mental health, such as coaching offered by an employer (Karjalainen 2018; see Karjalainen et al. 2019).

I use the concept of worker citizenship (in Finnish *työntekijäkansalaisuus*) to describe a way of participating in working life that stems from the needs of post-industrial work, wherein self-reflexivity, adaptability, and responsibility for the productivity of one's work are the guiding principles for individual working lives (Karjalainen 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Mäkinen 2012; Ylöstalo et al. 2018). To succeed in post-industrial working life, individuals must adopt skills and attitudes that have previously been considered feminine (Adkins 2001). My use of the concept worker citizenship in this article differs slightly from earlier Finnish research that associated it with an ideal citizenship produced by education policy (Ylöstalo 2014).

I identified three recurring themes related to the research question. The themes refer to the three ways in which men strive towards a better way of being a man and acting in working life. First, participants expressed a therapeutic ethos when defining how to be a man in a way that is in the best interests of working life and the men themselves and assessed how it differs from the masculinity that men of previous generations performed. The participants expressed a therapeutic ethos in their attempts to understand men of past generations and articulate the root causes of their strong orientation towards paid work and emotional restraint. The participants felt that such masculinity had succeeded in remaining vibrant over several generations. Some of them referred to a particular Finnish way of being a man, which some men still seek to reproduce despite the fact that it potentially damages their health. Here, the participants drew from gender equality discourse to justify men's engagement with behaviors associated with femininity.

Second, participants described how they had used therapeutic tools to change their own behavior and to overcome the problematic gendered behaviors they had previously adopted due their upbringing and the prevailing expectations placed on men in Finnish society. They felt that spontaneous self-examination and control of these mental functions increased their quality of life. Although not explicitly put forward in the original article, it is noteworthy that at least several participants from all the three fields of work covered in the study mentioned this type of therapeutic practice.

Third, participants identified with worker citizenship, through which they co-operated with their employers in improving their health and ability to work. In addition to other aspects of health, mental wellbeing has also now become a part of worker citizenship: more and more organizations are vocalizing the ideal of a "holistic employee" (Karjalainen 2018; see Karjalainen et al. 2019) who experiences mental wellbeing in a healthy and productive body. The participants described this citizenship in a favorable light and said that they want to perform it in working life. As opposed to private and indescribable experiences, the participants depicted mental health as a quantity that can be measured via self-assessment and cultivated through certain self-care practices and workplace health promotion. The men expressed a willingness to participate in workplace health promotion activities and make use of the commercial self-help products offered by their employer. Concurrently, some participants noted that the therapeutic discourse and emerging therapeutic tools in workplaces has made it possible for employers to listen to their employees only occasionally and thus bypass their needs. Although most welcomed employers' care for the mental health of employees, they at the same time carefully evaluated its authenticity. The participants expressed the opinion that employers should respect their employees and get to know their work conditions. My findings echo those of Jussi Turtiainen's (2014) study on men in working life during the post-war

nation-building years in that the experience of being respected in the workplace remains an important source of wellbeing at work. However, the central meaning of respect has changed from a source of positive self-understanding to an enabler of wellbeing at work.

In the original article, I explored the third theme by drawing mainly from the accounts of men working in the field of media. Here, it becomes evident that the power relations related to therapeutic tools are most intensive in the lives of men working in knowledge-intensive fields and managerial positions. Since workplace health promotion is more often organized for employers in such workplaces and positions, they have more opportunities to seek to influence the content and goals of these activities. I deliberately leave the issue of men's unfulfilled desires to co-operate with their employers in improving their mental health to be studied in further analysis of the data.

The results of this study support the idea of the decreasing value placed on masculinity in the self-understanding of men (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). I have termed this process one of healing from traditional masculinity: masculinity has been understood as a persisting set of gestures and behaviors that a person can refuse to perform. Drawing from Brunila's (2012) analysis of simultaneous occurrences of the entrepreneurial and therapeutic ethos in education, I suggest that diminishing the value and importance of masculinity unifies genderless worker citizenship and men's selves in a feminized working life. This citizenship leaves no room for the pleasures produced by a man's gender identity or gender expression (cf. Kortteinen 1992, 60; Siltala 1994b, 152–153). Concurrently, wellbeing is being conceptualized as a matter of individual responsibility. The therapeutic ethos guides individuals to consider indisposition as a personal flaw, one which can be corrected via their own actions. In line with Article II, however, men have begun demanding that employers take responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their employees.

5.2 STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE

Article II focuses on men's agentic encounters with health-related social expectations in Finnish working life. The data consists of 18 interviews with men concerning work-related self-care. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). I put forward two research questions: How do men care for themselves in the context of work and careers and with what goals? How do men experience the surrounding norms to limit and enable their self-care and how do they react to such norms?

I refer to the concept of honor (Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b) also in this article. However, instead of treating it as a self-assessed psychological trait (cf. Article I), I focus on the longing for honor as a control mechanism that is no longer capable of unifying men's behavior. I suggest that a transition towards broader societal criticism of conventional masculinities has made

men both able and willing to choose life courses that differ from such conventional models (Bridges & Pascoe 2014). Widespread gender equality discourse in the Nordic countries is destabilizing men's faith in traditional ways of being a man and showing them alternatives (Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018). Thus, abandoning what Biese (2017) terms prevalent masculinist notions about careers, such as linearity and continuous upward progression in organizations, also becomes possible for men.

In the article, I make use of the concept of work-related self-care, which I understand as a set of practices by which an individual decides to take action to support his or her mental or physical health as a reaction to current or anticipated problems in working life (Bressi & Vaden 2017; Kelly et al. 2007). Thus, self-care is twofold, including both practices that aim to increase work performance and practices that aim to modify the pace and content of work in order to achieve personal wellbeing. The aspects of health addressed in the data include the absence of illnesses, performance at work, body shape, and mental health.

Theoretically, the article draws from CSMM research stressing men's agentive and affective encounters with gendered expectations (Berggren 2014; Farrimond 2012; Hearn 2012; Waling 2019) and from the conception of self-care as "co-optation and resistance" (Heyes 2007, 85). Health is increasingly being rendered a meaningful subject in working life, both in informal organizational discourse in which bodies signaling unhealthy lifestyles are increasingly being stigmatized (Amsterdam & 2019; Huzell & Larsson 2012) and in formal workplace health promotion (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Dailey et al. 2018; James & Zoller 2018). The increased discussion on health in organizations implies a change in the health behavior of men in their pursuit of career advancement: self-reliance is being replaced by self-management (Connell & Wood 2005; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014). I suggest that in addition to the power relations causing men to co-opt certain work-related self-care practices, men's explicit criticism of masculinities centered on paid labor may also result in resistance to organizational health discourses and the competitive masculinities drawing from them.

I identified two themes related to both research questions. First, I analyzed how men described their self-care practices and what goals they set for their self-care. I highlighted the theme of *personal wellbeing*, as participants reported that their work-related self-care mostly included practices affecting bodily and mental health, such as dieting and talking about one's concerns to others, with an aim to achieving long-term personal wellbeing. This theme was supplemented by *aspiration to balance*, by which I refer to an aspiration to balance work and non-work. The participants engaged with regimes of self-care that I have termed downshifting and opting out.

Second, I analyzed whether the men felt that the surrounding norms limited or enabled their self-care and how they reacted to these norms. The

participants reported that their employer directed them towards certain forms of self-care that increased work performance. Under these circumstances, participants engaged in a practice that I have addressed under the theme *external power: critical co-optation and intentional resistance*. The participants claimed that external tips concerning self-care in the media and workplace health promotion, such as exhortations to eat more vegetables and engage in group exercise, are useful, but they also include the risk of exploitation. It is noteworthy that in the original article, the scope of the concept of external power is relatively wide. Most of the participants recognized contemporary working life as the site of numerous exercises of power to which they are subjected and which they scrutinized critically. As implicitly presented in the original article, their understanding of the immediate source of these exercises of power as well as their intended outcomes varied.

Measures to consolidate individual self-care were most often legitimized as a part of supervising work in social services and healthcare (see Bressi & Vaden 2017). The participants explicitly criticized neoliberal ideas, such as competition within organizations, as a motivator of work-related self-care, and the forms of workplace health promotion stemming from the needs of an employer without serving their individual purposes. These affective meanings were mostly produced by men working in the field of media. Their knowledge-intensive work, mostly done in the private sector, is an example of a socio-cultural context where the benefits of wellbeing among the workforce have only been realized recently and discourses on wellness, wellbeing, and caring for the self have been harnessed to accelerate a competitive corporate culture (Cederström & Spicer 2015; James & Zoller 2018; Kelly et al. 2007). Outside of knowledge-intensive work, interviewees recognized horizontal competition between individuals and a reluctance to acknowledge weakness as the most pivotal relations of power limiting individual self-care.

Concurrently, I recognized the theme of *plural masculinities and decreasing social pressure*: participants felt that their engagement with practices previously associated with various femininities and subordinated masculinities are now less regulated than among previous generations of men. Under the topic of changing social pressures, most of the participants felt that certain employer-driven forms of self-care signaling loyalty to the employer, such as participating in mindfulness exercises organized by the employer, are now more binding than being a certain kind of man. Here, the men drew from gender equality discourse and the therapeutic ethos to shake off noxious models of masculinity. Using Waling's (2019) poststructuralist understanding of men's agency as a springboard, I argue that theorizations based on men's participation in various masculinities that regulate their behaviors lack explanatory power. An awareness of masculinity as something men do and perform (ibid.), as well as the multiple masculinities available

(Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018), has enabled men to modify these gender scripts and react to them affectively.

However, as briefly presented in the original article (Article II, 30), there are differences between men in how freely they can negotiate their masculinity. Although the idea of performing masculinities different from the masculinities associated with previous generations of men was intelligible and appeared desirable for most participants, some of them also reported that the social pressure in their workplace did not facilitate such a change. The participants voluntarily brought socio-economic differences into the discussion to explain the contrast between the change of direction in Finnish society and the relative stagnation at their own workplace.

This article contributes empirical data to the literature on men's health in working life by addressing a wider socioeconomic coverage than previous research on men's work-related self-care (cf. Connell & Wood 2005; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Riach & Cutcher 2014). Additionally, the research design asked participants to define self-care and describe their methods of self-care in relation to working life, which contributed to the results since the organizational viewpoint on health promotion was not emphasized by the interviewer. I argue that men considered personal wellbeing and the balance between work and non-work as the primary goals of their self-care. Differing from earlier research on the intersections of men, masculinities, and health at work, the findings of this study suggest that men practice self-care for other reasons than to build their professional identity and to advance their career. The participants valued non-work just as highly as they did work. On the other hand, they justified participation in working life through the material necessity of supporting oneself as well as society and its public infrastructure.

5.3 MALLEABLE BODIES

Article III focuses on men affected by eating disorders from the perspective of the concept of self-care. The data consists of six interviews with men affected by an eating disorder at some point in their lives. Thematic analysis was used to analyze the data (Braun & Clarke 2006). The study addresses the following question: How do men affected by eating disorders make their eating habits and exercise meaningful in relation to other people and their social surroundings in autobiographical speech? The participants rendered working life a central context for their body-shaping efforts. Therefore, the results contribute to research on men's work-related self-care.

Most previous qualitative research on men's experiences with eating disorders has focused on how men affected by eating disorders actualize the social ideals connected to being a man, such as self-control, stoicism, muscularity, and strength (Arnou et al. 2017; Drummond 2002; Robinson et al. 2012). These studies constitute men as a distinct, clear-cut gender

differing from women, who must remain thin to satisfy feminine beauty ideals (Bordo 1993). In such a reading, the sexual and gendered diversity of men and men's experiences with interpersonal social power in different locations have been partly brushed aside (Delderfield 2018; Gough 2018).

Stuart Murray et al. (2017) point out that only a few studies on men's eating disorders have addressed the relationship between local cultural standards and body image. In his seminal work on men's lived experiences during periods of acute eating disorder, Russell Delderfield (2018) focuses mainly on men's bodies as "the nexus for the assault from others" (ibid., 128) and men's selves as depleted, colonized, and stigmatized. Men affected by eating disorders tend not to view themselves as ill, and they find it difficult to see themselves as having an eating disorder (Cohn et al. 2016; Murray et al. 2017; Robinson et al. 2012; Räisänen & Hunt 2014). Therefore, I find it important to analyze the connections between men's eating disorders and their everyday routines, social lives, and participation in working life. Theoretically, this article draws from the Foucauldian concept of care of the self (Foucault 1986; Heyes 2007) and the Shusterman's (2000; 2006; 2012) somaesthetic framework. I contribute to discussions on men's eating disorders by rethinking men affected by eating disorders not only as individuals aiming to represent the normative aesthetic qualities associated with men's behavior, such as beauty, but also as subjects who perceive these qualities in themselves and experience pleasure through creative self-stylization and social interaction.

Because of the focus on the meanings of eating habits and exercise, I ended up defining self-care as a set of practices by which individuals scrutinize themselves and intentionally decide to either change, maintain, or otherwise affect their bodies (see Heyes 2007, 82–86). To incorporate this study into the dissertation, in which I have associated self-care with care for one's own health, two remarks omitted from the original article must be made. First, I suggest that men might either follow a diet or engage in excessive exercise in an effort to change the shape of their body or its constitution. Although these activities vary and have different functions in different socio-cultural contexts, they all seek to eliminate material in a body that is considered negative and strengthen the properties of a body that are considered desirable. For this reason, I maintain that such practices are discursively linked to the pursuit of healthiness, namely the notion of "aesthetic health' whereby men are increasingly called upon as bodily subjects obliged to maintain disciplined, healthy, and attractive bodies" (Gough 2018, 26). Second, binge eating, a symptom unrelated to body-shaping and even identified as harmful to its purposes, has contributed to the individual mental health of the participants by providing them with a sense of wellbeing and comfort and an escape from loneliness and bullying.

Shusterman (2000, 267) defines somaesthetics as "the critical, meliorative study of the experience and use of one's body as a locus of sensory aesthetic appreciation (*aisthesis*) and creative self-fashioning."

Shusterman (*ibid.*, 241) first asks researchers in the field of somaesthetics to “reject both ahistorical and transhistorical human essence as a ground for some universal ethic”. He then provides a postmodern analysis of individual existence without downplaying the role of a material, localized, and sentient body. The body, despite being a focal point of analysis, is shaped in cultures that, within the context of late modern societies, are increasingly “steeped in the ideology of lifestyles and saturated with a bewildering variety to choose from” (*ibid.*, 282). Culture supplies the body with social institutions, vocabularies, norms, and systems of judgment, including diet and exercise, through which a body thinks, acts, and expresses itself aesthetically (Shusterman 2012, 27). Shusterman (*ibid.*, 324) understands self-stylization as an act of shaping and decorating one’s body to conform to the norms of some social taste group, which can also constitute a subculture that resists plural tastes still considered mainstream. I suggest that self-care contributes to one’s self-stylization: self-care as a lifestyle contributes to one’s style or it aims to change the appearance of a body to support a certain external style or fashion.

Heyes (2007, 125–134) argues that even if “no body exists outside of norms,” somaesthetics constitutes a theoretical approach by which to analyze multiple power relations and the pleasure of submitting to and resisting them without reducing dieting to an outcome of repressive power within patriarchal ideology. I suggest that a somaesthetic approach also challenges the theory of gender order still prevalent in the analysis of men’s eating disorders. Previous studies drawing from the concept of hegemonic masculinity have argued that men affected by eating disorders are colonized by “male culture,” a culture through which men learn that “competition is healthy” and “bigger is better” and through which “males place a good deal of their masculine identity on physical musculature” (Drummond 2002, 93–96).

I discuss numerous regimes of self-care in the analysis presented in this article. Due my original research interest in analyzing the gendered meanings men give to their eating disorders, especially in relation to the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Hyvönen 2016), plural social encounters both inside and outside the context of working life were present in the data. The participants did not report their self-care practices as reactions to working life. Instead, for them working life constituted one of the social contexts to which the participants orientated themselves and in which they pursued success due their self-care practices under certain self-care regimes.

The participants reported engaging with the following regimes of self-care during periods of acute illness. Some of the participants drew from social movements that deconstruct conventional masculinities, helping them critically scrutinize ways of eating viewed as normative for men, and thus, incompatible with their personal interests and gendered identity. Concurrently, they found such eating habits to not only be feminine but to indicate a degree of healthiness in comparison to people whom they

considered to be overweight or to adopt ill-considered attitudes towards their own health. One participant reported an interest in commercial self-help and neo-spirituality, saying that he bought foods from specialty shops selling groceries to people on a vegetarian diet to help him lose weight. The participants implicitly referred to the therapeutic ethos by referring to their need to control their emotions by binge eating, which some occasionally equated with the use of sedative drugs or substance abuse. One participant reported alcohol abuse during the period of acute illness and said he had abstained from eating to compensate for extensive energy intake caused by consuming alcohol. Some of these practices drew from local norms specific to a certain organization or labor market, where colleagues and clients had affected the participants by giving them ideas about how they should behave in order to be good workers and meet the requirements of a particular job.

The data analyzed in the article, collected in the spring of 2015, focuses on memories from numerous time periods beginning from the 2010s and extending back to as early as the early 1970s. Therefore, the analysis does not contribute straightforwardly to discussions on contemporary regimes of work-related self-care. Nevertheless, the data provides a vantage point for the gradual development of self-care regimes in Finnish society. Moreover, the analysis of individuals becoming subjects in care of the self, which still takes place in an urbanized, commercialized, socio-cultural setting, is nonetheless relevant for a contemporary society in which these power relations have intensified rather than subsided. The jobs and career aspirations that the participants described are located within the feminized and post-industrial labor market in jobs related to entertainment and customer service. Men's increased presence in these jobs (Adkins 2001; Cottingham 2017; Mears 2014) since the 1980s correlates with the emergence of men's bodies as objects of desire in the media and men's increased interest in a type of consumption related to body-shaping (Bordo 1999; Gough 2018). In this socio-cultural setting, the hybridization of masculinities has exposed men to an increasing number of behaviors that share similarities with previously known eating disorders (Murray et al. 2017). As hinted at in the title of this section, the hybridization of contemporary masculinities makes men's bodies malleable because it exposes them to norms previously located in a feminine domain (see Bordo 1993; Heyes 2007).

Most of the relevance of the study for this dissertation lies in how the participants became engaged with certain regimes of self-care within the context of working life. They not only reportedly use their free time to practice work-related self-care, but also entered the field of working life with certain strong identifications and self-stylizations regulating their self-care practices. The participants reported finding the practices of self-care and self-stylization both time-consuming and immensely pleasurable. Therefore, some participants also wanted to have a job in which they could practice the type of self-care they found so beneficial for their wellbeing and self-

stylization. The actual workplaces in which their self-care practices have proved useful include, for example, work as a doorman in a bar and a customer service job at a kiosk. In these working life contexts, the body shapes that the participants found beneficial differed from each other. The participant who had worked as a doorman felt that his former employer had bought credibility, resistance to stress, and a body communicating strength from him. By contrast, the participant who had worked at a kiosk felt that he had increased kiosk sales by his appearance, which drew from an “androgynous” glam rock style and was perceived by the customers as being that of a “freak.”

In addition to the internalized responsibility of needing to participate in working life and paid work as a source of positive self-understanding (Articles I; II), the results of this study underscore the significance of certain occupations for men’s identities as certain kinds of men and individuals. For most participants, a specific job or career aspiration supported their self-stylization efforts and gave them credibility in front of other people. Therefore, forms of self-care aimed at shaping their bodies and coping with the needs of the workplace also contributed to their personal wellbeing. Participants found it difficult to see some of their behaviors as an eating disorder because the behaviors also provided them with a way to experience happiness.

The article contributes to discussions on men’s eating disorders and more broadly to discussions on men’s body-shaping practices in general by questioning standard explanations for such behaviors based on men’s gendered beauty ideals or a singular idealized, normative or hegemonic masculinity (cf. Drummond 2002). Therefore, Article III continues my reading of masculinities as plural, historical, and local. Following Matthews (2016, 10), I argue that research on men’s health should not begin by presuming that masculinity is “the measuring stick” against which men regulate their health behavior. The article contributes to discussions on aesthetic labor (Kotzé & Antonopoulos 2019; Mears 2014; Monaghan 2002) by suggesting that the beauty ideals relevant for men in working life should be considered socially constructed and context specific. Moreover, bodies that can be perceived as non-beautiful also have strategic potential in certain social encounters.

However, the article contributes to this dissertation in other ways as well. The participants reported that they had engaged in certain eating habits and exercises to succeed in working life and then had ceased such activities because they had identified them as symptoms of eating disorders. I draw two conclusions. First, I argue that different regimes of self-care may occasionally become hostile to one another. By performing a therapeutic ethos, the participants not only marked their previous endeavors as unfavorable behavior, they had also reoriented their career aspirations to increase their health and wellbeing. This implies that self-care is a process that changes over time and is capable of reacting to changes in the

surroundings. Second, the results of this study indicate that self-care, a spontaneous effort to increase one's own health or wellbeing through regularity, intentionally chosen methods and explicit objectives, does not automatically lead to increased health and wellbeing. Although the participants sometimes managed to achieve certain goals through their self-care practices, the participants then redefined these plural "healths" as unhealthy and reported a willingness to leave behind these states of being.

5.4 HEROIC HEALTHINESS

Article IV focuses on representations of individual men's work-related self-care in the Finnish media. The data consists of 30 journalistic interviews, ergo, texts that focus on a single interviewee, collected from the Finnish media in spring 2016. Methodologically, the study draws from a discourse theoretical framework (Fairclough 1995). The article addresses two research questions: What goals of work-related self-care are represented as desirable? How are work-related self-care practices and the men practicing them evaluated?

Stories focusing on individuals are increasingly being used by the media to address affective topics, such as health, by attaching such emotions as disgust, pity, and admiration to them (Skeggs & Wood 2012). Focusing on journalistic interviews makes it possible to analyze what forms of men's work-related self-care are evaluated positively and which of them are understood as desirable. Instead of containing purely descriptive or explicitly normative elements, journalistic interviews include evaluation (Cotter 2015). The article continues the long tradition of Finnish CSMM research on how texts produce idealized ways of being a man in Finnish society, including within the context of work (Ahlbäck 2010; Jokinen 2000; Lehtonen 1995). I continue this discussion by examining how work-related self-care is increasingly being incorporated into representations of idealized masculinities.

The article makes use of the concept work-related self-care, which I understand as a set of practices in which an individual decides to take action to support his or her mental or physical health as a reaction to current or anticipated problems in working life (Bressi & Vaden 2017; Kelly et al. 2007). I recognize that the concept refers to two distinct practices, namely practices that promote personal wellbeing through regulating the time and effort spent on work and, as part of a professional role, practices that promote work performance. The analysis focuses on both these meanings concurrently. The regimes of self-care discussed by the interviewees derive from horizontal power relations in organizations and the labor market, commercial self-help, the therapeutic ethos, as well as opting out and downshifting. The aspects of health addressed in the data include physical health as the absence of illnesses, performance at work, body shape, mental health, and attitudes.

Theoretically, the article draws from discussions on hybrid masculinities (Bridges & Pascoe 2014) and poststructuralist theorization regarding idealized masculinities (Reeser 2010). Economic shifts have changed the labor market, removing suitable places for performing traditional masculinities, and this development has enhanced the emergence of hybrid masculinities in post-industrial societies (Bell 2013; Cottingham 2017; Whitmer 2017). I suggest that this major loss of legitimacy for masculinities based on a sharp gender difference in the 2000s has led the media to produce masculinities that are more hybrid than those idealized during the industrialization phase of Finnish history. As part of this development, an awareness of and investment in one's own health are now associated with idealized masculinities (Johansson et al. 2017; Matthews 2016; Meriläinen et al. 2015; Ojala et al. 2016; Riach & Cutcher 2014).

I identified three discourses promoting men's participation in working life as valuable: *exemplariness*, *expertise*, and *suspiciousness*. With respect to the *exemplariness* discourse, the interviewees expressed a desirable attitude towards work that manifested itself as a willingness to practice self-care as a means of maintaining and enhancing their performance at work. In texts promoting the exemplariness discourse, the interviewees had unusually challenging jobs either due their age and/or because the work was particularly demanding. The texts emphasize the significance of the attitude, rather than any intrinsic traits, since maintaining performance is about adhering to self-care practices that are available to everyone, such as "proper sleep and eating regularly" (Article IV, 13).

With respect to the *expertise* discourse, the interviewees had explicit knowledge of self-care practices and the articles implied that readers could learn self-care tips from them by reading the text. These practices included, for example, self-compassion as a psychological technique to curb excessive self-criticism and job crafting, intentionally breaking routines as a way to sustain work engagement. Self-care is presented as exceptional: it can improve work performance and wellbeing at work, elevating it from its current or past state. The texts focus on the novelty of self-care based either on the misfortunes that the interviewees had faced to date or their personal expertise in a certain field of self-care; this expertise is used to justify their position as an interviewee.

With respect to the *suspiciousness* discourse, men reported practicing self-care by decreasing their work pace at the expense of productivity. The interviewee's choice to value his personal wellbeing over productivity was represented as dubious or undesirable in the texts. They instead present a more conventional and desirable alternative to such a choice. The dubious choice is either carefully justified and thus presented as understandable or it is outright questioned. Although suspiciousness is here accompanied by negative emotions, such as confusion and grief, I also suggest that the possibility to justify these deviations from the conventional life courses of a man is a noteworthy finding, one that did not receive much discussion in the

original article. Somewhat contradictorily, the texts cited in the original article exhibited a suspiciousness of choosing wellbeing over productivity while also tapping into the “mythologies” surrounding adventurous, individualistic men and their departures (Whitehead 2002, 118), for example by giving active voice to an artist who considers leaving a place of employment his best decision despite its obvious negative consequences for his livelihood (Article IV, 16).

These discourses constitute a hierarchy of masculinities wherein men who value work performance and productivity over personal wellbeing are idealized over other ways of being a man. With the *exemplariness* discourse, the texts celebrated men whose attitudes towards their bodies, health, and work were directed at satisfying the needs of their workplace and remaining in that particular job as long as possible. Their masculinity was a hybrid of independence, emotional restraint, resilience, and some purposeful self-care practices. Although the discourse represented work-related self-care as a positive thing, the focus in the texts was not on its contents. With the *expertise* discourse, the texts represented men as holders of a novel type of knowledge making it possible for not only themselves but also for other people to increase their wellbeing and performance at work through tools applied to their bodies, attitudes, and overall way of being. Here, the role of self-care as part of idealized masculinity plays out on a deeper level: the texts presented men’s incorporation of new behaviors, such as a spontaneous willingness to immerse oneself in knowledge regarding health at work and sharing this knowledge as well as actively seeking to achieve a state of wellbeing, as valuable.

Whitehead (2002, 120–123) argues that during the 19th and 20th centuries, a masculine subjectivity invoked by militarism was accompanied by a new “heroic male project” focusing on working life. The title of this section refers to the unifying factors of the discourses in which work-related self-care are described positively, namely as a “heroic masculinity” (Halberstam 1998, 2; Wetherell & Edley 1999) attached to men who continue working for as long as possible and/or even increase their work performance over time. This notion, though omitted from the original article, points out why these masculinities appear in a favorable light: the men being interviewed about their attitudes, behaviors, and actions responded to questions and concerns about the sustainability and continuity of society. Therefore, I argue that the social role of men as both provider and protector in Finnish society (Jokinen 2000; Siltala 1994b) is not destabilized in the texts.

5.5 CONCERNS ABOUT BOYS AND MEN

Article V focuses on the expectations for and normative statements concerning boys and men and the forms of self-care they should practice so

as to meet the demands of contemporary education and working life as well as their future working life. The data consists of 25 texts, including columns, opinion pieces, journalistic interviews, and news texts, collected from the Finnish media in spring 2016. Methodologically, the study draws from a discourse theoretical framework (Fairclough 1995). The article addresses three research questions: What kind of self-care is present in the texts? What are the goals of self-care? How are men and gender portrayed in the texts?

The title of this section refers to a recurring discourse in Finnish public discussions on gender and education. Elina Lahelma argues that since the late 1980s, the public discussion on gender equality has increased concern about the poor school achievement of boys, the characteristics of which have remained relatively the same over time. She terms such a discourse the “failing boys” discussion (Lahelma 2005b) or the “boy discourse” (Lahelma 2014) because it assumes that boys are at particular risk of dropping out of education and working life due to their gender-specific characteristics, but in its present form education also dampens boys’ intrinsic activity and independence. The perception of an increased inability of boys and men to fulfill their societal function has later been compounded by increased concern about young men’s declining physical condition, a “softening” of men (Suikkanen 2016). Article V contributes to these discussions by examining how the emergence of individualization in working life and the ascending emphasis on care of the self are intertwined in the texts addressing boys and men.

The concept of self-care that I make use of in the article stems from the work of Heyes (2007). I define self-care as an activity in which an individual examines herself/himself and either makes changes in the self or in her/his behavior, or else consciously strives to maintain a good set of practices. Based on this definition, I then focus on a wider spectrum of practices inspired by concern for the self than those that affect merely somatic and mental health (cf. Article IV). Therefore, I suggest that the type of self-care discussed in the article is mainly about achieving, possessing, and cultivating certain healthy attitudes. Although not mentioned in the original article, this understanding of self-care connects the study to discussions of bio-capitalism. Some of the texts analyzed for the article focus on the aspirations of individuals to generate enthusiasm in themselves and others both to withstand the uncertainty of working life and to make one’s work input desirable in the eyes of others:

We throw ourselves into everything boldly, which is already indicated by the fact that we founded a company at a time like this [...] There must be balls in everything you do, because no one is interested in sterile fumbling. And you can see that blokeishness in our appearance too: there are large beards and spectacular tattoos.

(Turun Sanomat 11.4.2016, 8; translation HH)

Echoing Jokinen (2018, 24), I suggest that the drive to make products as inspiring and appealing as possible is inscribed on the interviewee's body as he is turning himself into a valuable product. The above quote (Article V, 46) describes the aesthetic operations performed by the individual for himself and the discovery of the meaning of these operations in the context of value creation. This act of care of the self (see Heyes 2007, 89–92) is also about increasing one's quality of life within the context of bio-capitalism, where individual life, rather than individual work input, holds value (Morini & Fumagalli 2010). The willingness to increase the quality of one's life is also an indication of a healthy attitude that helps individuals to cope with the demands of current and future working life, which constitutes a functioning society. As pointed out in the original article, this study therefore contributes to discussions on self-promoting (Mäkinen 2012) and intensified competition in labor markets and organization (Collinson 2003; Kelly et al. 2007; Siltala 2017). Nevertheless, somatic health also constitutes one of the article's core subject matters. Performance in a workplace consisting of attitudes considered healthy (Mäkinen 2012) and physical health (Kelly et al. 2007) are contrasted with efforts at personal wellbeing.

In comparison to other articles included in this dissertation, Article V does not focus solely on individual actions. Therefore, the analyzed texts are in a more distant relation to distinct regimes of self-care. However, some of the texts discuss and suggest concrete guidelines for proper self-care. For example, the texts draw from social movements deconstructing conventional masculinities and gender equality discourse, through which young men are invited to scrutinize their gendered behaviors critically.

Regarding theoretical discussions in CSMM research, the article draws from discussions on hybrid masculinity (Bridges & Pascoe 2014), Butler's (1990; 1997a) theorizations on gender performativity, and poststructuralist readings of the hegemonic masculinity concept (Wetherell & Edley 1999). Although I refer to hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995; Connell & Messerschmidt 2005) to justify the rationale for the study, namely the analysis of a hierarchy of different ways of being a man in Finnish society, I ultimately end up using the concept in much same way as that of idealized masculinity in Article IV. Epistemologically, the study is more far-reaching than Article IV, as it contributes to discussions on the ideals and norms affecting the education of boys and men. However, the study identifies a "variety of hegemonic masculinities," the existence of which are justified by the changing demands of working life (Article IV, 48). No single masculinity is presented in a more favorable light and there is no evidence of moral and intellectual leadership being granted to certain men.

To answer my research questions, I identified four discourses. I named them *self-responsibility* (vastuu itsestä), *questioning traditional masculinity* (perinteisen maskuliinisuuden kyseenalaistaminen), *longing for the past* (kaipuu menneisyyteen), and *limitations of self-care* (itsestä huolehtimisen rajallisuus). With the *self-responsibility* discourse, men are considered

obliged to take care of themselves by influencing their own health and the productivity of their own work. With the *questioning traditional masculinity* discourse, men are encouraged to practice self-care through focusing on their personal perception of what is appropriate for boys and men, whereby some traditional masculinities are considered a hindrance to men's success because, by performing them, men are adopting rigid behavioral norms that make it difficult for them to succeed in education and work. With the *longing for the past* discourse, the texts refer to positive qualities of men of the past as examples that contemporary men should emulate, arguing that an increased standard of living has decreased physical activity and blurred the necessity for work. The aim of the discourse is to revitalize previous practices among young people in light of the fact that the world is likely to be transformed into a state where such practices will once again be needed.

With the *limitations of self-care* discourse, the texts critically assess speech that portrays self-care self-evidently as a source of success and wellbeing. Some of the texts referred to previously published texts, continuing a discussion in which the discourse on the limitations of self-care took on the role of challenger and interlocutor. The texts argue that not all failures in individual life can be countered by self-care. Although all the newspaper texts in my data do not claim that self-care automatically leads to the desired outcomes, they still claim that self-care is a significant and even necessary practice. In other words, the texts echo the notion that people's willingness to critically examine themselves and improve their practices is essential, regardless of whether they can achieve their original goals via such actions. In line with Heyes (2007, 68), I argue that certain self-care practices are important to the practitioner because they indicate a healthy attitude of the self towards other people. Identifying with an imaginary judge (Siltala 2017, 219–226) is part of defining the self as a morally good citizen in comparison to those who supposedly have stopped trying to improve their position.

I conclude this section by suggesting that conflicting goals are set for men's self-care in the contexts of education and working life. The discourses differ in terms of what attributes are associated with succeeding in working life. Echoing the findings of Lahelma (2014, 174), the analyzed texts promote both neoliberal creativity in the free market and a neo-conservative focus on basic skills. The results of the analysis presented in this article support Hearn's (2014) notion that, for historical reasons, the social category of men is an important part of public discussions while concurrently being rather hollow and open for continuous discursive redefinitions. The redefinitions are, however, internally contradictory. They signal concern for the sustainability of society but cannot present a singular solution. My research contributes to the historicization of the social category of men and to questioning its naturalness.

6 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

My interest in the present study was to gain an understanding of how men think and talk about their work-related self-care practices as well as how the media portrays and constructs the norms surrounding men's work-related self-care. The norms have been addressed not only by focusing on men's accounts of their lived experiences (Articles I; II; III), but also by studying texts published in the Finnish media (Articles IV; V). My study has not been motivated by a desire to determine the healthiest work-related self-care practices for men or to practice corrective health promotion in men's lives. Instead, my research interest has focused on the current modes of sense-making orienting men's work-related self-care.

6.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

In the first chapter of this dissertation, I put forwards three research questions:

- 1) How do men discuss and negotiate work-related self-care and justify their choices and behavior? (Articles I; II; III)
- 2) How do men experience the surrounding norms, either as limiting or enabling their self-care, and how do they react to such norms? (Articles I; II; III)
- 3) How are the relationships between men, masculinities, and work-related self-care discursively constructed in the media? (Articles IV; V)

I begin answering the first research question by discussing the practices that the interviewed men feel help them appropriately care for themselves within the context of working life. Thereafter, I discuss the men's self-assessed goals for work-related self-care in more detail.

The interviewed men consider their own bodies and daily lifestyles to be manageable, meaning that they actively pursue and maintain certain practices that positively affect their health and wellbeing. These practices included, for example, changes in physical activity and eating habits, which the participants interpreted as affecting the properties of their bodies. Contrary to the idea that being a man and engaging in self-observation are contradictory, the present study indicates that men living in Finnish society do see their bodies as wanting, as they described their endeavors to intentionally shape their bodies to meet the aesthetic needs of a particular job (Article III) and withstand work-related stress (Article II). Article I contributes to the theme of manageability by pointing out that, through a therapeutic ethos, men's mental health and attitudes concerning their

responsibilities and possibilities as men and workers also become manageable for them. These analyses show that the feminization of working life contributes to men's interests in practices and behaviors previously associated with femininity, such as aesthetic labor and an interest in one's own feelings and changing them through therapeutic practices.

The participants noted that a significant form of work-related self-care involves managing one's own boundaries in working life, by which they meant monitoring the status of work in one's life and making sure that it does not conflict with other meaningful sectors of life related to non-work. The participants expressed a willingness to change jobs and to consciously regulate their personal ambitions with respect to a certain career. They also expressed a willingness to regulate the share of personal time and resources allocated to work. The men could evaluate themselves while at the same time being "aware of masculinity as something they do and perform" (Waling 2019, 102), which has enabled them to actively look for ways of being a man that are compatible with the ideals of worker citizenship and maintaining a balance between work and non-work. The men also called for and adopted ways of participating in working life that protect the self from the health hazards associated with work, including taking account of one's role and responsibilities in an organization and recognizing one's own limitations (Articles I; II). Article III discusses types of work-related self-care that are deemed afterwards unhealthy. I pointed out the possibility of abandoning certain self-care practices that, even if they support certain career aspiration or remaining in a particular job, started to damage one's body or reduce one's wellbeing.

This care of the self was not entirely limited to operations affecting men's bodies, thoughts, and way of being. Instead, it involved exercises of power targeting the men's environment. The men reported that they aim to, or at least want to, both change the way their employer acts and intentionally resist certain exercises of power by the employer. Usefulness and rationality from an individual standpoint demarcated the boundary of acceptable organizational power on the self-care exercised by employers (Articles I; II). For example, the participants noted that they at times perceive workplace health promotion as an attempt to exercise power over employees to merely satisfy the needs of the employer. Against this background, the participants expressed concern for their own wellbeing. In contrast, the participants expressed a willingness to participate in types of workplace health promotion that benefitted both the employer and themselves.

I now turn to the underlying principles that the men invoked to justify the self-care practices outlined above, namely fulfilling the demands associated with worker citizenship and aspirations for personal wellbeing. Article I conceptualizes worker citizenship as self-reflexivity, adaptability, and responsibility for the productivity of one's work. The desire for worker citizenship was also discussed in Articles II and III. In Article II, the analysis indicated that men do not prioritize the self over work in every situation.

Instead, work can be viewed as a material necessity; every person is supposed to do their part and engage in paid labor. The interviewed men understood paid work as their duty. Conversely, success in fulfilling that duty constitutes a source of personal wellbeing, as it has provided the participants with an experience of the self as a necessary part of society.

This relationship between working life and wellbeing, in which participation in working life constitutes wellbeing, was particularly strong in the analysis presented in Article III. The article argues that the men affected by eating disorders shaped their bodies through their eating habits and exercise to remain at a particular job or pursue a certain career. These self-care practices, as well as a strong affiliation with a certain field of work, supported the participants' self-stylizations, which in turn gave them credibility in front of other people. Moreover, even the most extreme forms of self-stylization extended into working life, which the participants claimed is an indispensable part of having a satisfying life.

With respect to the relationship between men, masculinities, and labor, the findings challenge the understanding of men in Finnish society presented in previous research (cf. Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b). The men that I interviewed from the standpoint of work-related self-care (Articles I; II), did not perceive paid work as an indispensable part of their manhood. Instead, they explicitly disputed the "honor of a man," a positive self-understanding of men as individuals who sacrifice themselves for work, with most even perceiving it as a repulsive phenomenon. The notion of worker citizenship was, for them, explicitly genderless and constituted by traits associated with both masculinity and femininity. On the other hand, in the analysis presented in Article III, I suggested that the appearances and skills that participants associated with their past self-care practices did not straightforwardly relate to various masculinities, but instead they were mediated through the norms of taste groups in plural localities, such as in the workplace.

The participants did not strictly equate paid work, perceived either as a duty or an opportunity to realize oneself, with men's gender identity or internalized understandings of what is expected of them as men. Hence, my findings dispute two conceptions of men and work-related self-care presented in the previous research. First, studies on men and masculinities in industrialized Finnish society have argued that an indifference towards one's health and wellbeing along with uninterrupted and prolonged devotion to a single field of work and the accumulation of the skills inherent in such a profession contribute to men's positive self-understanding (Aho 2019; Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b; Turtiainen 2014; Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012). On the other hand, in the context of post-industrial working life and knowledge-intensive work, studies have presented men as early adopters of a neoliberal regime of self-care, in which visibly working on one's own health is perceived as a way of expressing professionalism, loyalty to the organization, and commitment to the job (Cederström & Spicer 2015; Johansson et al.

2017; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Kelly et al. 2007; Meriläinen et al. 2015). The self-care regimen contributes not only to one's work input but also offers possibilities to climb up the career ladder by signaling healthiness and a high level of performance with one's body. The increasing number of discussions on health within organizations implies a change from indifference towards one's own health towards spontaneous self-management of it (Connell & Wood 2005, 355; Riach & Cutcher 2014).

Both these understandings present working life as an environment that Kortteinen (1992) terms a "field of glory" for men, whereby men's honor is constituted by visual signs of individuality, diligence, and success in work. In contrast to these understandings of men's health behavior, the findings presented in Articles I–III are aligned with recent studies on how men and masculinities in the Nordic countries have been affected by the gender equality discourse. They indicate a transition towards a broader societal criticism of conventional masculinities (Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018), men's willingness to distance themselves from the male breadwinner model (Eerola 2015), and the increased interest of men in domestic work (Neuman et al. 2017). Instead of performing self-esteem-enhanced self-identification to change one's position within a hierarchy between men, the interviewed men had abandoned a principled commitment to "masculinist" (Biese 2017) notions about career, such as linearity and continuous upward progression within an organization. The participants either understood their work as part of a fragmented personal life consisting of many responsibilities (Articles I; II) or they felt that their high level of commitment to a past vocation had arisen from something other than their understanding of themselves as men and a commitment to that particular social role (Article III).

The analysis presented in Articles I–III contributes to discussions on workers' selves in post-industrial working life, in which workplaces increasingly focus on knowing, caring, and servicing rather than on production. From the analyses presented in these articles, two conclusions can be drawn regarding men and masculinities. First, the repertoires of discursive practices providing men with examples for their various masculinities, that is, ways of being a man, have diversified. Men's incorporation of performances and identity elements is in no way unified by all-encompassing hegemonic subject positions at even a local level, and they certainly do not exclude alternatives from the realm of intelligibility (cf. Butler 1993, 112). Instead, the gender performances of men follow the needs of each workplace and a social reality inherent within that workplace. Second, echoing the findings of Bridges and Pascoe (2014), this pluralization and hybridization of masculinities also downplays the significance of the social category of men, which is seemingly being displaced by men to make room for other constituents of individual subjectivity.

In addition to men's accounts of the work-related self-care practices they found usable, necessary, and justified, my research interests included an analysis of the men's experiences with the surrounding norms limiting or

enabling their self-care as well as their reactions to such norms. In line with Waling (2019), I drew from poststructuralist discussions on the subject positions of men to analyze how an orientation towards work-related self-care occurs, what this orientation process looks like, and how the participant actively negotiate such an orientation. To begin with, I suggest that men in Finnish society perceive multiple possibilities for work-related self-care. The norms do not operate through systems of control that seemingly force individuals to act out of a fear of punishment as though they are always being watched (cf. Foucault 1977), as has often been suggested in studies focusing on the meanings of individual health in certain competitive organizations (Amsterdam & Eck 2019; James & Zoller 2018; Karjalainen et al. 2016; Riach & Cutcher 2014).

Instead of persistent surveillance, the participants perceived themselves as free to seek out the proper way to care for their health, which constituted a shared ideal for the participants. In line with Heyes (2007, 85), I have termed men's orientation towards different regimes of self-care "critical co-optation and intentional resistance" (Article II, 26). This process is strongly affected by the incompatibility of regimes and competition between them. The notion of a neurotic subject and its transformation into neurotic citizenship (Isin 2004) becomes instructive in such a context. Rather than conforming to a certain set of norms for work-related self-care, men's citizenship in relation to health is often characterized by an awareness of the numerous exercises of power to which they are subjected. In addition to a willingness to co-opt the self-care practices addressed repeatedly in both the workplace and the media, the men being interviewed also expressed fears, anxieties, and insecurities about them.

Identifying with a genderless worker citizenship oriented the participants to view the increased possibilities for men's work-related self-care positively (Articles I; III). The men perceived both a permissive norm of masculinity, in which they are allowed to practice work-related self-care, as well as a relatively norm-free environment, in which they are able to do and perform a masculinity best suited to them without the need to prove their manliness to other people via a certain type of health behavior. In the analyses presented in Articles I–III, I suggested that the men perceived gender and the norms related to it as a field of possibilities for self-realization and the pursuit of happiness.

In some situations, the participants recognized that the expectations placed on masculinity conflict with their personal aspirations. These situations included perceiving the self as something lesser than the idealized masculinity in one's environment (Article III); prevailing but receding social norms related to traditional masculinity (Article II); and an internalized behavioral pattern orienting the self towards traditional masculinity (Article I). The men could for the most part resolve the contradictions, however, through gender performances that draw from discourses questioning the value of perceiving such masculinities as either normative or customary.

Although the participants noted that this deviation required effort, they had discursive and cultural resources at hand to support their actions. The choices available to men generally characterize the sociocultural context chosen for the subject of analysis. However, certain workplaces still constituted social realities that somewhat limited men's gender performances and subjected them to group pressure. Intersecting power relations manifested themselves in the accounts of the participants as compromises: although the men refrained from some patterns of behavior, for example acknowledging tiredness at work, to better defend the self against hostility (Article II, 30), the masculinity considered most harmful was also not voluntarily legitimized.

In the context of organizational life, the participants also actively cultivated individual freedom and a normless atmosphere (Articles I; II). The men explicitly resisted the idea of self-care as a symbol of a strong work ethic (cf. Kelly et al. 2007) and the use of self-care as a form of horizontal power within an organization (cf. Amsterdam & Eck 2019; Huzell & Larsson 2012; James & Zoller 2018). Therefore, they also refused to express opinions on work-related self-care in the workplace. Worker citizenship, characterized by self-reflexivity, adaptability, and a sense of responsibility, was here understood as a personal conviction making it possible to achieve personal wellbeing and fulfil the obligations imposed upon oneself. It did not involve competition between individuals.

The answer to my third research question on the relationships between men, masculinities, and work-related self-care in the Finnish media (Articles IV; V) can be expressed concisely as follows. Representations of men's self-care related to work and education in the Finnish media leans on and reproduces the following three presuppositions: first, paid work is unquestionably a part of men's social role; secondly, working life is changing in a way that requires individuals to learn new skills and attitudes related to care for one's value in the labor market and one's own health; and thirdly, conventional understandings of how men should behave should be reconsidered, as they are incompatible with contemporary working life.

Friction emerged when comparing how men talked about work-related self-care, which they feel produces continuous wellbeing and helps them cope at work (Articles I; II), and representations of men's self-care in work and educational settings (Articles IV; V). The newspaper texts construct for men a heroic masculinity (Halberstam 1998, 1–4; Wetherell & Edley 1999; Whitehead 2002, 123), whereby they can, by performing certain operations on their bodies, minds, and attitudes, triumph in a changing and increasingly challenging working life. The newspaper texts draw from regimes of self-care that I have associated with neoliberalism. By contrast, men's self-assessed possibilities, potential, and goals regarding work-related self-care were much more limited, since the worker citizenship they identified with was about fulfilling a limited and still binding obligation to work. The idealized hybrid masculinities produced by men being interviewed combined a duty to work

with the importance of non-work, whereas the hybrid masculinities constructed in the Finnish media were oriented towards making use of both masculine and feminine traits to maximize success in working life. The neurotic citizenship of the participants being interviewed also became visible in references to the media, which for them creates pressures to practice self-care in ways that are somewhat unsuitable for men's personal needs (Article II).

The results presented in all the original Articles I–V suggest that the recent intensified discussion on the ethics of care of the self has destabilized men's gender identities. From the viewpoint of a post-industrial and increasingly feminized working life (Adkins 2001; Cottingham 2017; Morini & Fumagalli 2010; Karjalainen et al. 2019; Ylöstalo et al. 2018), the social category of men is becoming ever more problematic, evident in the speech of men being interviewed and representations of men that associate it with reactionary practices. The range of new masculinities that can be idealized, made intelligible, and seem possible for men opens new subject positions for men in which work-related self-care is possible. On the other hand, the significance of men's self-understanding as men is increasingly being downplayed.

As my analysis of men's perceptions of the norms regarding work-related self-care (Articles I; II; III) and normative statements on the subject matter in the Finnish media (Articles IV; V) demonstrate, work-related self-care is not a politically neutral phenomenon. Self-care is a site of intersecting and mutually contradictory power relations, as discussed in sections 3.1–3.3. For example, workplace health promotion and media discussions direct men towards certain forms of work-related self-care at the expense of others. These acts of government are motivated by certain ideals and self-interests, which define the boundaries of a meaningful, just, and good human life. As I have argued in the Articles II and III, some forms of self-care might entail personal loss and unhappiness.

6.2 THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The theoretical implications of the present study concern theorizing about men and the concept of masculinity in both working life research and men's health research. I begin the section by summarizing the implications for knowledge about men and masculinities in post-industrial working life in Finnish society affected by the gender equality discourse and other social movements deconstructing conventional masculinities. I then evaluate the theoretical implications for further uses of the concept of masculinity.

Earlier takes on Finnish men in working life considered paid work an important part of their masculinities. Regardless of class background, wage-earning, breadwinning, and professionalism, understood as an experience of skillfulness acquired through experience, represented the central

components of men's positive self-understanding. This connection has been highlighted in studies addressing the Finnish national awakening (Pöysä 1997; 1999), industrializing Finnish society (Kortteinen 1992; Siltala 1994b; 1994c; Turtiainen 2014; Turtiainen & Väänänen 2012), and post-industrial Finnish society within the contexts of manual labor (Aho 2019; Kosonen 2016) and knowledge-intensive work (Kangas 2020; Karjalainen et al. 2016). The present study does not entirely dispute this relationship. However, the constitutive elements of masculinities are more diverse than the connections promoted in previous research on men in working life.

In the Nordic countries, men find non-work more important than before (Eerola 2015; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Neuman et al. 2017). I suggest that the causes of this change can be traced to sources other than the policy-driven changes in the level of equality between men and women. Based on my findings, I suggest that contemporary regimes of self-care affect men in ways that take up space from the working life as the main component of self-understanding. Contemporary regimes of self-care as well as a current socio-cultural setting characterized by the presence of plural regimes and the intensified nature of discussions concerning the ethics of care of the self also position the self at the center. In addition to citizenship, understood as internalized individual responsibility, men's participation in working life is now also affected by customership and activism, detaching men from the direct influence of working life and the horizontal power structures present in organizations.

I suggest that, even in the context of working life, men's health behaviors are not produced through the collective practices of a particular workplace, sector of the labor market, or socio-economic class. Instead, contemporary ways of being a man are increasingly shaped by other cultural influences, which also affect men's behaviors in working life. With respect to working life research, I suggest the need to shift from theorizing about masculinities as shaped by men's ways of participating in working life to focusing on masculinities as situated constructions and components as a part of the subjectivities of men, subjectivities also formed outside and before the current working life situation of a person. With respect to men's health research, I recommend applying the concept of masculinity in a way that does not reduce it to typologies based on one's class background or current ways of participating in working life.

Current representations of men's work-related self-care in the Finnish media do not challenge the social role of men as providers. However, this widespread ideal in the Finnish mediascape sets only very loose guidelines for men's behavior. Contemporary productions of idealized images of masculinity in Finnish society are characterized by a sense of situatedness. By situatedness, I am referring to both a variety of contexts that the authors of the media texts draw from when depicting men in various work and life contexts. Moreover, the regimes of self-care discussed favorably in the texts mainly relate to the problems of certain individuals and how to possibly solve

them. The texts draw their examples for current and future men's behavior in working life from patterns of behavior associated with men in the past, speculations about the needs of future working life, and the repertoire of favorable behaviors currently associated with femininities. I therefore suggest that uncertainties about what kind of masculinity should be idealized for men in working life are apparent. The strong unity of a single idealized masculinity is therefore lost.

Based on the previous remarks, I suggest that CSMM research should strongly reconsider the role of hegemonic, dominant, normative, and even idealized masculinities as an explanatory framework for men's behavior with respect to work or health, since the explanatory potential of these concepts has been increasingly challenged from an empirical standpoint. Despite the range of epistemological frameworks underpinning such concepts, from social psychological explanations and gender identity (Wetherell & Edley 1999) to material rewards and recognition (Connell 1995), the power relations that unify masculinity are mutually incompatible and thus have been weakened in current society. This situation begs the question of how men should be addressed in future research on the subject matters central to this dissertation, namely health, working life, and men's health at work.

As Hearn (2004; 2014) points out, men are both a material-discursive category formed in social institutions that categorize people into genders as well as an identity-oriented category of collective and individual agents affected by those institutions. In the latter sense, men are sometimes addressed as a group with a strong shared identity, a shared past, and shared risks and hopes. This is the case in, for example, health education specifically targeted at men (Crawshaw 2007; Slutbäck 2018). However, the present study questions identity-based explanations of men's behavior. Although there is no sign of men collectively giving up their identities as men, men increasingly draw material for their self-understanding and identity work from various other sources besides their gender and gendered expectations. Men also actively conceal their gender by questioning the boundaries between genders and downplaying the significance of their gender as an explanatory factor for their actions. Based on the empirical findings of the present study, I argue that men actively downplay the meanings of gender in their accounts of their lived experiences, choosing to represent the self as an autonomous agent. Therefore, I recommend a strong dissociation from accounts of men's health that associate such notions as "today's hegemonic masculinity" (Pietilä 2008, 9) or a "lack of identification" with certain masculinities (Waling 2017) when discussing men's increasing interest in health issues.

Despite being informed by the theory of gender order and the structuralist concept of hegemonic masculinity, the concepts of hybridization and hybrid masculinity (Bridges 2014; Bridges & Pascoe 2014; Jóhannsdóttir & Gíslason 2018; Whitmer 2017) capture a remarkable social phenomenon that is also taking place in Finland. Men are not just distancing themselves from certain

social expectations related to men, they are also actively identifying with femininities. This shift from men desperately trying to comply with an overarching normative masculinity, “a very straight gay” (Connell 1995, 143), to men purposefully striving to be other than a man burdened by conventional norms of masculinity, “a very gay straight” (Bridges 2014), holds certain implications for future CSMM research. Since gender boundaries are no longer being symbolically maintained by most men, CSMM research will face a challenge. Until now, CSMM research has found it important to focus specifically on members of the social category of men, to *name men as men* (Collinson & Hearn 1994). I suggest that CSMM scholars should also be able to recognize men as *something else than men*: for example, to recognize them as worker citizens and participants in numerous regimes of self-care that regulate their orientation towards working life and their identifications with masculinities.

I suggest that masculinities should not be understood as clear-cut subject positions, still less as forms of gender identity. I do not, however, argue that researchers should rush to reject the concept of masculinity altogether, as the concept can be used to depict temporal and local variability within men, who, in the words of Hearn (2014, 13), constitute “a significant social category of power.” Instead, I encourage CSMM scholars to focus on men’s agency and the processes of negotiation with respect to, for example, the importance of work, relations between work and non-work, and regimes of self-care. Certain repetitive behavior patterns can certainly be identified, patterns constituted by men’s efforts find a sustainable and culturally acceptable response to contemporary insecurities. From this viewpoint, an analysis of the inequalities between certain masculinities and certain groups of men also becomes once again possible.

6.3 PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The practical implications of the present study concern men’s health behavior in working life and men’s participation in organizational practices related to health. I begin the section by addressing men’s subjectivity regarding health practices detached from the organizational discourses. I then discuss men as subjects of organizational power and workplace health promotion. I conclude the section by stating the practical implications for inequalities between men and men’s dominant position in working life.

The present study offers evidence that men no longer consider self-care and help-seeking as a threat to their identities as men. Despite the uncertainties and contradictions in the representations of men discussed above, it is evident that self-care and help-seeking have been made intelligible, even if not always materially possible, for men. Men seem to consider health information and the increased public discussion on the ethics of care of the self as an important component of their quality of life and

citizenship, in which they find it necessary to contribute to both working life and the area of non-work.

The present study implicates that men constitute an increasing customer base for healthcare products and services. However, the relations between men and help-seeking are becoming more complex than before. The previously presumed setup, in which men constitute a problem group in relation to orders given by a municipal or occupational healthcare authority, is undergoing significant change. The mutually incompatible discourses defining the contents of health, proper goals for self-care, and proper practices of caring for one's health offer also men resources to individually negotiate their stance towards the information provided by a single health authority.

As men's understanding of themselves as men is weakening, the means for directing them as a group towards certain health behaviors needs reconsidering. The idea of men as a group holding certain characteristics, such as being rigid and prioritizing physical strength over agility and avoiding fruits and vegetables, constitutes a problematic presupposition that is not compatible with men's contemporary understandings of themselves. Hence, health initiatives that seek to appeal to men conforming to a uniform and indivisible masculinity (Crawshaw 2007; Koivunen 2018; Ojala 2016; Slutbäck 2018) may in the future also be perceived as missed opportunities to adequately address men. In contrast, the regimes of self-care that are compatible with personal life goals and seemingly enhance possibilities to better address individual healthcare needs, despite having the reputation of being a feminine practice, hold increasingly appeal for certain men. In the present study, this has become evident through an analysis of the speech of men interviewed on their attitudes regarding masculinity and health, who justified their engagement with, for example, the therapeutic ethos, dieting, or downshifting based on their self-assessed needs. Here, the professional rationale of public health authorities, "proper treatment on the basis of accurate diagnosis" (Helén 2007b, 163), has begun to guide the choices made by contemporary men. From the viewpoint of biopower, this is not completely unproblematic, as control over the individual diagnostic gaze becomes harder to achieve.

From an organizational standpoint, the present study has more complex implications. Changes are occurring in the areas of working life and the labor market, including the division of labor, occupational healthcare, workplace health promotion, and the informal organizational discourses in which individuals are evaluated based on their health behaviors. First, men who increasingly find meaningful life content located outside of working life cannot be trusted to take greater responsibility for the workload compared to women. In line with the findings of Petteri Eerola (2015), who argues that the current Finnish cultural atmosphere is expanding men's roles in childcare, my findings seem to support the conception that contemporary Finnish men are complying with the ideal of gender equality in working life.

Second, it can be assumed that men are increasingly willing to seek help from, for example, occupational healthcare. Ojala et al. (2016) have pointed out that masculinity is sometimes maintained in self-care practices by keeping an instrumental focus on individual performance and by conceptualizing care for one's own health as self-control with quantifiable benefits at hand. Although I have argued for the decreasing value placed on men's self-understanding of themselves as men, the caveat considering instrumentality is still relevant. Intensive discussion on the ethics of care of the self does lead to a certain amount of suspiciousness among men towards all kinds of norms and governance affecting personal areas of life, such as individual health. Moreover, whereas idealized masculinities of the past included stoicism and an ability to obey even unpleasant commands if they were given by a legit authority, this trait seems to be lacking in contemporary men, who increasingly perceive themselves as customers of healthcare. This may result in a lack of credibility for occupational healthcare and workplace health promotion efforts, which men increasingly perceive as providing but one set of choices among many in an increasingly individualistic society.

Third, contemporary masculinities are decreasingly based on competition and success in working life, on a linear career path and continuous upward progression within organizations. This challenges the very basis of workplace health promotion as a practice that trains individuals to make the most of themselves at work and as a measure of individual loyalty. To promote health in a way that individuals of all genders can readily commit to, the projects should be evidence based and their implications and usefulness for individual health and wellbeing should be made transparent. Moreover, both the explicit and implicit rewards for participation related to one's position within an organization should be taken into consideration and removed. Men, who increasingly aim at striking a balance between work and non-work, are not self-evidently opportune subjects for such exercises of power, which may increasingly provoke contempt, doubt, and conflict. The present study has discussed workplace health promotion only from the perspective of men's self-assessed needs and their willingness to either co-opt or resist the services offered by their employers. Further systematic investigation is needed on how men are addressed in workplace health promotion and how men's position in relation to non-men as well as the differences between men are constructed through such practices.

The results of the present study also have practical implications concerning inequalities between men and men's dominant position in working life. I have suggested that men's work-related self-care has intensified and partially moved into the area of non-work, where men in their free time and using the resources they have at hand are able to negotiate their relationship with themselves, proper practices for caring for their health, and their attitude regarding the demands placed on them by their employer. The feature uniting contemporary regimes of self-care is that they, as the concept suggests, encourage individuals to perceive the challenges they

face as problems in their relationships with themselves. However, an individual's willingness to practice introspection and exhibit resistance towards certain external power relations constitutes only half of the whole picture. I offer three insights.

First, differences between workplaces create differences between men. Despite men's increased willingness to break the connection between manliness and a reluctance to seek help, the freedom to perform hybrid masculinity is mostly available to men engaged in knowledge-intensive work. Working life contexts still exist in which men experience that their gender performances are limited by a certain masculinity norm. Some practices of self-care, such as psychological help through coaching, become available for men either through their personal investment in or, more likely, through workplace health promotion or occupational healthcare. Therefore, an individual willingness to engage in such practices does not automatically lead to an adoption of such practices. The differences in individual wealth, knowledge about self-care possibilities, and collegial support for self-care may ultimately help maintain and even strengthen inequalities in health between men. This study contributes to CSMM research and working life studies by discussing the changes in masculinities in a cultural environment where work-related self-care is becoming increasingly important. To achieve this goal, the data collection process entailed broad-based socioeconomic coverage and representativeness. However, it would be at least equally valuable to study men's work-related self-care by focusing on sub-groups inside the category of men, such as fathers, men in temporary jobs, immigrant men, and non-heterosexual men.

Second, some situations in current working life, such as freelance work, do not include or enable employer supervision of work-related self-care practices by workers wanting to consistently perform at a high level. Therefore, a strong involvement with self-care regimes that are based on an individual's own judgment and self-assessed needs carry the risk of, for example, eating disorders, substance abuse, and a reluctance to seek out other forms of self-care, such as help-seeking, if the pre-adopted self-care practices seemingly prove beneficial and conflict with new information. The feminization of working life may promote unwanted equality by subjecting men to new power relations and the health risks related to them, such as subjugating men to perceive their body as a commodity that needs to be constantly managed and controlled.

Third, the representations of men's work-related self-care tend to associate self-care with positive meanings, such as continuous opportunities for increasing performance and productivity in work and coping with challenges. As such, it opens mainly heroic subject positions up for men. Since the media also shapes the cultural repertoires used in everyday language to express attitudes regarding work ethics, it inevitably carries implications for what is construed as a good or favorable masculinity. Men

who are unable to meet the requirements of these subject positions are still in danger of being stigmatized and marginalized.

Concerning men's dominant position in current working life, the contributions of the present study partly lie in what cannot be said based on the results. Men identify with a form of worker citizenship in which it is still primarily their responsibility to engage in paid work. The discursive interrelationship between men and work is persistent also in the representations of men. Despite the men's willingness to regulate the time and personal resources allocated to work, paid work is not valued on an equal footing as other contents of life, such as care responsibilities. Concurrently, the numerous incompatible regimes of self-care present in contemporary Finnish society and the uncertainties and conflicts in public discussions on the ethics of care of the self offer individuals possibilities to practice co-optation and resistance based on their other internalized attitudes. The lack of strong ethical authorities offers individuals the possibility to make very careful choices as to what regimes they co-opt and how they incorporate them into their individual lives. Although men are increasingly conforming with the gender equality discourse, the present study does not offer evidence of a social authority compelling men to draw any conclusions from the discourse that would challenge their personal identity projects. As such, men's work-related self-care in the form of visibly deconstructing men's conventional social role and temporarily aligning themselves with the gender equality discourse can also hide inequalities and make them less meaningful.

6.4 FINAL THOUGHTS

Throughout the research process for this dissertation, my research interest has focused on men's subjectivity, including both the conditions of its construction and its manifestations in men's accounts of their lived experiences. I have suggested that self-care and the hybridization of contemporary masculinities mutually enhance one another: ascending hybrid masculinities are a site of men's agency, and the self-care practiced by agentive subjects deconstructs masculinities based on a sharp gender difference. It seems that the social category of men and men's understanding of themselves as men are disappearing, "like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea" (Foucault 1994, 387). I conclude the dissertation by pondering possible future developments of the social category of men under the ethics of care of the self.

I have argued throughout this dissertation that not only are masculinities plural but also that the field of acceptable masculinities is more broadly defined than before and that more is now permissible for men. Power no longer affects men primarily by restricting them. Instead of being punished for wrong performances of masculinity, power is increasingly productive in that men are encouraged to adopt new skills, behaviors, styles, thoughts, and

ways of being. However, this plurality is partially constructed by the concurrence of nostalgia and enthusiasm for novelty. Bits and pieces of a man who sacrifices himself for his work are still valued: a glance at the success story of the Finnish welfare state shows that their sacrifice has not been in vain, while on the other hand, through such sacrifice, men have demonstrated an exemplary attitude towards work. Concurrently, problems with this masculinity are now being recognized. Especially in Finland, both nostalgia and progressivity characterize public and private discussions on men.

I have pointed out that the Finnish media represents men who are able to work despite challenging circumstances as heroes. Moreover, I have suggested that individuals belonging to the social category of men still perceive paid work as their duty: the gaze on men of the past is compassionate and understanding rather than judgmental. Concurrently, both contemporary men and the Finnish media suggest that some men do not meet the requirements of the contemporary labor market because they are certain kind of men. Thereby, I suggest that men are a social category associated with both hope and concern: men are heroes except when they are a problem. Although the social category of men seemingly includes an increasing number of permissible gender performances, the category itself does not seem to be disappearing. Instead, an intensified network of power relations is reinforcing its importance, giving attention to it, showing concern for it, shaping it, and attaching future hopes to it.

The concept of man is seemingly becoming an empty signifier that no longer matters much to men themselves: in a time where sustainability is valued, it is challenging to draw positive self-understanding from a gender identity associated with self-destruction. The present study has shown that the new way of being a man, one not dependent on being recognized as an honorable man, has contributed positively to men's wellbeing. However, even if men cease to exist as an identity-orientated category, they do not necessarily cease to exist as a material-discursive category. The social category of men, even if emptied of possibilities for self-identification, still denotes certain people holding dominant positions in contemporary labor markets, which in the Nordic countries and especially in Finland are still strongly segregated by gender. Moreover, public discussions in Finland demonstrate a concern with the sorts of social changes that aim to delegitimize men's moral and intellectual leadership in working life.

These remarks bring my interest back to the core subject matter of the present study, care, which I have conceptualized as a practice motivated by concern. The understanding of men as either heroes or problems as well as the understanding of masculinity as mainly a problem are motivated by a concern for and an awareness of social problems that need to be resolved as soon as possible. This concern delimits perspective and orients attention towards a crisis atmosphere and crisis management. Although I began this dissertation by suggesting that the ethics of care of the self provide fuel to the

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crisis tendencies threatening the contents of normative masculinity, this same ethical discussion is also functioning in ways that, at least temporarily, prolong the positions of men in current social configurations by shaping their behaviors to be more compatible with contemporary working life.

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APPENDIX I

The interview guide to men's work-related self-care in English (translated from Finnish)

Background information

- Age, education, length of work experience, current position or job title

Tell me about your current work situation

- What are your key tasks?
- What is the weekly and daily rhythm like in your job and do you do overtime work?
- What kind of challenges do you face in your job?
- How do the challenges you face in the workplace affect you?
- Do you consider your performance sufficient?
- How do events at the workplace affect your wellbeing and performance during leisure time?

What do you think about self-care?

- How would you define self-care?
- What does self-care entail?
- Where have you come across ideas or discourses related to self-care?
- Where do these thoughts occur (e.g., in the media, communication within the workplace, other people's speech)?
- How do you respond to self-care tips and self-care talk?
- Are the ideas and discourses present in Finland / the Greater Helsinki area different or approached differently than in other places you have visited, worked or lived?
- How does family background and parenting affect how you respond to such speech?
- Are there differences between generations in attitudes towards self-care?
- What other things influence your attitude?

Do you take care of yourself?

- How do you practice self-care?
- Why do you practice self-care?
- What concerns do you have about yourself and your workplace?
- How do these concerns affect your actions in working life?
- Can you affect the amount of concern by your own actions?
- How do you need to change to achieve your work-related goals?
- What kind of self-care do you expect other people in your position to practice, and does your own activity differ from this?
- Do you feel that you can influence your position at the workplace or, more generally, in working life by practicing self-care?
- How has your way of practicing self-care changed with age and time?

Self-care and gender

- What kind of self-care is common among men?
- What gender differences exist in matters of self-care?
- Is it appropriate for a man to worry about himself or to practice self-care?
- Where do these perceptions of men come from?
- How have expectations for men affected your way of practicing self-care?

APPENDIX II

The interview guide on the autobiographical speech of men affected by eating disorders in English (translated from Finnish)

Childhood and youth if relevant

- Does the participant remember a time before the eating disorder at all?
- General impression of one's own past
- Home environment, parents, siblings
- School, friends, teachers
- Regarding to home environment, parents, and siblings as well as school, friends, and teachers
 - What role did the participant play in these environments?
 - What kind of attention did he or his body receive?
 - Did he want to be more central?
 - Did he feel that he received too much or distracting attention?
- Idols, goals, dreams
 - Were there any idols or role models in the participant's life that would have influenced his aspirations at school, at work, or in social relationships?
 - Did his personal goals and dreams seem realistic?
 - Did it seem that the person as such (meaning a state he would probably end up in if he did not change his ways) could not achieve those goals?

Time before the eating disorder

- At what stage of life was the participant?
- What age was he?
- General impression, mood
 - Was your feeling of inadequacy particularly strong, and if so, what issue/situation was this feeling related to?
- Family, friends
 - Was there a lack of support, encouragement, or friendship in the participant's life?
 - Did something else replace relationships?
- What motives or role models most impacted the participant?
 - Did the participant feel the need to become like those role models?
 - Did the participant follow the media?
 - Did the participant belong to a sub- / youth culture? (these concepts must be defined by the participant)

The acute period of the eating disorder

- The participant's self-defined timeframe when he suffered from the illness
- Were there different stages of the illness?
- What were the symptoms of the illness?
- Can the participant articulate "why" he was losing weight OR why he felt he had to control his eating and lose weight?
- Where would it all end?
- What emotions did the participant experience during the illness?
- Did the people close to him notice the participant's symptoms?
 - Family
 - School mates or co-workers
 - Friends
- Did the participant experience other psychological problems during the acute period of illness?

Appendix II

Recovery

- Intervention
 - Who noticed and intervened?
 - How did the participant's post-intervention life differ from the one before it?
 - Did the intervention bring pleasure or conflict or both?
- Care Experience
 - What did the treatment entail?
 - How did the participant perceive the help he received?
 - How did the help affect other aspects of his life?

Time after the acute eating disorder

- Is the illness still symptomatic?
- What is happening in the participant's life now?