

between personal pleasure and professional commitments are blurred. The range of literature and film that I have analysed suggests that in the NVA's cloistered environment, the instincts to both conform and resist became heightened, resulting in individuals developing complex relationships to the institution's ideals, values and expectations. Applied to the interplay between masculinities in these works, Raewyn Connell's analysis suggests that gestures of both limited conformity and limited challenge to the NVA's ideals, which dominate literary and filmic representations of East German military masculinities, can serve to reinforce the ideals. Because so many GDR citizens rejected militarization, the role of individual men in bolstering military ideals and contributing to the functioning of the NVA appears to be an important source of the narrative difficulties and self-doubt that dominate so many works depicting military service.²

However, Connell herself has suggested that she did not intend the concept of hegemonic masculinity to leave so little room for resistance.³ *Deutschland 83* shows the potential for play and subversion, experimenting with expectations about GDR soldiers as embodiments of the state's values by using the spy genre to imply that not everything about soldiers' identities is what it seems. Films, literary fiction and autobiographies build a broader image of GDR masculinities than existing studies have identified. Even in the extreme circumstances of military service, these works show gender ideals to be more unstable, more participatory and more dependent on conventionally marginalized aspects of masculinities than the NVA's or the SED's official pronouncements or policies on gender suggest. *Deutschland 83* appears less interested in marginalized GDR masculinities than in those in the West, with the focus on the AIDS crisis in particular. However, other writers and filmmakers have focused on marginalized aspects of masculinity within the GDR, even in the most officially sanctioned works, and the conflicts that result during military service drive the narratives in each case.

Kaja Silverman proposes that representations of conflicts and marginalized masculinities can challenge dominant ideals.⁴ Many depictions of East German soldiers experiment with ways of disrupting the NVA's values, often in retrospect, by representing vulnerable bodies, exaggerating the theatricality of military masculinity or exploring ways of depicting emotional intensity and same-sex desire. Representations of marginalized masculinities need not, and often cannot, go so far as to be entirely subversive in the way that Silverman describes. Yet these representations can and do show gender ideals as contingent and dependent on the participation of individuals through everyday performative negotiations of gender. The image of masculinities in the NVA, and by extension in the GDR more widely, is complex and highly contested in these texts, far from the monolithic and normalizing military ideals on which scholarship has predominantly focused. In fact,

masculinities that contravene or disrupt military norms are at the centre of portrayals and of the construction and articulation of the GDR's gender ideals more broadly.

Narrative depictions of East German soldiers are further driven by the difficulties of representing the diverse range of embodied masculinities within the military context. The open ending of *Deutschland 83* in part dramatizes this tension by implying that Alex Edel's subordinate masculinity and General Edel's hegemonic position cannot both survive the end of the series. By *Deutschland 86*, we learn that the former has left the military altogether. In the GDR too, films and literature grappled with the difficulties in promoting the socialist soldier personality while representing individual masculinities, as in *Härtetest* and *Es gibt kein Niemandsland*. The literature of the Militärverlag and DEFA films contributed to disseminating the NVA's masculine ideals, but the interest in these works is so often in troublesome masculinities or difficulties fitting in.⁵ The influence of the NVA's normalizing environment on representations of gender may partially explain the fraught place of more divergent masculinities even in post-reunification portrayals. Ingo Schulze, for example, writes about an ineffable quality of military service, 'the actual feeling' or 'das Eigentliche', which no writing can adequately capture.⁶ Many other authors support this view, while explicitly describing the creative impulse that these narrative difficulties provided. Jens Sparschuh and Sten Nadolny, for example, describe a feeling of abject subordination during military service, and Sparschuh writes, 'I have to thank this feeling of "hitting rock bottom" [*auf der Fresse liegen*] for tons of book pages that in retrospect I'd be reluctant to give up'.⁷ Across my analysis, narrative and expressive difficulties are particularly prevalent in the depiction of masculinity, in moments when the subordination that Sparschuh describes reveals individuals' inability, failure or refusal to conform to masculine ideals. Yet these writers' comments suggest that the difficulties in articulating individual identities within the military environment are also a source of immense creativity, resulting in the urge to explore and reinterpret military masculinities.

Writing and film, by both representing and modelling fraught negotiations of GDR institutions, enhance our understanding of the GDR as a participatory dictatorship, by placing gender at the heart of citizens' entanglement in institutions. Since Mary Fulbrook's *The People's State* in 2005, numerous investigations have clarified and tested her concept of the 'participatory dictatorship' in specific contexts.⁸ Depictions of military service support Fulbrook's view that the GDR dictatorship was constituted and sustained by everyday actions and interactions between people and the state's institutions. In fact, the link between state power and soldiers' gender practice suggests that Fulbrook's analysis might be expanded. Not only was the participation in the GDR dictatorship gendered, in that forms of participation differed for

men and women, as Fulbrook suggests, but compliance with gender ideals was a form of participation in itself. The NVA was an extreme case, in its harsh discipline, the urgency of men's confrontations with the system and its domination by men. Yet this conclusion may hold true for other institutions, at least for men, whose conformity to hegemonic masculinities could be seen as bolstering not only the ideal but also the institutions and the state that promulgated these gender ideals. Writers and filmmakers show gender practice and institutional membership relating to each other in multiple, changing ways. Military service in these texts emphasizes aspects of masculinity that do not fit easily with the NVA's gender ideals. Although young men's varying degrees of accommodation to masculine ideals during military service may have contributed to the institution's control in similar ways to Fulbrook's concept of 'participation', vulnerable, theatrical, emotional or queer masculinities frequently unsettle or challenge ideals and institutions, or at least expose their limits.

These texts show the process of marginalization within GDR institutions having profound effects on citizens' identities. In the model of embodied performativity that I have explored, drawing on Judith Butler especially, we can expect individuals' identities to be affected by their interactions with the gender ideals of GDR institutions. In *Deutschland 83*, Martin's self-understanding develops through his mission in the West, and is shaped by his Stasi mission and by his new life in the Bundeswehr. His feelings for Linda, for example, appear genuine, as does his friendship with Alex. When he eventually reveals his status as a mole in Episode 7, to warn General Edel that the GDR regime had mistaken a NATO training exercise for preparations for war, he does so not only out of fear, but also with a degree of admiration for his Bundeswehr colleagues. There is even a note of respect for the NATO exercise in his voice when he tells Lenora about Able Archer: 'They're playing a war game. A very realistic one with real control codes and real security regulations, but still a game' (Episode 7, 9:59–10:06). Martin's grudging respect for the Bundeswehr forms a stark contrast with the effects of the NVA on conscripts' identities in representations of East German military service, and his own experiences in the NVA are not discussed in depth. Most literature and film present the physical hardships of military service as having a more profound psychological and emotional impact than *Deutschland 83* shows. Especially the autobiographical works *Fassonschnitt*, *Einstrich-Keinstrich* and *Hinterm Horizont allein* show that the intensity of military service resulted in lasting psychological and emotional disruption that continued to affect conscripts years after their service. These factors may explain the continued interest in East German military service in life-writing, both autobiographical and fictional, even after the institution was dissolved. Representations of the NVA become a way of understanding, reinterpreting and rewriting the

continuing importance of military ideals for men's understanding of self and masculinity.

Deutschland 83 also helps conceptualize the impact of this analysis more broadly, including by showing women's negotiations of institutions in relation to gender ideals. Annett, Martin's girlfriend, is an instructive example. Finding out about Martin's mission in the West and about her pregnancy lead to her becoming more engaged with the Stasi and with the state's ideals. When Thomas, a friend with whom she has cheated on Martin, accuses Martin of abandoning her and Ingrid, her reply draws on images of masculine sacrifice: 'He sacrificed himself for us, for our country!' (Episode 5, 35:00–35:04). This conversation prompts her to begin working with the Stasi, culminating in Thomas being arrested, but also involving trying to convince Martin to go back to the West: 'You're setting the best example for our child by serving our country so selflessly' (Episode 6, 3:56–4:02). She compares Martin explicitly to the ideal man selflessly serving his country, appealing to their unborn child. However, her joy at the apartment and car that she is to receive complicate the picture, as this newfound zeal could be partly explained by the security and privilege that Martin's mission affords. Moreover, her tears when she reports to Schweppenstette that Martin 'isn't co-operating' (Episode 6, 5:13–5:14) make clear the emotional toll of her entanglement with GDR institutions. In *Deutschland 86*, now in the Stasi's inner circle, Annett's negotiations of single motherhood alongside her commitment to her job further show how women were – and still are – required to negotiate a masculine-coded institution. Annett's case is an extension of the trend in recent writing and film to explore GDR citizens' complex involvements with the state and its institutions, and the effects of these negotiations on their sense of self. Like the conscripts in the narratives I have analysed, who assimilate themselves in small ways to the NVA's expectations for a variety of personal reasons, Annett tries to act in the best interests of her child, but this involves imagining Martin as an impossibly perfect socialist soldier personality and suppressing her own sadness at his absence.

I have been unable to address women's negotiations of gender in the NVA due to the paucity of sources on women soldiers. However, a documentary feature in a *Süddeutsche Zeitung* TV programme in 2009, entitled 'Die NVA-Frauen', does suggest potential avenues for investigating the gender practice of women soldiers.⁹ 'Die NVA-Frauen' quotes footage from a 1987 documentary and interviews three women from the documentary about their military experiences and their present lives. The 2009 feature is interested less in military gender than in the ex-soldiers' difficulties adapting to the post-reunification environment, but it suggests that such a combination of interviews and official NVA footage might productively balance official representations of women soldiers with individual memories and narratives.

Diaries by women in the NVA, where these exist, also provide a useful source.¹⁰ The lack of literary and filmic representations of women in the NVA probably reflects in part the fact that only limited numbers of women served in the GDR armed forces. However, it also demonstrates how powerful the link is between masculinity and military service, to the extent that experiences in the NVA are represented as quintessentially male, even in literature and film by women themselves.¹¹ It would seem that military masculinities are viewed as unimportant for women's gender in or after the GDR, or at least that the NVA is not one of the institutions through which femininity was constructed. Yet the case of Annett, like Doris in *Härtetest* or Friederike in *Es gibt kein Niemandsland*, positions women as instrumental in defining masculinity in the NVA and wider East German society. These examples suggest that the dependence of GDR institutions on certain masculine ideals could have profound effects on women's lives too.

Deutschland 83 depicts East German citizens involved with its institutions in a diverse range of ways, which frustrate the binaries that have often crept into scholarship on the GDR: conformity versus resistance, public versus private spheres. Its playful experimentation with genre points to the diversity of influences and styles in GDR culture, which requires us to move beyond linear narratives of development and change as a way of conceptualizing the GDR cultural sphere.¹² My investigation has taken in narratives and films that approach East Germany from many different perspectives. Even amongst the GDR-era texts representing an institution as normative as the NVA, works range from modernist film to slapstick comedy, from critical autofiction to normalizing socialist realist epic, often with contrasting works appearing within a few years of one another. The multiple means of using humour to represent the NVA are particularly instructive, from the light-heartedness of *Der Reserveheld* to the sinister elements of humorous sequences in *Ein Katzensprung* or *Zum Teufel mit Harbolla*. Even after reunification, films such as *Drei Stern rot* and *NVA* and texts such as *Neue Leben* use darker, ambivalent forms of humour. The more relaxed approach to humour in *Deutschland 83* and *Deutschland 86* suggests that engagements with East German military figures, as time passes, may lose their fraught relationship to the hardships of military service. Moreover, it allows the show to exist as thriller, drama and comedy all at once, performatively modelling a productive mix of styles that better accounts for the diversity of the GDR's cultural scene in the 1980s.

Deutschland 83 particularly engages in a play with genre by drawing on diverse references, from the barracks film and the spy film to the GDR retro comedy and the TV crime drama. In the texts I have analysed, the greatest differences fall among generic lines and all are acutely aware of the conventions of the genres to which they contribute. This observation is perhaps surprising, given the radical changes in the circumstances of production

and publication after 1990, but pre- and post-reunification narratives in fact share significant formal and thematic similarities. The most striking differences are between autobiographical and fictional works. Memoirs such as *Einstrich-Keinstrich* and *Hinterm Horizont allein* present themselves consciously as part of an engagement with memory, personal experience and the changing masculine identities of the author-protagonists. However, in many apparently fictional works, the line between fiction and autobiography is consciously blurred. Walter Flegel, Fuchs, Haußmann and Schulze position their novels and screenplays ambiguously and even playfully as autofictions, drawing on autobiographical material with various degrees of explicit and implicit fictionalization. Even more straightforwardly fictional works, such as *Härtetest*, *Drei Stern rot*, *An die Grenze* and *Der Turm*, draw on the military experiences of their writers and filmmakers, albeit usually without comment. Many of these texts exceed the conventions of their genres by drawing attention to the contingency of representations, not least in the archival narratives I discussed in Chapter 6. This concern with how memory and the past are mediated, and how such mediations are always imperfect and fraught, is a major theme of *Deutschland 83* and *Deutschland 86*, in which shots filmed as if from security cameras or through glass windows or doors foreground the film's mediating work.

Along with many other recent representations of East Germany, such as *Atomic Blonde* and especially *Bridge of Spies*, *Deutschland 83* revolves around the fortified inner-German border, with Martin's job as a border guard and his repeated border crossings. While the centrality of the inner-German border to representations of the GDR is a recent development, this interest dates back even before the border's fortification in 1961. Numerous films and literary texts depicted the border in the early 1960s, including most prominently *Julia lebt*, but from the mid 1960s, such works became very uncommon.¹³ However, *Zum Teufel mit Harbolla* shows that a fascination with the border remained and that some filmmakers found ways of responding to this interest – here, by setting the film before the border was fortified in 1961. The collapse of the GDR focused attention on its former border once again, with the widely televised fall of the Wall, the media frenzy around the border guard trials and controversies around the *Schießbefehl*. *Drei Stern rot* and *An die Grenze* are just two examples of post-reunification films that focus on the border, although their approach, as I discussed in Chapter 2, tends to elide the suffering of civilian victims at the border in favour of a focus on soldier victims. In other films and novels depicting the border since reunification, border guards become symbols of repression once again, suggesting that incorporating multiple perspectives and multiple forms of suffering at the border remains a difficult task.¹⁴ *Deutschland 83* sidesteps this problem, but only by removing all images of violence at the border

entirely. Only in *Deutschland 86*, with Marianne's death while trying to help the Fischers escape to West Berlin, does the series deal directly with violence against civilians at the border.

One effect of the growing focus on the GDR's border with the West is to signal an increasingly transnational approach to memories and representations of East Germany, which *Deutschland 83* foregrounds through Martin's mostly seamless transition from NVA to Bundeswehr. *Deutschland 86*, with its James Bond aesthetic and its moves between South Africa, Angola, Libya, France, the FRG and the GDR, explores the GDR in an even broader global context.¹⁵ Representations of the NVA, which tend to highlight both the specificity of GDR experience and the army's similarities with other armed forces, contribute to a more transnational understanding of the GDR. This study also has important resonances for the interdisciplinary study of military socialization, where representations are commonly overlooked, despite their centrality to how military ideals are created, received and challenged. Contemporary theories of military masculinities have often been neglected in the German context, with the notable exception of Andrew Bickford's anthropological work on the NVA.¹⁶ Analysis by Bickford, Paul Higate and others, particularly in Anglo-American contexts, has pluralized discussion of military masculinities, emphasizing the multifaceted nature of military ideals.¹⁷ Yet even in Higate's work the multiplicity of military gender hierarchies is described only with regard to either rank or occupation. The importance of marginalized masculinities in military training remains largely overlooked. The films and literature I have analysed insist on the importance of experiences of marginalization and vulnerability for soldiers' development. My discussion of bodily vulnerability even suggests the possibility for the vulnerability of individual bodies to unsettle, as well as be unsettled by, the physical demands of military service. Raz Yosef's work on the Israeli military has made a valuable contribution to these questions, but, like most explorations of marginalized masculinities in military environments, he too focuses on combat experience first and foremost.¹⁸ Focusing on training avoids the conclusion that marginalized aspects of masculinity only gain prominence in the extreme conditions of warfare. Instead, representations of GDR military service suggest that masculinities conventionally seen as marginalized are in fact central to military training environments. The diverse range of embodied masculinities in military organizations must be analysed in detail if we are to understand military training regimes and their long-lasting physical, psychological and emotional effects.

Just as *Deutschland 83* and other representations of East German soldiers draw on a wide range of techniques and ideas from scholarship on GDR history, film and literature, studies of the GDR also advance theoretical and conceptual debates in numerous ways. Theorists such as Slavoj Žižek have

called for a reassessment of popular understandings of violence, and the films I analysed in Chapter 2 show how visual representations of subjective violence play a crucial role in revealing more insidious, often invisible cultural and structural forces. Chapter 4 suggested new directions for research into post-reunification representations of the GDR, as scholars move away from restrictive debates over *Ostalgie*. Retro may offer insights into a wider subset of representations of the GDR and, more importantly, my analysis highlights continuities between GDR and post-reunification comedies that have been largely neglected. The texts I discussed in Chapter 5 suggest three approaches to the representation of shame at a time when the cultural significance of emotions is being debated across a range of disciplines, and Tellkamp's spatial metaphors in particular offer an innovative approach. Finally, Schulze's and Wolter's texts, when read together, suggest an interplay between the closeting of same-sex desire and the processes of archivization that influence our access to the past. The problems associated with queer archives continue to inspire debate, and these texts suggest that literary narratives can offer productive ways of representing queerness without neglecting or effacing the experience of suppression and closetedness. By placing vulnerable, theatrical, emotional and queer masculinities at their heart, these texts contribute to contemporary debates in literary studies and further afield by insisting on the centrality of marginalized masculinities across fields and disciplines.

Above all, the East German context is essential for understanding contemporary masculinity more broadly. The playful retro in *Deutschland 83* and its deliberate construction of an impression of 1980s 'pastness', to use Fredric Jameson's term once again, makes clear its interest in how these masculinities inform our contemporary world. Post-reunification films and literature continually reassess masculine identities in the GDR long after the NVA's dissolution and the discrediting of its ideals, showing the ongoing resonance of the East German context. Works such as *Drei Stern rot*, *Fassonschnitt* and *Einstrich-Keinstrich* explicitly dramatize the need to reinterpret past military experiences in order to articulate masculine identity in the present. The effect is sometimes to stabilize present-day masculinities through the act of narration, as in *Einstrich-Keinstrich*, but the reverse is equally true, with the twist at the end of *Drei Stern rot* destabilizing Christian's identity, his memories and the film's entire diegesis. Schulze's novel and Wolter's memoir are particularly explicit about the role of representations of military service in narrative constructions of identity in the present, but also about related questions regarding the validity of evidence and the mediation of experience through memory.

Numerous works point to the continued relevance of the GDR's repressive institutions for contemporary society, not least the epilogue to *Einstrich-Keinstrich*. Waehner describes being sought out in 1993 by his former Stasi

caseworkers, who in a remarkable and seemingly fantastical episode offer him a job with their new insurance company. They are still following Waehner's movements and describe their continued links with former Stasi colleagues.¹⁹ Antje Rávic Strubel's more recent novel, *Sturz der Tage in die Nacht* (*When Days Plunge into Night*, 2011), also presents the persistence of GDR power relations in post-reunification society using ex-Stasi figures, while Michael Sollorz's novel *Die Eignung* (*Fit*, 2008) describes a post-reunification criminal movement that perpetuates the masculinities and values of the NVA.²⁰ These works externalize the continued effect of GDR institutions on characters' identities by depicting interactions with representatives of extinct institutions. Writers and filmmakers thus continue to position themselves and their work in relation to GDR institutions as a way of understanding masculinity in the present.

Deutschland 83 and *Deutschland 86* suggest that conflicts between societal norms, institutional practice, and personal values and ideals exist in different forms in Western societies too, and they show how the GDR as a short-lived state now thirty years distant points to underacknowledged tensions in our own contemporary societies. The resignation and half-heartedness, even cynicism and scepticism, with which many characters approach military service in these novels and films repeatedly fail to protect new conscripts from the damaging effects of the NVA's constant threat of violence and its psychological and emotional impact. These representations show cynical interactions with institutions sustaining and upholding their ideals and structures, and profoundly influencing the identities and self-understanding of individuals. In the current political climate, thirty years after the GDR's collapse, but in another period of global political upheaval, East German masculinities are an instructive case study. However much distance we maintain from the state institutions that create and administrate damaging policies, and whether that distance be rhetorical, spatial or psychological, our everyday involvement with institutions at the lowest level can still bolster policies and ideals without concerted efforts to reveal the damage they cause.

I began by pointing to the centrality of idealized, muscular, 'spornosexual' masculinity in the second decade of the twenty-first century. The open objectification of the masculine body has recently served less to subvert the power of hegemonic masculinity than to bolster it at the expense of young people's mental health. It is therefore essential to improve our awareness of how ideals of masculinity work, how they circulate and how they affect the lives even of individuals who openly reject or cynically distance themselves from them. Returning to East Germany to understand its military masculinities and their ongoing effects on contemporary subjects can help us in this first step. Above all, we must centre our investigations on those masculinities that complicate and trouble images of masculine strength, autonomy or coherence. Changing

the focus of work in masculinity studies in this way allows us to understand masculinities in twentieth- and twenty-first-century culture in a manner that is sensitive to and respectful of individuals' complex embodied relationships to their own identities and the world.

Notes

1. The very few from boarding schools would be the only exceptions; see e.g. U. Mietzner, *Enteignung der Subjekte – Lehrer und Schule in der DDR: Eine Schule in Mecklenburg von 1945 bis zum Mauerbau* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1998).
2. Scholz, *Männlichkeit*, 189; Bald, 'Militärpolitische Restauration', 80.
3. Connell and Messerschmidt, 'Hegemonic Masculinity', 833.
4. Silverman, *Male Subjectivity*, 48.
5. See Decker, *Gewalt und Zärtlichkeit*; Eifler, "'Ewig unreif'"; M. Rogg, "'Filme von der Fahne'": Das Armeefilmstudio der Nationalen Volksarmee der DDR', in B. Chiari, Rogg and W. Schmidt (eds), *Krieg und Militär im Film des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Munich: Oldenbourg, 2003), 611–34; G. Wiechmann, "'Top Gun' in der DDR? Der Kalte Krieg und die NVA am Beispiel von 'Anflug Alpha 1'", in Chiari, Rogg and Schmidt, *Krieg und Militär*, 543–67.
6. Schulze, 'Tausend Geschichten', 25.
7. Nadolny and Sparschuh, *Putz- und Flickstunde*, 81.
8. See e.g. Jones, *Complicity, Censorship and Criticism*.
9. 'Die NVA-Frauen: Die Lebenswege dreier Soldatinnen der DDR', *Süddeutsche Zeitung TV*, VOX, 14 November 2009, 23.00.
10. See e.g. Emmendingen, Deutsches Tagebucharchiv, DTA 1350/056, diary of a trainee officer, 16 July–5 December 1990.
11. See e.g. K. Lange-Müller, 'Lebenslauf', in *Wehleid – wie im Leben: Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1986), 100–8; J. Schoch, 'Himmelfahrt', 'Schießübung' and 'Der Exot', in *Der Körper des Salamanders: Erzählungen* (Munich: Piper, 2001).
12. See Smith, 'Music, the GDR Military and the GDR Today'.
13. Wolfgram, 'Gendered Border Crossings', 164.
14. See e.g. Spielberg, *Bridge of Spies*; Leitch, *Atomic Blonde*.
15. This trend is mirrored in recent scholarship, e.g. S. Allan and S. Heiduschke (eds), *Re-imagining DEFA: East German Cinema in Its National and Transnational Contexts* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2016).
16. See e.g. Bickford, 'The Militarization of Masculinity'.
17. See Morgan, 'Theater of War'; Higate, *Military Masculinities*; Woodward and Winter, *Sexing the Soldier*.
18. See e.g. R. Yosef, 'Spectacles of Pain: Masculinity and the Masochistic Fantasy in Amos Gitai's *Kippur*', *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 24 (2005), 49–66.
19. Waehner, *Einstrich-Keinstrich*, 321–25.
20. A.R. Strubel, *Sturz der Tage in die Nacht* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2011); Sollorz, *Die Eignung*.