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‘It feels like you’re in Funderland’: An Ethnographic Study of the Performance of Masculinities in Youth Cafés

Thesis presented by

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School of Applied Social Studies

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Abbreviations

OMC – Office of the Minister for Children

OMCYA – Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs

NCO – National Children's Office

DCYA – Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Declaration

This is to certify that the work I am submitting is my own and has not been submitted for another degree, either at University College Cork or elsewhere. All external references and sources are clearly acknowledged and identified within the contents. I have read and understood the regulations of University College Cork concerning plagiarism.

…….

Robert Bolton

September, 2018

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Abstract

Using an ethnographic approach, this thesis explores how youth cafés act as objects and agents in the performance of young masculinities. Within the last ten years, youth cafés have emerged in the Irish context as a relatively new 'model of intervention' in working with young people. Youth cafés can generally be described as 'dedicated' meeting spaces were young people can relax and hang out, constituting a form of 'open access' provision, meaning that young people may access them regardless of their background. Within the UK and Ireland particularly, there has been a general deficit of research in relation to open access youth provision such as youth cafés and youth clubs and even less research employing an ethnographic approach. Furthermore, there has also been a dearth of research on the gendered dynamics of 'open access' youth settings. Ethnographic research on the performance of young masculinities is also lacking in the Irish context. By deploying an ethnographic approach involving participant observations over the course of six months in the Fusion and Retro youth cafés in the south of Ireland, this research explores a type of space not previously explored in relation to the performance of young masculinities.

The thesis further diversifies masculinities theorising by deploying a psychoanalytic expansion of Erving Goffman's dramaturgical perspective that is informed by broader masculinities theorising. The thesis shows how Goffman's work coupled with the ethnographic methodology is useful for understanding and capturing both the complex ways through which masculinities come into being through socially constructed performances and for elaborating on how social establishments themselves are mutually constitutive of and constituted by these performances. The thesis complicates studies which argue that open access provision such as youth cafés afford young people the opportunity 'just to be'. This implies that the masculine self is a given and possessed. Instead, the thesis argues that youth cafés constitute front stages for the performances of masculinities where much work is done by young men to 'be' and maintain this masculine self through 'impression management'. The thesis shows that despite the simple arrangement and purpose of youth cafés as spaces for 'hanging out', they are both spaces which are not neutral and where quite a lot is going on. Through face to face interaction in the spaces, gendered inequalities are reproduced thus, youth cafés constitute both 'micro-political' spaces. This is exemplified in the way in which

some young people privately contest the legitimacy of performances and how café workers act to explicitly and implicitly direct young men to ‘be’ or enact more egalitarian and considerate modes of being. The findings indicate that in youth café spaces the (gendered) self is built up, defended and open to question and change.

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Background

Employing a qualitative ethnographic methodology, this thesis explores how youth cafés act as objects and agents in the performance of young masculinities. "A youth café is generally understood as a dedicated, safe, relaxed, friendly and inclusive meeting space for young people, primarily ranging in age from 12-18 years" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 1) and can be described as a form of 'open access' provision, meaning that "a young person may access regardless of their background, needs or position in society" (Ritchie and Ord, 2017, p. 270). The impetus and idea for this thesis came in the context of research I was undertaking for a youth organisation in Ireland in 2014. My task was to develop a best practice guide for the youth café (though it was not referred to as a 'youth café') which had been in operation for several years. The organisation aimed to eventually develop an 'impact model'[1] for the youth café, which they did a couple of months after I had completed my report. During the research for this report I came across an article by Bowden and Lanigan (2011, p. 7) which explored young people's experiences of youth services in Dublin, Ireland. One quote from one young man stood out:

> it doesn't matter whether you're eh small, tall, squeaky voice ... just be yourself and no one will care or anything, but where on the road [outside of youth services] like, that's it you're gone ... ye have to be the hard man [out on the street].

This quote caught my attention. I had known little about the practice of 'youth work' despite having previously volunteered at a youth club for a couple of months with sixth class boys (12-13-year olds) and I did not realise how meaningful youth work services could be for young people.

The idea, implicit within the above quote, that young people could experience a relief from 'role' performances, lead me to develop a research proposal relating to youth cafés and the performance of young masculinities, but the rationale became more than

[1] 'Impact models' detail the specific paths by which a particular project or service impacts upon service users.

individual interest as it became clear there was a significant gap within the literature relating to the performance of masculinities in open access youth provision.

1.2 The Problem

This thesis aims to fill a gap within the literature relating to how young masculinities are performed within 'open access' youth settings, specifically, the settings of youth cafés. Within the last ten years, youth cafés have emerged in the Irish context as a new (in name at least, see Chapter Two next) 'model of intervention' (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 13) in working with young people. The development of youth cafés in Ireland can be largely attributed to the *National Recreation Policy for Young People* (Office of the Minister for Children [OMC], 2007, p. 2) which aims to "provide publicly funded recreational opportunities for young people between the ages of 12 and 18". The development of this policy involved a consultation process (NCO, 2004; OMC, 2006) and a commissioned research study (de Róiste and Dineen, 2005) with young people aged 12 to 19 years. One of the key findings of both this commissioned research and the consultation process was that young people wanted more facilities to enable them to "hang out with their friends" (de Róiste and Dineen, 2005; OMC, 2006, p. 29). The *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007, p. 70) proposed that "dedicated youth cafés should be provided on a phased basis, particularly in areas where there are high concentrations of young people between the ages of 12-18". Three subsequent waves of capital funding in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013 enabled the development of youth cafés and as of 2015, Forkan *et al* (2015) estimate that there are more than 190 cafés in operation across Ireland.

Academic research on youth cafés and 'open access' youth provision generally has been limited, particularly in the Irish context. Two undergraduate dissertations have explored the perceived benefits of youth cafés from the point of view of young people (Foley, 2014; O' Shea, 2012) and one dissertation has focused on how youth workers and volunteers construct their practice in a youth café setting (McMahon, 2013). The most significant research to date is Forkan *et al's* (2015; see also Brady *et al* 2017; Moran *et al* 2018) *operational profile and exploration of the perceived benefits of the youth café model in Ireland*, which was commissioned by the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs (OMCYA). The 'profile' recommended that "an

ethnographic study with a small group of young people attending a café" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 56) should be undertaken to gain a more detailed insight into the impact of youth cafés on the lives of young people.

Indeed, within the Irish context, research which employs the ethnographic methodology within youth work settings is lacking. Bowden and Lanigan's (2011) study as mentioned, deployed a multi-methods approach consisting of four weeks of participant observation, interviews with key informants and an online self-completion questionnaire for young people. In the focus groups conducted with young people, the authors report how some young people articulated how, in youth work settings, they felt relieved from "role performance, postures and putting on a face" (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011, p. 7). McGrath (2012) also used a mixed methods approach to seek to understand the role Foróige's[2] youth clubs may play in contributing to youth development. The survey showed that young people reported experiencing a positive change in a number of measures, such as the feeling of being part of a community. In the focus group discussions some young people also reported how they experienced a growth in confidence from being involved in a youth club.

In the UK context, Ritchie and Ord's (2017) small-scale practitioner research study explored the experiences of young people within one open access youth club using focus groups. They found that the youth club "caters for a variety of diverse needs" for young people such as providing the need for association, 'acceptance' and a sense of connectedness (Ritchie and Ord, 2017, p. 278). Coburn's (2012) ethnographic case study approach in the UK examined how young people experience and perceive equality within the multiple spaces of a youth centre. She found that although young people experienced equality within the centre, they did not experience it at all times.

This thesis is particularly concerned with youth café spaces from the perspective of the performance of masculinities and the domain of spatiality. In the past, the discipline of geography was criticised for "seeing the world from the perspective of men" (Hopkins and Noble, 2009, p. 811) and not from "the experience of men *as men*" (Jackson, 1991, p. 209). A number of special issues (see Hopkins and Noble, 2009) and edited collections (see Gorman-Murray, 2014; van Hoven and Hörschelmann, 2005) have sought to remedy this. Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) re-formulation

[2] Foroige is an Irish youth organisation.

of hegemonic masculinity[3] for example, notably included an explicit attention to the geography of masculinities. They argue that hegemonic masculinity could be analysed at the global level, involving analysis of "world politics and transnational business" amongst others; the regional level, "at the level of the nation state" and the local level "in the arenas of face-to-face interaction" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 849). This thesis addresses a gap within the masculinities research at this 'local level'. As Ward (2013, p. 6) argues "young men's lives are always located in specific localities, times and places" and settings. Research has shown that masculine identities are spatialised in that they are mutually constitutive of and constituted by space (Hopkins and Noble, 2009) and formed at various construction sites such as schools (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Pascoe, 2007; Willis, 1977), homes (Gorman-Murray, 2008) and football clubs and streets (Curtin and Linehan, 2002). As Curtin and Linehan (2002, p. 65) further elaborate:

> from the classroom to the home, teenage boys negotiate their self-concepts and gender identities, changing their performance of masculinity depending on the places and spaces that they inhabit from one moment to the next.

The question of how masculinities are performed within open access youth provision constitutes a gap within the literature. The closest study which addresses this gap is Vicky Plows's (2010) PhD research in the UK context. Plows (2010) deployed an ethnographic methodology to contribute toward a contextual understanding of 'challenging interactions' as a social phenomenon within a youth club setting on young people aged from 11 to 14 years. Although the study was not specifically focused on masculinities, she found much evidence of gendered sexist humour on the part of the boys[4]. She proposed that further research could examine the 'gender dimension' of 'challenging interactions' within an open access setting. This thesis does not specifically focus on the 'gender dimension' to 'challenging interactions' but what Plows's (2010) research indicates is that open access youth provision may be spaces where gender is performed and negotiated.

[3] This refers to an idealised form of masculinity that is legitimated through consent and works to (re)produce unequal gender relations (see Connell, 1987, 1995).
[4] 'Boys' is Plows's (2010) construction. For the purposes of this thesis I use the terms 'young men' and 'young women'.

The *Beyond Male Role Models* (Robb *et al* 2015) report specifically addressed the construction of masculinities in the context of young men aged 13-25, who use support services in the UK context. The main aim of the study was to explore the extent to which gender is important in building relationships with young men who engaged with these support services. In some cases, it was found that place and locality had a notable effect on young men's transition to adulthood. The report "found that local expectations of what it means to be a man were key to understanding young men's masculine identities" (Robb *et al* 2015, p. 15). The young men who were engaged with services were embedded in local cultures of masculinity that "acted as a default reference point" in constructing and negotiating their identities" (Robb *et al* 2015, p. 15). Participants reported that within their local areas, they had to "act in a certain way and just try to impress people, try to stand up, don't be a pussy" (Robb *et al* 2015, p. 16). The consequence of failing to present an aggressive masculinity in public was put bluntly by another participant: "You are going to get chewed up" (Robb *et al* 2015, p. 16). In the study, youth clubs were mentioned as one of these support services which enabled young men to come into contact with a variety of support workers and other services, but youth clubs were not the specific focus of attention in this study.

Similarly, within other studies which have focused on the performance and construction of masculinities (Back; 1993; James, 2012; le Grand, 2010; Robb *et al* 2015; Wight, 1994), the youth clubs mentioned in these studies are discussed and referred to in peripheral terms. Gaetz's (1992) research in Ballinaclasha in the city of Cork in the south of Ireland for example, focused on problematizing the terms 'community' and 'youth' as homogeneous concepts. For Gaetz (1992, p. 106), due to the differing vantage points and needs of the 'advantaged', 'mainstream' and 'disadvantaged' young people, the term 'community development' homogenizes "the nature of youth problems…what youth needs are…the appropriateness of the services that presently exist, and those that must be provided in the future". Gaetz (1992) deployed an ethnographic approach and worked within a drop-in centre for unemployed youth over the course of a year. He drew particular attention to disadvantaged young men, but again, the drop-in centre and its relation to performances of masculinity was not the focus of the study. In sum, what is common about these studies is the way in which the youth clubs or drop-in centres mentioned were used as a convenient means to conduct observations and develop rapport with

young people. How these types of spaces were bound up with performances of masculinity themselves were not directly addressed.

Research on young masculinities outside of youth work settings in the Irish context has also been lacking, especially research that deploys an ethnographic methodology. Curtin and Linehan for example (2002) used focus groups to explore how young men (15-16 years old) maintain a gendered sense of place. Ging (2005) also used focus groups to examine young men's media consumption and reception of a range of media texts such as magazines and films. Ging (2005) argues that media texts act as a 'manual for masculinity' but this is not in the form of a 'direct effect model' whereby young men passively accepted meanings. Rather, young men were shown to be 'multiliterate' and critical of normative hegemonic masculinity portrayed in these texts.

Johnston and Morrison (2007) interviewed young men to explore how masculine norms of expectation impacted on their presentation of self. Barnes (2007) on the other hand, employed a classroom-based case study approach to explore the material and lived culture of young working-class men in the south of Ireland in the context of their engagement with the *Exploring Masculinities Programme*. The programme aimed to deconstruct normative conceptions of masculinity, but for Barnes (2007, p. 370), the programme content represented too much of a gap between the lived culture and identities of the young men and thus, the young men resisted it, believing that it blamed "everything on them". Barnes (2007) argued that for the programme to be successful, it must engage with young men by acknowledging the importance of youth culture and appeal to their cultural competencies and their familiarities with particular media.

In sum, this thesis contributes more broadly to this relatively small but significant literature on Irish masculinities by exploring the contemporary construction and performance of young masculinities in youth café spaces using a methodology that has been less applied in the Irish context.

1.3 Research Aim and Questions

This thesis contributes to the broader masculinities and youth work literature by exploring a type of setting previously neglected - that of the open access provision of

two youth cafés. Crucially, this research is not about using the youth café spaces as a convenient means to explore the performance of masculinities. Rather, the study is concerned with how the spaces of the youth cafés themselves are mutually constitutive of and constituted by the performance of masculinities. In other words, youth cafés are not considered as mere backdrops, empty vessels or neutral 'containers' for these performances (Allen, 2013; Massey, 1994; O' Donoghue, 2007). Such an approach neglects how different settings themselves can be bound up in the reproduction of gender inequalities. Indeed, I argue that even seemingly simply recreational hang out spaces such as youth cafés are no less implicated in these dynamics, hence, I ask:

- How do youth cafés act as objects and agents in the performance of young masculinities?
- How are masculinities performed and negotiated with youth workers, immediate peers and other young people within youth café spaces?
- What are young people's and café workers' experiences of the café spaces and how might these experiences relate to the performance of young masculinities within the spaces?

As I mentioned, Forkan *et al* (2015) have called for an ethnographic approach to be employed to enrich our knowledge base of youth café settings in the Irish context. In response, the research for this thesis deployed an ethnographic methodology for use in the Fusion[5] and Retro youth cafés in the south of Ireland. Over the course of six months, I worked in both cafés as a volunteer and conducted over six months of overt participant observations. I also undertook nine semi-structured interviews and one pair interview with young people, four semi-structured interviews with paid youth workers and one interview with a café volunteer.

Given the increasing emphasis placed on hard outcomes and targeted interventions with young people within broader youth policy discourses (de St Croix, 2018; Kiely and Meade, 2018), the thesis is also a timely contribution to debates (see Ritchie and Ord, 2017; Robertson, 2005) as to the value of both open access provision and qualitative research in exploring young people's experiences (Ritchie and Ord, 2017).

[5] The names of the cafés have been changed to ensure anonymity.

My theoretical approach is based on Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1967) dramaturgical perspective. As far as I can tell, this thesis is the first to employ, in conjunction with an ethnographic methodology, this 'psychoanalytically orientated symbolic interactionist' approach (Turner, 2013). The use of this approach further diversifies the increasing heterogeneity of masculinities theorising (Beasley, 2012). Goffman's (1959, 1966, 1967) perspective employs metaphors of the stage to describe the techniques which individuals employ to control the 'impression' and image of self which others form of them. Goffman's perspective is useful for understanding how masculinities come into being based on socially constructed performances that are "intentionally or unwittingly employed" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32) to maintain homosocial bonds with others (Kimmel, 1994; Scheff, 2006).

The thesis highlights the usefulness of Goffman's spatially sensitive perspective both for analysing both the "fine-grained production of masculinities (and femininities) as configurations of practice" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 840) as they occur within the two micro spaces of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés and how these performances are bound up with the café spaces themselves. Overall, this approach highlights how the multiple contingencies of the youth café spaces both enable the performances of multiple masculinities and how they are also constituted by these performances

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

Chapter Two - The Development of Youth Cafés in Ireland

The aim of this chapter is to provide an account of the development of the 'youth café model' within the Irish context from the late 1990s up to the present period. The chapter also contextualises this development with reference to the 'youth club' model of provision and to broader trends in relation to youth policy making.

Chapter Three - Theorising Masculinities

This chapter has two aims. First, it situates this thesis within the broader areas of the 'sociology of masculinity' and the spatiality of masculinities. I outline some of the key

trajectories within the sociology of masculinity which have occurred over three 'waves' of theorising and I give an overview of key studies which have highlighted how masculinities are 'emplaced'. In the second section I develop a theoretical approach that constitutes a psychoanalytically orientated interactionist perspective based on Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1967) dramaturgical framework. Goffman's work emphasises how masculinities come into being based on socially constructed performances and is a spatially sensitive approach in that it considers how the immediate ecological environment mediate these performances. I also suggest that Goffman's (1959, 1967) work is useful as a 'thinking tool' as it allows us to think about what kind of images of self can be imputed to performers at any one time.

Chapter Four - The Ethnographic Methodology

This chapter elucidates the ethnographic methodological approach adopted for this study. It first describes the philosophical underpinnings of the research, one which is consistent with the interactionist theoretical approach employed. I also discuss and address the question of reflexivity, which I imbue throughout the thesis. I explain why I chose to employ an ethnographic methodology. I outline my ethical protocol, describe my entry to the field and discuss the method of data collection. Finally, I elaborate on the process of data analysis employed.

Chapter Five - Entering the Cafés

This chapter introduces the sites of Fusion and Retro youth cafés. In the first section of the chapter, I provide an operational profile of each café. I contextualise both cafés within the broader communities in which they are located, provide a history of the cafés and I classify them according Forkan *et al's* (2015) typology of youth cafés. This helps to locate the cafés within the context of developments within broader youth policy in Ireland. Finally, I describe the layout of each café aided with a visual drawing.

In the second half of the chapter I introduce my entry to both the Fusion and Retro cafés respectively. I provide an overview of the general day to day dynamics of each

café. Following this, I provide a biography of the 'key players' within each café. I conclude the chapter by using Goffman's (1959, 1966, 1967) perspective to make some general points about the settings of the café spaces.

Chapter Six - "I'm only having a laugh": Humour in the Performance of Masculinities

The chapter offers a contrast with what Barnes (2012, p. 239) has called the "long history of theorising the role of *school*boy humour" [my emphasis]. The chapter explores how multiple regimes of humour were performed within the relatively less institutional and regulated sites of the youth cafés in comparison to schooling contexts. In this chapter, I define humour in a general sense to describe what performers in the Fusion and Retro youth cafés *intended* to be humorous.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In each, I explore how masculinities are performed and constructed through humour and I also ask what constitutes particular performances as humorous. The first section explores humorous performances that were generally located within the immediate context of peer interactions and between young people and youth workers. The second section of the chapter continues with the theme of humour in relation to its role in constructing masculinity. It shows how young men use the norms that café workers attempt to uphold within the cafés, to construct heterosexual and daring images of self. In this chapter, I coin the terms 'humorous improprieties', 'humour bombing' and 'pride spirals' to explain some of the dynamics which I observed.

Chapter Seven - Between Conflict and Intimacy

This chapter explores two contrasting dynamics which I observed at both youth cafés. The first section explores the gendered dynamics of 'humiliated fury' (Scheff, 1988) and (homophobic) bullying between young people. I explore how young men perform 'humiliated fury' when threats to masculine status cannot be prevented or 'corrected' by other markers of masculinity. I argue that 'humiliated fury' is the result of 'being ashamed of being ashamed' and is enacted both to (re)signify masculinity and to hide displays of vulnerable feelings. This section also explores the homophobic bullying of

Cian which occurred in the Fusion youth café. This homophobic bullying exemplifies how youth cafés are not neutral spaces but can comprise spaces where gender inequalities can be reproduced. The analysis in this section of chapter suggests a need for mechanisms to help café workers deal issues of homophobia and other issues relating to how inequalities may be (re)produced in youth café spaces.

The second section of the chapter explores the performance of softer masculinities, which included the enactment of physical tactility, emotional intimacy and social fluidity. In this section I draw upon Anderson's (2013) Inclusive Masculinity Theory to help account for these performances. I argue that there are methodological and theoretical problems with categorising young men who enacted these performances as 'inclusive'. Most young men who enacted softer performances were popular in their own peers groups and also enacted meanings pertaining to hegemonic masculinity.

Chapter Eight - The (Gendered) Experience of Youth Cafés

This chapter draws largely on the formal interviews to explore young people's and café worker's experiences of their respective youth cafés. The first section of the chapter focuses predominantly on the voices of the young people themselves. Young people describe many positive aspects of the cafés such as how the cafés provide a safe space away from bullying. Young people also express reservations about certain aspects of the cafés and related to the performance of masculinities.

The second section of the chapter draws upon the experiences of café workers. It shows how through a 'pedagogy of loose space', café workers attempt to teach young people basic skills and elicit a change in young people's 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, 1963). The section helps to contextualise some of the young people's reservations about the café spaces. Café workers strive to maintain a balance between letting young people 'be' themselves - which includes boisterous performances - and ensuring that the café space is safe and inclusive to all.

Chapter Nine - Conclusions

This final chapter ties the previous chapters together and provides a more explicit answer to the main questions of this thesis. I argue that youth cafés constitute stages for the performance of masculinity where young men work to 'be', maintain and defend a masculine image of self, using the multiple contingencies afforded by the café spaces. These performances inscribe the café spaces as not neutral, especially since the 'idea' about masculinity sometimes works to (re)produce inequalities and thus, work to constitute youth cafés as 'micropolitical' spaces. Performances of masculinity are privately and publicly contested by young people and café workers. In the youth café spaces, young people and café workers contest the legitimacy of some young men's performances, problematising accounts suggesting that youth cafés afford young people the ability "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44). At the same time, the chapter argues that youth café spaces allow the enactment of multiple masculinities and provide a space for 'association'. The chapter highlights the usefulness of an ethnographic approach coupled with Goffman's dramaturgical perspective for understanding the theatricality of masculinities and for advancing more nuanced understandings of open access youth provision such as youth cafés. I outline how some of the findings of this thesis have implications for wider policy, the practice of the youth café model and other youth work settings. Finally, I suggest some ideas for future research.

Chapter Two - The Development of Youth Cafés in Ireland

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to account for the development of the 'youth café model' (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 1) in Ireland and to contextualise the model in relation to both recent research (Brady *et al* 2017; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018) and broader trends in Irish youth policy. Thus, the chapter will help to contextualise how the Fusion and Retro youth cafés in this study situate in relation to broader Irish youth café provision (see Chapter Five).

A 'youth café' can be generally understood as a "dedicated, safe, relaxed, friendly and inclusive meeting space for young people, primarily ranging in age from 12-18 years" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 1) and is a form of 'open access' provision which a "young person may access regardless of their background, needs or position in society" (Ritchie and Ord, 2017, p. 270). Although there have been questions as to whether youth cafés constitute a *new* "model of intervention" (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 1; Powell *et al* 2010) in working with young people, what is generally new is the term 'youth café' itself, the explicit naming of 'youth cafés' in Irish government policy documents from 2007 onward (see Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2009; Department of Children and Youth Affairs [DYCA], 2014a; DCYA, 2015; OMC, 2007) and their considerable growth over the last ten years in the Irish context, owing to three rounds of capital funding provided in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013 (Forkan *et al* 2015). As of 2015, Forkan *et al* (2015) estimate that there are approximately 190 youth cafés in Ireland.

In the first section of this chapter, I focus on the development of the youth café model in Ireland from the late 1990s to 2006. Following this, I account for the development of youth cafés from the year 2007 onward, since this was the year in which the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) proposed that youth cafés should be developed on a phased basis. The second section of this chapter contextualises the development of youth cafés by first exploring how the youth café model contrasts with that of the youth club model. The section then situates the development of youth cafés within broader debates around the changing practice of youth work and the various

'governmental rationalities' (Kiely and Meade, 2018) which work to 'conduct' the practice of youth services.

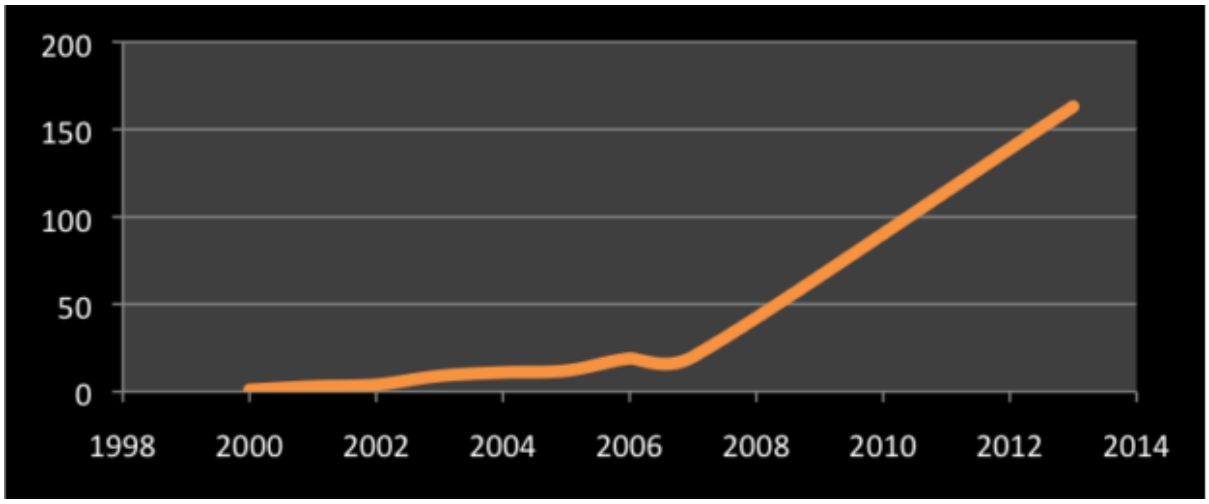
2.2 The Growth of Youth Cafés in Ireland

This section provides an account of how youth cafés have developed in Ireland. The first subsection explores the development of the model from the late 1990s to 2006. During this period there was no specific national government policy which recommended the development of youth cafés. Instead, youth cafés developed from the initiatives of local and regional actors. Following this, I explore how the café model developed from the period 2007 onwards. I provide a background to the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) which proposed the development of youth cafés and I give an indication of how the youth café model has developed up to the present period. Finally, I highlight some of the findings from a study (Forkan *et al* 2015; also Brady *et al* 2017; Moran *et al* 2018) commissioned by the OMCYA which explored the impact of the youth café initiative.

2.2.1 1990s - 2006: The Early Development of Youth Cafés in Ireland

As Figure 2.1 shows, the number of youth cafés grew significantly from the year 2007 onward and as of 2015, Forkan *et al* (2015) estimate that there ARE approximately 190 youth cafés in Ireland. This can be attributed to three rounds of capital funding in 2010, 2012 and 2013 in response to a proposal in the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) to develop youth cafés on a phased basis. Before 2007, youth cafés emerged out of local and regional actors' responses to localised and regional needs. The youth cafés which developed during this time were mainly underpinned by a health promotion approach.

Figure 2.1: Growth Rate of Youth Cafés in Ireland 2000 - 2013 (From Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 12)



For example, although Donnelly *et al's* (2009, cited in Forkan *et al* 2010a) survey suggested that only one youth café existed in Ireland in the year 2000, - the Gory Youth Needs Drop-In - *in name* there was another 'youth café' located in Denny Street Tralee, Co. Kerry (Department of Health and Children, 1999). The café originally aimed to enable young people who wanted to pursue a career in the Catering or Service Industry by enabling them to make and prepare budget food such as sandwiches for other young people who wanted to use the café (Department of Health and Children, 1999). It was thus, based on a health promotion approach, that of promoting healthy eating. Today the café functions primarily as a recreational and 'hang out' space (The Kerryman, 2017).

One of the most referenced youth cafés within the broader Irish policy and research literature (see Forkan *et al* 2010a; Lynch and McGrath, 2007; OMC, 2007) is 'The Gaf' youth café. Today, it is known as the 'Galway City Youth Café' and it "offers a variety of information and educational services, incorporating a range of prevention and education strategies and offers health advice and information" (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 80) such as "Drug & Alcohol awareness" (National University of Ireland Galway, 2017). The café was originally established in 2002 due to research conducted in the West of Ireland, which highlighted high rates of alcohol and drug abuse amongst young people. The 'Gaf' begun as "an adolescent health project for 14-20 years olds" and "emerged though the joint working between Child Care Services and Drug Prevention Services" (Fitzmaurice, 2005, p. 3). Its original name, 'The Gaf Health

Advice Café' or 'The Gaf Health Café', exemplifies its underpinning 'social health model' approach, "which incorporates a range of prevention and education strategies" such as "a sexual health programme" that aims "to delay the onset of early sexual activity" (Fitzmaurice, 2005, p. 3-4). Interestingly, the café is described as neither a universal nor targeted form of provision[6] but a mixture of both: "The Gaf is a universal service which is open to all young people within which there is targeted provision for those most at risk" (Fitzmaurice, 2005, p. 4).

McGrath and Lynch's (2007) *Where do you go when you go out?* report on an interesting regional based consultation process in East Cork, further shows the way in which the development of some youth cafés was driven by local and regional actors working with and through the consultation of young people. The report is based on a process initiated by the East Cork Area Development Ltd[7] (ECAD) in 2004, which aimed to identify the needs of young people in Cobh, Youghal and Midleton[8]. The ECAD Ltd is a regional actor "… formed in 1995 to address the economic, social, and educational issues faced by the [East Cork] area" and consists of a Management Board of local actors "drawn from the private, public, community and voluntary sectors" (McGrath and Lynch, 2007, p. 4). A total of 702 young people (aged 13-18 years) responded to McGrath and Lynch's (2007) survey to give their views on the provision of facilities in their local areas. The survey was distributed to several schools and youth projects in the East Cork area as part of the consultation process and it provided space for qualitative answers. These survey responses acted as "a means of starting a discussion" (McGrath and Lynch, 2007, p. 14) at a subsequent youth conference which took place in Midleton. The conference was focused on addressing the needs of young people in these areas. Overall, 577 (82.2 percent) young people reported that one of the things they like doing is 'hanging out' amongst many other activities and 555 (79.1 percent) young people reported that there were inadequate facilities for them in their respective towns.

What is interesting about the survey responses is that of those provided by young people in Youghal, half of them, who wanted a place to 'hang out', specifically used the term 'youth café' as a way of meeting this need, in contrast to the other areas where

[6] Universal provision refers to provision which is open to all young people whereas 'targeted provision' refers to services offered to specific groups of young people.
[7] It is now known as the South and East Cork Area Development Partnership Ltd.
[8] These are towns in East Cork.

respondents did not specifically name this type of facility. Research commissioned by Kildare Youth Services (Lalor and Baird, 2006) with the similar aim of identifying the needs of young people, also found that a small proportion of respondents mentioned 'youth friendly cafés' as one of a number of ways to address the issue of needing 'somewhere to go'. In terms of McGrath and Lynch's (2007) report, the responses from Youghal suggest that knowledge about the 'youth café' idea can be locally contextual and specific. As McGrath and Lynch (2007, p. 26) comment, "Clearly, youth cafés mean different things to different people in different areas. This depends on what young people know about the youth café idea". McGrath and Lynch (2007) argued that young people's knowledge about the youth café idea in Youghal may have been due to two factors. First, it was a youth worker (and not a teacher) who distributed the questionnaires. Second, the questionnaires were distributed around the same time that a Youth Action Project had begun in Youghal thus, as McGrath and Lynch (2007) argue, there may have been a local discourse at work in Youghal which promoted or advocated for such provision.

In April 2006, the ECAD and East Cork Youth Network organised a study visit of ten people comprising of youth workers and young people who subsequently spent three days examining the operation of youth cafés in the Highlands of Scotland, where the Prince's Trust had "successfully developed a network of youth cafés" (McGrath and Lynch, 2007, p. 32). The Prince's Trust is a youth charity that helps young people aged 11 to 30 years to access employment. The purpose of the trip was to help elicit ideas on how youth cafés could be developed in East Cork. In November of the same year, Bill Anderson, a manager from the Prince's Trust visited Youghal, where he provided more information on youth cafés to a gathering of young representatives from the different areas of East Cork.

A similar tour of the café model in other countries was also undertaken for the publication of the *Youth Café Feasibility Study for Cork City* (Cork City Partnership, 2007). As part of this study, a Cork group visited a youth café in Finland. The group also visited a café in Liverpool, which provided a service for homeless young people aged 18 and over. These points show that youth cafés are not specific to the Irish context. There are youth cafés in the UK and Australia for example (Moran *et al* 2018). A simple internet search reveals that the UK has many youth cafés and which have their own websites (see for example, Oban Youth Café, 2018; Switch Youth Café,

2018; Vision Youth Café, 2018). There is no database of youth cafés in the UK context however, and there has been no specific policy document or specific funding stream which provided for the development of youth cafés in the UK. The only documents available are *Youth Café Survival Guide* which was published by The Prince's Trust (2005) and a book which has detailed the history of the Edinburgh City Youth Café (Philip, 2015). Indeed, Moran *et al* (2018, p. 11; also Brady *et al* 2017) argue that the literature on youth cafés internationally is 'sparse' and that "further research into youth cafés internationally, is warranted".

In the Irish context, some youth cafés have also developed out of regional policy responses. For example, although the *Youth Homelessness Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2001) did not discuss youth cafés, youth cafés were developed out of one of the recommendations of the policy. The *Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2001) recommended that each Health Board[9] should develop a plan aimed at preventing youth homelessness. Subsequently, the South-Eastern Health Board's (SEHB) *Youth Homelessness Strategy* (2002) identified several 'gaps' in preventative services provided by the SEHB. One such gap related to the lack of youth services for 16-22 year olds and a lack of points of contact for this age group. The SEHB *Youth Homelessness Strategy* (2002, p. 18; also Lalor and Baird, 2006) highlighted that organised activities which take place in youth clubs do not attract this older age group, who instead prefer services and spaces which are "much more informal and unstructured". The report proposed that youth cafés should be established in the SEHB area since it was "The current thinking… that 'places to hang out - drop-in centres, youth cafés… have the best chance of success in terms of engaging with this age group" (SEHB, 2002, p. 18). The words 'current thinking' is noteworthy here because the SEHB *Youth Homeless Strategy* (2002) was published in the same year as 'The Gaf' youth café was established, but the *Strategy* does not mention 'The Gaf' specifically and does not expand on where exactly this 'current thinking' originated from or what it composed of. The *Strategy* (SEHB, 2002, p. 19) proposed that the role of the youth cafés would be to act as a point of contact for young people and would help promote a 'dovetailing' between services which would "prevent young people from falling out of the service net when they reach 18 years of age".

[9] Up until 2005, the Irish health service was managed by eleven regional health boards. The health service is now managed by the Health Service Executive.

A similar 'gap' in services was also identified by the *North Western Health Board Youth Homeless Strategy* (2002). The C.R.I.B. youth café in Sligo was subsequently developed since there "was a need for a service… aimed at young people who are isolated from mainstream health and youth services" (Bradley *et al* 2004, p. 65). The café, managed by Foróige, a leading national voluntary youth organisation (Foróige, 2018) is modelled on the successful Gaf youth café in Galway and is also underpinned by a Health Café approach consisting of - like 'The Gaf' - "targeted delivery within universal provision" (Bradley *et al* 2004, p. 66).[10]

This 'Health Café' approach has characterised the development of youth cafés under the management of Foróige. Foróige's annual reviews are interesting in that they show how the organisation gradually rolled out these health cafés throughout the 2000s. In the first two Annual Reviews (Foróige, 2004, 2005) for example, only the C.R.I.B Youth Health Café was mentioned. In the 2006 review, Foróige (p. 6) described their cafés as "centres that provide a safe place for young people to be themselves, meet friends, share concerns with each other and staff and access appropriate information and services to enable them to lead happy, healthy and connected lives". The review stated that as well as the C.R.I.B., Foróige managed two other cafés in Dublin, "both of which are funded by the Crisis Pregnancy Agency" (Foróige, 2006, p. 7). In 2006, Foróige (2007, p. 20) expanded its services "to meet the needs of young people in the 21st Century" and by the end of the year it operated six 'Youth Health Cafés'. The underpinning rationale of these cafés consisted of meeting the needs of young people through health-oriented approaches. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the *National Recreation Policy* (OMC) was published in 2007 and proposed that youth cafés should be developed on a phased basis. Interestingly, 2007 was also significant in terms of the development of youth café provision under the management of Foróige'. As the annual review for 2007 (Foróige, 2008, p. 33) states: "Foróige is playing a strong role in the development of Youth Cafés which are becoming a much sought-after response to the social and recreational needs of young people". From then on, each of Foróige's Annual Reviews profiled some of the youth cafés which it managed. The annual review for the year 2008 (Foróige, 2009, p. 16) for example,

[10] Foróige (2018) highlights that it works "with over 50 000 young people ages 10-18 each year through volunteer-led Clubs and staff-led Youth Projects".

reiterated that youth cafés are growing in Ireland and that "Young people and volunteers are responding enthusiastically" to this.

As the previous paragraphs have shown, youth cafés have been developed by different local and regional agencies due to several rationales. Outside of the local and regional agencies themselves, within a few policy documents during this period the need for open access youth provision such as youth clubs and cafés was mentioned in the context of addressing social issues such as drug and alcohol (mis)use. The theme common to these documents is the idea that designated recreation facilities have a role to play in reducing young people's drug and alcohol use. Both the 1996 and 1997 interim reports on the *Ministerial Task Force on Measures to Reduce the Demand for Drugs* (Ministerial Task Force on Measures to Reduce the Demand for Drugs) argued that most drug misuse takes place in areas where there are (amongst other factors) 'deficits' in recreational facilities for young people. Indeed, young people's alcohol (mis)use was linked to the issue of young people 'having nothing to do and nowhere to go'. This is not merely an adult viewpoint, as it has "long been argued by young people [themselves] that they drink because 'there is nothing else to do'" (OMC, 2008, p. 13; McGrath and Lynch, 2007; Williamson, 1997).

The National Children's Advisory Council's (2003) report was commissioned by the Minister of State with Responsibility for Children to provide further advice to the Minister on the issue of alcohol. The report discusses the Council's views on the 1st interim report on the *Strategic Task Force on Alcohol* (Strategic Task Force on Alcohol, 2002). The Advisory Council's (2003, p. 4) report argued that the 'most striking finding' is that "across Ireland… there is a dearth of alcohol free recreational and leisure facilities for young people". Young people, who were consulted for the report in the form of focus groups, recommended the provision of more alternative activities on Friday and Saturday nights and some mentioned that youth centres should be better equipped. Interestingly, some young people also reported a liking for "the café idea such as Eddie Rockets[11] with nice lighting and comfortable seats" (National Children's Advisory Council, 2003, p. 42).

The second *Strategic Task Force on Alcohol* (Strategic Task Force on Alcohol, 2004) report argued that on their own, such alcohol-free alternatives/venues are not effective,

[11] Eddie Rocket's is an Irish restaurant chain that is styled similar to 1950's American diners.

but must be combined with other community policy approaches. Nevertheless, the report cited 'The Gaf' youth café as an example (and model) for the kind of 'alcohol free venue' which the government should provide through capital funding as one of a number of ways to address young people's alcohol (mis)use (Strategic Task Force on Alcohol, 2004). This argument was also made by the 'Costello'[12] report (Department of Labour, 1984, p. 31) twenty years before, which proposed that youth clubs should be based in more "attractive premises… as part of a preventative strategy against alcohol abuse".

2.2.2 2007 - Present: The Recent Development of Youth Cafés

As the last section has highlighted, youth cafés emerged from a variety of locally perceived needs and were developed by different local and regional agencies and organisations. Overall, this early development was slow and gradual, with the discourse on the 'youth café' model being predominantly localised and regional, absent from national policy making. In contrast, both the discourse on the youth café 'model' and number of youth cafés grew considerably from 2007 onward as Figure 2.1 has shown. This is because the proposal contained in the *National Recreation Policy for Young People* (OMC, 2007) to roll out youth cafés on a phased basis, was fulfilled in the form of three rounds of capital funding provided in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013.

Although this *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) and the subsequent capital funding provided thereafter explain the immediate development of youth cafés, this policy development can be traced back to the *National Children's Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2000a). This strategy aimed to reflect the provisions of the 1989 UN Convention on the Rights of a Child, which Ireland ratified in 1992. Article 12 of the Convention outlines that children should have a say in matters which affect them. In keeping with this provision, the development of the *National Children's Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2000a) was aided by a consultation process involving 2,488 children and young people aged between 3-19 years (Department of

[12] The aim of this report was "To prepare for Government consideration recommendations for a National Youth Policy which would be aimed at assisting all young people to become self-reliant, responsible and active participants in society" (Department of Labour, 1984, p. 8).

Health and Children, 2000b) which the *National Children's Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2000a, p. 8) described as "a major new development in the formulation of government policy". Children and young people's views on "what Ireland is like as a place to grow up in" (2000b, p. 3) were expressed through emails, letters and discussion groups. Although the consultation found that children and young people felt that Ireland was a good place to live, the "most pressing issue raised" (Department of Health and Children, 2000a, p. 22) was the perceived lack of leisure and recreational facilities such as youth clubs and sports facilities.

The *National Children's Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2000a) made a number of proposals to address this issue. Goal Three of the *Strategy* (Department of Health and Children, 2000a, p. 44) proposed that "Children will Receive Quality Supports and Services to Promote All Aspects of their Development". Specifically, 'Objective D' of the goal outlined that "Children will have access to play, sport, recreation and cultural activities…" (Department of Health and Children, 2000a, p. 57) and proposed the development of dedicated national play and recreation policies to address this issue. This proposal was fulfilled in the publication of *Ready, Steady, Play!* (NCO, 2003), the recreation policy for children under 12 years and the *Teenspace: National Recreation Policy for Young People* (OMC, 2007) aged between 12 and 18.

The objective of the *Recreation Policy for Young People* (OMC, 2007, p. 2) was to "provide publicly funded recreational opportunities for young people between the ages of 12 and 18" years. The development of the policy involved a consultation process (NCO, 2004; OMC, 2006) and a commissioned research study (de Róiste and Dineen, 2005). De Róiste and Dineen's (2005) mixed methods study involved the completion of a survey of 2,260 young people across 51 schools in Ireland. Focus groups were used post-survey to further explore some of the themes arising out of the research while other focus groups were conducted with minority groups to ascertain their additional recreational needs. The survey found that 61 percent of young people reported that they hang around 'every day' or 'most days' and over 90 percent indicated that they enjoyed this activity. This finding was also echoed in the focus groups, where it was found that it was the 'greater freedom' as opposed to more structured activities and supervised places that made 'hanging out' attractive (deRóiste and Dineen, 2005). Consistent with previous research (Department of Health and

Children, 2000a; Lalor and Baird, 2006; McGrath and Lynch, 2007) however, 59 percent of young people felt that there was insufficient leisure provision for them within their localities.

The consultation process for the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) itself involved the distribution of a summary of a consultation document along with an accompanying response questionnaire (in 2005) to every school in the country (NCO, 2004). Respondents were asked about their thoughts on some of the aims and objectives outlined in the document for the development of the recreation policy. Nine hundred and forty people responded to this process, three-quarters of whom were under 18. A key finding was the perceived need for more recreational facilities, with "The most requested facility being "somewhere for young people to hang out with their friends" (de Roiste and Dineen, 2005; Lalor and Baird, 2006; OMC, 2006, p. 29; McGrath and Lynch, 2007) that "is legitimate in the eyes of their parents, their communities and the Gardai" (OMC, 2006, p. 27). Youth shelters, cafés and drop-in centres were amongst some of the ideas cited by respondents as potential solutions to this need. As mentioned in the previous subsection, the C.R.I.B. youth café in Sligo is modelled on 'The Galway City Youth Café', formally called 'The Gaf'. *The Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007, p. 62) also noted how "as a model" 'The Gaf' youth café "has the potential to be developed elsewhere". The policy also suggested that youth cafés can "… operate as different levels of service provision" in line with the needs of the local area and suggests that a café space "can be used to provide health and other information/education relevant to their needs" (OMC, 2007, p. 63).

The result of the commissioned research (de Róiste and Dineen, 2005) and the consultation process (NCO, 2004; OMC, 2006) informed a discussion in the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) on 'youth cafés' as a possible solution to young people's recreational needs. The policy briefly mentioned the existing provision of youth cafés in the UK, Australia and Ireland and it recommended that:

> Resources permitting and following a local needs assessment, dedicated youth cafés should be provided on a phased basis, particularly in areas where there are high concentrations of young people between the ages of 12-18. These youth cafés/drop-in centres should be introduced in consultation with young people (OMC, 2007, p. 70).

Furthermore, action 33 of the policy states that "A formal partnership should be entered into with other relevant State agencies to provide health and other relevant services/information in these settings" (OMC, 2007, p. 70).

Three subsequent waves of capital funding for the provision of youth cafés in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013 under the Youth Capital Funding scheme administered by Pobal[13] constituted the main accelerator of the growth in youth cafés since then. The OMCYA also commissioned research with the aim of contributing toward a policy foundation for youth cafés. This resulted in the publication of the *Youth Cafés in Ireland: A Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a) and the *Youth Café Toolkit: How to set up and run a youth café in Ireland* (Forkan *et al* 2010b).

One of the main objectives for the development of the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 2) is to ground "the 'youth café' idea in a conceptual base" and to develop some guiding principles which should underpin youth cafés. These seven guiding principles state that a youth café should enable the participation of young people, be safe and quality spaces, have a clear purpose, be inclusive and accessible, adopt a 'strengths-based approach' and be places that are sustainable and well-resourced (Forkan *et al* 2010a). Both the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a) and the *Youth Café Toolkit* (Forkan *et al* 2010b) are not only useful in terms of the helpful advice they offer, but also in the way they provide an insight into where youth cafés belong in terms of the broader spectrum of youth services in the Irish context. For example, Forkan *et al* (2010a) conceptualized youth cafés as a 'model of intervention' that could help expand young people's social networks, provide opportunities for development, cultivate resiliency and foster civic engagement. In the Request for Tender for the development of both guides, the OMCYA outlined three main types of youth café (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 2):

> Type 1 – A place or space to simply 'hang out' with friends, to chat, drink coffee or a soft drink, watch TV or movies, surf the Internet, etc.

[13] Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.

> Type 2 – All the above but also with the inclusion of entertainment or leisure services chosen by the young people themselves, together with information on State and local services of interest and relevance to young people.
>
> Type 3 – This is perhaps the ideal model and the one that should be aimed for in the medium to long term, where all the above activities and facilities are augmented by the actual provision of services targeted directly at young people. This can include education and training, healthcare (both physical and emotional) and direct targeted assistance.

In 2012, the OMCYA also commissioned a research study on youth café provision in Ireland. Forkan *et al's* (2015; further elaborated in Brady *et al* 2017; Moran *et al* 2018) subsequent *Operational profile and exploration of the perceived benefits of the youth café model in Ireland* aimed both to profile Irish youth café provision and to explore the perceived benefits of the youth café model. At the time of the research (2013), Forkan *et al* (2015) identified 163 cafés in existence. Postal questionnaires were sent to each of these cafés in order to build a national profile of youth café provision. The research also consisted of interviews with 102 young people from 10 youth cafés as well as 18 interviews with staff and volunteers from the same cafés. Telephone interviews were conducted with external stakeholders linked to each café and telephone interviews were also conducted with key national informants involved in child and youth policy. Since the 10 café managers were asked in advance to recruit young people for the research, the authors acknowledge the possible 'filtering' of participants, who may have been selected to only give positive views of their respective cafés.

Six core themes were identified in relation to the benefits that young people attributed to attending their respective youth cafés (Brady *et al* 2017; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018). Young people reported feeling a sense of social support both from the friendships they forged in the café spaces and through their trusting relationships with café workers. Relatedly, the cafés also helped them "relax and escape from stresses they may be experiencing in other areas of their lives" (Brady *et al* 2017, p. 6; Forkan *et al* 2015). Young people also reported that the café spaces also helped them feel a sense of belonging and community and helped them "curb their own drinking and drug-taking" (Brady *et al* 2017, p. 8) and develop new skills such as cooking and

computer coding (Brady *et al* 2017; Forkan *et al* 2015). Related to the general theme of identity which this thesis explores (see Chapter's Five to Nine), one important finding related to how "the concept of 'being yourself' emerged powerfully from [the] interviews" (Moran *et al* 2018, p. 6). One female interviewee saw her youth café as a 'mask-less' space where young people could express "their identity in whatever way they wished" (Moran *et al* 2018, p. 7), while some young people spoke of their social anxiety and how the café spaces helped them develop self-confidence (Moran *et al* 2018). These themes are consistent with similar research on youth settings and open access provision (see Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Coburn, 2012; Ritchie and Ord, 2017).

In terms of the future development of youth cafés, recently published policy documents suggest that there is an intention to continue developing the youth café model. The consultation for the *Better Outcomes Brighter Futures* (DCYA, 2014a) policy for example, found that young people wanted more safe spaces such as youth clubs and cafés to 'hang out'. As part of one of the main outcomes to ensure children and young people are 'active and healthy', the policy proposed that the government should "Continue to develop play and recreation spaces… from playgrounds to youth cafés…" (DCYA, 2014a, p. 58). Similarly, the *National Youth Strategy* (DCYA, 2015) also proposed to "Review youth café support and provision" to take into account Forkan *et al's* (2015) evaluation.

2.2.3 Summary

Up until 2007, there was a general discursive absence of the youth café 'model' in broader youth policy making. The first youth cafés before 2007 developed out of initiatives by local and regional actors in response to varying perceptions of need. The development of some youth cafés was also aided by tours and visits to other cafés within and outside of Ireland by actors interested in setting up this provision in Ireland. The second subsection highlighted how youth cafés grew considerably in number following three rounds of capital funding administered in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013. This funding fulfilled the proposal in the *National Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) to develop youth cafés on a phased basis. Government attention to the youth café model has also been exemplified through the publications of the *Best Practice*

Guide (Forkan *et al* 2010a), a *Toolkit* (Forkan *et al* 2010b) and a commissioned profile and evaluation of the youth café initiative (Forkan *et al* 2015). In the next section of this chapter, I further elaborate on what these developments mean by further contextualising and accounting for the development of the youth café model in the Irish context.

2.3 Contextualising the Development of Youth Cafés

The aim of this section is to deepen the discussion on the development of youth cafés by exploring some of the issues and debates raised by the development of the café model in the Irish context. Whereas the previous section offered a descriptive account of the development of the café model, this section contextualises the development of the youth café model both by exploring how it relates to the similar 'youth club' model and how it is located within the broader landscape of youth work service provision.

2.3.1 Just another 'buzz word'?

There have been questions raised as to whether the youth café model constitutes a *new* 'model of intervention' (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 1). Some interviewees in Powell *et al's* (2010) profile of the youth work sector in Ireland argued that the term 'youth café' is a 'buzz word' for provision which has always existed. Indeed, reflecting on the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007), McLoughlin (2008, p. 15) suggests that many would agree that youth cafés are the same as youth clubs and recommends that the 'focus' of what he sees to be the "new and cooler facility" of the youth café model is in keeping with the philosophy underpinning the youth club model. It is interesting that although the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007, p. 45) stated that "Youth clubs were identified by the majority of respondents to the public consultation [OMC, 2006] as an example of recreation that worked particularly well", the policy did not make further proposals in regard to the expansion of funding of youth clubs.

According to Powell *et al* (2012) youth clubs have been formed over the past seventy years in Ireland. In the UK context, they have existed since the early 1800s (Robertson, 2005). There are "different interpretations of what constitutes a youth club" (Breen, 2003, p. 16; Department of Labour, 1984). However, one of the defining features is

that they are a form of ‘open access’ provision in that that they are open to all young people (McGrath, 2012; Powell *et al* 2010; Ritchie and Ord, 2017; Robertson, 2005) and where “any young person is free to enter and leave of their own free will” (Ritchie and Ord, 2017, p. 270) which is consistent with the youth café model. Historically, a key element of the ‘youth club’ model however, has been its role in facilitating the practice of youth work (Robertson, 2005; Staunton, 1996) As Staunton (1996, p. 58) elaborates, the youth club model “is perhaps the oldest and most recognizable manifestation of youth work”.

‘Youth work’, it has been argued, is difficult to define (Kiely, 2009; O’hAodain, 2010a; Staunton, 1996). As a guiding definition however, it is generally composed of the ‘informal education’ of young people (Department of Education and Science, 2003; Hurley and Treacy, 1993; Jeffs and Smith, 2008; Powell *et al* 2012) or “as the personal, social and cultural development of young people that is offered as complementary to the formal education that they receive” (Powell *et al* 2012, p. 106). This informal education can take many forms to suit different ends (Kiely, 2009) as exemplified by the different theoretical ‘models’ of youth work (Hurley and Treacy, 1993; Kiely, 1996) and can be delivered through various ‘models’ of provision (Staunton, 1996).

Youth work "emerged out of a number of diverse traditions, each with their own very distinctive value stances..." (Kiely, 2009, p. 11; see Jeffs and Smith, 2002). Despite this diversity however, there has been and continues to be certain “high-minded or progressive values” (Kiely, 2009, p. 11) and ideals which the youth work sector has sought to underpin its practice. For example, it has sought to deliver a ‘progressive’ mode of informal education, characterised by the absence of a pre-packaged agenda that is set beforehand with pre-defined outcomes (Spence, 2004). Instead, the ideal is for youth work to be ‘young person centered’ (Kiely, 2009) meaning that the needs of young people should inform the process and not the needs of the agency, workers or funders. This is also referred to as “starting where young people are starting" (Davies, 2005, p. 11; Spence, 2004). Youth work is also generally based on the voluntary participation of young people and adults (Department of Education and Science, 2003; Jeffs and Smith, 2008; Jenkinson, 2000; Merton *et al* 2004; O'hAodain, 2010a). This ‘voluntary principle’ (Kiely, 2009, p. 23) means that young people should be free to engage with youth work services on their own accord and in their own time, “to freely

enter into relationships with youth workers and to end those relationships when they want" (Jeffs and Smith, 2008, p. 277). Trusting, respectful and egalitarian respectful relationships between young people and youth workers are also emphasised in youth work (Jeffs and Smith, 2008; Powell *et al* 2012). Finally, youth work provision is ideally 'universal', meaning that it is open to all young people.

Breen (2003) and Staunton (1996) characterise youth clubs as spaces where a variety of activities take place. Similarly, Forkan *et al's* profile (2015, pp. 23-24) shows that different youth cafés provide a variety of various recreational and educational activities. The principles of universal provision, volunteerism, participation and the fostering of egalitarian relationships between young people and youth workers, which underpin the idealised philosophy and principles of youth clubs are also congruent with the youth café model (see Forkan *et al* 2010b; Forkan *et al* 2015).

Although the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) was not a youth work policy per se, O'hAodain (2010b) and Stone (2007) both note that the youth work sector was an implicit stakeholder. Stone (2007, p. 100) argues for example that the policy provided an "opportunity to bring professionals from the statutory, community and youth work sectors… to listen to young people and plan for their ongoing and continued development". In their profile of the youth work sector in Ireland, Powell *et al* (2010) found that the majority of youth clubs in Ireland are affiliated to either Foróige or Youth Work Ireland. Similarly, Forkan *et al's* (2015) *operational profile* found that 101 youth cafés out of the 163 cafés they identified as part of their profiling, were affiliated to youth work organisations. Respondents in Powell *et al*'s (2010, p. 6) profile held "mixed views" as to whether the youth café model "actually constitutes youth work". Powell *et al's* (2010, 2012) profile was carried out, however, before the first round (2010) of capital funding was provided for youth cafés. A senior official from the OMCYA informed Powell *et al* (2012, p. 135) that the development of youth cafés would be guided in the future by youth work principles but not by a 'youth work perspective'. Forkan *et al* (2015) on the other hand, found that 148 out of 163 cafés reported being based on a 'youth work' model of practice and key national informants interviewed for the profile thought that youth cafés embody "the practices and principles of good youth work…"

There are three key differences between the youth club and youth café model. First, based on the findings of Forkan *et al* (2015), Brady *et al* (2017, p. 2) argue that "while youth participation and ownership is also important in youth work, it is considered an intrinsic element of the youth café model". Indeed, documents (see Forkan *et al* 2010a, 2010b; Forkan *et al* 2015; OMC, 2007, p. 129) relating to the provision of the café model place discursive emphasis on the importance of young people's active participation in youth cafés and exemplify Brady *et al's* (2017, p. 4) point that "the youth café model is [primarily] based on the principle of youth participation and ownership, emphasising the importance of young people playing an active role in the management and operations of the café".

Second, although "the youth café model can involve some structured activities, it is essentially about facilitating social interaction between young people in a relaxed, unstructured manner" (Brady *et al* 2017, p. 2). As Forkan *et al* (2015, p. 56) found, youth cafés are generally characterised by a "drop-in, less structured… *à la carte* approach to participation in activities and programmes…" This contrasts with the slightly more structured orientation of the youth club model where there is a feeling of having to join in on the activities in a youth club (Forkan *et al* 2015). Indeed, the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007, p. 44) passingly refers youth clubs as a form of 'structured recreation'. The literature on Irish (McGrath, 2012; McLoughlin, 2008) and UK based youth clubs (Clubs for Young People, 2009; Robertson, 2005) also indicates that youth clubs are more orientated towards 'programmes' and 'activities' rather than affording young people the freedom "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44). According to Forkan *et al* (2015) young people and other respondents indicated that one of the main appeal of youth cafés is their informal 'à la carte' approach, which is consistent with previous research (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; de Roiste and Dineen, 2005; Lalor and Baird, 2006; Powell *et al* 2010; South Eastern Health Board, 2002) which has shown that it is the lack of structure that makes youth provision attractive for older young people.

These points may explain why a 'youth café model' was proposed in the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) rather than a proposal to develop more youth clubs. Indeed, one of the issues which youth work has had to contend with, in the Irish and British context, is the retention of young people. For example, the *National Youth Work*

Development Plan (Department of Education and Science, 2003, p. 11) recognised the:

> challenge of attracting and sustaining the interest and involvement of young people, especially "older young people", given that: a) they too have more demands on their time and are more likely to be engaged both in formal education and some form of employment; b) there is a greater range of alternative and readily accessible leisure-time provision on offer than heretofore (much of it IT based).

Within the UK context for example, Roberts (2008, p. 187) highlights that during World War Two, the youth service "was a prominent provider of organised out-of-home leisure for young people". After the war however, cinema and football crowds became increasingly younger and the Albemarle Report[14] of 1960 concluded at the time "that traditional youth clubs" had become "unable to compete with the glitzy world of commerce" (Roberts, 2008, p. 188). What happened was that older teenagers felt that they had outgrown out clubs (Roberts, 2008) thus, changes in the way young people spend their time has meant that youth work has had to "come up with appropriate ways to stimulate the interest of older teenagers in particular" (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011, p. 5).

The third key difference between the youth club and youth café model relates to the level of service provision (see also 'Youth Café's as Government' below) provided by youth cafés. As mentioned, the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 2) and the *Youth Café Toolkit* (Forkan *et al* 2010b, p. 3) highlight how the OMCYA described three models of youth café provision. Forkan *et al* (2015, p. 20) have developed a new typology (see Table 2.1 below) however, based on the findings of their survey of youth café managers, though they caution that this typology "is an illustrative model rather than an exact specification" since "there is substantial variation in the services that youth cafés offer to young people" (also Moran *et al* 2018). Out of 72 café managers who responded to Forkan *et al's* (2015) survey, 37 percent described their cafés as (in Forkan *et al's* interpretation) 'medium scale' while 35 percent described them as 'large scale'. The 'small scale' youth café (Forkan *et al* 2015) model is closer to the youth

[14] This report provided an influential rationale and framework for youth work in England and Wales and was a key element in the subsequent funding for youth work.

club model in two ways. First, like youth clubs they are more likely to be based in rural areas and small towns than in cities (Forkan *et al* 2015). Second, like youth clubs (Breen, 2003), they are primarily volunteer led (Forkan *et al* 2015). In contrast, sources (Forkan *et al* 2015; Forkan et. al 2010b; Powell *et al* 2012) show that the 'medium' and 'large scale' youth cafés can have multi-dimensional services on offer and can make and receive referrals (Forkan *et al* 2015). In sum, what Forkan *et al's* profile (2015, p. 54) highlights is the "continuum of youth café provision". It also highlights how there may be other rationales which underpin the development and operation of some youth cafés rather than merely providing a space to 'hang out'.

Table 2.1: Youth Café Typology (From Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 20)

Operational dimensions	**Small-scale youth café**	**Medium-scale youth café**	**Large scale-youth café**
Opening hours	1-4 hours per week	Up to 8 hours per week	9 or more hours per week
Numbers of young people attending each week	Up to 30	Up to 60	Up to 100+ young people
Affiliation type	Standalone/ independent	Integrated into a larger service	Integrated into a larger service
Staffing	Volunteer-led, without paid staff	Mix of paid staff (often shared with other services in parent organisation) and volunteers	Dedicated youth café staff, shared staff and volunteers
Activities	Primarily recreational	Recreation and service provision	Recreation and service provision
Referrals	Less likely to make or receive referrals from other agencies	Makes and receives referrals from other agencies and parent organisation	Makes and receives referrals from other agencies and parent organisation
Location	Based in rural areas or small towns, with lower population densities of 12-18 year-olds	Based in medium and larger towns, with a mix of population densities	Based in 'county towns' and disadvantaged urban areas, with higher population densities of 12-18 year-olds
% of cafés in sample	**28%**	**37%**	**35%**

2.3.2 Youth Cafés as 'Government'?

Researchers have expressed uncertainty over the long-term development of the youth café model (Forkan *et al* 2015; O'hAodain, 2010b; Powell, *et al* 2012). In a similar way to youth work however, youth cafés too must be "understood in the context of the wider political, economic and social conditions" of the society in which they have emerged and of which they are part (Davies, no date, p. 2). Brady *et al* (2017, p. 2)

highlight that in the Irish context, the current youth policy framework is focused on ensuring "the best possible outcomes for children and young people" (see DCYA, 2014A, 2015) by adopting an ecological approach which emphasises the strengthening of the support system around young people.

Echoing trends in the UK context (Spence, 2004), there has been a recognition in the literature that youth work and youth services in the Irish context has been increasingly targeting specific groups of young people (Jenkinson, 2013; Kiely, 2009; McMahon, 2009; O'hAodain, 2010b; Scanlon *et al* 2011). Targeted provision contrasts with universal provision and can be defined as programmes for and services directed at "specific young people - particularly those identified as 'at risk' and/or with 'special needs'" (Scanlon *et al* 2011, p. 5) such as young people who are disadvantaged or at risk of, or involved with, crime or drug abuse (O'hAodain, 2010b). O'hAodain (2010b) argues that this has resulted in the youth work sector now constituting a two-tier provision, consisting of a mixture of universal/mainstream and targeted provision. This is supported by evidence from Powell *et al's* (2010) national study of youth work, which aimed to profile the youth work sector in Ireland. The survey of 662 youth groups showed that there is "a substantial differentiation on several aspects of youth work", "between 'mainstream' and 'targeted' youth work provision" (Powell *et al* 2010, p. 12).

Youth cafés are also implicated in this trend. Powell *et al* (2012) for example, take issue with the third 'type' (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 2) of youth café as it implies that youth cafés may eventually develop as a form of targeted provision. Furthermore, they also argue that the interagency potential of youth cafés, as discussed within the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a) may face the same criticism that has been directed at targeted projects, "namely that they have a compensatory role, making up for the shortcomings of various statutory services (Powell *et al* 2012, p. 135). The *National Drugs Strategy Interim Report* (Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, 2009) for example, recommended that youth cafés should be established as one preventative measure in areas where young people are at risk and suggested that youth cafés could offer educational activities on the issue of drugs and referral support. Similarly, in the public consultation for the production of the *Steering Group Report on a National Substance Misuse Strategy* (Department of Health, 2012), one 'key theme' which arose was the perceived importance of access to drug-free and alcohol

free recreational facilities, with the report recommending for the continued funding of youth cafés.

The application guidelines for the 2013 Youth Café's Capital Programme (DCYA 2013) state that the quality of an application for capital funding is appraised based on the extent to which the application is in line with the conceptual principles outlined within the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a) and *Youth Café Toolkit* (Forkan *et al* 2010b). The guidelines also state that both the *Guide* and *Toolkit* represent the aspirations of the DCYA in terms of the preferred way of operating a youth café (DCYA, 2013). The applicant must tick a box to indicate which 'type' the youth café constitutes. The application further states that "Priority will be given to areas which demonstrate the greatest needs in relation to deprivation, access to services, youth population and existing provision" (DYCA, 2013, p. 5). Given also that the OMCYA, in the Request for Tender for the development of the Toolkit and Best Practice outlined 'Type 3' as the "ideal model" (Forkan *et al* 2010b, p. 2), the preference for the 'Type 3' form of youth café is clear. Forkan *et al's* (2015) profile shows that out of 163 cafés they identified, 101 were located in areas 'marginally below average' (0 to -10) on the HP Deprivation Index[15]. Although the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) outlined that youth cafés should be provided in areas where there are 'high concentrations of young people', Forkan *et al* (2015) found that just under 40 percent of cafés were located in areas with the lowest youth population density.

'Value for money' is also deemed a marker of the quality of an application for the Youth Cafés Capital Programme (DCYA, 2013). This is consistent with the emphasis on 'value for money' or 'cost effectiveness' in broader youth policy (McMahon, 2009; see also DYCA, 2014b; Horwath Consulting Ireland and Matrix Knowledge Group, 2009; Indecon, 2012; Youth Work Ireland, 2011). Relatedly, a managerialist outcomes-driven approach also made its way into youth work (Jenkinson, 2013; Kiely, 2009; McMahon, 2009) in which "youth work organisations are being required to demonstrate the efficacy of their interventions" (Jenkinson, 2013, p. 12; Kiely, 2009; Rose, 2010). Government policy documents in relation to children and young people

[15]This "index provides a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses. A score is given to the area based on a national average of zero and ranging from approximately -40 (being the most disadvantaged) to +40 (being the most affluent)" (Pobal, 2010).

for example emphasis the need to develop a 'culture of accountability' (DCYA, 2014b, p. 38; DCYA, 2015; DCYA, 2014a; OMCYA, 2010; OMC, 2007).

Similarly, the *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 24) also argues that in terms of the future development of youth cafés, the "themes of outcomes and integration will have to be key". It also advises that the seven national service outcomes identified in *The Agenda for Children's Services* (Minister for Health and Children, 2007) should be a focus for the development of youth cafés. In this regard however, it does acknowledge that some youth cafés will have more of an effect on outcomes than others; that sexual and mental health outcomes for example, would be "more difficult to see" (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 24). The *Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a) advises that the qualitative aspect of any evaluation should seek to ascertain young people's opinions of their youth cafés and the possible skills they feel they have learned. It also argues however, that those undertaking a qualitative evaluation of a youth cafés should "realise that" young people themselves "are able to identify outcomes through their own experience with youth cafés" (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 65).

The work of Kiely and Meade (2018) and others (Besley, 2010; de St Croix, 2018; Kelly, 2001, 2003) situates these developments within the broader context of neoliberal and 'governmental rationalities'. Kiely and Meade (2018, p. 18) deploy a governmentality lens for example, to explore how Irish youth "policy discourses… seek to conduct young people towards desired behaviours and ways of being". By the subheading 'Youth Cafés as Government' therefore, I refer to the way in which youth cafés may constitute yet another way to direct young people's conduct toward specific ends. Within 'governmentality studies' the term 'Government' to put simply, refers to how behaviour is elicited to bring forth desired ends (Kiely and Meade, 2018). The term 'elicited' speaks to how this 'conduct' is not forced in the form of a repressive, top-down coercive manner. No youth project or organisation is required to deploy or manage a youth project, service or programme in a particular way. Rather 'governmental rationalities' (Kiely and Meade, 2018) work in the form of a feedback loop in which youth work organisations aim to fulfil the discursive aims deployed and favoured by *the* Government in order to secure funding from *the* Government (Kiely, 2009; Mc Mahon, 2009). These discourses include the 'targeting' of specific groups of young people, the fulfilment of hard 'outcomes', deploying and operating projects that are 'evidenced based' and which constitute 'value for money'. Indeed, what is

interesting about the development of the youth café model is that the provision of capital funding in the years 2010, 2012 and 2013 was made during a period of austerity. Moran *et al* (2018) report that cuts between the years 2008 and 2014 have amounted to a 31 percent cut to youth work services. Yet, during this time, Kiely and Meade (2018, p. 5) highlight that there was "intensification of concerns about the economies, impacts and effectiveness of public, community and youth services" during this time.

One aspect of these governmental discourses around 'accountability' and 'outcomes' relates to how young people use their free time to engage in 'hanging out'. As Allen and Harwell (1996) argue, young people's "hanging out is not always seen by adults as a meaningful" way to spend their time. The problem is both one of a perception that young people should be partaking in things more meaningful to their psychological development and also that of perceptions relating to being seen as troublesome. Malone (2002, p. 157) argues, for example, that within the context of young people's 'hanging out' in public spaces, young people have frequently been "positioned as intruders", as "threatening presences" (Evans, 2008, p. 1671) or a "polluting presence" (Matthews *et al* 2000, p. 281). As Lieberg (1995, p. 722) puts it:

> Just by appearing in large groups in public spaces or through their dress, ways of moving and ways of expressing things, teenagers attract attention and cause irritation.

For Besley (2010) this 'mistrust' has also been fuelled by media representations of young people. In his research of Irish media representations of young people, Devlin (2006, p. 47) concludes that "Irish news stories tend in the vast majority of cases to portray young people either as *being a problem* or as *having problems*…". In the focus group discussion for the study, young people also reported how they feel adults view them as trouble-makers or potential trouble-makers. It is thus, perhaps unsurprising that in the consultation process for the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007, p. 27), young people wanted "somewhere to hangout that is *legitimate* [my emphasis] in the eyes of their parents, their communities and the Gardai".

The *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 24) also advises that youth cafés should "reflect strong commitments to multidisciplinary and interagency working", particularly in areas which have "higher levels of need". The *Recreation Policy* (OMC,

2007) also proposed that services could also be offered in youth café spaces. Indeed, a senior official from the DCYA interviewed in Powell *et al's* (2012, p. 135) national study stated that the youth café model has emerged as "very much a multi-disciplinary model, a venue for all sorts of activities… Some youth cafés already have a very wide range of practitioners involved in them for example a nurse in health education". As sources show (Forkan *et al* 2015), youth café funding comes from a variety of sources, predominantly Government. Funding comes from the DCYA/Pobal, the Health Service Executive, local Country Councils, Drugs Task Forces and the Crisis Pregnancy Agency to name a few, indicating that interagency work is being conducted through café spaces.

Youth cafés which are funded by such agencies are likely to justify their existence partly through the problems which these agencies aim to alleviate. This has implications for the evaluation of youth cafés, as each funder can effectively determine what processes and outcomes are important (Forkan *et al* 2015). For Forkan *et al* (2015, p. 55), this is an important point as there is a risk that these sources of funding could in the future mean, that the "core features that distinguish youth cafés from other forms of provision will not be given priority". Consequently, Forkan *et al* (2015, p. 55) argue that "the introduction of a common evaluation framework for youth cafés in Ireland needs to be considered", but no such framework has of yet been developed.

2.3.3 Summary

This section has contextualised the youth café model in the Irish context. Questions have been raised as to the extent to which the 'youth café model' differs from the 'youth club' model of provision. Youth clubs have been key sites through which youth work has been practiced and there has also been ambivalence over where the practice of youth work situates within the youth café model of provision. Youth cafés are based on the principles of youth work and Forkan *et al* (2015) have found that the majority of youth cafés adhere to a youth work model. The ideal of participation is 'intrinsic' to the café model. Youth cafés are generally less structured than youth clubs which appeals to older young people and some youth cafés also have greater levels of service provision: they are involved in the making and receiving of referrals and they can have specific multi-dimensional services on offer.

This section also situated the development of youth cafés within broader trends in the youth work sector. Youth cafés have grown considerably during a period of austerity and within a broader context whereby particular 'governmental rationalities' (Kiely and Meade, 2018) increasingly pervade youth service provision. These rationalities include an emphasis on 'targeting' specific groups of young people, the fulfilment of hard 'outcomes', through 'evidence based' projects and services that offer 'value for money'. Although Forkan *et al's* (2015) profile showed a mix of café provision, there is a discursive preference (DCYA 2013; Forkan *et al* 2010a; 2010b) on allocating funding to cafés that are based in areas of deprivation, and to cafés which offer multi-dimensional services and interagency provision.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a contextual account of the development of youth cafés in Ireland. Youth cafés have developed in multifaceted ways for a multiplicity of reasons. While it was young people's wish to see more facilities where they could 'hang out' that lead the *Recreation Policy* (OMC, 2007) to propose the development of youth cafés on a phased basis, what has emerged is a model of open access provision that is hybrid, which facilitates interagency work and a multiplicity of services and activities. Some commentators have argued that universal open access provision such as youth clubs and cafés constitute the most ideal model of provision, within which to practice "the fundamentals of youth work itself" (McLoughlin, 2008, p. 15; Kiely, 2009; O'hAodain 2010b). As Kiely (2009, p. 30) argues, it may be precisely youth clubs "and other generic youth work initiatives" such as youth cafés themselves which may "offer the best opportunities for a relatively genuine engagement with young people and for a positive reassertion of youth work's core values".

This chapter has shown however, that youth cafés have grown in number during a time of cutbacks to youth services and where there is emphasis in broader youth policy on 'governmental rationalities' that place emphasis on 'targeting', 'outcomes', 'value for money' and 'evidence-based programmes' which conflict with youth work's core values (Kiely and Meade, 2018). This is evident in the way in which documents relating to youth cafés place discursive emphasis on the preference for youth cafés to be located in areas of deprivation (DYCA, 2013, p. 5), which facilitate interagency

work, multi-dimensional services (DYCA, 2013, Forkan *et al* 2010b, p. 2) and where "outcomes… will have to be key" (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 24). It is interesting for example that both the Galway City Youth Café (formally 'The Gaf') and the C.R.I.B youth cafés are described as targeted services within universal provision. It suggests that the hybridity of the model enables a multiplicity of actors to fulfil their aims, objectives, and in the case of young people, their wishes and needs. Nevertheless, Forkan *et al's* (2015, p. 54) profile has found that there is a "continuum of youth café provision" in Ireland. This chapter helps to contextualise and situate how the Fusion and Retro youth cafés generally relate to these developments (see Chapter Five especially). It would be the object of another ethnographic study however, to focus more specifically both on the extent to which 'youth work' and these 'governmental rationalities' are experienced (or not) and enacted in practice in youth café contexts.

Chapter Three - Theorising Masculinities

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is divided into two main sections, containing two further subsections in each. The purpose of the chapter is to situate this thesis within the broader 'sociology of masculinity' and to develop a theoretical approach as a lens for interpreting the fieldwork data. In section one, I first give a broad outline of the 'sociology of masculinity', which is generally defined as the critical study of men's practices and values (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001). This outline is achieved by exploring the three theoretical waves that have occurred within this sociology (Hearn *et al* 2012; Whitehead, 2002) and some of the key concepts and ideas that have informed masculinities theorising. In the subsection following, I review studies which have explored how masculinities are bound up with spatiality as this thesis is also concerned with the how the spaces of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés are mutually constitutive of and constituted by the performance of masculinities.

The second section of this chapter attends to developing a specific theoretical approach for this thesis that is suitable for analysing the performance of masculinities within the micro spaces of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. Within both subsections of this section, I theorise masculinities using a psychoanalytically orientated interactionist perspective based on Scheff's (1988, 1994 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1967) dramaturgical perspective.

3.2 The Sociology of Masculinity

The first subsection of this section explores some of the key concepts and ideas that have informed masculinities theorising. It traces the general development of masculinities theorising over three waves, with the current wave characterised by "diversity and critique" (Hearn *et al* 2012, p. 7). I do not claim this review to be exhaustive, but it will help to set the general scene and situate the interactionist approach I develop in the second section of this chapter. 'Gender' and 'masculinity' however, are broad categories with intersect with multiple sociological domains. As I highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, this thesis is also concerned with domain

of spatiality, which considers how different spaces are implicated in the performance of masculinities thus, the second part of this section reviews the literature on the spatiality of masculinities. Since this thesis is concerned with the performance of masculinities within the micro spaces of two youth cafés, the studies reviewed are those which pertain to what Connell and Messerschmitt (2005, p. 849) refer to as the 'local' level of analysis, which examines how masculinities are performed and "constructed in the arenas of face-to-face interaction of families, organizations, and immediate communities, as typically found in ethnographic and life-history research".

3.2.1 Masculinities Theorising - A Review

The 'sociology of masculinity' generally entails the "critical study of men, their behaviours, practices, values and perspectives" (Whitehead and Barrett, 2001, p. 14). It holds that masculinity (and gender) is a social construction, rather than something that is "innate, residing in the particular biological composition of the human male" (Kimmel, 1994, p. 119), exemplified through popular discourses such as the phrase 'boys will be boys' (Kimmel, 1994). This essentialist and biological view of gender came to be challenged through 'sex role' theorising, which constituted the first wave of masculinities theorising. These 'role theories' generally argued that people are expected to live up to the expectations of the social position which they occupy, expectations which are enforced through sanctioning (David and Brannon, 1976). As a structural concept, the idea of the 'role' was developed during the 1930s and was applied to questions of gender (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985). Much of this theorising was based on women's sex/gender roles but the 1970s saw a burgeoning of 'sex/gender role' research in relation to men (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985), exemplified in texts such as David and Brannon's (1976) *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority: The Male Sex Role*. These 'sex/gender role' theories[16] came to be extensively criticised (see Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Connell, 1979) on numerous grounds. Two of these criticisms were that they could not account for how and why change happens between and within genders and that they neglected the issue of power and domination.

[16] Plural being that there are many variations of the 'sex role' approach in theorising gender (Connell, 1987).

I argue (as do Hearn *et al* 2012) that the second wave of research on men and masculinities was established in the 1980s when more nuance and complexity was introduced into debates about sexuality and gender. In broader debates around gender theorising, 'gender' itself was conceptualised as the "activity of managing situated conduct in light of normative conceptions of attributes appropriate for one's sex category" (West and Zimmerman, 1987, p. 127). In contrast, 'sex' or 'sex category' (Goffman, 1977; West and Zimmerman, 1987) was argued to be a pregiven biological fact, with 'gender' constituting "the cultural inscription of meaning on a pregiven sex" (Butler, 1990, p. 10).

Within these broader debates around gender and sexuality (for example Rubin, 1984), Carrigan, Connell and Lee's (1985) article *Toward a New Sociology of Masculinity* argued that a more nuanced perspective was required in masculinities theorising. The resulting framework developed by Connell (1987, 1995) has been very influential in the field of men and masculinities (Connell and Messerschmitt, 2005). Connell (1987, 1995) argued that there exists a consent-maintaining, but contestable, culturally exalted form of masculinity called 'hegemonic masculinity', defined as a "configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 77).

Connell (1995) argued that 'hegemonic masculinity' existed alongside the three other subject positions of 'complicit', 'subordinate' and 'marginalised' masculinities and that few men actually embody hegemonic masculinity. Indeed, Connell (1995) argued that there are 'multiple masculinities' which intersect with classed and racial identities (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Hopkins and Noble, 2009). The key point however, is that hegemonic masculinity has been conceptualised as an ideal which defines the standard by which boys and men measure themselves against (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Goffman, 1963) but an ideal in which 'proof' is constantly required. In other words, masculinity is a 'performance' or an accomplishment (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; West and Zimmerman, 1987). Performances or actions do not express masculinity but create an *impression* or image of it.

One important idea developed within gender theorising is the idea that masculinity should be understood as *relational* or that it is constructed through sameness and

difference with others (Connell, 1995; Hopkins and Noble; 2009). In other words, to be 'masculine' is also not to be 'feminine'. This is not merely difference in the sense of being 'different' from other people yet equally esteemed. Rather, it is a vertical difference of debasing where women and gay men are positioned as 'other' and of lesser value (Kimmel, 1994). In other words, ideals of hegemonic masculinity are held in higher esteem and privilege against meanings associated with "girls/women and non-macho boys/men" (Epstein, 1997, p. 113; Bird, 1996; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Renold, 2004; Stoudt, 2006; Swain, 2006). Although what gets coded as masculine/feminine is fluid (Mac an Ghaill, 1994), the central exalted ideal which has been consistently shown in research on boys and men is heterosexuality (Connell, 1995; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Richardson; 2010; Wight; 1994) hence, homosexual masculinities have constituted the main 'subordinate' masculinities (Connell, 1995).

Research shown how this image of a heterosexual self can be constructed. For example, young men have been found to project heterosexuality through tales of sexual exploits (Curry, 1991; Flood, 2008; Kehily and Nayak 1997a; Pascoe, 2007; Wight, 1994) - tales in which women are talked about in terms of objects of sexual pleasure (Bird, 1996). Within peer groups in Parnell School for example, Mac an Ghaill (1994) observed how young men spoke in terms of "misogynistic boasting and [the] exaggeration of past heterosexual conquests". The reality in terms of actual heterosexual experience however, can be very different (Pascoe, 2007; Richardson, 2010; Wight, 1994). The motivation for this boasting is clear for Wight (1994) and Richardson (2010, p. 742), who argue that rather than a natural biological urge, the reasons for having (or claim to have had) heterosex are "overwhelmingly social". For Richardson (2010, p. 745; also Pascoe; 2007; Wight, 1994) there is significant status to be gained for giving the impression of sexual experience. Through interviews with young men mostly between 13-16 years of age, Richardson (2010, p. 746) found that young men spoke with a "discourse of shame" when describing what they would feel like if they did not have heterosex. What these studies exemplify is the key idea that masculinity is a '*homosocial* enactment' (Kimmel, 1994, p. 127), referring to how men seek recognition *as men* from other men (Arxer, 2011; Bird, 1996; Flood, 2008; Kimmel, 1994). This concept of 'homosociality', referring to "social bonds between persons of the same sex and, more broadly, to same-sex-focused social relations" (Flood, 2008, p. 341) exemplifies how masculinity is socially constructed, because it

is enacted based not on biological urge but by fluid norms of expectation. In sum, these studies have shown how “heterosexuality is a ‘social glue’, central to male homosociality and approval…” (Richardson, 2010, p. 745; Flood, 2008; Grazian, 2007).

As a consequence of the way in which men seek recognition from other men, the maintenance of an ideal or acceptable masculine self is attained both through self-policing (Burns and Kehler, 2014; Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman, 2003; Pollack, 1999) and peer policing through a ‘vocabulary of abuse’ (Lees, 1993; Goffman, 1963). The abusive terms have been shown to be homophobic and misogynistic in meaning, functioning as "a means of consolidating sexuality and gender through the traducing of femininity and its association with homosexuality" (Nayak and Kehily, 1996, p. 214; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Kehler, 2007; Kimmel, 1994; Stoudt, 2006). As Dalley-Trim (2007) reminds, those who are invoking and deploying these policing mechanisms and derogatory labels are *themselves,* through these practices, affirming their own masculinities and aiming to enhance or affirm their status.

Although homosexual masculinities have been constructed as subordinated, studies have shown that perceived homosexual orientation is not always the sole criterion of scorn and insult (Epstein, 1997; Kimmel, 2009; McCann, Plummer and Minicheillo, 2010; Kehily and Nayak 1997a; Pascoe, 2005; Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman, 2003; Plummer, 2001; Stoudt, 2006). Rather, homophobic insults are policing mechanisms used against boys who act in ways perceived to be non-masculine and/or feminine, or “anything that signifies a lack of allegiance to the collective expectations of male peers” (Pascoe, 2005; Plummer, 2001, p. 21; Kehler 2007; Kimmel, 2009) such as the expression of emotions (Bird, 1996; Martino, 1999). As Pascoe (2013, p. 91) has highlighted, homophobic bullying and “harassment has as much to do with definitions of masculinity as it does with fear of gay men”. Similarly, referring to the gendered basis for motivation in young men’s perpetration of mass shootings in the context of the United States, Kimmel (2009, p. 179) too has identified that mass shooters being perceived as actually gay was not the issue, but the fact that the young men "were *different* from the other boys - shy, bookish, an honour student, artistic, musical, theatrical, non-athletic, a 'geek', or weird". As one informant in Plummer's (2001, p. 18) study put it: "It was just... lack of masculinity. It wasn't necessarily you had sex with men. [It was] you're not as tough as us, so you're a 'faggot'".

While these norms of expectation masculinity can come at a price of loneliness, isolation and alienation (Bird, 1996; Kaufman, 1994; Mac and Ghaill, 1994) because they are difficult to obtain, women can also be insidiously caught up in the slipstream of male homosociality. Studies have shown that having a girlfriend for example can be marker of heterosexual esteem (Pascoe, 2007; Renold, 2007; Wight, 1994). As Kimmel (1994, p. 128) notes, "women become a kind of currency that men use to improve their ranking on the masculine social scale". Girls and women have also been shown to face sexual harassment (Dalley-Trim, 2007; Flood, 2008; Robinson, 2005) in the form of 'put downs' and 'predatory attitudes' for example, due to the way in which young men attempt to confirm their heterosexuality (Dalley-Trim, 2007; Robinson, 2005).

The studies cited thus far have largely been framed or influenced by Connell's (1987, 1995) insights. Connell's work has not been received without critique however. Researchers have pointed out: that it did not account for how hegemonic masculinity may borrow from other identities to hybridize and maintain hegemony (Demetriou, 2001); that the four subject positions Connell put forward has tended "to reduce the complexity and nuances of what men actually do" and cannot capture and complexity of men's lives (Moller, 2007; p. 813; Arxer, 2011; Hopkins and Noble, 2009; Wetherell and Edley, 1999) that it prompts researchers to 'look' for negative configurations of masculinity where power is thought in terms of oppressive practices (Moller, 2007) and consequently "prescribes perpetual patriarchy" (Anderson, 2016, p. 184; Johansson and Ottemo, 2015). In a review of how 'hegemonic masculinity' has been appropriated, Messerschmitt (2012) argues that part of the problem with some critiques of the concept lie with the problematic application of the concept itself. Nevertheless, although Connell and Messerschmitt (2005) dealt with these critiques, theoretical work continues to diversify the framework itself and/or move beyond it (for example Coles, 2008)

The sociology of masculinity has now entered its third wave. Writing with reference to the Swedish context, Hearn *et al* (2012, p. 7) argue that this third wave began from about the year 2000 onwards and has been "characterised by diversity and critique". The same arguably holds true within the broader Anglophone research on men and masculinities, where masculinities theorizing is now characterised by a heterogeneity of perspectives (Beasley, 2012). I argue that there are three sub strands to this third

wave, though the boundaries are not always neatly clear cut. The first of these strands is exemplified in the development of 'Inclusive Masculinity Theory' (IMT) (Anderson, 2011, 2013, 2016). The development of IMT was foreshadowed by Swain's (2006) ethnographic work in three UK schools on ten to eleven-year-old boys. Swain (2006) found amongst 'hegemonic', 'complicit' and 'subordinate' groups of boys, another group of boys who did not fit any of these subject positions. Boys who enacted the hegemonic form of masculinity at the schools were the 'sporty boys' who, though small in number, were proficient at sport, playground games and decided who could and could not participate in the games. For Swain (2006), they were 'dominant' in that they set the normative masculinity. Boys who enacted 'complicit' masculinity aspired to be as dominant as the 'sporty boys'. As Swain (2006, p. 338) noted however, these boys were 'wannabes' who "were good, but not good enough". Boys who were subordinated on the other hand, were constructed as either 'different' such as by 'looking different' or 'deficient' such as being perceived to lack toughness (Swain, 2006).

In contrast to these patterns, there were other groups of boys who "were popular in their own cliques, and they were generally nonexclusive and egalitarian, without any clearly defined leader" (Swain, 2006, p. 341). These groups had delineated their own norms for judging social worth, where "having a 'good personality' took precedent over sporting prowess, and by 'good', they meant kind and helpful but also lively and exciting and sharing a common interest" (Swain, 2006, p. 342). Swain coined this 'new pattern' of masculinity as 'personalised masculinity'. What is interesting about Swain's (2006) description is that many of the words (such as 'popular', 'nonexclusive' and 'lively') he uses to describe these groups of boys are precisely the terms that have been used to describe the characteristics of young men in the 'inclusive masculinities' literature (Anderson, 2009; McCormack, 2011a).

Eric Anderson's Inclusive Masculinity Theory (2011, 2013, 2016) was developed from Anderson's (2005, 2007) studies on men in sports terrains, where he found that men on sports teams in the United States were less stigmatising in their attitudes to homosexuality and were "less concerned about associating with femininity" (Anderson, 2005, p. 347) than men on some other teams. Anderson (2013, pp. 28-30) coined the term 'inclusive masculinities' to describe young men who express 'increased emotional intimacy' and 'physical tactility, an 'eschewal of violence' and

greater openness towards gay male peers. The central argument of Inclusive Masculinity Theory is that men are able to enact these softer, emotionally intimate and physically tactile performances because 'homohysteria' - defined as men's fear of being homosexualised (Anderson, 2011) - has declined. 'Homohysteria' involves three variables. First, there needs to be a mass awareness that homosexuality exists as a static sexual orientation. Second, there needs to be a cultural zeitgeist, or a general cultural belief which disapproves of homosexuality. Third, there needs to be a disapproval of men's femininity because of its association to homosexuality. For Anderson (2007), because the stigma of homosexuality has been decreasing, men are freer to engage in behaviours that would have been associated with it.

Anderson (2005) contrasts 'inclusive masculinities' with what he has coined 'orthodox' masculinity, which describes a construction of masculinity based on the core traits of American masculinity as outlined by David and Brannon (1976, p. 12) in their book *The Forty-Nine Percent Majority*: (1) no sissy stuff, (2) be a big wheel, (3) be a sturdy oak, and (4) give 'em hell, plus Anderson's (2005) addition of homophobia as a fifth trait. For Anderson (2016) 'hegemonic masculinity' constitutes all of the above traits plus (in light of Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) idea of 'local' and 'national' hegemonic masculinities) those characteristics that particular local or national contexts deems normative for men. For McCormack and Anderson (2010, p. 845), "Connell's theory is only accurate in settings of high homophobia". Anderson (2016, p. 180) argues that 'Hegemonic Masculinity Theory'[17] was useful for understanding masculinities in the 1980s and 1990s, but it is no longer compatible with 'inclusive masculinities' since there is no "hegemonic hierarchy" and no "discursive marginalisation of men that subordinates non-hegemonic masculinities" (Anderson, 2016, p. 180). A growing body of work has continued to document 'inclusive masculinities' (Adams, 2011; Cashmore and Cleland, 2012; Gaston, Magrath and Anderson, 2018; Jarvis, 2015; Ripley, 2018) and has developed new concepts (McCormack and Anderson, 2010) for use within the IMT framework.

It is evident that what Anderson (2005, 2007) and others (Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Kehler, 2007; Swain, 2006) have found (on the surface at least) is very different from the overt oppressive policing of masculinities documented by studies previously

[17]Anderson (2016, p. 179) calls this a "theory because it maintains predictive power".

cited thus far, but IMT has been subject to much criticism (see Barrett, 2013; de Boise, 2015; Haywood and Mac an Ghaill, 2012; Levesque, 2016; O'Neill, 2014). Messner (1993) previously warned for example that researchers should not confuse a shift in the 'style' of masculinities with a shift in power. Indeed, for Bridges (2013, p. 60) "the bulk of the literature agrees with Anderson that hybrid masculinities are widespread…", but for Bridges, hegemonic masculinity is still being reproduced through hybridizing, involving the incorporation of "bits and pieces' of marginalised and subordinated masculinities and, at times, femininities" (Bridges, 2013, 59-60).

The idea of 'hybrid' masculinities constitutes the second strand of theorising men and masculinities within the third wave and is generally based on keeping gendered power as a sensitizing line of inquiry, though there are also researchers (see Duncanson, 2015; Hammarén and Johansson, 2015) who have attempted to theorise how, in Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005, p. 853) words, 'hegemony may fail'. One of the central differences between IMT and the 'hybrid' masculinities framework is that IMT is based on the view "that the changes evident in men's gendered behaviours are not superficial or fleeting, but represent a fundamental shift in the practices of masculinities" (Anderson and McCormack, 2016, p. 3).

The 'hybrid' masculinities framework is largely based on Demetriou's (2001) expansion of the hegemonic masculinity framework (Connell, 1987, 1995). Demetriou (2001) argues that there are two aspects to hegemony: 'external' and 'internal'. In terms of gender relations, external hegemony refers to men's dominance over women, while internal hegemony refers to men's dominance over other men. In order to maintain external hegemony, what may be needed is to incorporate elements from subordinated masculinities and femininities to maintain dominance (Demetrious, 2001), a practice called 'hybridization' as discussed. What researchers who locate their research within this 'hybrid' masculinities (Arxer, 2011; Bridges, 2013; Bridges and Pascoe, 2014; Messner, 2007; Ward, 2015) approach argue is that hegemonic masculinity itself is not a static category with a clear set of meanings, but a shifting formation thus, researchers argue that it is better to think in terms of hegemonic 'masculinit*ies*' (Arxer, 2011; Coles, 2009, p. 32). Arxer's (2011) paper for example shows how homosociality can work to produce 'hybrid' masculinity. A covert observatory approach in a bar allowed Arxer (2011) to listen in on men's conversations. In two cases, male friends shunned emotionality (also Bird, 1996).

However, in another case, one man was advised by another to act 'sensitive' in order to attract the attention of women, which Arxer (2011, p. 409) interprets as a 'strategy' of hybridization to "gain sexual advantage over a woman".

Coles (2009, p. 30) on the other hand incorporates Bourdieu's work on 'fields' to show how some men could be both "dominant in relation to other men" yet at the same time "subordinate in relation to the cultural ideal" of masculinity. The concept of 'field' refers to different domains of life. Broadly, 'capital' refers to a resource that can raise a person's status within a given field (Coles, 2009). For Coles (2008; 2009, p. 39), within the overall 'field' of gender, there is the 'field' of masculinity which in turn contains many 'subfields' with "their own sets of struggles over capital, which in turn creates distinctions between dominant and subordinated groups of men". One such subfield is that of 'gay masculinity'. Cole's (2008) research shows how gay men who may be subordinated in the overall field of masculinity by the fact of their homosexuality, can use meanings associated with hegemonic masculinity to establish a dominant position within the subordinated subfield of gay masculinity. He gives the example of two gay male interviewees who positioned effeminate gay men as other and referred to them as 'poofters' and 'fairies' (Coles, 2008).

The 'hybrid' masculinities literature highlights the fluidity of masculinities. As Watson (2015) argues, terms such as 'personalised', 'inclusive' and 'mosaic masculinities' show that masculinity is a 'shifting formation'. The third strand of theorising within the current third wave of men and masculinities theorising takes this fluidity as a point of departure, evident in the emergence and development of post-structural approaches (Alldred and Fox, 2015; Berggren, 2014; Butler, 1990; Laurie, 2015; Watson, 2015). These approaches see masculinity as a 'discourse' or a historically contingent *topic* that is "culturally and historically available…" (Robinson, 2005, p. 23) in contrast to the view that language may be a "*resource*, providing clues as to what is going on inside" (Edley, 2001, p. 190) the interior self. The significance of this perspective is that 'masculinity' is not something that produces performances (ways of enacting a self) or discourses (ways of talking or describing the self) but is a *consequence* of discourses and performances (Butler, 1990; Edley, 2001). Butler (1990) argues for example, that gender should not be thought of as a set of socially constructed meanings which are imposed on a supposedly pregiven natural sex. For Butler (1990, p. 153) "sex is itself a gendered category" and that "it

does not follow that to be a given sex is to become a given gender; in other words, 'woman' need not be the cultural construction of the female body, and 'man' need not interpret male bodies" Butler (1990, p. 152).

As alluded to within the previous paragraph, post-structuralist perspectives place emphasis on the role of discourse in constituting the 'subject', but such approaches have been criticised on the grounds that they bulldoze the phenomenology of the self and the way in which "people feel bound to certain ways of being" (Edley, 2006, p. 602). Seidler (2007) is highly critical of how even role theories and structural perspectives such as Connell's (1987, 1995) fail to give adequate attention to men's lived experiences. As a compromise, Berggren (2014) has argued for a fusion of feminist post-structuralism with feminist phenomenology to suggest an understanding of masculinity as 'sticky'. He argues that such as approach "allows us to see both that subjects are positioned by competing discourses, and that through repeated enactment, the cultural signs of masculinity tends to stick to bodies" (Berggren, 2014, p. 247). Gough (2004) on the other hand, fuses discourse analysis within Kleinian psychoanalysis, but Edley (2006) argues that such a fusion is ultimately incompatible.

Some scholars (Jackson and Scott, 2010; Plummer, 1982) argue that these post-structural approaches are not dissimilar from interactionist approaches thus, Jackson and Scott (2010) call for a rehabilitation of interactionist insights in the study of gender and sexuality. Plummer (1982, p. 227) points out for example, that interactionism has challenged the "prevailing imagery" that sex is "a *powerful biological drive*" [his emphasis]. Interactionist approaches emphasise the way in which meaning is constantly negotiated through interaction rather than a pregiven, which is consonant with the de-essentialism of post-structuralist theorising. Furthermore, following Butler's (1990) insights, post-structuralist approaches not only destabilise the construction of gender and sexuality, but they also interrogate the very concepts and tacit assumptions beneath academic discourse around gender and sexuality themselves. Haywood and Mac and Ghaill (2012, p. 589) for example, highlight that Butler's thinking "brings into focus how conceptual frameworks may *politically* contribute to the instantiation of hegemonic systems of thinking". Laurie (2015, p. 17) for example, argues that masculinity scholars unintentionally construct some aspects of the male psyche as 'innate dispositions' such as a supposed "innate disposition for homosocial bonding". Laurie (2015, p. 16) cites a number of studies for example to

show the way in which scholars' construct examples of 'masculinity' as a "strategy motivated by hidden rewards". As I show in the next main section on 'Theorising Masculinities: Psychoanalysis and Interactionism', I follow the interactionist viewpoint that the (masculine) self is not something that is pregiven but is built up through managed impressions. However, my research diverges from post-structuralist approaches as it emphasizes the role of the 'interior self' in constituting performances and the emphasis I place on the disposition individuals have both in maintaining human bonds and the need to construct or verify a self (Elliot and Meltzer, 1981; Turner and Sets, 2006).

3.2.2 The Spatiality of Masculinities

As I mentioned in the introduction to this section, there are a range of other sociological domains that intersect with masculinity as the analytical focus. One of these domains is the spatiality of masculinities. Here, I review studies which highlight the way in which gendered identities are bound up with spatiality. The spatiality of masculinities is exemplified in Curtin and Linehan's (2002, p. 65) argument regarding the way in which "the performance of masculinity seems to require" that young men "behave in a manner deemed appropriate depending on the company that they are in". As Curtin and Linehan (2002, p. 65) further elaborate:

> from the classroom to the home, teenage boys negotiate their self-concepts and gender identities, changing their performance of masculinity depending on the places and spaces that they inhabit from one moment to the next.

Indeed, one the key findings of the broader masculinities literature is that young men's sense of security can be based on the exclusion of other young men (Renold, 2004) and young women (Curtin and Linehan, 2002; Stoudt, 2006).

While this point relates to the normative expectations through which gender is enforced and policed within face-to-face situations, studies have highlighted the active gendered *physical* exclusion of others (Krenichyn, 1999). In Tucker and Matthew's (2001) study on 10-14-year-old young women's use and perception of space in rural Northamptonshire, friendship group discussions with the young women revealed their gendered experience of exclusion from different spaces in the rural countryside. They

reported being the victim of comments made by older mixed sex groups of young people and thus, stayed away from areas that signalled the presence of these older young people such as the presence of beer bottles on the ground. In other places, such as playing fields and recreation areas, the young women described them as 'boy places' and regarded them as unsafe due to the presence of boys. This was not merely due to an imagined perception of unsafeness but also due to how some boys actively told some young women to 'go away' (Tucker and Matthews, 2001, p. 166). Some of the young women described how they deployed different strategies to avoid conflict with groups of boys such as choosing to visit locations at certain times of the day.

Many other studies (Krenichyn, 1999; Thorne, 1993) have shown how boys and young men can actively monopolize spaces to the exclusion of girls and young women. In an underfunded New York high school for example, Krenichyn (1999) shows how young men and women contested the claim for the gym space at break time. Young men managed to claim the gym as their own and although young women actively contested this monopolization through attempting to play volleyball, the young men made it difficult for them do to so, taking the ball and throwing it at the young women.

One of the most researched sites in which "ideas about men and masculinity are presented, enacted, contested and negotiated and where masculinities are performed, policed, regulated, legitimated and embodied" (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 16) has been within schooling contexts (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Mac and Ghaill, 1994, Pascoe, 2007; Swain, 2006; Willis, 1977). Many of the studies I have cited thus far within this chapter pertained to research conducted on masculinities within school settings, but the point here is to highlight more explicitly what this (and other) literature has revealed about the spatiality of masculinities. Swain (2006) argues for example that the construction of masculinities in schooling contexts is impacted by the official/formal and unofficial/informal cultures of schooling. Furthermore, he argues that there are four key areas of "masculinizing practices" (Swain, 2006, p. 333) that shape the negotiation of masculinity: the sports curriculum; teacher and pupil relation; management practices and finally relations between pupils.

O'Donoghue's (2006, p. 17; 2007) research was motivated by what he saw as a 'tendency' to see the material aspects of schools as neutral and "unencumbered by gender politics…". He argues that the material physical spaces of schools themselves

can be inscribed with particular conceptions of masculinity, which supposedly reflect and/or communicate what 'real boys' should be or actually do. O'Donoghue (2006, 2007) explored how the different micro spaces within four Irish primary schools mediated the experiences of 10 to 12-year-old boys. He argues that in the entrance halls and other hallways in each of the schools, photographs and posters among other things depicted images of able-bodied men of sporting ability, while trophies and cups served as a reminder that sport is practiced and highly valued within the schools (O'Donoghue, 2006). In other words, for O'Donoghue (2006, p. 24) the materiality of the schools presented conceptions of how "to *think*, *act*, and *look* like a man". (O'Donoghue, 2006). Following workshops with O'Donoghue on photography, the boys documented their feelings and experiences of the different micro spaces within the school n themselves which they photographed. The boys described how there were 'places where you can be yourself'; 'spaces where you learn to act in certain ways'; 'spaces where you feel safe' and 'spaces where you learn' to name a few (O'Donoghue 2007, p. 66).

Institutional and management processes within schools have also been found to be constitutive of gendered identities. During break time in one school in O'Donoghue's (2007) study, there was a designated space for boys to play football. Boys who did not play football had to appropriate other spaces for their own use such as for the playing of card games. O'Donoghue (2007 p. 68) argues however, that these spaces "are not designated for such purposes". For O'Donoghue, (2007, p. 68), this differentiation of the provision of space "sustains difference and hierarchy". This is similar to Renold's (2004) ethnographic study of 10 to 11-year-old boys' and girls' gender relations in two UK primary schools. In one school, there was an official policy of dividing the playing field during recreation time between 'football' and 'other'. For the boys who chose not to play football, their absence from this masculinised field reinforced their 'Otherness' since they had to use the other side of the field, which was occupied by the majority of girls and younger infants. The boys were called names such as 'babies' and 'girlie', indicating that they were aligned with 'femininity' and 'immaturity' (Renold, 2004). In the other school in her study, year six boys could choose either to 'stay in class' or 'play outside'. Dally-Trim (2007) has argued that classrooms themselves are not neutral spaces, but socially produced contexts. Indeed, in Renold's

(2004) study, boys who preferred[18] to stay inside where perceived and constructed as 'other', but the classroom also provided a form of 'retreat', enabling them to remove themselves from the gaze of the "hegemonic and wannabe hegemonic boys" (Renold, 2004, p. 257). This enabled the opening up of behavioural possibilities, which was exemplified in the way Renold (204, p. 257) observed how one boy stroked his friend's hair in the classroom. The point is that this may not have been possible had there been the presence of the more 'hegemonic' or 'wannabe boys' (Renold, 2004).

Allen's (2013) research within two high schools in New Zealand examined the spatiality of young people's sexual cultures and shows the ways in which different spaces within schooling contexts themselves can become encoded with different meanings. In her research, the sports field for example, was officially designated by the school as a place for health and fitness, but students also coded the field with sexual meanings since bodies were on display, which some students found attractive. The large size of the sports field itself also provided students with greater opportunities to talk about relationships and 'illicit' topics such as sexual activity since it was more difficult for the teachers to police. For Allen (2013, p. 67), this shows how "students' embodied practices and the materiality of the sports field were mutually constitutive of sexual identities and meanings". Similarly, the enclosed space of the gym constituted a 'sexual space' for some male students as it afforded them the freedom to talk about sexual topics. For one student, it enabled him to satisfy his curiosity as to how his body compared to other male bodies.

This 'freedom to talk about sexual topics' has not always been shown to be positive however, but reinforcing of unequal gender relations. Curry's study (1991) shows how the micro space of a locker room can compel male athletes to discuss topics that are instrumental for maintaining the 'fraternal bond' amongst the athletes. Through documenting 'talk fragments' within the locker room context, Curry (1991, p. 127) found that athletes made fun of homosexuals and partook in what he calls "women-as-object" stories involving 'braggadocio talk' about sexual success with women. Other forms of talk included competitive forms of joking through insults - the idea being that each ridiculing joke hurled at another teammate must 'top' the previous joke. For Curry (1991, p. 133), though the locker room may seem like "just a place to

[18] It is not clear whether they always or mostly stayed inside.

change clothing and shower", the presumption that "one should not make too much of what goes on there" is problematic since it is likely to have a cumulative negative effect on young men, desensitizing them to womens' and gay rights as well as to the possibility of gender equality. In this way, Curry (1991) implies that what goes on in a locker room does not necessarily stay within a locker room. The broader implication is that even within small enclosed spaces, social practices may not merely but mutually constitutive of space but can also constitute relations beyond the space which these social practices are situated.

Another institutional process in relation to schooling is the official curriculum. In the Irish context for example, Barnes (2012) has shown how young men deploy humour to displace and avoid anxieties provoked by the *Exploring Masculinities*[19] programme within an Irish secondary school. This shows how different spaces and institutional practices do not simply press down on boys and young men, but how there can also be active adaption, negotiation and resistance against these the practices within spaces. Paul Willis's (1977) Marxist inspired ethnographic work on 'the lads' stands as a classic in this regard. For 'the lads', schooling and its curriculum did not have much to offer in terms of the education required for working class jobs. Thus, since school work was not something they saw as important, 'the lads' saw school as something to survive or get through and effectively enacted a counter culture based on opposition to the schooling system.

Some other studies can be cited. Jackson (2002, p. 41) argues for example, that achievement in school brings a sense of self-worth whereas failure "is attached to feelings of failure, such as shame, anxiety and withdrawal". Young men must also negotiate the hierarchy of worth delineated by norms of masculinity related to the curriculum however, as studies (Jackson, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 2000; Swain, 2006; Willis, 1977) have shown that academic work has been associated with femininity. Jackson (2002) fascinatingly shows how some young men use various strategies to protect themselves from being perceived not only as 'failures' academically but also perceived as not masculine. One technique for example, is to project 'effortless achievement' (Jackson, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

[19] This programme aims to challenge "long-established and deeply felt understandings of what constitutes a 'real man'" through "presentation of 'alternative' masculine identities" (Barnes, 2012, p. 239).

‘Effortless achievement’ describes how some young men in schooling contexts have been shown to project and imply that their academic success has been based on the absence of having done hard work (Jackson, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This enables them to protect themselves both from the possible ‘self-worth’ implications of actually doing poorly in a test itself and from being perceived as doing the non-normative masculine enactment of academic work (Jackson, 2002). Mac an Ghaill (1994) examined how four modes of masculinity were developed in relation to the structure and curriculum of Parnell School. In Mac an Ghaill’s (1994, p. 67) study, this ‘effortless achievement’ was displayed by the ‘Real Englishmen’, who held values of personal autonomy and who “rejected the school’s dominant work ethic, assuming that intellectual talent was ‘naturally’ inscribed within their peer group”.

Outside of schooling contexts, Arnesen and Lagrean’s (2000) research in the Norwegian context shows again how different spaces mediate young people’s gendered identity work. By conducting observations and interviews with young people who hung out at a shopping centre (called ‘Torget’) and a Pentecostal church (called ‘Betel’), Arnesen and Lagrean (2000) show both the way in which spaces differentially mediate the performance of gender and also how at the same time young people’s ‘gender play’ can (re)produce gender and space. At Torget for example, some young men deliberately teased the security guards by challenging and testing the borders of acceptable behaviour such as by laying on the floor and pretending to the guards that they were doing drugs. Torget also provided the space where young men could prove masculinity by displaying toughness. Arnesen and Lagrean (2000) show how participating in an actual physical fight was not necessary to prove this toughness, but threatening a fight was. The young women on the other hand, mostly acted as spectators of the young men’s displays and their performance of femininity was confined to the more enclosed spaces of shops and fitting-rooms. The physical design of Torget also made it “an excellent place for flirting” (Arnesen and Lagrean, 2000, p. 57) and the authors observed how this flirting was performed differently by young men and women. The young men were observed to have a more direct approach, in terms of touching and putting arms around young women’s waists, in contrast to the young women who used smiling and laughter. In these ways, Arnesen and Lagrean (2000, p. 167) argue that the presence of an ‘audience’ in the form of other young people, the public and security guards were “not without significance” but provided a

stage for the performance and construction of masculinity. At Betel (the Pentecostal church) on the other hand, Christian norms around sexuality and gender regulated young people's performances. Flirtation and sexuality at Betel had to be performed and related to in a 'passive manner' whereas at Torget the same young people could flirt more openly. For one young man, his performance of masculinity differed between the shopping centre and the church. The shopping centre in his words allowed him to do "boys' stuff" (Arnesen and Lagrean, 2000, p. 57) and constituted a place of retreat from the more constricting norms of the church.

3.2.3 Summary

This section has shown how researchers in the field of men and masculinities have developed a range of conceptual and theoretical approaches in relation to theorising masculinities. There has been a significant proliferation of this theorising from the 2000s onwards constituting what can now be called the 'third wave' of theorising. This section has also reviewed studies which indicate that masculinities intersect with the domain of spatiality and has shown "not simply how masculinities are played out in different spaces, but how these spaces shape the very nature of the experience of masculinity" (Hopkins and Noble, 2009, p. 814). Indeed, Curtin and Linehan (2002, p. 65) argue that "It is for these reasons that gender is regarded as a performance; what individuals do at particular times and space, rather than a universal 'who you are'". In the next section of this chapter, I develop an approach that retains both a socially constructed view of gender and a spatial sensitivity to gendered performances.

3.3 Theorising Masculinities: Psychoanalysis and Interactionism

This section specifies the theoretical approach which informs the analysis of the performance of masculinities for this ethnographic study. As the previous section has highlighted, there has been considerable diversification within masculinities theorizing. Within the broader field of gender studies, Jackson and Scott (2010) have called for the rehabilitation of the symbolic interactionist perspective for the study of gender and sexuality. In terms of the interactionist tradition itself, Turner (2007, p. 506) has called for the blending of "mainstream symbolic interactionist theorizing

with ideas from psychoanalysis". This section answers these calls by deploying what Turner (2013) has called a 'psychoanalytically orientated symbolic interactionist' theorising, based on Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1967) dramaturgical perspective.

In the first subsection I outline Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, which I situate within the interactionist tradition. I outline the importance of the 'looking glass self' for understanding both how individuals project a (gendered) self and how the audience always imputes a (gendered) self to others thus, I emphasis the continuous dynamics of intersubjectivity. Through an elaboration of Goffman's perspective, I also retain some of the central insights found by the men and masculinities literature: the relationality of masculinity; the multiplicity of masculinities and the hierarchy of masculinities. I outline both how Goffman's work shows both how gender comes into being through socially constructed performances and how his work is sensitive to the spatial context of these performances. In the second section, I introduce Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) theoretical (re)development of Goffman's work. I explicate Scheff's proposal to consider the interior, psychological dynamics of face to face interaction.

3.3.1 The Dramaturgical Perspective

The symbolic interactionist perspective has a multitude of variations (see Longmore, 1998). Classical interaction holds three basic premises (Blumer, 1986, p. 2), the first being that "human beings act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them"; second, "the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of the social interaction that one has with one's fellows; and third, "that these meanings are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the thing he encounters".

Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1966, 1967) dramaturgical perspective employs metaphors of the stage to outline the techniques which individuals employ to control the 'impression' which an 'audience' forms of them. In Goffman's (1959) terminology, the person 'giving' the impression is called a 'performer' and the impression they wish to make is mainly a favourable one. It is important to point out that there have been diverse interpretations and readings of Goffman's work (Hancock and Garner, 2015;

Jacobsen and Kristiansen, 2010; Smith, 2006). As Jacobsen and Kristiansen (2010) highlight, there have been interactionist, functionalist, structuralist, existentialist, phenomenological, critical and postmodern interpretations of Goffman. In *Asylums* for example, Goffman (1961, p. 50) himself stated that his approach is located within the "symbolic-interaction framework" while he adopts a 'functionalist' approach in *Gender Advertisements* (1976, p. 8). Following Scheff (2006), my approach locates Goffman's work within the interactionist tradition.

I follow Scheff's (2005, 2006) interpretation that Goffman's work is based on Cooley's (1902, p. 177) concept of the 'looking glass self'[20], which holds that individuals live "in the mind of others without knowing it", like walking on "the solid ground without thinking how it bears up". This involves three processes: individuals imagine their appearance in the eyes of others, imagine their judgement of that appearance and finally experience "some sort of self-feeling…pride or shame" (Cooley, 1902, p. 152). For Scheff (2005, p. 157), Cooley's idea that individuals live in the mind of others 'without knowing it' "is profoundly significant" as it implies that individuals are *always* engaging in the intersubjective process of 'pendulation' where "we move swiftly and unself-consciously between the viewpoints of self and other… so well that we are completely unaware that it is happening" (Scheff, 2006, p. 45). For Scheff (2006), the resulting feeling of 'pride' or 'shame' signifies the state of the 'social bond' with others, or the degree to which individuals feel accepted and connected or rejected and alienated by others (Scheff, 2006).

Scheff basis his view on Cooley's line, but I argue that it is also supported by three interrelated claims of Goffman. The first is that when an individual enters the presence of another "he *knowingly and unwittingly* projects a definition of the situation, of which a *conception of himself is an important part*" (Goffman, 1959, pp. 234-235, sic [my emphasis]; also Goffman, 1967, p. 5). The 'definition of the situation' describes what is explicitly and implicitly, 'knowingly and unwittingly' expected by and expected of individuals within a social situation. Goffman's idea that an individual's conception of 'himself is an important part' of this situation relates to the second and third claims of Goffman. The second is that performers always "knowingly and unwittingly" (Goffman, 1959, pp. 234-235; Goffman, 1967) project an image of

[20] Goffman (1952, p. 10; 1967, p. 13, 27, 98) implicitly makes references to the 'looking glass self' within his work.

themselves, making "an implicit or explicit claim to be a person of a particular kind" which informs others "as to what they *ought* to see as the 'is'" (Goffman, 1959, p. 24). This also 'implicitly' implies that the individual "forgoes all claims to be things he does not appear to be…" (Goffman, 1959, p. 24, sic). This idea is consistent with the argument that gender is performed (West and Zimmerman, 1987) and is constructed on the basis of sameness and difference to others (Lawlor, 2008).

The 'knowingly' in Goffman's argument refers to how performances can be 'given' in an overt sense, where the performer acts "admittedly and solely to convey information" (Goffman, 1959, p. 14) in the 'intentional' hope to "induce others to hold" an image of self "in regard to him" (Goffman,1959, p. 244, sic). By 'unwittingly' Goffman refers to how impressions may also be 'given off' (Goffman, 1959) in that the audience's impression of the performer may be incongruent with the intended impression the performer wishes to give. Furthermore, Goffman (1959, p. 111) argues that even when performers are not directly "giving expressions", they are still 'giving off' impressions.

Related to this is the third claim, that individuals always 'knowingly and unwittingly' impute an image of self to others, or who the other person "intentionally or unwittingly" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32; also Goffman, 1963, p. 12) claims to be. This is established through the process of 'cognitive recognition' or the way in which "we socially or personally identify the other" (Goffman, 1966, p. 113) through the "rapid cognitive process of physically recognising or 'placing' someone" (Goffman, 1966, p. 114). It is only when the other person acts in a way which discredits this imputed image of self that individuals realise they have engaged in this process (Goffman, 1959, 1963, 1967, p. 7 and 168). In other words, individuals do not merely live in the minds of others 'without knowing it', but also impute impressions to others without knowing it.

I argue that these insights show that Goffman's work is not merely a repository of concepts with which to transpose onto raw data. Rather his work helps as a 'thinking tool'. Goffman's (1959) ideas of how impressions are both 'given' and 'given off', how individuals always mutually consciously and/or unconsciously project and impute images to themselves and others allows researchers to think about what kind of images of self have been or can be imputed to individuals at any one time. His

approach emphasises not simply behavioural action, but what kind of *image of self* this action, or performance brings into being. Furthermore, Goffman's ideas also imply that researchers themselves are always actively engaging in the process of interpretation in the field. This is because the researcher too, is an 'image maker' (Schwalbe, 1993) and is always interpreting what others think of them and uses 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959) accordingly.

The process of 'defining the situation' and imputing an image of self to others relies upon several sources of information. There is the 'personal front' referring to sign vehicles such as clothing, sex, age, posture (Goffman, 1959). As Goffman (1959, p. 34) reminds, some of these signs "such as racial characteristics, are relatively fixed". Individuals do not generally make a claim to be any type of person, for two reasons; First, a person must be careful with the initial image they project since "he and the others tend to build their later responses upon it, and in a sense become stuck with it" (Goffman, 1967, p. 12, sic). Thus, it is better to choose an image at the *beginning* of an encounter; Second, individuals are careful with their claims because although there may be multiple (masculine) claims to project, "masculinities are not created equal" (Kimmel, 1994, p. 124) as there is a hierarchy of (masculine) selves (Connell, 1995):

> There is only one complete unblushing male in America: a young, married, white, urban, northern, heterosexual Protestant father of college education… Any male who fails to qualify in any of these ways is likely to view himself – during moments at least – as unworthy, incomplete and inferior… (Goffman, 1963, p. 153)

This hierarchy of selves is the subject of Goffman's book *Stigma* (Goffman, 1963). The term 'stigma' refers to "the situation of the individual who is disqualified from full social acceptance" (Goffman, 1963, p. 9). There are three types of stigma: physical deformities, blemishes of character and tribal stigma (e.g. race, gender, religion). There are attributes which an individual may possess which are discrediting 'almost everywhere' in society, but generally the attributes which are stigmatised are those which are incongruent with the stereotype of what the perceived category of the individual should be (Goffman, 1963). As Goffman (1963, p. 14) summarises, "A stigma, then, is really a special kind of relationship between attribute and stereotype" thus, what we need in the study of identities is a "language of relationships, not

attributes…" (Goffman, 1963, p. 13). This is consistent with the relationality of masculinity and the way in which meanings that signify masculinity and femininity can fluctuate (Carrigan, Connell and Lee, 1985; Mac an Ghaill, 1994).

For Goffman (1967, p. 5) therefore, individuals generally claim something more socially acceptable or favourable within a social situation, a 'face' which "is an image of self delineated in terms of approved social attributes…". For Goffman, 'face' has a sacred quality because it is connected with the dignity and social worth of the individual. This social 'face' is thus, the "the center" of an individual's "security and pleasure" (Goffman, 1967, p. 10). Key to Goffman's argument is that when individuals present this 'face', they "will be expected to live up to it" (Goffman, 1967, p. 9), or as Schudson (1984) puts it, they are expected to maintain 'consistency of character' within a social situation and thereby adopt a 'situational identity (Modigliani, 1968). This does not mean that individuals can project a new 'character' or 'face' amongst the same audience within a different social situation. Goffman (1983, p. 4; 1959) states that he does not "claim a rampant situationalism" because "each participant enters a social situation carrying an already established biography of prior dealings with other participants…". As Goffman (1959, p. 235) points out, a 'slip' in a given encounter may result in a situation whereby 'previous positions' that the individual claimed in past interactions "may become no longer tenable". In this way, Goffman hints at the way in which a 'general identity' (Modigliani, 1968) is built up through repeated performances. In agreement with Brickell (2005, p. 32), I contend that Goffman indeed "hints at a reflexive model, where the self is built up through ongoing social interaction and reflections on the social world and the possibilities it offers". This is captured in Goffman's notion of 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, p. 119; 1963), which refers to the changes in a person's "framework of imagery" for judging self and others[21]. The 'moral career' can change based on 'moral experiences' which constitute "happenings which mark a turning point in the way in which the person views the world" (Goffman, 1961, p. 154)[22].

[21] In terms of masculinities, Anderson's (2008) work on 'inclusive' masculinities also seem to show that such changes in this 'framework of imagery' can occurring in collegiate cheerleading. For the men involved in cheerleading, Anderson (2008, p. 108) argues that college cheerleading is 'a transitional heteromasculine' space – since "it is influential in redefining informants' attitudes toward homosexuality, masculinity and same-sex sex".

[22] For an exemplary symbolic interactionist study on how the self can be (re)constituted, see Athens (1989).

Goffman's notion of 'moral career' exemplifies that 'face' is not something that is static, but something that can undergo redefinition. Furthermore, 'face' is not something that the individual possesses but must always be proved: "… it is only on loan to him from society; it will be withdrawn unless he conducts himself in a way that is worthy of it" (Goffman, 1967, p. 10, sic). This is consistent with the idea that masculinities must be (re)proved (Kimmel, 1994; West and Zimmerman, 1987). For Goffman (1959, p. 244) then, the self "does not derive from its possessor". Interactionism does recognise the role of 'impulses' (Shott, 1979) in constituting performances however, but performances which in lay terms could described symptoms of a firm self or 'gender core' (Butler, 1990) do not *create* images of self. These images are *imputed* to the individual. What kind of images of self the audience imputes to the individual, are images based on the socially constructed meanings of the performances, but meanings which are "already socially established" (Butler, 1990, p. 191).

These insights have implications for how we understand gender. According to the "doctrine of natural expression" (Goffman, 1976, p. 6) the gendered self is simply the expression of an "internal essence" (Butler, 1990, p. xv). From the audience's point of view, the gendered image of self "appears to emanate intrinsically" (Goffman, 1959, p. 245). For Butler (1990), these performances appear to be an expression of an 'internal essence' because they are repeated. Yet, for Butler (1990) it is the very repetition of gender that produces the idea of gender. Goffman's idea around impressions that are 'given off' also allows us to further understand why audiences may indeed, 'inscribe' (1990) the idea of gender. For example, the lay conception of the self holds that actions which feel 'natural' and authentic are symptoms of an underlying nature and the "psychobiology of personality" (Goffman, 1959, p. 244). On the other hand, there is a tendency to view moments of 'self consciousness' (Goffman, 1967, p. 118) as ones where individuals have to 'put on' a mask. Here, gender may indeed, seem like an illusion, since in these situations a performance becomes calculating, instrumental and appear as 'contrived performances' were performances are "painstakingly pasted together" (Goffman, 1959, p. 77). Consequently, it would seem to imply that the 'looking glass self' only 'turns on' in these moments of 'self consciousness' since individuals *knowingly*, consciously and painfully imagine themselves in the eyes of others.

When individuals live in the minds of others 'without knowing it', performances may feel 'natural' and comfortable because there is an alignment between the (desired) 'face' they 'intentionally or unwittingly' project and the image of self which they believe the audience imputes to them. As Goffman (1967, p. 8, sic) argues, "When a person senses that he is in face, he typically responds with feelings of confidence and assurance". The point I am making here however, is that this is not an obvious and greatly felt confidence, but in the form of a taken for granted psychic comfort that is interpreted as evidence of the 'natural self'. In other words, this psychic comfort comes to be felt as naturalised. As Edley (2001, p. 195) argues:

> (masculine) practices become so utterly familiar, so thoroughly routinized and automatic, that most men (and women) mistake history for nature. Men don't typically have to think about looking and sounding like men. When they spread themselves out on the sofa, for example, they don't have to concentrate upon the careful placement of their limbs. They just plonk themselves down and make themselves comfortable. For most of the time the vast majority or men remain completely oblivious to the ways in which masculinity has inscribed itself upon their bodies.

Performances which feel 'natural' to the individual will also *appear* natural to the audience, as "not purposely put together at all, being an unintentional product of the individual's unselfconscious response…" (Goffman, 1959, p. 77). The point however, is that impressions and performances which feel 'natural' to the individual are really "well oiled" (Goffman, 1959, p. 245) performances. In reality, "we all act better than we know how" (Goffman, 1959, p. 80). Thus, in "civil society" generally, an individual "need not constantly look over his shoulder to see if criticism or other sanctions are coming" (Goffman, 1961, p. 42-43).

For Goffman (1967), individuals attempt to maintain an 'equilibrium' in a face-to-face interaction. This involves maintaining the 'definition of the situation', projected images of self and of protecting the images of others through appropriate 'deference' or respect. During the course of an interaction, this 'equilibrium' is maintained in a number of ways. Individuals will "ensure that a particular *expressive order* is sustained – an order that regulates the flow of events, large or small, so that anything that appears to be expressed by them will be consistent with face" (Goffman, 1967, p. 9). This is

because others may intentionally or unintentionally make certain demands within a situation that could disrupt both the ‘definition of the situation’ and individuals’ projected images of self. Goffman (1959, p. 24) uses the term ‘preventive practices’ to refer to how individuals may prevent a disruption to the ‘definition of the situation’ in the immediate future of an interaction. Individuals also engage in ‘face-work’, referring to “actions taken by a person to make whatever he is doing consistent with face” (Goffman, 1967, p. 12, sic). One such action for example, is ‘poise’, which involves supressing the signs of embarrassment. If embarrassment is not suppressed it implicitly reveals to others that an individual’s ‘face’ has been discredited (Goffman, 1967). When a threat to an image of self has occurred, individuals also use ‘defensive practices’ (Goffman, 1959) to ‘correct’ and repair this threat.

Through the discussion up to this point, it should be evident that Goffman’s work is bound up with the domain of spatiality. Indeed, in *Asylums*, Goffman (1961, p. 137) stated that his focus revolves around how “a conception of oneself can be sustained when the usual setting of supports for it are suddenly removed”. Goffman’s idea of the ‘definition of the situation’ and his discussion around the self is bound up with the spatially sensitive term ‘social situations’ because it is within these that “mutual monitoring possibilities” (Goffman, 1964, p. 135) occur, where “persons must sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sensing of being perceived” (Goffman, 1966, p. 17; Scheff, 2006). Thus, social situations involve an ‘audience’ who imputes an image of self to the performer. The ‘audience’ is spatially contingent and is located in what is called the ‘frontstage’ (Goffman, 1959), which refers to the place where the performance if given. In contrast, there is the ‘backstage’, which refers to how “the impression fostered by the performance is knowingly contradicted as a matter of course” (Goffman, 1959, p. 114). The distinguishing factor which divides the ‘frontstage’ from the ‘backstage’ is the way in which there is ‘segregation’ between the performer and the audience that creates a ‘barrier to perception’ (Goffman, 1959) between both.

Furthermore, social situations and the attendant dynamics of performance and intersubjectivity always occur within a ‘setting’, “involving furniture, décor, physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the

spate of human action played out…" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32)[23]. While this is a basic idea, the significance can be highlighted through the concept of 'affordance', which refers to things or objects which facilitate or provide the possibilities for action (Clark and Uzzell, 2002; Maarja-Trell and van Hoven, 2014). The implication is that these affordances can be utilised in a way that can enable images of self to be projected, as will become evident in Chapter Six of this thesis.

3.3.2 Psychoanalysis and Interactionism - An Incompatible Fusion?

The main thrust of interactionism as mentioned, is that people "act toward things on the basis of meanings that the things have for them (Blumer, 1986, p. 2). Classical interactionism holds an anti-essentialist view of human interaction, based (like poststructuralist insights) on an epistemology which rejects "the search for universal truths" (Plummer, 1982, p. 227). The outline in the previous section however, highlights that underlying interaction there is always something else of conscious or unconscious concern to individuals - that of the self. What Goffman's work shows in my view, is that even in the most seemingly mundane of interactions and performances (such as opening a door) which on the outside may bear no relation to the self, the self is always open to question. Goffman's (1959, 1967) discussion on how individuals attempt to maintain both the 'definition of the situation' and their projected image of self for example, implies that individuals always 'knowingly and unwittingly' mould and shape their actions within the presence of others to suit their conscious and unconsciously projected image of self. As Goffman (1967, p. 99) argues "there is no social encounter which cannot become embarrassing to one or more of its participants" and:

> there is no interaction in which participants do not take an appreciable chance of being slightly embarrassed or a slight chance of being deeply humiliated. Life is may not be much of a gamble, but interaction is Goffman (1959, p. 236; also Goffman, 1967, p. 33).

I contend therefore, that it is not merely that individuals act on the basis of the meanings things hold for them (Blumer, 1986), but on basis of what the meanings of

[23] Goffman's (1959) idea of 'setting' also applies to outside contexts.

things, acts and situations hold for the self they "intentionally or unwittingly project (Goffman, 1959, p. 32).

These points relate to the implicit question of motivation within masculinities theorising[24]. Some symbolic interactionist insights (see Plummer, 1982) reject any notion of underlying impulses - the claims of which are the purview of psychoanalysis. As Elliot and Meltzer (1981) argue however, a careful reading of the interactionist literature reveals some unspoken underlying assumptions. One such assumption is the idea that the 'self' is something which individuals seek to establish and verify through recognition (Elliot and Meltzer, 1981; Turner and Sets, 2006). This is evident in the way in which disruptions or threats to the 'definition of the situation' or to projected images of self can result in painful emotions such as embarrassment and shame (Goffman, 1959, p. 23; 1967, pp. 7-13). Numerous researchers (such as Billig, 2001; Branaman, 1997; Hancock and Garner, 2015; Heath, 1988; Scheff, 2006; Schudson, 1984; Schwalbe, 1993; Smith, 2006) have noted that these emotions of embarrassment and shame (or ashamedness) are notable features of Goffman's work. Although Goffman's perspective is close to the postmodern view that the self is nothing but an assemblage of images (Branaman, 2010; Schwalbe, 1993), Branaman (1997) and Schwalbe (1993) argue that the emotions within Goffman's work seem to show a deeper attachment to these signs than postmodern conceptions of identity would have it. In this way the self can be thought of not as static and unitary, nor as a free-floating assemblage of images (Schwalbe, 1993), but 'sticky' (Berggren, 2014; Freeman, 1993).

Scheff (1988, 1994, 2006) takes these ideas further to develop a psychoanalytically orientated expansion of Goffman's perspective, based on what Goffman (1961, p. 159) called "the classic" theme of sociology, that of "the social bond". For Goffman (1961, p. 320) the 'individual' is a "stance-taking entity", because images of self provide us with "something to belong to" without which "we have no stable self" (Goffman, 1961, p. 320). Scheff's (2006) starting assumption is that the maintenance of social bonds is a crucial human motive. This has been alluded to within the masculinities literature through the concept of 'homosociality' (Bird, 1996; Flood, 2008; Kimmel, 1994) where it has been shown how masculinities are performed to sustain male social

[24] Nayak and Kehily's (1997b) paper asks explicitly in the title for example '*Why are Young Men so Homophobic?*'

bonds. The degree and type of actual or perceived 'deference' (or respect) an individual receives signifies the confirmation (or not) of these bonds (Scheff, 1988, 2006). When bonds or masculinity is confirmed, individuals experience 'pride' and when threatened or disrupted they experience 'shame' making up what Scheff (1988) calls the 'deference-emotion system'. In sum, to 'be' a person, through projecting an image of self, is to 'be' an object of value to others, signified through deference. As Goffman (1967, p. 58) argues, individuals cannot give themselves deference, they are "forced to seek it from others". For Scheff (1994, 2006), this means that identities are always linked to individuals' *relationship* to and with others, otherwise "there might be a tendency for society to disintegrate into islands inhabited by solitary cultish men, each in continuous worship at his own shrine" (Goffman, 1967, p. 58).

For Shott (1979, p. 1324) these emotions show that "social control is, in large part, self-control" in terms of self-criticism". The desire for the maintenance of social or masculine bonds arguably constitutes a mechanism of social control because the construction of norms of masculinity sets the terms or ideals by which these bonds are maintained. Thus, for Scheff (1988, p. 396; 2000; and Shott, 1979):

> the degree and type of deference and the attendant emotions of pride and shame make up a subtle and pervasive system of social sanctions… We experience the system as so compelling because of emotions-the pleasure of pride and fellow feeling on the one hand, and the punishment of embarrassment, shame and humiliation on the other.

Similarly, in terms of discussing the policing of masculinities within his research on a US high school Stoudt (2006, p.273) writes:

> Emotions such as shame, humiliation, and desire for inclusion are fundamental sites for discipline and control because their apparent emergence from within makes them seem "natural," untouched by social or political forces.[25]

[25] The link (or not) between these insights and post-structuralist thought are arguably incompatible (as Edley, 2006 argues) and controversial. Goffman's work is not generally discussed in terms of 'discourse', with the exception of Johnson (2016, p. 448) who argues that "Goffman probed the problems of self-relating to self-image… demonstrating how the self is relationally constituted through discourse…" Discursive perspectives do not view language and embodied actions as a 'resource' to indicate what is going on inside (Edley, 2001), whereas the insights I am deploying here would suggest that it (language) does. What is compatible is the post-structuralist notion that performances, whether bodily or discursive, *construct* the (gendered) self rather than being reflective of it (Butler, 1990).

For Scheff (1988), Goffman's work offers some useful new directions in relation to emotions and psychoanalysis. He argues that Goffman shows how an *interpersonal* 'feeling trap' may occur between two or more individuals in face to face interaction. This involves "the contagion of embarrassment *between* interactants" [my emphasis] whereby "one becomes ashamed that the other is ashamed, who in turn becomes ashamed" (Scheff, 1988, p. 396; see also Goffman, 1959, pp. 23-24; 1963, p. 30; 1967, pp. 12-13; 1983, p. 2). Scheff's (1988) criticism of Goffman however, is his neglect of the interior or psychological aspect of the individual, of what may occur *within* an interactant in face to face interaction. Scheff (1988) draws upon the work of psychoanalyst Helen Block Lewis (1971) who showed that an *intrapersonal* 'feeling trap' or 'inner loop' (Scheff, 1988) can occur, where an individual becomes 'ashamed of being ashamed'.

Scheff (2006, p. 68) defines 'shame' as a "*class name*" for "a large family of emotions that includes many cognates and variants, most notably embarrassment, humiliation, and related feelings such as shyness that involve reactions to rejection or feelings of failure or inadequacy" that results from a "threat to the social bond… *no matter how* slight" (Scheff, 2000, p. 96). This 'shame' is produced when an image of self is threatened or discredited (Goffman, 1952). Ideally, individuals will try to prevent these situations from occurring by engaging in a 'corrective' performance to maintain or restore an image of self. If this cannot be enacted, the 'inner loop' of being 'ashamed of being ashamed' can lead to a 'shame-rage spiral' (Scheff, 1994) called 'humiliated fury'[26] (Scheff, 1988) or 'narcissistic rage' (Redman, 2000). Scheff (1988, 1994, 2006) argues that acknowledging shame and vulnerability has a discharge function and can serve as a way to restore social bonds and avoid entry into this 'inner loop'.

These insights are especially relevant for masculinities theorising because the expression of embarrassment, shame and vulnerability have been found to be *in themselves* a source of stigma and shame for men (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Martino, 1999; Pollack, 1999; Scheff, 2006; Seidler, 2007). Thus, the avoidance of displaying these vulnerable emotions constitutes a type of

[26] A careful reading of Goffman indicates that he was close to making this link. He recognised that an individual can become ashamed or being ashamed (Goffman, 1963. 1967, pp. 8-9) and makes the point elsewhere that "There seems to be a critical point at which the flustered individual gives up trying to conceal or play down his uneasiness: he collapses into tears or paroxysms of laughter, has a temper tantrum, *flies into blind rage*…" (Goffman, 1967, p. 103, sic) [my emphasis].

'feeling rule' (Hochschild, 1979) and makes this state of being 'ashamed of being ashamed' more likely; second, the more ambitious a claim about self is projected or desired, the more 'thin skinned' and virulent a person can become (Goffman, 1967) when their projected image of self is threatened. This is exemplified through academic discussion on the relationship between masculinity, 'aggrieved entitlement', bullying and humiliation in the case of mass shootings in the United States (Kalish and Kimmel, 2010; Kimmel and Mahler, 2003).

3.3.3 Summary

This section has theorised masculinities using a psychoanalytically orientated dramaturgical framework. The insights above do not entail the need to revert to the 'drive theories' of some psychoanalytic accounts which hold that motivation is rooted in drives which "propel humanity toward conduct" (Elliot and Meltzer, 1981, p. 229). I have pointed that the motivation underpinning this interactionist perspective is the need for construct or verify a self (Elliot and Meltzer, 1981; Turner, 2011). This is not a static self however, in terms of a rigid character structure that has been developed during the early years, but one which must be proved and comes into being based on socially constructed performances and which can also undergo a 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, 1963) or a continuous re-definition and re-constitution over time (Brickell, 2005, Elliot and Meltzer, 1981). Through Scheff's (re)development of Goffman's work, I have also emphasised the role of emotions in constituting performances.

3.4. Conclusion

As this chapter has shown, masculinities theorising has become increasingly diverse and heterogeneous (Beasley, 2012). I have furthered the heterogeneity of masculinities theorising by explicating a psychoanalytically orientated interactionist approach based on Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1963, 1966, 1967) dramaturgical perspective. Scheff's expansion constitutes, as Charlton (1999, p. 1533) puts it, the "blending of the psychotherapeutic into the mix of classic sociological concerns". This 'classic' concern is around the 'social bond' (Goffman, 1961). The

framework is not dependent on a deep form of psychoanalysis where gendered power dynamics and the emotional suffering of these inequalities are "explained within the universal framework of family relations" (Seidler, 2007, p. 13). Rather the focus is on the social context of face to face interaction and the ways in which 'face' is constantly projected and maintained within and through the multiple contingencies of a social situation.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this thesis however, the sites of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés were not chosen simply as a useful *means* to observe the performances of masculinities in themselves. Rather, how the Fusion and Retro youth cafés as spaces which are mutually constitutive of and constituted by the performance of masculinities are of focus. As Giergn (1999, p. 482, cited in O'Donoghue, 2007, p. 66) argues, sociological studies are always and everywhere, in some form "touched by place". For O'Donoghue (2007, p.62), this means that "All learning" then, "is emplaced. It happens somewhere…". It is within the social situations that occur within particular 'settings' that a 'definition of the situation' is established, expressed and built up. The 'definition of the situation' however, is built up from normative rules, obligations and expectations of what images of self can be projected and sustained, expectations which not only are enforced through mere disapproval but with sanctions and sanctioners "of some kind" (Goffman, 1959, p. 111; 1966). Thus, Goffman's work is useful for theorising and understanding how different settings can be "implicated in 'who we can be and become'" (Allen, 2013, p. 59), since the freedom to "enact some identities or realities rather than others is highly contingent on the power-laden spaces in and through which our experiences are lived" (Valentine, 2007, p. 19, cited in Trell and van Hoven, 2014). Thus, his work recognises Connell's (2000, p. 12) claim that masculinities "come into existence as people act. They are actively produced, using resources and strategies available in a given social setting".

This interactionist approach is highly suitable for this ethnographic study because it is not concerned about the institutionalization of gender inequalities or the broader cultural construction of gender, but rather the "fine-grained production of masculinities (and femininities) as configurations of practice" (Connell and Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 840) as they are observed within the two micro spaces of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. Furthermore, it also has implications for how research is conducted and approached within the field itself. As the next chapter highlights, the

‘impression management’ and emotional embodiment of the researcher in the field itself can constitute both a form of data and analysis.

Chapter Four - The Ethnographic Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and elucidates what Creswell (2009) has termed the three components of research design: philosophical assumptions; methodology; and methods. I deploy an ethnographic research approach within a qualitative methodology, conducive with my aim to contextualise the subjective feelings, meanings and experiences of young people (Choak, 2012; Creswell, 2009; Emond, 2005) in the mediated settings of two youth cafés. Ethnography has become increasingly popular amongst children and youth researchers (Heath *et al* 2009) and it "well suited for capturing the 'theatricality' of public displays of masculinity" (Arxer, 2011, p. 403; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Pascoe, 2007; Willis, 1977). Allan (2012) for example, notes that the approach has applicability to youth settings such as youth clubs. Indeed, youth clubs have been featured as one part of more general research projects (see Back, 1993; le Grand 2010), but these generic youth work settings have also been studied as objects of research in themselves (See Coburn, 2012; Kiilakoski and Kivijärvi, 2014; Plows, 2010).

First, I outline the philosophical foundations of this research, one that is consistent with the interactionist theoretical approach which frames this thesis. The issue of reflexivity is also dealt with here, as this is inevitably linked with this underpinning philosophy. The second section - 'Ethnography' - outlines the ethnographic methodology deployed for this study, including the process of entering the field and how the research was negotiated within the field. The third section focuses on the ethical considerations of this research while the final fourth section explores the process of data collection and modes of analysis adopted.

4.2 Philosophical base

4.2.1 The Constructivist-interpretive Paradigm

This research based on the 'constructivist-interpretive' paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). A research paradigm acts as the researchers 'net' which holds the ontological, epistemological and methodological beliefs (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) or "the basic

belief system or worldview" which guides the research (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). The ontology underpinning this research, referring to the nature of social phenomena and the beliefs that researcher holds about this reality (Denscombe, 2010) is constructionist. This is the view that people construct reality by interacting together with each other to construct and reconstruct new understandings of the social world (Denscombe, 2010). This ontology is consistent with the symbolic interactionist theoretical approach I use to guide the ethnographic work more broadly, including the data analysis and interpretation, since the third premise of classical interactionism emphasises the way in which the meanings that make up the construction of reality "are handled in, and modified through, an interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer, 1986, p. 2, sic).

Related to this constructivist-interpretive paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011) is the question of epistemology. Epistemology refers to how humans come to create knowledge about social reality, in other words, "how we know what we know" (Crotty, 1998, p. 3) or where the source of meaning comes from. I take the interpretivist epistemological view that the social world is *interpreted* by people rather than something that exits objectively (Descombe, 2010). This is again consistent with the second premise of classical symbolic interactionism, that the *source* of meaning "is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction that one has with one's fellows" (Blumer, 1986, p. 2). This qualitive constructivist-interpretive underpinning of the research is thus appropriate for my aim to understand the meanings individuals and groups give to social phenomena (Creswell, 2009), namely, their behaviour within and their experience of two youth cafés. It also facilitates flexibility, since the process of learning out in the field allows for appropriate change in research questions to order to respond to 'unexpected' findings in the field.

This philosophical base has important implications for several aspects to this thesis. Firstly, since this ontology holds that reality is multiply constructed by different social actors, universal truths are absent. Individual persons and groups of people give different meanings to the world depending on a wide variety of factors such as race, class, age and more specifically for this thesis, gender (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005; Moses and Knutsen, 2012). Knowledge is thus, historically 'situated' (Crotty, 1998; Guba and Lincoln, 1982; Willis, 2007). Secondly, this co-construction of meaning and 'situated' truth does not only relate to participants in the field but also to myself as a

researcher. Under the interpretivist epistemology which frames how meaning is produced throughout this research, I too am a part of the social world. Thus, the knowledge I create is a product of my interaction with participants, but the assumptions, knowledge and interpretation which I bring to the research as a whole is in itself shaped by my own circumstances and biography, which is also why "interpretivists also tend to be relativists" (Willis, 2007, p. 50). The entire research process should thus be understood as a social production, produced through the researcher's interactions with participants. To account for how this, I employed a 'reflexive' approach throughout the thesis.

4.2.2 Reflexivity

The 'reflexive turn' came about due to the postmodern critique of 'truth' of ethnographic research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011). This critique, which manifested in the 1980s with the publication of *Writing Culture* (Clifford and Marcus, 1986) rejects the idea that the standards, checks and guidelines employed by researchers in attempting to maintain 'objectivity' are sufficient in eliminating bias and accessing the 'truth' (Angrisino, 2005; Davies, 2008). It argues that researches cannot in fact escape the influence of their subjective values (Bradford *et al* 2012), and that their biographical 'situation' (gender, class, ethnicity, age and life experiences) has an effect on all processes of the ethnography (Angrosino, 2005; Davies, 2008). Hammersley (1998, p. 25) notes for example, that "what is to be included in the description must also be determined by assumptions about what is relevant" and what is relevant can find its origin in the ethnographer's pre-existing theoretical bias. Thus, "Given that the ethnographer in part creates the facts that he or she then records, it is advisable for him or her reflexively to monitor the construction activity" (Gobo, 2008, p. 73). Taking a 'reflexive' approach acknowledges the mediating force of the researcher's subjectivity (Davies, 2008) and implies that ethnographers should reflect upon how the multitude of vectors within their biographical lives, including their discipline of study and socio-cultural circumstances, shape the entire research process, from the impetus for the research topic's selection (Brewer, 2000; McRobbie, 1990), the selection of research questions (Choak, 2012) through to the "final reporting of results" (Davies, 2008, p. 4). This does not mean that ethnographic research cannot achieve a certain standard

of quality and that ‘anything goes’, but that “impartiality is impossible” (le Grand, 2010, p. 25; Greene and Hogan, 2005) because the researcher is always positioned vis-à-vis with the research participants.

While there are multiple ways in which the researchers are positioned, one such positioning to note in the context of this study is that of gender. Feminist criticism has pointed out that the gender of the researcher is important since "ethnographic texts have been shown to portray male domains of experience" (Back, 1993, p. 216). As Davison (2007, p. 389) argues, “there is a need for greater researcher reflexivity to acknowledge the entanglement of masculinities, methodologies, and subjectivities. David Morgan (1981) suggests that this does not necessarily mean that male researchers should try to overcome the 'effect' of their gender on participants’ responses and relationships to the researcher. Instead, male researchers in particular should reflect on how their gendered subjectivities are involved within ‘the process of knowing’ (Back, 1993) in all stages of the research.

In light of the ‘reflexive turn’, rather than simply stating here what possible aspects of my biography may have impacted on the research process, I have imbued ‘reflexive introspection’ through reflective discussion throughout this thesis (Plows, 2010) and took the standpoint that the notion of adopting strategies to enhance ‘objectivity’ and reduce my influence on the field would have only given the *impression* of ‘objectivity’. There is no consensus as to how much of this reflexive discussion should appear in ethnographic monographs (Coffey, 1999). The general criteria I have used was to write these ‘reflexive’/’reflective notes’ at times where I felt that my situated, embodied and affective self was playing a large part in the co-construction of knowledge rather than incessantly ‘naval-gazing’ underneath the fieldnotes or memos throughout the doing of the research. These reflective notes where not solely added afterthoughts however, because it was not simply that my own feelings and thoughts were split into writing fieldnotes first and personal reflections second. Rather, my own feelings and embodiment were part of the fieldnotes themselves (see ‘Approach to Data Collection’ below). Indeed, as I will show in chapters Six, Seven and Eight, documenting my own experiences within the field and reflecting upon them afterward was epistemologically productive (Coffey, 1990). In these chapters, I show how my own gendered embodiment within both cafés were productive of performances of masculinities and how some events prompted recall of my own schooling experiences

(Hertz, 1997). This recall exemplified how I was also simultaneously affected and constituted by these performances, meaning that I too become an object of research, embedded into the social relations within each café and not merely a distant observer. As a result, not only did I attempt to account and interpret young men's performances of masculinity, but also my own actions and feelings within the field using the symbolic interactionist framework which I have developed in the previous chapter. These points capture Morgan's (1981) claim that the researcher's gendered self can be seen a source of knowledge rather than a prohibitor of knowledge.

4.3 Ethnography

4.3.1 Why Ethnography?

Ethnographic research owes its origins to anthropological studies which entailed the immersion of the researcher into a culture foreign to his/her own for an extended period of time (Gobo, 2008). Given that much sociological ethnographic research varies considerably in terms of length of time spent at any one setting (For example Adam's (2011) ten-day research in comparison to Alice Goffman's (2015) six-year ethnography), there have been debates on what exactly counts as 'ethnographic' research (Esterberg, 2002; Hammersley, 1998). I call my methodological approach 'ethnographic' because of two factors. The first is that I immersed myself in the context of the issue I was exploring, and I used observations and subsequent fieldnotes as the principal source of data collection. These three elements are what generally distinguishes ethnographic research from other approaches (Allan, 2012; Gobo, 2008).

Ethnographic research is not merely a collection of research methods (Crang and Cook, 2007; Yudell, 2006) distinguished only by the use of observations. The other key feature which makes this approach 'ethnographic' is how it aims to explore and ascertain how social meanings, activities and social life is mediated by and within a particular concrete *setting* (Brewer, 2000; Esterberg, 2002; Gobo, 2008; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Youdell, 2006), in this case two youth cafés. The observations I make are not simply about the performance of masculinities, but about the performances of masculinities within a certain space.

An ethnographic approach was chosen because masculinity is not only about how young men feel about themselves or others, but something that is "accomplished in the course of social interaction" (Edley, 2001, p. 192). Through the use of observations, the ethnographic methodology is best suited to capture these dynamics, as shown by other numerous ethnographic studies of the performances of youthful masculinities (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Pascoe, 2007; Willis, 1977). Indeed, it is precisely the 'ethnographic moment' (Connell, 2000, p. 9) from the 1980s to the millennium which showed there were 'multiple masculinities' (Connell, 1995). As Willis and Trondman (2002) and Puddephatt (2009) argue, the strength of ethnographic research lies in its ability to explicate social dynamics from qualitative descriptions to conceptual analysis and link the issues that arise in the field to inform existing theory. This is shown throughout the rest of this thesis in the way the observations and interviews were linked to the broader theoretical framework and conceptual literature on youthful masculinities and space. In sum, this study was 'ethnographic' because it connected the observations to the specific setting in which they occurred which were then further linked to the wider historical and cultural contingencies pertaining to gender and young people.

4.3.2 Getting In...

This research consisted of the conducting of over one hundred hours of observations and interviews with 11 young people (eight young men and three young women) and five café workers (four paid youth workers and one volunteer) within the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. The data produced was in the form of written fieldnotes and interview transcripts. Ethical approval was sought and granted from the Social Research Ethics Committee in University College Cork. I adopted no general selection criteria for the choice of youth cafés. My inclusion criteria was based on a convenience-based approach. I gathered an initial list of all the youth cafés that I could feasibly (in terms of location and access) conduct the research in through an internet search. I also sent an email to the co-ordinator of the network of independent cafés located in the wider geographical area. This final list included the days and hours each café was open. Most of the cafés were open for one day a week, mostly Fridays. I made initial contact by sending emails to the co-ordinator of each café, believing they

constituted the 'gatekeepers' (Gobo, 2008) to my entry to the field. Some did not reply while another co-ordinator needed to check with café workers if they were comfortable with hosting me, but I did not get an answer when I rang back twice, nor a return phone call. I had discovered that Ciara[27], one of the volunteers of a youth club I had previously volunteered in two years before was now the co-ordinator of the Fusion youth café. She invited me to meet with her to discuss my research. Sarah, the co-ordinator of the Retro youth centre which contained the Retro youth café also invited me for a meeting.

I brought all the necessary information sheets and consent forms to both meetings along with a 'Who am I?' information poster (see appendix 1) which I proposed to put up on the walls of each café (James, 2012; Plows, 2010). At each meeting I discussed the proposed research and what it necessitated. I proposed that I would take the role of 'participant observer', meaning that I would also engage with those being studied within the setting (Brewer, 2000; Davies, 2008). Thankfully, both co-ordinators were enthusiastic about the research and agreed to host the research. I was especially relieved that the Retro youth café was open for five days during the week, since this meant I could spend many hours observing in contrast to the Fusion café, which was open one day a week for two hours. Ciara and Sarah agreed that we would explain who I am and my role to young people as follows; that I am 'a student from University College Cork doing research on youth cafés who will be volunteering for a couple of months.' This meant that I would help with the setting up and closing of each café as well as the general operation of each youth café each setting as per the usual responsibilities of any café worker.

At these meetings, I also informed both Ciara and Sarah that although I could not foresee that the research design would change significantly, it was a possibility as sometimes happens with ethnographic research (Gobo, 2008; Hammersley, 2007; for example, Tucker, 2012), but that any proposed changes would first be discussed with them. I also informed both that the research was not an evaluation of the respective cafés and their practices (Emond, 2005). I informed them about the child protection training which I undertook two years before (due to my previous voluntary work at a youth club) and they were happy that this was recent enough not to warrant another

[27] All names are pseudonyms.

session of training. Since I had previously been Garda vetted for my previous youth club role, Ciara was satisfied that I did not need to be vetted for my potential role in the Fusion café, but Garda[28] vetting was required again for the Retro café.

4.3.3 ...and 'Getting On': Negotiating the Research Approach

In both youth cafés, I adopted the same approach to negotiating the research process with young people and café workers. I introduced my 'student' status at University College Cork and that I was conducting research 'mostly about what young men do in youth cafés, why they hang out at their youth cafés, what they think about the space and how it compares to different spaces*'*. Explaining research in simple terms such as this is consistent with the approach of other scholars who have conducted ethnographic work on the same age group (see McCormack, 2011; Pascoe, 2007). I also stuck up 'Who am I?' posters in each café. I also informed young people that 'I would be asking young people later if they were interested in participating, but that at first I would just be getting used to the place'. I explained that my research was like coursework, but has a long presentation and exam (viva) element at the end, that the research will help me to obtain a 'PhD degree in social studies' and that I would be grateful if they could share their views on youth cafés. Some were fascinated by the 80 000-word count, while some such as Jack (who I introduce in the next chapter) seemed to empathise with my position. Similarly, Emond (2005) felt that participants' view of her as a 'student' meant that participants were more open with her and willing to answer questions. I continued this introductory greeting for every new young person I met until I left the field since this constitutes good ethical practice (Spence *et al* 2006). Sometimes I was able to explain who I was to two or more young people at a time. However, there were occasions where I did not get a chance to introduce myself to some young people as they attended for about fifteen minutes and left without seeing them again.

'Getting in' is not the same as 'getting on' (Gobo, 2008) however. Whilst achieving physical access was easy overall (in comparison to the experiences of other ethnographers, (see Ilan, 2007), achieving 'social access' was something I was initially

[28] Under the law, any person whose work or activity involves access to children or vulnerable adults must be vetted by An Garda Síochána, the Irish police.

worried about, as is common amongst other student ethnographers (Ilan, 2007; le Grand, 2010). As Heath *et al* (2009) and Emond (2005) point out, the negotiation of access does not necessarily end once one is in the field. I also had to gain acceptance from young people within each café. Indeed, as Gobo (2008) highlights, poor data can result if participants are not comfortable with the researcher. I introduce each café space, the biographies of the participants and my entry to the field in more detail in the next chapter, but it is necessary to make a few general points about the research approach within the field and the issues I anticipated.

First, as is common with first time ethnographic researchers especially (see Ilan, 2007; le Grand 2010) I was anxious about entering the field itself. This was mostly a gendered anxiety however, an anxiety about young mens' acceptance of me not merely as a person or man, but as a researcher. This was because I never like sport and felt even simple things such as this would mark me as 'different'. Of course, I had anticipated and assumed through this anxiety that young men within the cafés were going to be homogenous (though in what way I could not pin down), something which proved to be (very) wrong (see Chapter Five). Despite these anxieties, I refrained from trying to 'decrease social distance' (McCormack, 2011, p. 89) by adopting young people's colloquialisms or by dressing differently (see le Grand, 2010; McCormack, 2011) as I felt this would have given an illusion of objectivity.

One of the practice issues when working with young people relates to that of boundaries (Hart, 2016) and both my role as a volunteer and as a researcher necessitated that these boundaries be managed. One aspect to these boundaries related to the question of intervention when witnessing problematic behaviour. Here, the boundary relates to when a line has been crossed that may necessitate the researcher having to intervene in some way. The issue partly relates to that of the (gendered) positioning of the researcher. Pease (2013) notes that male researchers have traditionally not accounted for the interplay and connection between their gendered selves and their research. Delamont (2000) and Skeggs (1992) for example, have also been critical of how male researchers have imagined themselves to be member of the group of male participants they are studying. Skeggs (1992) highlights how Paul Willis's (1977) involvement with 'the lads' was probably the reason why Willis was not critical of the 'lads' sexist behaviour. On the other hand, in Les Back's (1993) exploration of young people's attitudes towards other racial minorities in a youth club

setting, he writes of his conflict as to whether he should have intervened to challenge young men's sexist behaviour. While McRobbie (1996) urges male researchers to be critical of sexism in field research, Les Back (1993 p. 218) and others (Barnes, 2013; Flood, 2013) feared that confronting men in field research may alter the researcher-participant relationship for the worst, yet also felt that holding back criticism would be dishonest and unethical. I also had this fear at the outset, but my overall approach was to adopt a duty of care in both cafés (see 'Ethics' below) and though I had to intervene in young men's interactions (see Chapter's Six and Seven), the reality was that my rapport with them was unaffected (from my viewpoint at least).

Another issue in relation to boundaries and my immersion in the field was how I related to young people in the café. Heath *et al* (2009) for example, caution that while in the field, the researcher should be conscious not to identify with one group over another. Otherwise, this will affect how the researcher is seen by others. My approach was to try and intermingle with all young people at each youth café, but since some young people attended more than others, identification and rapport with some young people was inevitably more firmly established than others. At the same time, it was also necessary to keep a boundary between myself and young people as was the case with other volunteers and youth workers.

As I note in the next chapter, I played at least one game of draughts with Jon (whom I introduce in the next chapter) in every session at the Retro youth café. This sometimes meant I would be sitting with him for at least half an hour at a time. Even when we were not playing draughts, we had many conversations. Jon did not talk much to other young people in the café, but he had some things in common with myself, especially when I was his age. I had to be careful however, in that I had to ensure that Jon did not become too close to me and I had to ensure (as do other volunteers and workers) that I was not considered a friend. During one conversation for example, I mentioned how I had a funny Facebook profile photo. Since he was looking at Facebook during this conversation, he looked up my name, saw my photo and then (though he did not say it at the time) sent a friend request. I explained the next day how I could not accept the request as café workers have to maintain some distance with young people, which he understood. Part of my strategy in maintaining an appropriate boundary was to ensure that I played pool and chatted with other young people attending the café.

4.4 Ethics

4.4.1 Preventing 'harm'

Ethical issues arise at every stage of the research and warrant attention (Anderson, 2004). I based my ethical framework on UCC's *Code of Research Conduct* and the Sociological Association of Ireland's (SAI, undated) *Ethical Guidelines*. Since most participants in this research were under eighteen, I also based my ethical protocol on the *Guidance for developing ethical research projects involving children* (DCYA, 2012) and *Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (DCYA, 2011).

It is generally accepted that harm, both physical and emotional is to be avoided in social research (Bryman, 2012), yet what counts as 'harm' is dependent on a number of complex factors (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) and in terms of overcoming the difficulties with the various ethical approaches, Alderson (2004), notes that these issues continue to be debated. Lindsey (1999, p. 3, also Gobo, 2008) argues that all "Research with human participants is an intrusive process" and although she admits that this characterisation may seem overstated, I argue that she has a point, but that this 'intrusiveness' should be interpreted as a continuum rather than something that is statically oppressive.

Harm, which may occur during ethnographic research, is more likely to be indirect than direct), mostly because "harms or benefits derive from the participants' unpredictable response to the interactions rather than the researcher's intentions" (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p. 340). Since this 'harm' is unpredictable and there is "no definite agreement on what might, or might not be ethical" (Murphy and Dingwall, 2001, p. 341) I adopted a situationalist approach to research practice:

> This point of view usually places particular emphasis on the avoidance of serious harm to participants, and insisted on the legitimacy of research and the likelihood that offence to someone cannot be avoided. It leaves open to judgement the issue of what the benefits and costs of particular research strategies are in particular cases, and how these should be weighed. No strategy

> is proscribed absolutely, though some may be seen as more difficult to justify than others" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p. 219).

This approach was informed by two ethical 'rules' throughout my research:

> I will commit to safeguarding the rights and dignity of participants throughout my study and interact with participants in a respectful manner.
>
> I will do my best to avoid any physical or emotional harm to participants both in the field and in the dissemination of data by ensuring confidentiality, anonymity, privacy and implement to the best of my ability, safeguards to ensure such values.

Though a situationalist approach helps, France (2004, p. 186) suggests that it is "not unreasonable for us to think through our own research proposals and identify areas that might create emotional upset and difficulties". In terms of the interviews, I took on board France's (2004) recommendation that the researcher give apt support should discomfort or upset arise and Choak's (2012) suggestion to use a 'cool off' round of questioning or even a break from, or postponement of the interview. Influenced by France (2004), I also prepared and put together a basic information guide of helpful organizations that participants could contact should such issues of emotional harm arise. I did not envisage that any upsetting issues would arise within the interviews and I did not think I would have to utilise out this information guide. As I document in Chapter Eight however, Jack revealed a personal distressing issue in the interview which required me to ask him if he was feeling alright and if he did need this contact information. He declined however, as he revealed how he was getting apt support for these issues, which was also confirmed by Ciara, the coordinator of the Fusion youth café. Finally, to ensure anonymity and confidentiality, I substituted all real names with pseudonyms, including the names of the youth cafés and the local areas in question. I was also careful in chapters Five to Eight to exclude fieldnotes and interview data (such as personal details) which had the potential to reveal the identity of participants, the cafés and the wider community (Gobo, 2008).

4.4.2 Informed Consent in Overt Research: Consenting to What?

Under the umbrella of ethical research practice, the notion of 'informed' consent stands as one of the most basic principles. Informed consent refers to the idea "that research subjects should have the right to be informed about the nature and consequences of the research" (Christians, 2005, p.144). In practice, this means that participants' involvement in the research should be voluntary, not ascertained by coercion, and "based on full and open information" (Christians, 2005, p. 144; Davies, 2008). As the *Sociological Association of Ireland*'s [SAI] (undated, p. 6) ethical guidelines state, it is the:

> responsibility on members to explain as fully as possible, and in terms meaningful to participants, what the research is about, who is undertaking the financing it, why it is being undertaken, and how it is to be promoted. In general, co-operation in fieldwork should be negotiated and not assumed.

The phrase 'in terms meaningful to the research' highlights two issues with the notion of 'informed consent'. The first is that researchers themselves "can rarely if ever know the full extent of what participation may entail or predict in advance all the possible outcomes of participation" (Heath *et al* 2009 p. 24; also, Rogers and Ludhra, 2012). It is, according to Rogers and Ludhra (2012) 'naive' to presuppose so. As Miller and Bell (2012, p. 64) point out, knowledge "is grounded in individual and collective experiences and this means that the course of the project may only be guessed at initially". It may also be the case, as Allan (2012, p. 73) reminds, that changes in the research questions could also be due to how participants may "direct the researcher to matters that are important to them". These points are especially true for ethnographic research (Gobo, 2008). Despite my agreement with these points, I did not enter the field without a compass and I communicated my orientating aims and in an accessible way to all within the setting (Davies, 2012).

The SAI's (undated, p. 6) use of the phrase 'in terms meaningful to participants' highlights how consent is not informed if it is not understandable due to the academic language which infuses research overall. Academic speak was not a suitable means to communicate this research. In fact, I argue that articulating the true purpose of the research in academic terms could arguably be more unethical than communicating in more simpler terms, since failure to understand the research could merit the

participants not only staying deeply uninformed but also uninterested. This also remains true for the parental information sheet and consent forms thus, I developed accessible information sheets and consent forms (Anderson 2004; Heath *et al* 2009) for parents (see appendix 2) and young people and café workers (see appendix 3). These were written with understandable but meaningful vocabulary (Fraser, 2004; Heath *et al* 2009) and outlined the research topic, why the research was being conducted and how the research would be promoted and disseminated. When I asked young people if they were interested in participating, I read the information sheets and asked after each subsection if they were 'okay' with what I read. After young people signed the consent form, I gave them an envelope which included the consent forms and information sheets for parents to take home. Some young people did not return consent forms as I did not see them for a long while after and they either forgot to obtain parental consent or had misplaced the forms. I piggybacked on two consent forms in the Retro café since the youth service itself was sending out consent forms for a day trip. In the Fusion youth café, I managed to verbally explain the research to two parents themselves since they were playing bingo in the community centre in which the café was located.

4.4.3 Ongoing and Negotiated Consent

Information sheets and consent forms did not constitute the end of the consent process however. Informed consent cannot be thought of as a once off stage but should be thought of as 'provisional' throughout the research process (Rogers and Ludhra (2012). This is partly due to the possibility that the research may change in scope but also because it is necessary to remind participants that the research is still ongoing. I envisaged that young people may have seen me more as a volunteer and less as a researcher since the voluntary element of participating and helping in each café would have been more overt than the research process itself. My ethical approach was thus, based on an 'ethics as process' (Rogers and Ludhra, 2012), or 'negotiated consent' framework (Miller and Bell, 2002) that is ongoing throughout the research process (Kellet, 2010). This constitutes good practice (France, 2004) and is seen by researchers as a suitable approach for research with young people (Heath *et al* 2009).

In practice, this meant being conscious of the privacy of participants and being respectful of their willingness to engage (Emond, 2005). This does not always mean that a desire for privacy will be vocally articulated. In Plows (2010) research on challenging interactions within a youth club setting for example, the desire for privacy was communicated by young people's sudden quietness when she came close to them, prompting her to walk away. This did not occur in this research. A tendency on the part of participants to forget my researcher role may have been one explanation, but my approach was to remind participants as to my researcher role. This was done by conversing with participants about school and college, yet even outside the context of such conversation, some young people (such as Jon, Jordan and James) specifically asked how my research was going, while some (such as James, Liam and Beth) asked when I would be conducting the interviews.

4.5 Approach to Data Collection and Analysis

4.5.1 Observations, Conversations and Fieldnotes

As the distinguishing feature of ethnographic research, I used observations, which is useful for examining group and individual interactions (Tucker, 2012). I wound down the observation process and fieldwork, when I perceived that the observation data in relation to the performance of masculinities became saturated (Crang and Cook, 1995; Curry, 1991), entailing around one hundred hours spent immersed in the cafés overall. These observations where enhanced with my participation in some activities in each café and enabled me to converse with young people. I kept the beginning stages of the research to observations and general rapport building, to avoid coming across as overly intrusive (Gobo, 2008). I was eventually able to have numerous ‘conversations with a purpose’ (Burgess, 1984, cited in Gobo, 2008) characterised by asking young people as to the meanings of some interactions within each café (Davies, 2008). My reflexive standpoint on these observations and conversations was of reminding myself as to my ‘participatory observer’ role, that I was embedded and a part of the cafés themselves. As I document in the chapters that follow, I was often at the receiving end of some of the humorous ‘wind-ups’ (see Chapter Six) performed by young men in both cafés. In other words, my own gendered presence was productive of some performances of masculinities. There were also occasions where I briefly lost a sense of my role as

researcher however, since I became engrossed in enjoyable activities such as cooking and in playing various board games with young people.

The problem with this however, was the fluidity of the cafés, especially that of Retro. There were many 'performances' of masculinities where the meaning behind them could not be ascertained because questioning was not possible. This was not merely because of the intrusion which such questioning might have entailed, but also because asking young people the day or even moments after was sometimes not possible. Most young people did not attend the Retro café every day, but sporadically. Even then, many young people who used the café did not arrive and stay for the full duration. They often left with their friendship groups and came back moments later or even an hour after they had first signed in.

I took handwritten fieldnotes immediately after leaving the research sites to minimise the visibility of the research process (Spradley, 1970). However, like Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson's (2015) ethnographic research on the performance of masculinities in a school setting, there were times where I deemed it safe to take brief scratch notes on my mobile phone. This was possible mainly in the Retro youth café on a couple of occasions since I could position myself behind the countertop in a way where nobody could stand behind me. I integrated these scratch notes with the handwritten fieldnotes and deleted them form my mobile immediately after. The taking of scratch notes was not simply to save time after, but to capture events which I thought at moments to be important.

I adopted this 'lightly structured approach' because of the danger that 'everything' observable could have become interesting (Gobo, 2008; Tucker, 2012, p. 36). My focus on masculinities acted as a buffer to prevent losing focus on the topic, yet I was conscious not to be overly stringent in case other aspects proved to be important, hence the 'lightly structured' approach. Yet this was not sufficient to capture all elements which may have been important. In fact, it was only over the halfway point of the research for example when I realised there was occasional instances of young men in the Retro café whispering to each other, actions which are particularly important in terms of the topic of masculinities (see Chapter Seven), yet these were not contained in the immediate fieldnotes since I had no recollection of them. Upon this realisation, I re-focused my 'observation schema' (Gobo, 2008) to be mindful and watchful of

these particular interactions. Ultimately, this shows that choices of *how* and *what* to observe are not perfect processes but only ideals and exemplifies Emerson *et al's* (1995, p. 147) argument that "the ethnographer always writes her interpretation of what she feels is meaningful and important to them".

In terms of the chronology of fieldnote taking, my fear of losing memory of some of the conversations and interactions I had with young people lead me to write some fieldnotes beginning with these ad verbum extracts. This later meant I had to attempt to put them in chronological order with the more general observation fieldnotes, but this was not a perfect process. It was easier to capture the step by step turn taking of particular 'encounters' (Goffman, 1966) rather than accurately and chronologically order each individual encounter as they happened in each session. Of course, these ad verbum extracts lie on a continuum of accuracy. Some events and conversations simply 'stuck' with me more than others for a variety of reasons, such as whether I perceived them to be crucial to the topic of the research or in the way they had an emotional effect on me (see Chapter Seven).

Finally, in terms of the process of fieldnote taking as a *description* of events, these written descriptions must again be seen as mediated. Firstly, my fieldnotes were a mixture of the 'realist' and 'confessional tale' (Emerson *et al* 2001) styles of field notetaking. They were 'realist' in the way they sometimes described what I plainly observed, but 'confessional' in how I documented my own embodiment and experiences, which are articulated and drawn upon throughout this thesis. Secondly, although it is recommended to use concrete language (Gobo, 2008) when writing fieldnotes, Youdell (2006) argues that there is no neat distinction between description and theory since all ethnography is situated within discourse and theoretical frames. In the reflective/reflexive notes at the end of the fieldnotes from each session, I took note of instances where this point seemed to transpire in terms of my selection of particular words for describing particular events. Youdell's (2006) point is particularly relevant in regard to instances where I was actively interpreting through the writing of fieldnotes and I again noted this in my reflective/reflexive notes.

The point I am making here is the way in which the observations and fieldnotes are mediated by a multitude of factors. Fieldnotes are selective in terms of the conscious and unconscious choices of *what* to write and *how* to write (Emerson *et al* 2001). What

gets unconsciously memorized as important and consciously chosen to be important (as in the case of choosing to take scratch notes) as well as how these choices are described within the field notes are not completely in a binary separation from 'data analysis' since there is some analysis already occurring as to what to write and not to write. As Emerson *et al* (1995, p. 144) argue, data "does not stand alone, rather analysis pervades all phases of the research enterprise…", hence, why I have titled this overall section as the '*Approach* to Data Collection' rather than the more objective title of 'Data Collection Methods'.

4.5.2 Interviews

Interviewing is a popular and widely used method in qualitative research (Bryman, 2012) and is also widely used in research with young people (Heath et al., 2009; Choak, 2012). I interviewed 11 young people out of the possible fourteen and five café workers (four paid youth workers and one volunteer), entailing 16 interviews in total. I interviewed Beth and Michelle from the Fusion café together since they were available. The three-young people who I did not interview but who consented to participate were from the Fusion café. I was consistently told that the café would be closed for four to six weeks beginning from August. I began the interviews in June believing I had the time to complete them before then. However, Ciara informed me that the café would be in fact closed for over eight weeks starting from July. The café closed before I could have the chance to interview Cian, Kieran and Gary, but even then, Cian and Kieran's attendance had become sporadic. Unfortunately, upon my return to the café as a volunteer rather than a researcher in the middle of September, all three did not show up. This is one limitation to this research, especially regarding having conducted no formal interview with Cian, since he endured experiences in the Fusion café (see Chapter Seven) that were worthy of further probing within an interview context. Instead, I was left with fieldnotes which documented some of the conversations I had with him, which included questions about his views of the café.

Each young person I did interview was a regular at their respective cafés, meaning they had experiential relevance (Pattman, 1990). The flexibility inherent in the semi-structured interview method meant there was room to ask participants to clarify and develop their answers more (Choak, 2012). This also meant there was more room for

leeway in the direction participant's answers may go (Bryman, 2012). In this regard, semi-structured interviews can close the hierarchical gap between the researcher and participant precisely because it gives scope to the participants to talk about issues important to them and helps to move the researcher away from assumed knowledge's and important themes.

The interviews were conducted near the end stages of the fieldwork meaning that sufficient rapport had been built. Ideally, it is recommended to conduct interviews in locations that are based on the young person's choosing in order to minimise power differentials (Heath *et al* 2009). However, since café workers are not allowed to be left alone with a young person as part of café policy, the interviews were conducted in rooms within the vicinity of the café space; the art room in Retro (which also had a CCTV camera) and the storage room in Fusion, which was inside the café space itself. Before each interview, I re-negotiated consent by explaining the topic of the research and the purpose of the interview. I explained that names would be anonymised and that I would not be discussing what anyone said in the interviews with other café workers. I also explained that there were no right or wrong answers (Morrow, 2001) but that I was simply interested in young people's opinions and experiences. I also informed all participants as to the limitations of the research's potential to change things within each café (Morrow, 2001). Lastly, I reiterated that the purpose of the tape recorder was to have an accurate recording of the interview (Davies, 2008). I used an interview schedule (see appendix 5) that was non-directive to reduce the mirroring of the dialogue that young people already face with authority figures (Heath *et al* 2009). 'Why' questions were also avoided to avoid defensive answers (Heath *et al* 2009).

The psychoanalytically informed symbolic interactionist framework I deployed to frame the ethnographic work had implications for how I transcribed the interview data in terms of what to include and what to note about particular moments within the interview. As I highlight in the case of Jordan's interview in Chapter Eight in particular, different facial expressions, bodily comportments and gestures constitute meaningful signs which not only furthers understanding of what kind of performance and impression is intended to be given, but also what is unintentionally 'given off' (Goffman, 1959). Following each session which involved an interview, I listened back to each interview and wrote down the points where bodily expressions such as a brief

look of disgust occurred in case I would forget these whilst transcribing. Human talk contains many of what would appeared to be ‘useless words’ such as ‘like’, ‘yeah’, and ‘eh’, but these can also indicate moments of hesitation and awkwardness. They can also indicate an attempt on the part of the interviewee to project a certain ‘definition of the situation’ (see Chapter Eight) which is important for the interactionist approach I am deploying. I included these seemingly unimportant words as well as silences and pauses, which Gobo (2008) also sees as important. After each session which involved an interview I took reflective notes about the interview, typed them up and attached them to the eventual transcripts (Gobo, 2008). What these points highlight is that the “interview is a ‘co-construction’, in the sense that it does not belong entirely to the interviewee but is the outcome of interaction with the interviewing researcher” (Gobo, 2008, p. 198). Age differences, my gendered self, the location of the interview and my role as a researcher should be seen as mediators of the interview as participants did at times try to impress me with their answers (see Chapter Seven).

4.5.3 Analysing the Data: An Inductive/deductive Approach

Research methods books usually describe the overall research approach in the binary of qualitative/quantitative research and then subsequently refer to data analysis as entailing either an ‘inductive’ approach for qualitative or ‘deductive’ approach for quantitative research. Though some ethnographic research may be purely inductive since a grounded theory approach is undertaken (Silverman, 2010), the binary distinction of inductive/deductive was unsuitable as an approach to the data analysis in this research. The data analysis in practice was “at once” both “inductive and deductive” (Emerson *et al* 1995, p. 144) in two ways. It was deductive because I did not enter the field with a blank slate in which everything which I found simply 'interesting' were gathered and merged into themes. Rather, as the previous chapter has implied, I entered the field with 'known' theories, concepts and previous studies, predominantly from the masculinities literature, which all formed a lens, with which to uncover the unknown elements of the youth cafés I am entered. It was inductive because this lens was not simply imposed onto the data. In practice the analysis was

an ‘iterative process’ between the literature, the theoretical approach and the fieldwork material (James, 2012).

Given the discussion around reflexivity throughout this chapter, I would argue that data analysis does not begin after leaving the field. The fieldnotes, as mentioned, are a selective conscious and unconscious analysis of what I felt to be important. Furthermore, as I show in the analysis chapters (for example, Chapter Six and Seven), I also at times experienced personal anxiety on occasion in the field. In line with the interactionist theoretical approach of this thesis which holds that individuals are always consciously and unconsciously analysing the implications that interactions or events hold for their image of self, this anxiety constitutes an example of active analysis within the field. It constitutes my own situational interpretation of how an interaction threatened my own image of self.

The *formal* analysis of the data however, began upon my leave from the field. Like Ward (2013, p. 89), I too found that “the practice of analysing the data from the fieldnotes and interviews was not straightforward”. I uploaded the interview transcripts to the NVivo software. I generally coded the fieldnotes and interviews together over a couple of weeks. My general approach toward extracting themes from both forms of data was to be mindful of ‘repetitions’, ‘similarities and differences’ and ‘theory-related material’ (Ryan and Bernard, 2003) but these were not the only techniques. I also wrote and kept ‘analytic memos’ throughout the data analysis process (Emerson *et al* 1995; Saldaña, 2009). These memos facilitated the recording of various theoretical, coding and other reflective ideas and comments, which helped me to grapple with the various parts of the data analysis process. Although the content of interview transcripts was different to that of the fieldnotes, I was mindful that some of the topics and issues within the transcripts and fieldnotes could overlap and complement each other. Thus, I constantly kept open the possibility that single themes could be developed from both these forms of data.

The main difficulty with the process of data analysis however, was the coding of fieldnotes. I typed the handwritten fieldnotes up on Microsoft Word and left extra space on the right margin to aid coding (Crang and Cook, 2007). I stored them on my encrypted laptop but printed them for coding since I felt they would be easier to read and coded using pencil. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (Saldaña,

2009) was especially helpful in deciding upon a suitable method of coding. Simply put, a 'code' is "a word or short phrase that captures and signals what is going on in a piece of data…" (Emerson *et al* 1995, p. 146) As per my discussion on reflexivity, these codes do not objectively capture what the fieldnote or interview extract is about or even what the piece of data means. As Saldaña (2009) and Emerson *et al* (1995) point out, what word or phrase is used as a code depends on the research and analytic lens and biography of the researcher.

The choice of coding methods depends on a variety of factors such as the goals of the research and the actual form of data (in this case fieldnotes and interview transcripts). I used 'simultaneous' and 'descriptive' coding for both the fieldnotes and interviews. 'Simultaneous coding' (Saldaña, 2009, p. 62) involves the use of two or more codes to categorize data, thus acknowledging that multiple topics and meanings may be contained within an action, fieldnote fragment or spoken word. On the other hand, 'descriptive coding' "summarizes in a word or short phrase… the topic of a passage of qualitative data" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 70). The combination of both these coding methods enabled me to build a hierarchy of codes and categories to aid the eventual formation of themes. I also at times used 'emotion'[29] and 'in-vivo'[30] codes where appropriate, but I was cautious "of muddying the analytic waters too much" (Saldaña, 2009, p. 47).

The coding of fieldnotes proved to be far more difficult than imagined. On my first attempt at coding, it was clear that although the combination of these coding methods was suitable, I was getting carried away with the 'simultaneous' method of coding as there were many single lines of fieldnotes that had up to six codes. This high number was problematic as it reduced the meaning of particular discrete 'encounters' (Goffman, 1966) as a whole, since the many codes split the reciprocity of the interactions documented in the fieldnotes (Plows, 2010). It also meant that the coding process as a whole became positivistic in appearance and more resembled the type of 'open coding' used by grounded theorists. There were also many different codes

[29] Emotion codes label the emotions recalled by the participants themselves of inferred by the researcher about the participant.
[30] This involves using direct quotations or words used within the line itself as a code.

throughout the fieldnotes as a whole. I kept a coding sheet, which acted as a basic list of the codes I used, along with brief preliminary descriptions of what they meant.

These problems are common among researchers who are new to the coding of ethnographic fieldnotes (Emerson *et al* 1995; see Plows, 2010; Ward, 2013). The overall point as Emerson *et al* (1995) and Saldaña (2009) advise, is to link different codes under a single category to aid the development of an eventually overarching theme. In the end, I was overwhelmed, confused and anxious with the sheer number of different codes left from the first round of coding and they did not meaningfully categorise the data in any way like Ward (2013) also experienced. I reviewed the fieldnotes and erased out (since I used pencil) codes which I deemed wholly unsuitable and (looking back) embarrassingly tedious. I also replaced codes. I turned to my coding sheet and fieldnotes many times to attempt to try and find different codes which could be replaced with one single code. Of course, I was conscious that my attempt in watering down the meanings of codes could have also meant I was diluting the complexity of the actual data. After further thinking and re-attempts at coding, I turned to 'holistic coding' (Saldaña, 2009) and repeatedly read the fieldnotes (Hart, 2016). This 'holistic coding' involved categorizing larger portions of text (Saldaña, 2009) where I could then proceed to conduct line by line coding. This was especially helpful in the coding of humour for example, which was a large part of the fieldnotes but was complex social practice in the performances of masculinities (see Chapter Six).

4.6 Conclusion - Ethnography as 'an answer'

This chapter has outlined the ethnographic methodology which I deployed for this research. In keeping with the symbolic interactionist approach of this thesis, the first section outlined the 'constructivist-interpretive' paradigm which underpins this thesis. Consequently, I also highlighted how my biography and positionality is bound up with the research process. Indeed, throughout this chapter, I have highlighted the multiple ways in which the research is mediated through my own biography, through the explication of my methods and approach to data analysis. This means that this ethnography on the performance of masculinities does not provide 'The Answer' to the research questions but rather, 'an answer'. The coding and categorization of the interview and fieldnote data into themes did not automatically produce an

ethnographic story. The process of coding enabled me to fully appreciate what the idea of ethnography as a ‘craft’ really meant, since the mechanistic process of coding did not neatly align and produce a single story but a collection of many stories. The boundaries which separated them were soft rather than hard and distinct. In other words, the irony was that the process of coding on the one hand helped to organize a mess, but on the other, it helped in the crafting and writing of the ethnographic story by the necessary process of making a further ‘mess’ out of this organization. It is this ‘story’, of the way in which the Fusion and Retro youth cafés are mutually constitutive of and constituted by young masculinities, which I now explore.

Chapter Five - Entering the Cafés

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to profile the Fusion and Retro youth cafés and to introduce the ethnographic work. In the first section of this chapter, I provide an operational profile of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés respectively. In each profile, I first contextualise the cafés within the broader communities in which they are located. I provide a brief the history of the development of each café and situate them in the context of broader developments in youth policy in the Irish context. I classify the cafés by using Forkan *et al's* (2015) topology. Finally, I give a description of the layout and provide a visual drawing of each café.

In the second section of this chapter, I proceed to introduce the ethnography of both youth cafés separately. In each of these accounts, I first outline my initial entry to the field and provide a general description of some of the main dynamics of each café. I then proceed to outline and describe the biographies of the 'key players' of the ethnography. In the conclusion to this chapter, I use Goffman's (1959, 1966, 1967) perspective to make some general points about the settings of the café spaces.

5.2 The 'Fusion' and 'Retro' Youth Cafés: An Operational Profile

5.2.1 The Fusion Youth Café

The 'Fusion Youth Café' is situated within a city suburb with a HP Deprivation Index of -0.4[31] (as of the 2011 census), which is 'marginally below average' on the HP deprivation scale. The café itself however, is situated immediately adjacent to an electoral division with a deprivation index of -9.5. The other adjacent electoral divisions have a deprivation rate of just below zero. The Fusion youth café is not affiliated to any youth work organisation nor a part of a broader youth service but is an independent café. The café is situated within a very large room in a community centre, which was re-furbished and fitted with a storage room and kitchen facilities

[31]This "index provides a method of measuring the relative affluence or disadvantage of a particular geographical area using data compiled from various censuses. A score is given to the area based on a national average of zero and ranging from approximately -40 (being the most disadvantaged) to +40 (being the most affluent)" (Pobal, 2010).

owing to the funding provided by Pobal[32] under the April 2010 round of funding for youth cafés.

The call for funding applications prompted members of the community association's committee to propose the development of a youth café. Owing to her experience of working with children and young people, Ciara - who was on the committee of the community association - was asked if she would become the coordinator of the youth café if the application for funding was successful. She agreed and sought help from members of the Community Development Project for the local area to fill out the Pobal application form. The application for funding was approved, and the DCYA provided over 60,000 euro in funding to convert the large room in the community centre into a suitable space for a youth café. This community centre acts as a hub for a range of activities, groups and businesses who rent out various spaces within the centre. The centre hosts a weekly bingo night and a community café, with the money from both going back into the community centre to help meet various operational costs. In the broader local area, there are basic shops, a library and a large park which contains a playground. There is a local community drugs worker, a youth club over a kilometre away from the café and a youth project, which is managed by a national youth organisation and is also over a kilometre away from the café.

Following the conversion of the space and the hiring of volunteers, the café officially opened two years after the funding was granted. An adult committee comprising some members of the board of management of the community centre initially helped to get the café up and running. A 'younger' sub-committee of people between the ages of eighteen and thirty was then set up to oversee the running of the youth café. There was much enthusiasm for the youth café at first. According to Ciara, there was a total number of forty-eight people, who submitted their contact details to be considered for a volunteer role within the café. Those selected received child protection and leadership skills training from a national youth work organisation. Unfortunately, the initial enthusiasm waned. The café had been opened for four years at the time I began the fieldwork and it was a period where the café was undergoing a change in direction due to a lack of interest on the part of both young people and volunteers. For example, a few weeks after I had begun the fieldwork, I was invited to the meeting of the

[32] Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU.

subcommittee where the future of the café was discussed. Two out of the original six members of the subcommittee attended and Ciara felt that the committee had become defunct.

One of the items on the agenda related to young people's (lack of) attendance. Initially, the attendance was good. The café was open for those aged between eleven and eighteen years from 5pm to 9pm in two-time slots[33]. However, some young men got permanently barred due to disruptive behaviour[34] and a friendship group of young women split apart, and they did not attend the café again. The attendance had continued to drop considerably over the three years previous (2013 – 2016) to the extent that the first-time slot from 5pm was allocated to those aged twelve years and under while the second-time slot accommodated young people aged twelve to eighteen years. This made the dynamics of the Fusion café quite unusual because young people aged twelve could stay from 5pm to 9pm. This is precisely what occurred with three of the participants in this research - Adrian, Cian and Lisa.

Using Forkan *et al's* (2015) youth café typology as a guideline, I have classified Fusion as a 'small-scale youth café', not to be confused of course with its actual physical size. The café is volunteer-led. Ciara as mentioned, is the coordinator of the café and works regularly at the café. Fred, a volunteer, works at every session. Several other volunteers work at the café at irregular intervals. Young people are not involved in the management of the café. The café opens for one night per week and is described as a 'meeting space' where young people can 'be themselves' and relax within an inclusive and tolerant space[35]. It functions purely as a recreational space which facilitates social interaction. The activities on offer include a large pool table, board games and two TVs. The TV closest to the kitchen is connected to an Xbox which is located in the storage room (see Figure 5.1). This TV is not connected to any TV channels. There is also a foosball table which is frequently moved to a different place and there are opportunities to take and use art supplies from the storage room during the café session.

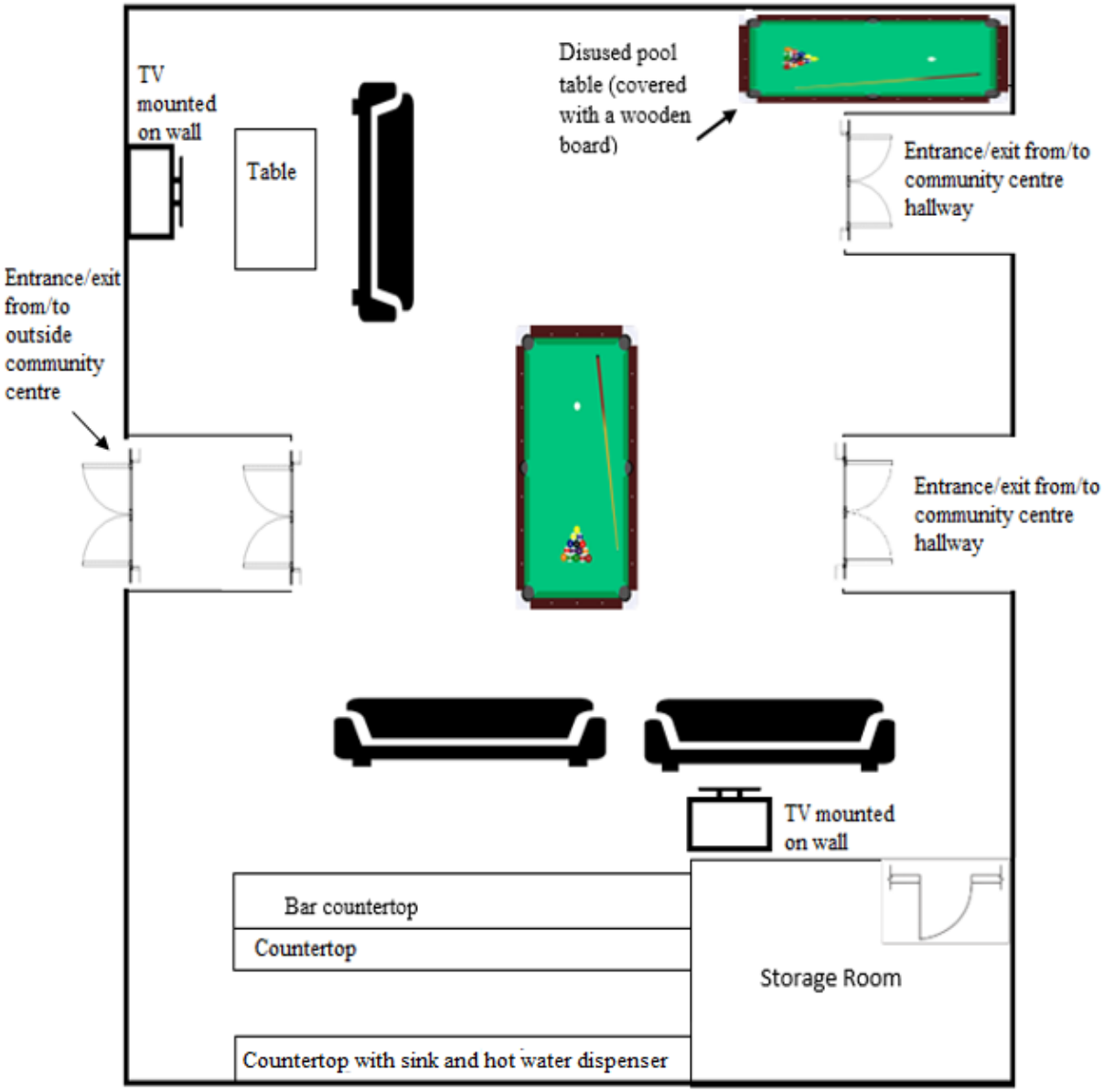
[33] Due to the possibility of the café being identified through detailing the specific time slots and ages I have chosen to omit these details.
[34] Since they were also disrupting the space of the community centre itself, the board of management of the centre informed Ciara that the young men could not be permitted to use the café.
[35] To protect the anonymity of the café, I have chosen not to reference the café's website.

Table 5.1: The Fusion Youth Café profile

Operational dimensions	Small-scale youth café
Opening hours	4 hours per week
Numbers of young people attending each week	Up to 12 young people
Affiliation type	Independent café
Staffing	Volunteer-led, without paid staff
Activities	Primarily recreational
Referrals	Does not make or receive referrals
Location	Based in a city suburb

In terms of physicality and decor, the Fusion café space is physically very large (see Figure 5.1). The space is at least twice the length of the Retro youth café (see below) and about another metre wide, which makes it more of a long rectangular shape, though this large size has made for poor acoustics, meaning that sounds make a slight but notable echo. The décor is plain. Fusion is painted with a light cream colour. There are no art murals on the walls and the floor is made up of a blue PVC colour. The last third of the café space furthest from the kitchen also has sliding doors which can be used to turn the space into two separate rooms. These are opened before each café session. The separate storage room contains the kitchen ware, Xbox games, a cabinet which stores art supplies, a fridge, a small grilling machine for making toasties (toasted sandwiches), a portable double electric hob for heating milk for hot chocolate and a computer and printer. The café also has a basic kitchen located behind the bar countertop and contains a hot water dispenser and a microwave. There are three black leather couches and five large beanbags in the café. At the corner of the far side of the café there is a disused pool table which is covered with a wooden board. Half of the pool table is hidden by an unused (during the café times itself) recessed door.

Figure 5.1: The Fusion Youth Café sketch



5.2.2 The Retro Youth Café

Jordan, a young man whom I introduce later, describes the 'Retro Youth Café' as situated within a 'medial location' that is 'easily accessible' near the centre of Ballymore[36] a county town in the south of Ireland. As of the 2011 census, Ballymore has a HP Deprivation Index of -3.6, or 'marginally below average deprivation'. There

[36] The name of the town has been changed to protect the identity of the café.

are several different services available to young people within the town such a 'No name! club'[37], targeted services such as a Garda Youth Diversion Project[38], a community drugs project initiative and another youth service which consists of targeted youth service provision.

The space which is used as the youth café five days a week is located on the ground floor in the front part of a three-storey modern youth centre to which it is attached. The centre operates as a charitable youth service (the 'Ballymore youth service') and (unlike Fusion) is affiliated to an Irish national youth work organisation. The café has a historical background which is very different from Fusion. The service originally began as a one room basic drop-in centre in another part of the town, set up by adults in response to young people's wish to have a space to meet and relax. In this way, for Sarah (the coordinator of the youth service for the majority of the fieldwork period) the actual 'café' provision of the modern youth service today is only new *in name* (also Powell *et al* 2010):

> …before the recession they [the government] said let's change the way we are working with young people and call them 'youth cafés' but they're the exact same methods that we had been using [since the beginning], but they just put a different name on it. (Sarah, interview extract)

Apart from a dance studio at the very back of the first floor, the building is narrow, but this is compensated by its three floors, equipped with many rooms such as a computer room, kitchen, an arts and crafts room and a larger general activities room, to name a few. When the service moved to a new part of Ballymore, a competition was held for young people to decide on the best name and logo for the new youth centre. 'Retro' was eventually chosen and refers to the name of the youth centre as well as the café[39].

The youth service sources funds from frequent local fundraising activities, the resources generated by the rental of rooms in the youth centre to other community

[37] No Name! Club is a National Youth Organisation founded in 1978. 'No Name! Clubs' are run by, and for young people aged 15-18 years, and enables young members to organise and enjoy positive alternatives to alcohol and drug-centred activities.

[38] Garda Youth Diversion Projects are "multiagency crime prevention initiatives" (Garda Community Relations Bureau, 2015, p. 23) which aim to divert young people away from perceived anti-social behaviour and/or criminal behaviour

[39] Since I have changed all names, in reality of course young people voted for a different (and catchier) name. The main point here however, is that it was young people who chose it.

groups, Pobal and SPY[40] funding administered by the Education and Training Board, government grants as well as through a local charity shop which the youth service owns. In terms of management and staff, there is a Board of Directors (all of whom are adults) who oversee the service and a coordinator. Sarah was the coordinator for under ten years and resigned from the role during the last two months of the fieldwork. The centre used to be staffed by two full-time youth workers but funding for these youth work positions decreased due to austerity. When I began the fieldwork, Anne was the full-time youth worker whilst Emma was the part time worker. Due to Anne's promotion to the role as coordinator following Sarah's resignation, her former full-time position was cut to part time. The centre is also supported by a paid part time administrator, Community Employment[41] workers and volunteers.

Table 5.2 below is based on Forkan *et al's* (2015, p. 20) typology of youth cafés. I have classified the 'Retro youth café' as a 'large-scale youth café'. The aim of the Ballymore youth service is to provide quality youth work to young people through the provision of a wide range of different activities and projects. The service promotes an integrated response, exemplified in the giving and taking of referrals and through liaising with other community groups in the provision of activities and projects. In contrast to other 'large-scale' youth cafés (see Forkan *et al* 2015) however, the Retro youth café itself is limited in the activities and service provision on offer. This is primarily because the other activities and facilities which occur during earlier times in the other rooms within the centre. Since two adults are required to be present amongst young people, there are not enough volunteers to accommodate the use of the other rooms during the café time. What makes it 'large-scale' in my opinion, is the fact that the café opens five days during the week for a total of twelve hours. What is different however, from other large-scale youth cafés (see Forkan *et al* 2015) is the fact that its function is purely recreational. Although the service provides quality youth work, the provision of youth work is restricted (but not absent, see Chapter Eight especially)

[40] SPY is an antonym for Special Projects to Assist Disadvantaged Youth consisting of a scheme of grants made available in respect of special out-of-school projects which designed to tackle "unemployment, increasing educational attainment and combating crime among young people" (DCYA, 2014, p. 7).

[41] These are workers who avail of the Community Employment (CE) programme, which "is designed to help people who are long-term unemployed (or otherwise disadvantaged) to get back to work by offering part-time and temporary placements in jobs based within local communities" (Citizens Information Board, 2018). CE workers are paid by the sponsor.

during café sessions as no educational activities or programmes are run through the café itself, as in the case of other large-scale youth cafés (see Forkan *et al* 2015).

The recreational activities which are on offer in the café include the provision of board games, a small pool table, a TV to watch and listen to music channels, a PlayStation Two (though rarely used) and the availability of WIFI for all young people. One of the main differences between Fusion and Retro is that on one of the days[42] young people are afforded the opportunity to use the kitchen to make whatever basic cakes and bakes they wish, such as cup-cakes, brownies and rocky roads.

Table 5.2: The Retro Youth Café profile

Operational dimensions	Large-scale youth café
Opening hours	12 hours per week
Numbers of young people attending the café each week	Up to 100+ young people
Affiliation type	Integrated into a larger service
Staffing	Mixture of paid staff and volunteers
Café Activities	Recreation (The youth centre provides a broader service provision during other times)
Referrals	Makes and receives referrals
Location	Based in a county town

In terms of the décor, the Retro youth café looks modern both outside and within. On the outside of the building the bright paint colour is inviting. It contrasts with the darker, duller look of some of the other buildings on the street. On the inside, the walls look like they have been freshly painted. In terms of the space which constitutes the youth café, it is physically very small (see Figure 5.2), being almost square shaped. The two walls enclosing the pool table are painted in a very colourful mural which depicts friendly alien like figures, painted by a talented local young artist during a refurbishment of the centre years before. The overall décor of the café space consists of a brown wooden flour, a lighter brown coloured bar countertop and the chairs and

[42] I have not stated which day to protect the identity of the café. This does not impact on the analysis in any way.

tables under the TV are each coloured with more variants of brown. The walls are cream coloured, and the two leather couches are black. Together, the décor for me at least, made the café a warm and cosy space.

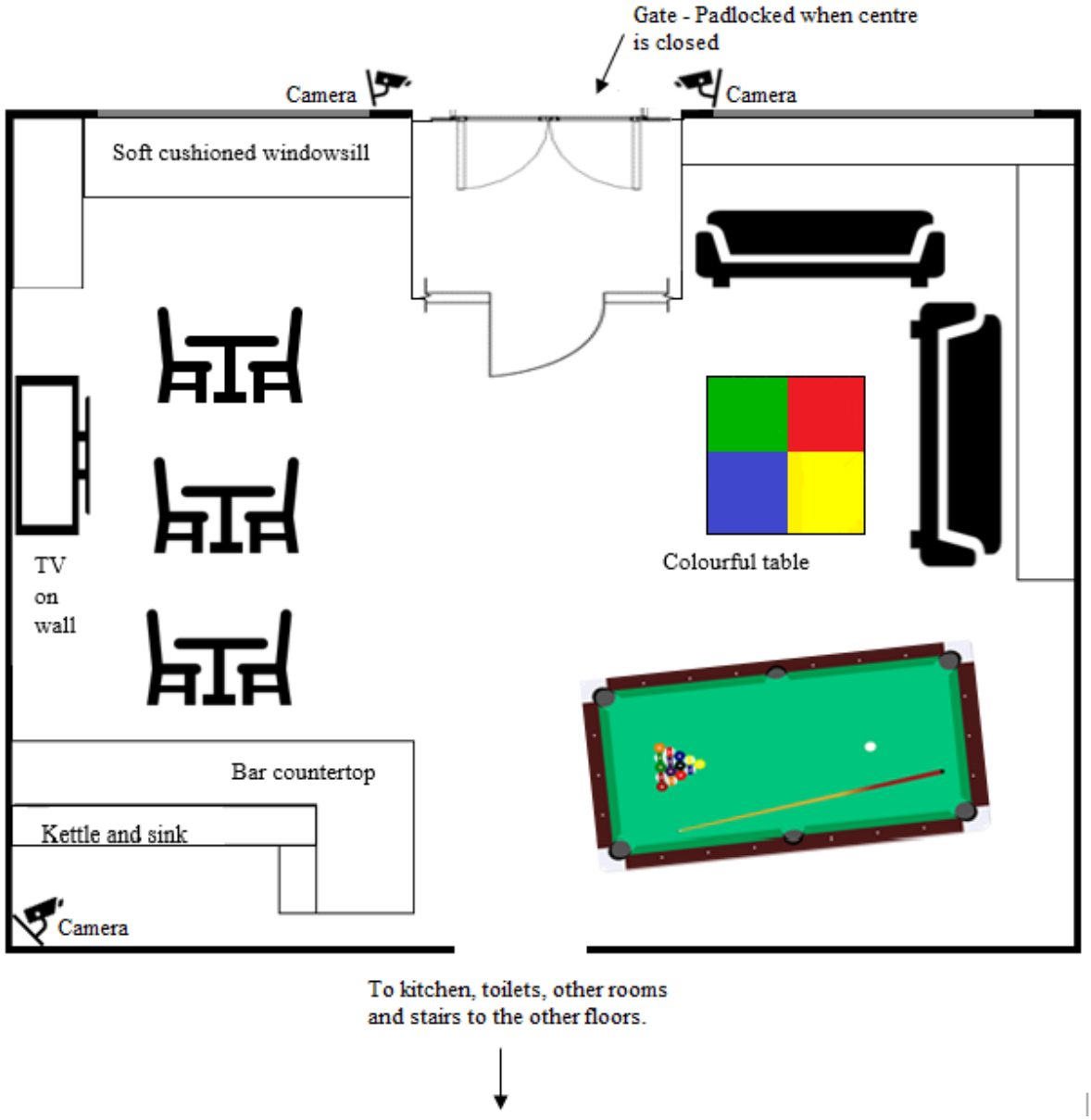
Above the black couch opposite the TV, there is a rule sheet on the noticeboard. This essentially outlines young people's 'interaction obligations' (Goffman, 1967): 'no name calling or mocking'; 'don't make a mess, but if you do clean it up'; 'no food fights'; 'watch the noise level'; 'staff have time to talk to young people'[43]; 'no hanky panky'; 'be polite and apologise for wrong actions'. The rule sheet also lists out the consequences of breaking these rules and essentially informs young people what staff can do (such as 'staff have the right to ask young people to leave'). As part of an attempt by the service to involve young people in decision making, young people were involved in writing these rules. Anne informed me that the workers surveyed young people about what rules should underpin the café. At first there were too many rules so young people were asked to reduce them since a 'brief guide' was only necessary. There is no younger sub-committee of young people however, and young people do not participate in the governance of the café space or the centre. On the same notice board, there is also a sheet outlining safety tips for using Facebook and a notice by the local Gardaí reminding that it is an offence to purchase intoxicating liquor for use by persons under the age of eighteen.

Opposite this notice board on the other side of the café, there is a TV mounted on the wall which is connected to a sky box that provides a basic channel service. Young people can access a range of music channels and some of the basic channels also occasionally air Irish and international sporting events. To help contextualise the next chapter, it is also worth mentioning that 'freeview' adult channels are also accessible but (obviously) forbidden to watch. The two windows are separated in between by the recessed main door which serves as the only access to the youth centre. In front of this door outside, there is a gate which is closed and padlocked when the centre is closed. There are bars on the windowsill outside to prevent individuals from sitting down and two large white cameras gaze down at the front entrance. In contrast to the standard size, the pool table is very small and basic. On the wall next to it, there is a pool game 'rule sheet'. Behind the bar countertop there is a lower countertop containing a sink.

[43] This is not so much a rule for young people but for staff. It serves to remind young people that staff are not simply rule keepers but are also a friendly face, who young people can talk to.

The kettle, cups, sugar, glasses and spoons are kept on this lower countertop during the café time. In the ceiling corner of this segment there is a camera which provides a live feed to a monitor in the co-ordinators office and can be played back if needed.

Figure 5.2: The Retro Youth Café sketch



5.2.3 Summary

This section has provided an operational profile and description of both the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. Fusion is an independent, small-scale café while Retro is large-scale, operating under the Ballymore youth service and is affiliated to a national youth work organisation. The Fusion youth café is staffed by volunteers and is coordinated

by Ciara. In contrast, the Fusion youth café is staffed by at least one paid youth worker or co-ordinator during the café session.

In terms of physical size and décor, both cafés are very different. The Fusion youth café is very large and there is a slight echo during the café sessions. In contrast, the Retro youth café is very small. Décor wise, Fusion is plain while Retro is colourful. In terms of the activities on offer, the pool table within Fusion is large while small in Retro. The most significant difference is the TV. At Fusion, the TV is used mostly for the use of the Xbox and there is no access to music channels. In contrast, the TV at Retro is used primarily for the watching and listening to music channels. Both youth cafés are primarily recreational in functiom. Besides the opportunity to use the kitchen in Retro, there are no educational activities directly offered in the café spaces and there are no governance structures through which young people are afforded the opportunity to participate in decision making.

5.3 The Ethnography of Fusion

5.3.1 'Do you go to house parties?' (Gavin) - 'Getting on' in Fusion

The fieldwork for this thesis began at the Fusion café. Around fifteen minutes before my first session I met with Ciara (the café coordinator) to re-cap on the purposes of the research and scope. When the session began, I moved around and introduced myself. Throughout the session, I felt that a rapport between myself and the young people was being quickly established which I did not expect, believing that young people would just want to do their own thing. Adrian (who I introduce later) for example, asked me and another volunteer if we would listen to his rendition of Elvis Presley's 'Jailhouse rock' and he sang the complete song. This quick rapport building was something I did not expect, but the café was attended by only a very small cohort of young people which meant I was afforded more opportunities to spend time with them. In the second session, I brought in the consent and information forms and asked Adrian, Cian and Jack if they wanted to participate. They enthusiastically agreed.

In the third session however, I experienced a more challenging interaction. While Lisa was signing the consent form, James and Gary came over to ask what I was doing. In my explanation, I asked if they were interested in participating in the research. What

occurred over the next ten minutes was what I felt to be a test of my composure. They asked me a whole series of rapid questions such as to how often I went to house parties; how often I 'went out' to clubs; if there were 'lots of girls' at the house parties I apparently attended; if I 'got smashed' and 'wasted' at these parties; if I 'smoked weed' or 'did the white stuff' (fieldnotes, Fusion). My answers were all humorous to them, not believing me when I said I had only ever been to one house party and even then, as I explained it was not the noisy house party which I thought they had in mind. There were times where I did not know how to respond as some of the questions incited awkwardness on my part. I did not want to come across as 'uncool' in the fear that Gary and James would not want to talk to me much or participate in the research, yet I did not want to act as a poor 'role model' for saying that I did go to a house party once. There was also the question in my mind as to how to respond to questions about drugs, as I presumed youth workers had a particular approach in responding to these questions, even if they are meant to be a 'joke'. This testing highlights the issue of managing boundaries and relationships in each café (Hart, 2016) and how I had to adopt 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959).

In terms of the broader dynamics of the Fusion youth café, a couple of points can be made. Firstly, the overall attendance of the café was very poor throughout the fieldwork. There were nine regular young people in total and this constituted the main cohort of young people and the size of the café made this small attendance more obvious. Ciara attributed this to the wider demographics of the area. She claimed that the youth café in the future should target younger children (such as under twelves) as there was a decline in the number of young people in the area. Near the end of the fieldwork I drove around the area randomly on four weekend nights over two weeks. On one night there was one very large group of around fifteen young people hanging around the general vicinity of the café. On the other nights there were also many smaller groups of young people walking and hanging around the general area thus, the youth café was not attracting young people.

In terms of the general dynamics of the café space, upon entry to the café, each young person first signs in and pays one euro to use the café. This facilitates the allowance of one hot chocolate or tea per session as well as a toastie (a toasted sandwich) with a choice of filling. Fred and another volunteer usually makes the hot chocolate and toasties. After signing in, some young people may either have a brief conversation

with whoever is behind the counter or they may immediately partake in some activity. Adrian for example almost ways sat down to play the sandbox[44] game Minecraft[45] on the Xbox. Since Adrian was twelve during the majority of the of the fieldwork, he was able to attend the earlier session for the under twelves and would share the Xbox with some of this younger group. Jack also liked to play the Xbox, but in most sessions, he came with his headphones around his neck and sometimes lay on one of the couches and listened to music. James and Gary used the café primarily to play pool and the Xbox. Cian meanwhile rarely played the Xbox and pool. He liked having conversations with Ciara and the other volunteers. He also brought in headphones and liked to listen to music. He frequently either sat on top of the disused pool table (see Figure 5.2) or hid underneath it with Lisa and another young woman, using the large bean bags to hole themselves in effectively.

5.3.2 Fusion Participant Biographies

There were nine young people amongst the older group (twelve to eighteen) who used the Fusion café, consisting of six young men and three young women. One other young man later began using the café regularly three months before the completion of the fieldwork, bringing the number to seven young men. A total of seven young people consented to the research, but I was only able to interview four, since the café closed earlier than I was initially informed for the summer recess. This meant I was unable to interview Cian, Gary and Kieran. Here I provide a biographical profile of six participants as they constituted the 'key players'. The ages of the participants are based on their ages upon my leave of the field.

James and Gary

I profile James and Gary (aged fourteen and fifteen) together here because they are brothers. Valerie (a volunteer) aptly called James and Gary 'jokers' and 'messers' and they agreed and embraced these titles, since they liked to pull pranks and tell jokes

[44] These are games where every player does not have to follow the same exact sequence to complete the games objectives.
[45] Minecraft is a game based on using different types of cubes within a 3D world. Players can use these cubes to build their own 3D worlds.

and perform ironic modes of humour (see Chapter Six). They lived about a five-minute walk from the café and their attendance was sporadic. They did not always come to the café together and in the main, James attended more sessions than Gary and for a longer duration. I had originally got the impression that James and Gary were going to be quiet and reserved young men since during my first session at Retro, they came in about twenty minutes before closing, sat down and played FIFA 2015 on the Xbox and kept quietly to themselves. Both James and Gary informed me that they 'hated' school since they frequently get into trouble with their teachers. Outside of the café, James is a member of a local football club and plays football in the large park close to the café. He can also be frequently seen cycling around the general area, as I witnessed during and after the fieldwork period. The pool table was used mostly by James and Gary and was the activity they partook in the most. They also liked to hang around many parts of the general community with friends.

Jack

Jack (aged fifteen) lived a five-minute walk away from the café and had begun to attend the café a couple of months after it first opened its doors. He introduced himself to the café after he saw young people entering and leaving the outside door of the café. He used to attend a youth club over a kilometre away from the café. Jack mostly played the Xbox in the café and sometimes brought in his own Xbox games, including Call of Duty Black Ops 2, a first-person shooter game. I mention this because the game is rated 18 years and over. Ciara sometimes told Jack to turn the game off and to not bring it into the café in the future. As mentioned, Jack sometimes came in with headphones around his neck and sat or lay on the couch to listen to whatever music was playing on his phone. Other times, he would use the café WIFI to browse on his phone. Jack attended the café on his own but talked to other young people in the café.

Cian and Lisa

Cian (aged thirteen) also lived a five-minute walk away from the café. He was introduced to the café by Jack, who told him about it in the library close by. Cian was an openly gay young man and most of the young people and all the café workers were

aware of this. He used the café in a fluid manner, going in and out of the café to go to the shop or to talk and intermingle with other young people and adults who occupied the community centre during the café session, since bingo night was on during the same time. Cian frequently played music from his phone out loud within the café or listened to music through his earphones. He was best friends with Adrian (introduced next) and Lisa, but in the café space he mostly hung out with Lisa and another young woman. He frequently liked to either sit on top of the disused pool table to talk to Lisa or hide underneath it, using the bean bags to effectively hole themselves in and thus, territorialize this part of the café. The space was not contested (except on one occasion, see Chapter Seven) by other young people and he used it to watch music videos, YouTube videos and to talk to Lisa. Cian liked to hang around the general community and he knew a lot of other young people. He was quite enthusiastic and talkative within the café space and could be heard laughing a lot within the space with Lisa.

Adrian

Adrian (aged thirteen) was introduced to the café by Cian and are best friends, though they did not talk as much within the café as they did outside, since Adrian was not friends with Lisa and her other friends. Adrian and Cian became friends through attending the same primary school and they also live within the general community around the café, however, Adrian attended the Fusion youth café on his own every week. He had been attending the café every week for about a year at the time of the interview. On my first session, he was the first to turn up and after he signed in, he immediately sat down to play the popular sandbox game called Minecraft on the Xbox as mentioned. The was his routine every week, but he did not play the Xbox for the entire session. My first conversation with him began when I sat down next to him and asked him about the game. His explanation was detailed, and he was enthusiastic in showing me the game's various features. He gave me the impression that he liked games and gaming. Indeed, Adrian was very knowledgeable about what he called 'technology' which he referred to things such as gaming consoles, games, the internet and social media and frequently told me about various games which were popular with young people. He was active on YouTube. He had his own account and described himself as a 'content creator' since he created and uploaded his own video content

such as reviews of his favourite anime[46] series, hence, why he also described himself as a 'youtuber' (fieldnotes, Fusion). This simply describes a person who posts videos to YouTube, whereas a 'content creator' refers to someone who makes content such as videos for a variety of other platforms. Adrian has a broad range of hobbies and interests. He also plays the electric guitar and likes to write short fantasy stories when he has the time. He also attends two homework clubs on Tuesdays and Thursdays and sometimes attends a youth club in another location a few kilometres away when he visits his grandparents.

Adrian also described himself as 'studious'. On many occasions Ciara spoke to me on how 'brainy' she thought he was and I had to agree. One could assume that Adrian preferred to spend time indoors on the Xbox or computer, playing and practicing on his guitar and writing stories. Although he did describe himself as 'kind of indoorsy' (fieldnotes, Fusion), this was not because he felt attached to the indoors, but that the activities he liked are normally undertaken indoors. In fact, Adrian also liked going to the park nearby with his friends and sometimes climbed on top of the large bins which belonged to the community centre to 'chill out'. It may also be easy to think (as I did for a short while) that Adrian prefers to keep to himself, but in fact Adrian likes "being friendly with people" (interview extract), in contrast to some of his friends who he described as 'anti-social'. This was evident in the fact that he liked talking to the volunteers within the café.

5.4. The Ethnography at Retro

5.4.1 'Are you working here?' - 'Getting on' in Retro

As I mentioned in the first section of this chapter, both the Fusion and Retro youth cafés are similar in that their purpose is primarily recreational. They differed in several ways however, in terms of the general dynamics of each session. I arrived at the Retro youth café ten minutes early to find a young man and woman knocking at the door, seeming eager to get in. I immediately got the sense that the Retro youth café was more popular than Fusion. I introduced myself to both and the young woman asked if I was 'working here?' I explained that I was doing a research project and that I would

[46] Anime is a style of hand-drawn and computer animation associated with Japan.

be volunteering in the café for a few months. Sarah (coordinator of the Ballymore youth service) opened the door to let me in and reminded them that they would have to wait until seven p.m. sharp, which was opening time. They complained, and I immediately got the impression that they must have enjoyed going to the youth café.

Sarah had already set up the café. For Retro, there is less preparation for opening in comparison to Fusion. The teabags, cups, spoons, sugar and juice drinks need to be brought from the kitchen into the café. The pool table must be moved only slightly out from the corner of the café and the pool balls need to be taken out from underneath the kitchen counter. The board games are also brought from under the kitchen counter and placed on one of the tables underneath the TV. The TV is always switched on to a music channel before young people arrive and young people are then free to change the channel as they wish.

Before opening, I had a brief chat with Sarah about my research to recap on my approach. She explained that it was a common occurrence for young people to be waiting outside. After our discussion, I put up one 'Who am I?' information poster and Sarah opened the door as it was time to open. The young man who arrived early went straight for the sign in sheet and then wrote his name on the pool table sheet, followed by his friend Liam (see 'biographies' below). The sign in sheet is mandatory and young people must put their names on the pool sheet if they want to play pool. This helps to ensure that there is no arguing over who gets to play pool and for how long. The person who wins the pool game gets to stay playing.

The first half hour of this first session was quite representative of the general dynamics of the Retro café. In this first half hour, things happened very fast. I introduced myself to several young people. I was surprised that I was asked to play a game of pool by a young man, thinking that he would have preferred to continue playing with his friends. Though my rapport with young people had built up quickly in Fusion, I still had the expectation that young people would want to do their own thing and that rapport in Retro would take some time given and number of young people who used the café. Sarah (the coordinator) had informed me before opening and even at our initial meeting months before however, that young people would try to 'check you out' (field note extract, before the opening of the first session), as she further explained:

> when a new person starts they are very quick to interact they're very quick to suss out that person because they're very clear that that's their space so in a way it's a natural instinct to figure out 'who's in my space? Is this person alright?' and generally 99% of the time they accept anyone that's there… (interview extract)

Within this first session at Retro, the gender dynamics were obvious, and the dynamics and general atmosphere of the café was different from my experience at Fusion. Firstly, the young men (aged from thirteen to fifteen years) within this first half hour audibly dominated the space as they were quite loud and boisterous. There were three young women gathered around the soft windowsill and remained generally quiet for the forty minutes or so that they were there. Secondly, the young men physically dominated the space in terms of numbers and their embodiment, in the way they moved around the space more freely. In terms of the use of the pool table, most of the games played were done so in a competitive manner and were all played by young men. For example, one young man and Liam bent over to focus their eyes on the end of the cue and the shots they took were loud and precise. These basic gender dynamics remained consistent throughout my time at the café (see Chapter Eight also), but this has not been consistent over the years. As Emma (a youth worker) points out:

> at the moment we have a big amount of young males in, when I first started it was all female so I think that's really interesting the way that flip has happened. I know that when I first started I did consciously wanted to engage more males so I got in the pool table like and then we had the PlayStation going a bit more when I first started the café was very quiet like. There wasn't many engaging at all only one or two in some nights so one of my first pieces of work was wanting to increase numbers in the café so I used to have the telly turned on… you need to create the warmth… so that definitely got more males in the door (interview extract).

What this extract shows is that this research was conducted during a specific period when many young men were using the Retro café.

In terms of the general dynamics of the café each night, what also remained consistent from the very first session was the overall atmosphere. The TV channel on this first night remained on music channels and the songs which were played were those from

the top ten charts at the time. The Retro café was much smaller compared to the Fusion café, so the songs playing in the background filled the space with a very different kind of atmosphere compared to Fusion.

On entry, each young person almost always immediately walked toward the bar counter, was greeted by whoever was behind the counter and signed in. In most cases young people also signed the pool sheet. Café workers can also put their name on the list to play pool and I did so at every session. On the odd occasion, young people themselves asked café workers to play pool with them. In most cases also, after signing-in, young people immediately asked for tea or juice, both which are free. At the Fusion youth café, Fred makes the hot chocolate and puts it on the counter for young people to take. At the Retro café however, tea is mostly drunk, but young people were allowed pour their own milk and put in their own sugar. The significance of this is that on some occasions, some young men continued to put up to about five spoons until a café worker would ask them to stop.

On one of the days during the week, young people are also afforded the opportunity to bake something of their choosing. The youth worker on duty normally asked young people what they wanted to bake and gave them permission to go ahead. Young people themselves did the baking and cleaned up afterward. Cup-cakes, rocky roads and brownies were the usually baked. A café worker always supervised this process but did not get involved unless asked by young people themselves to help. If ingredients needed to be purchased, the youth worker on duty gave one young person the duty to buy these from the shop next door. When whatever has been baked was ready, everyone in the café was invited to eat it.

One final aspect in relation to the dynamics of the Retro café should be mentioned. Some young people come in with one other friend, while some come in in groups of threes and fours. Friendship groups normally sat on the black couch or gathered around the general vicinity of the pool table. Some young people, such as Barry, Beth, Jon, Jordan and Michelle came in on their own, but this did not mean they did not talk to anyone else. Barry for example frequently intermingled with others in the café. Michelle on the other hand sometimes came with Liam and other young people.

5.4.2 Retro Participant Biographies

In the week leading up to my leaving of the field, there were still young people who I did not see before using the café. There were regulars however and there were six young people who participated in the research.

Jon

I did not know how to approach Jon (aged fourteen) in the sessions after our initial introduction. He seemed very shy and he was mostly on his phone during café sessions. He listened to music through his earphones, drank lots of tea and kept mostly to himself. In the third session, he had his shoes on the rim of the chair and his posture reminded me of the foetal position. He was gazing intently at his phone and about twenty minutes later, he sat on the soft windowsill in the same foetal like position. In another session however, when there was a quiet lull in the café, I asked him if he wanted to play chess and I felt this was the best way to get to know him better. This was the first proper conversation I had with him and I expected him to say 'no'. Instead however, he smiled, got up from the soft windowsill and told me he did not know how to play chess and suggested draughts would be easier. From then on, we always played at least one game in every session, but it was often more. We eventually began to keep a score and by sheer coincidence at my very last session we had played our one hundredth game with the score being a 50/50 tie.

Jon lived a ten to fifteen-minute walk away from the café and at the time I entered the field, he had been attending the youth café for about a year and a half. One of the reasons he liked to attend the café was because of the free Wi-Fi hence, the reason why he used his phone so often while there. In the café he liked to watch music videos, film trailers and liked to listen to film and music reviews, sometimes wearing his earphones to do so. Despite the solitary way in which Jon used the phone in the café like this, Jon was quite happy to have a conversation and often showed me YouTube clips of various things such as movie clips.

Jon had his own YouTube account and liked to post videos of his own gaming and film reviews as well as his puppet sketches which he filmed at home. A month after I had begun my fieldwork, Jon said that he was working on a horror audio drama which

he planned to upload to his YouTube account in October of 2016. I told him about the time when I was sixteen years old when I wrote a movie script with a friend, held auditions in my school and managed to film one scene on a high-quality camera. I brought in the script and he read it through. When he finished writing his own audio drama he brought in the script and asked me to highlight areas which I thought were in need of editing or change. A few weeks later, he showed me a trailer for this audio drama which he made himself and uploaded onto YouTube.

Jordan

In one way it was fitting to begin the profile of the Retro café by drawing upon Jordan's (aged eighteen) description of where the youth café was located. This is because this was one thing which Jordan liked to do – give his perspective – and when he did give his perspective, he was anything but vague. He liked telling long and elaborate stories, so much so that in my field notes, I privately referred to these as his 'great tales'. He enjoyed telling them, and I enjoyed listening to them, even if Emma cautioned that he often exaggerated. He spoke of how he met Gordon Ramsey (who is apparently according to Jordan, 'a very nice man'), flew first class on an Airbus A380[47], how he travelled all over the world, that he knew a wealthy millionaire who owns 'lots of hotels around the world' and spoke about being caught up in a small riot in a neighbourhood in an Irish city. Jordan spoke sweetly about his girlfriend sometimes and about his 'hectic busy life', doing everything and going everywhere. For example, all year round he does sailing and is involved in the Scouts[48] and the Irish Red Cross. He also liked to attend Irish College[49] during the summer. This 'busy life' is the main reason why Jordan has been coming to the café "on and off for about three years" (interview extract). He was introduced to the café by a friend who was planning to attend a Friday movie night: "What happened was they were doing a movie night and one of my buddies said, 'come in it's a great place to go let's watch the

[47] A double decker passenger plane. It is the largest passenger plane in the world.
[48] Scouting is a non-formal educational experience that is rooted in the experiential educational model and is provided by 'Scouting Ireland'.
[49] 'Irish College' refers to attending a school specifically targeted toward the provision of Irish language education during the summer months.

movie' so then I came in… they made me feel very welcome, so I've been a regular since then" (Jordan, interview extract).

When Jordan began telling a 'great tale', I would sometimes be so absorbed in his stories that I would forget my surroundings. Exaggerated or not, for the purposes of this research, it was the impression of confidence and of being knowledgeable that is significant here, because Jordan projected what I perceived to be an inflated image of self. For example, when I asked him if he would like to participate in the research he was very enthusiastic and claimed confidently that that he did not need me to explain what the research was about. He simply declared 'sign me up!' (fieldnotes, Retro). I explained both that it would be good for him to know what I was doing and that it was a requirement for me to do so. My impression of him as someone who liked to project an inflated image of himself was also evident in the interview (to cite one example):

> Robert: And would you know most of the people who come into the café then?
>
> Jack: Eighty percent I [sniggering] would like because you see, I'm a very popular guy anyway because you see I've a load of friends all around like I'm very busy.

In sum, Jordan projected an image of himself as a person who has been to many places, who knows a lot and who is very popular.

Liam

Liam lived a fifteen-minute walk away from the café and attended most days. He was quite popular and well known amongst many young people who used the café. He could frequently be seen hanging out with other young people in the vicinity of the café before opening times and he liked spending his time outside hanging out on the streets around his estate and the wider community with his friends, chatting and playing football. His friends included both a mixture of young men and women, but they attended the café sporadically. Liam attended the café mostly with one of his best friends and at almost every session Liam signed up to play pool when he arrived. He sometimes used one of his best friend's e-cigarettes outside the café and inside and laughed when told to put it away or to go outside by café workers. Liam was also very

careful about his hairstyle and sometimes could be seen fixing it up within the café and using the reflection on his phone to check it. As I will show in Chapter Six, Liam sometimes liked to perform sexualised humour, but although this was sometimes met with disapproval, Liam had a good relationship with café workers.

Michelle

Michelle (aged fourteen) attended every café session. She sometimes entered on her own and sometimes with one of her best friends. Michelle usually stood at the bar countertop and usually had her left hand on her cheek, giving the impression of boredom. Michelle liked to look at what other young people were doing in the café and liked talking to café workers. She played for a local football club and on occasion attended the café wearing her football gear. She sometimes brought in her ball, where she always had to be told to store it away. Michelle sometimes gave off the impression of being upset about something. Indeed, there were many occasions where she talked about trouble she was having with some of her friends. Whenever she was upset, she took considerable time telling café workers what was wrong and spoke in one or two words at a time. Michelle played pool on the odd occasion, though not in the same competitive manner as the other young men within the space. Michelle also liked to 'hang out' around the wider community with different young people.

Barry

Barry (aged sixteen) attended the café most days, but there were occasions were his attendance was sporadic. Barry always asked for orange juice after he signed in and could always be seen either sitting down at the tables or black couch or leaning against the wall surfing the internet or listening to music on his phone. Sometimes he would listen with his earphones while on other occasions he would mount his phone onto his portable wireless Bluetooth speaker, meaning that the music could be heard. This exemplified how Barry had an interest in science, technology and gadgets and was knowledgeable about the area. Barry was quite a reserved young man. He was very well spoken and rarely cursed, yet he interacted with many young people in the café

and played pool with anyone who was next on the list. He also participated in the other activities offered by the Ballymore youth service.

Darren

Darren was an avid skateboarder who loved using the skateboarding park and various side streets for skateboarding in the town of Ballymore. He sometimes brought his skateboard inside the café and stored it in the hallway at the back of the centre. He always entered the café with headphones around his neck, though he did not use them within the space itself. Darren does not feature in the ethnographic work for this research since he mainly sat down to talk with his friend or other young people quietly. Like Barry, he was also quite reserved and talked to a lot of other young people while he used the café space. He did not play pool competitively and never contravened any rules. Darren was an irregular user at the café. He also used to attend a youth club a few kilometres away, but this closed down

5.5 Conclusion - Setting the scene

There are several points to be made about the settings of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. The first point relates to the general features which make up how these physical spaces gets to be constituted as a 'youth café'. There are four elements at play. First, when a young person enters the youth cafés, they enter a physically static space with four walls and a roof. The space in which young people is a particular 'setting' (Goffman, 1959) however, because it contains particular "furniture, décor" and a particular "physical layout, and other background items which supply the scenery and stage props for the spate of human action played out before, within, or upon it" (Goffman, 1959, p. 33). A key part of this 'setting' is the mandatory presence of at least two café workers as per the policies of the spaces.

Second, young people do not enter the spaces accidentally. At the most basic level, these particular 'settings' provide something for young people a space to 'hangout' and 'relax'. Both youth cafés thus, constitute 'social establishments' in the sense that they are spaces where an "activity of a particular kind regularly goes on" (Goffman, 1961 p. 15) - that of hanging out. Both youth cafés are recreational spaces that facilitate

social interaction. Of course, when Goffman refers to 'activity' in the singular, this is not meant to be taken as him meaning that what 'regularly goes on' is a singular and specific performance. 'Hanging out' is the single regular activity which 'goes on' in both cafés, but under this banner comes a multitude of other activities. Generally, it includes talking to friends, café workers, listening to music, relaxing and playing games such as pool.

Thirdly, when a young person enters a youth café, they enter a 'social situation' (Goffman, 1964, p. 135):

> An environment of mutual monitoring possibilities anywhere within which an individual will find himself accessible to the naked sense of all others who are 'present', and similarly find them accessible to him.

Although this may be an obvious element of the café spaces, the important point is that the most basic social situation that is allowed to transpire when one young person enters the café space is that of comprising one young person and two café workers. Related to this point is the fourth element. When two or more people are in one another's presence, a 'definition of the situation' is constructed, referring to how both individuals know what to expect from each other (Goffman, 1959). In the café spaces, a significant part of the what makes up the 'definition' of the social situation is the fact that café workers aim to uphold official rules and unofficial norms of expectation. There are 'instrumental' (Goffman, 1959) rules that pertain to ensuring that the materiality of the café spaces are kept intact. There are also the 'official rules', exemplified in the rule sheet in the Retro café for example. There are also what Goffman (1959, p. 110) calls 'moral requirements' which refer to "rules regarding non-interference and non-molestation of others" including that of "sexual propriety". In other words, there are rules regarding respect for others and norms relating to general decorum to be followed within the spaces. I refer to these rules and norms as the *normative order*, an order which café workers, who constitute the 'sanctioners' (Goffman, 1959, p. 111) aim to uphold.

In relation to how the cafés situate within broader youth policy, both cafés are consistent with Brady *et al's* (2017, p. 2) argument that the "youth café model… is essentially about facilitating social interaction between young people in a relaxed, unstructured manner". Both cafés are indeed "run according to core youth work

principles, such as equality, respect and inclusion" (Brady *et al* 2017, p. 2). Educational activities, programmes and service provision are not offered in both cafés and are thus, limited in both the youth work that may occur in the café spaces (see Chapter Eight) and the 'governmental rationalities' (Kiely and Meade, 2018) that may imbue the spaces. Although "youth participation and ownership" are considered "an intrinsic element of the youth café model" (Brady *et al* 2017, p. 2), young people do not participate in any form of governance structure in the café spaces.

Some points can be made about the social dynamics in the café spaces. Goffman (1966, p. 89) defines an 'encounter' as involving "two or more participants in a situation joining each other openly in maintaining a single focus if cognitive and visual attention" (Goffman, 1966, p. 89). Within both cafés, there were *multiple* 'encounters' as different friendship groups and young people engaged with each other in some shared activity, such as having a conversation or playing a game of pool. There were also 'bystanders', meaning that there were young people who were not engaged in any particular encounter or conversation with another at any one time. They can be said to be 'doing their own thing' alone, but they could then become engaged with another young person or café worker.

Although three out of the thirteen young people who participated in this research were young women, the cafés were gendered spaces in the sense that they were mostly used by young men. As the profile of the participants showed, within both youth cafés there were 'multiple masculinities' (Connell, 1995). In other words, the cafés were not dominated by young men who had the same hobbies and interests. Rather, the cafés were heterogeneous in terms of the mix of young people (and not just young men) who attended. In the next chapter, I proceed to explore some of the more specific dynamics of the cafés relating to the performance of masculinity.

Chapter Six - ‘I’m Only Having A Laugh’: Humour in The Performance of Masculinities

6.1 Introduction

This chapter explores one of the most conspicuous dynamics of both youth cafés: that of humour and laughter. Similar to Plows’s (2010) ethnographic work in a youth club, humour was a large part of the general culture of both cafés and featured heavily in the fieldnotes. There has been much written on the relationship between humour and the performance and construction of youthful masculinities (Barnes, 2012; Huuki, Manninen and Sunnari, 2010; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Pascoe, 2007; Willis, 1977). In these studies, humour has been identified as a mechanism through which masculinities are performed and constructed in a way that (re)produces infra and intra gendered hierarchies. These studies have also pertained predominantly to that of the schooling context. As Barnes (2012, p. 239) notes, within masculinities theorising there has been a “long history of theorising the role of *school*boy humour” [my emphasis]. This chapter offers a contrast to these studies by contributing to an understanding of how humour is performed within the less institutional and regulated sites of two youth cafés.

Although it was easy to identify that humour was a major theme and aspect of the performance of masculinities within the observation work, categorising humour further however, proved to be difficult due to the multiple complexities of humour. One such complexity is the way in which there can be an imbalance between the intention and receipt of humour, as humour that is intended to be funny may produce antagonism, hurt and conflict. As Walker and Goodson (1977, p. 212, cited in Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 74) argue:

> The nature of humour is complex because it resides not only in the logic and content of what is said, but in the performance of the teller, in the relationship between the teller and the audience, and in the immediate context of the instance.

As part of my decision making regarding the categorisation of humour, one of the decisions I have made within this chapter is to explore only those humorous

performances which did not begin an *overt*[50] dispute between young people. These overt disputes are discussed in the next chapter. I use the terms 'humour' and 'laughter' in a broad sense to include joke telling, insults, imitations, 'game-plays', the use of vulgarities, disruptions and pranks. The humour performed predominantly (and not exclusively) related to what the *performer* felt to be funny or humorous, but even this has its limitations.

Thus, this chapter documents, explores and analyses the multifaceted 'regimes of humour' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) which were infused with multiple meanings, deployed in a variety of ways and had several different functions relating to the construction of masculinities in both youth cafés. Although humour is a complex social practice, the chapter does make general claims about how humour functioned to construct masculinities. As this chapter will show for example, humorous performances were mostly sexualised content wise and were gendered in two senses: the first is that it was mostly young men who enacted humorous performances and second, much of the humour was imbued with meanings relating to the construction of masculinities.

There are four questions which frame the analysis and discussion throughout this chapter, two of which pertain to the main research questions underpinning this thesis. The first question asks: how are young masculinities performed, constructed and negotiated through humour? I have found it useful to address this question by asking two further sub questions: what function does humour play in the performance of masculinities and what makes these performances humorous? Finally, relating to the overall question of this thesis, I ask: how are the youth café spaces mutually constitutive of and constituted by these humorous performances of masculinity?

Structurally, the chapter is divided into two main sections, both of which are divided into further subsections, each dealing with various regimes of humour that were enacted within both cafés. The boundaries of what separates these different 'regimes' cannot be said to be completely static however. There is likely to be some slippage in the boundaries as the smallest gesture can change the meaning of humour and my own

[50] I say 'overt' in recognition of the fact that humour can produce private animosity against an instigator in which case the hurt and dispute is covert.

eyes and ears may not have captured all of the elements necessary to definitively establish what regime of humour a humorous performance fits into.

6.2 Humour *in* the cafés

In this section, I first explore humorous performances that relates to the directing of insults. Here, I document examples of sexist, gendered and homophobic encoded humour that is sometimes competitively exchanged between peers in the form of 'verbal duels'. I then proceed to explore the materiality of laughter and humour through 'game-plays', which involve competitive physical interactions such as 'punch-'n'-runs' and 'rough-and-tumble'. Finally, I explore what I have called 'sexual exchanges' which involves the use of sexualised humour through parody and irony toward another individual.

6.2.1 Insults, Banter, and 'having a laugh'

One way in which masculinity was performed through humour was through the hurling of insults toward and between peers. Although most humorous teasing and insulting banter occurred between young male friends, as I will show, there were four occasions where insult laden humour was directed against one young woman only, Michelle. It should be restated however, that Michelle attended almost every session of the Retro café for the full session. Young women generally used the cafés far less than young men and when they did use it, they did not stay for the full session (as did many young men also). The result is that there were simply less possibilities for insults to be directed toward young women by young men and between young women themselves. On two occasions, Michelle retaliated with insults of her own and I discuss one of these occasions in the next chapter since it was predominantly characterised by friction. On another two other occasions however, Michelle generally remained quiet when targeted and did not retaliate. On the first occasion, she was notably upset:

> I was standing near the pool table to watch Liam and his friend play a game of pool. I had overheard them shortly before this both joking and laughing at Michelle, asking her if she was 'pregnant'. Shortly after, they each declared 'Michelle you're a slut!'

> … a while later, I stood at the counter. Michelle was now sitting down on the windowsill, where she seemed to be upset about something. Emma sat next to her and begin talking to her quietly, presumably asking questions since I overhear Michelle explaining '[they're] saying I'm pregnant and calling me a slut'. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

In another session at Retro, while I was talking to Jon about the upcoming 'Transformers' film, Michelle was sitting at the table next to us and began playing the hangman board game[51] with another young man around her age (13), who I had never seen before. Two of his friends were looking at Emma's laptop at the table next to them. One of them loudly asked: "Michelle do you have blue waffle?!"[52] The three young men sniggered, but Michelle ignored the question[53] (fieldnotes, Retro). A minute later, while I was talking to Jon again I saw that the young man whom she was playing the hangman game with had now spelled out the word 'whore'. Over the next few minutes, I repeatedly asked him to choose different words over the sexualised and implicitly insulting (such as 'slut') terms he was spelling out. When he finally spelled the word 'house' I let the game continue, wherein Michelle immediately began to guess if the word was 'whore' and after this, 'slut'.

However, as I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, some of the questions which frame the analysis revolve around *why* some performances are humorous for the young men and *how* these performances construct masculinities. Firstly, there is nothing inherently humorous about the terms 'slut' and 'whore'. The terms invoke traditional views and discourses around female sexuality pertaining to the Madonna/whore binary, which refers to the stigma of female promiscuity (Farvid, Braun and Rowney, 2017; Pascoe, 2007; Richardson, 2010). The 'blue waffle' myth is undoubtedly connected to notions that perceived female promiscuity is unclean or

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[51] The purpose of this game is for one player to guess what word the other has spelled out. For each letter guessed wrong the opposing player twists a clock which shows sequential pictures of a stickman who is about to be hanged.

[52] 'Blue waffle' is a fictitious disease that is supposedly meant to affect women in the genital area. The 'blue' refers to the colour of the infection.

[53] Reading this field note brought me back to my experiences of school where between first and second year, there was occasional joking and talk around the 'blue waffle', something which I myself privately believed to be a real disease at the time. When this interaction occurred, it prompted me to think about how particular gendered jokes and myths may vary with age. It seems that this particular myth and its accompanying jokes occur around this age (13-14 years). Jokes and fears around girls supposedly having 'Cooties' is another example and seems to be limited to the middle to late years of primary school (see Throne, 1993), again something I believed to be true around age 7 and 8 and was featured repeatedly in cartoons (such as 'Rugrats') I was watching at the time.

‘polluting’ (Wight, 1994). In contrast, males cannot be said to catch the mythical ‘blue waffle', nor is there an equivalent derogatory term such as ‘slut’ to describe real or imagined male promiscuity since ‘active’ heterosexuality has generally found to be normative for young men (Richardson, 2010; Wight, 1994). In fact, there is the opposite, as indicated by the terms ‘Casanova’ (Smiler, 2013) ‘stud’ or ‘player’ (Farvid, Braun and Rowney, 2017) since heterosexuality and masculine status has traditionally been gained by proclaiming to have had a lot of heterosex (Richardson, 2010; Wight, 1994). Furthermore, as Smiler (2013, p. 2) points out “Casanovas, or players, are typically depicted [in the media] as having exciting sex lives that don’t have any negative consequences: they rarely get anyone pregnant or get sexually transmitted infections, nor do they worry about these things”, in contrast to depictions of young women who are assumed and meant to be responsible for the consequences of sexual activity. In sum, insults do not have to do with the undesirability of the attribute itself, but the relationship between the insult (and implied attribute) and the image of self attributed to the insulted person. In this case the young men perceived the ‘slut’ and ‘blue waffle’ insult to be funny because they undermined Michelle’s desired identity.

In terms of why these insults were directed at Michelle, I argue that they are not about the simple policing of normative femininity. This interpretation falls back onto the ‘voluntarism’ of role theory (Connell, 1987) which leaves with the remaining question of why the young men would want to police Michelle. The answer lies in what can be *gained* for directing these insults. I interpret these insults as performances, since they actively do something, that is, they construct masculinity. Specifically, this form of gendered humour served as “a tool to validate and amplify their heterosexual masculinity” (Dalley-Trim, 2007, p. 209; Renold, 2007). In other words, they have more to do with the young men themselves. Michelle herself acted as an ‘affordance’ (Clark and Uzzell, 2002) in that the young men used her to perform masculinity. In terms of the ‘blue waffle’ question, it implicitly allowed the young men to assure themselves that they are simultaneously ‘better’ (Lyman, 1987) than Michelle and that they do not and cannot suffer from this unclean and misogynistically mythical condition. Lastly, the humour served to consolidate male social bonds (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Pascoe, 2005) because of how it affirmed young men’s similarity with each other (as ‘better’, clean and heterosexual) through their difference to Michelle.

As I mentioned in the introduction to this chapter however, most humorous insults were exchanged between young men. Some of this insulting was ‘once off’ in that it did not lead to a back and forth ‘verbal duel’ as I show later below. These ‘once off’ insults were encoded with sexist, misogynistic and homophobic meanings, exemplified through declarations such as "You're a pussy like. You have a pussy" (fieldnotes, Retro) and questions such as "are you gay or something?" (Liam, fieldnotes, Retro). The common purpose of these insults was to mock perceived stupidity (Pascoe, 2005) such as the perceived lack of skill in playing pool. They were usually met with a smile, snigger or a joking ‘shut up’:

> Liam was quite hyper tonight. He set up the pool balls, took his shot, looked behind him and jokingly exclaimed “come on ya ‘faggot” as he noticed his friend was busy talking to another young person. I took the opportunity immediately to ask him “why are you saying that?” (Innocently) “I’m only messing I’m just having fun”. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

Emma was not too pleased however, asking him why he was using ‘that term’. His reaction implied that he did not know what she was talking about, but she felt otherwise:

> “the ‘f’ word you used. Liam did not seem to care about her intervention, passing it off humorously that his friend “is just being stupid”. Emma asked if he knew what the term meant, where he replied “no”. She explained that it is an insult for gay people, but Liam simply replied “oh right. (Laughing and smiling, continuing playing pool) I was just calling him stupid”. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

As I will show again later, Liam sometimes replied to café workers disapproval of his actions with a profession of innocence (as he stated: ‘I’m *only* messing I’m *just* having fun’). Liam’s passing off of these insults as merely ‘just a joke’ is consistent with findings from other studies (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Huuki, Manninen and Sunnari, 2010; McCann, Plummer and Minichiello, 2010; Pascoe, 2007; Robinson, 2005). This profession of innocence does speak to the way in which the use of terms such as ‘faggot’ in the Retro youth café were not used in the context of bullying but of teasing between friends (in contrast to Fusion, see Chapter Seven). This does not make them unproblematic however, in two ways. Firstly, although they may be lobbed

as jokes, homophobic insults can prevent young men from expressing intimacies (Curry, 1991; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Wight, 1994) since they are a way of policing masculinities. Secondly, the instigators themselves can also 'give off' (Goffman, 1959) the impression that they are unaccepting of other identities, which can in turn inscribe the café as an unwelcoming space due to it being possibly associated with unwelcoming homophobic and unaccepting individuals.

It is interesting that Liam apparently did not know the precise meaning of the term 'faggot'. It is possible that he may have proclaimed ignorance as an excuse to avoid disapproval. However, given that the term can have many meanings, which can vary amongst different age groups (Plummer, 2001), Liam may have genuinely not known its relation to the derogation of homosexuality, nevertheless the point is that he used it as a policing and shaming mechanism to shame perceived stupidity. In her ethnographic study of a US High School, Pascoe (2005, 2007) also found that the term 'faggot' was sometimes synonymous with being thought of as 'stupid'. Its use in Retro is also consistent with the broader research which has found that labels such as 'faggot', 'gay' or 'poofter' are not always directed at those who are perceived to be actually gay (Kimmel, 2009; McCann, Plummer and Minichiello, 2010; Pascoe, 2007; Plummer, 2001; Stoudt, 2006) but perceived to be lacking masculinity. Pascoe (2007) also found that terms like 'gay', can also be directed towards objects as well as individuals. Similarly, when a group of four young men entered the Retro café together, already laughing, joking and trading insults, one of them made his way toward the pool table and exclaimed "'this pool table is gay!' I then asked, 'Is it because it's small?' He replied, 'yeah like!'" (fieldnotes, Retro). I realised shortly after however, that in asking 'Is it because it's small?' I may have implicitly given the impression that I supported the conflation of smallness/inadequateness with homosexuality.

At the Retro café overall, these homophobically loaded terms were not uttered in the pervasive and everyday sense as has been documented in other studies (Nayak and Kehily, 1996; Pascoe, 2007). Undoubtedly however, in these studies the school context afforded greater opportunities to observing the deployment of these terms due to the larger numbers of young people that can be observed at any one time in comparison to a youth café. What was every day and pervasive in the Retro youth café

especially however[54], was a variety of other humorous performances, as the rest of the chapter will show. For example, a few minutes following the pool table being labelled 'gay', two of the young men began a light 'play-fight' or 'rough and tumble' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) (see 'game-plays' below) along with the hurling of curses and insults in the form of 'verbal duelling'.

These 'verbal duels' occurred predominantly in the Retro youth café and constituted another variation of humorous insulting between peers. They were characterised by competitive back and forth rebuttals. These duels have also been called 'cussing' or 'blowing competitions' (Back, 1993; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) and are based on an attempt to 'top' or at least equalize the others vulgar insult (Curry, 1991; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a). There are a couple of features to these duels that should be mentioned. The first feature relates to their 'interactional format' (Goffman, 1983). These duels are forms of 'focused interaction' (Goffman, 1966, 1967), whereby the young men's focus of attention is toward each other. These duels can also be of a volume higher than that of an ordinary conversation and it is difficult to capture the way in which these duels constituted the general café environment. The Retro café is quite small, and in the case of the four young men which I mentioned in the previous paragraph, they were interacting in a way that could be described as boisterous. Two of these young men were engaged in 'physical clowning' (Barnes, 2012) as mentioned and dominated half of the space of the Retro youth café, moving around the space very freely, knocking into the young men playing pool, the black couch and the square table in a manner that seemed to demonstrate their oblivious to their surroundings. Anne's intervention best captures the way in which these young men constituted and effected the space both through their embodiment and their 'verbal duelling': "you can't simply come in here and do anything you want. You have to respect people and obey the rules" (fieldnotes, Retro).

A second example of these verbal duels can be offered and exemplifies further the 'ground rules' (Barnes, 2012) and meanings of masculinity that are embedded within them. One of these exchanges occurred again in Retro and involved a young man jokingly teasing his friend for being on the losing side of a game of pool he was playing with me. One of the jokes hurled was the claim "you have titties". His friend did

[54] I attribute this to the fact that there were fewer young people who used the Fusion café at any one time.

engage in retaliatory insults but seemed unnerved and uneasy by the exchange - his smiling especially seeming to buckle when he was called 'gay', where he claimed in a serious tone matter-of-fact tone "I'm not gay". Here the duel seemed to have had crossed the boundaries of acceptability and resulted in visible unease and tension and a slowdown in the speed of the rebuttals. This moment in particular exemplifies how humour can thread a thin line between play and seriousness that can descend into an overt dispute. Commenting on her own observations of the trading of insults within a youth club context, Vicky Plows (2010, p. 269) argues that:

> engaging in 'playful' insults in interaction is a carefully negotiated process that has the benefits of strengthening friendships as they play and laugh together and get to know one another's boundaries but it is also a risky strategy that could potentially lead to the degradation of relationships as 'invisible' lines are crossed if this boundary testing is not well managed.

When the verbal duel between the two young men at Retro moved onto insults regarding penis size (called a 'cock game' by Pascoe in 2005) however, the unnerved young man seemed to gain sudden pride and confidence by rebuking that "black men have the biggest dicks in the world, d'y know that?" (fieldnotes, Retro)[55]. His friend backed down, smiling. This confident rebuttal and his friend's backing down shows that both young men mutually accepted wider discourses and beliefs that black men supposedly have an above average penis size. They also implicitly implied that larger penis size is supposedly confirming of masculine esteem.

Ethnographic researchers have observed these duels within schools (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) and youth clubs (Back, 1993; Plows, 2010). In each duel, the over-riding concern is a "battle to maintain status", a battle that "is continuous and on-going…" (Barnes, 2012, p. 244). As Plows's (2010) comment indicates, these duels can be precarious due to the implications they can hold for the masculine self. Firstly, there is esteem to be *gained* or *lost* for 'holding one's own' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 72) in terms of being able to retaliate to the smart quip with both "the ability to respond quickly" (Barnes, 2012, p. 244; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Pascoe, 2007) and the extent to which the rebuttal equalises or 'tops' the other's (Curry, 1991) insult. In this way masculinity is accrued and signified

[55] This young man was black.

by giving the impression of being skilful in the art of the 'comeback' (Curry, 1991, p. 131) whilst not doing so signifies lack of skill and hence lack of masculinity.

Secondly, failure to retaliate could have a larger implication than merely being imputed with an impression that one lacks this 'skill'. In Chapter Three, I suggested that Goffman's work is a useful 'thinking tool'. His idea that individuals consciously and/or unconsciously impute an image of self to themselves and others can help ethnographic researchers think about what kind of image of self can be imputed to an individual at any moment in time based on the immediate context of an interaction. In these 'verbal duels', although an individual may stop retaliating or directly giving an 'expression' (Goffman, 1959) and thus, stop actively giving an 'impression', this lack of retaliation can still 'give off' an impression (Goffman, 1959). It could be seen by others as implicitly accepting the insulting label as truth - a truth that is discrediting. This is exemplified in Pascoe's (2005) interactionist research on the performance of masculinities at River High School in the USA. She found that the 'fag' insult can become "a hot potato that no boy wants to be left holding" (Pascoe, 2005, p. 339). In her research, unless a young man who had been called 'fag' retaliated by ascribing the label to another peer, this temporary identity could stick and ultimately discredit his masculinity (see also Barnes, 2012, p. 248). This point is an important one. It highlights Goffman's (1959) point that images of self are also imputed to individuals when they do not directly give performances or overt 'expressions'. What Goffman's (1959) point implies and what these verbal duels show is how individuals can compel others into having to prove the image of self which is on 'loan' to them (Goffman, 1967). If a young man chooses to retaliate then he has chosen to accept the challenge and put his image of self on the line. If he refuses, then he may 'give off' an impression that is discrediting. In sum, some young men may perceive that it is better to accept the challenge of duel rather than reject it and potentially 'give off' the impression of lacking in skill (in the 'art of the comeback'), lacking a sense of humour and/or lacking masculinity in terms of what the insult signifies. These points show how young men can be "bound" by a "powerful set of ground rules" (Barnes, 2012, p. 248; Curry, 1991; Lyman, 1987) in these forms of interchanges.

Within the context of 'verbal duels' themselves, one of the 'ground rules' revolves around giving the impression that one has taken the personal comment or insult "with seeming indifference" (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 72; Lyman, 1987). This

constitutes a third way in which these duels can have implications for the masculine self. I would also argue however, that the rule to enact 'poise' (Goffman, 1967) and to "to keep control of your emotions" (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 72; Lyman, 1987) does not only relate and pertain to the specific context of these verbal duel themselves. This 'feeling rule' (Hochschild, 1979) also pertains to normative masculinity in general as the displaying of hurt and the other emotional cognates of shame (Scheff, 2006) such as vulnerability and embarrassment have been shown to be *in themselves* discrediting for young men (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Martino, 1999; Pollack, 1999; Scheff, 2006; Seidler, 2007). I argue that the ability to enact this 'poise' constitutes the second meaning of the term 'holding one's own'. In sum, it is not simply that "being properly masculine entails not being humiliated" (Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman, 2003, p. 183) but also in not *displaying* this humiliation. The display of hurt has another implication in the context of a verbal duel. As a cognate of shame (Scheff, 2006), embarrassment or the display of vulnerability can 'give off' (Goffman, 1959) the impression that the image of self which the insult was designed to discredit has indeed been discredited or punctured.

Given the precarity of these duels, it is understandable why these exchanges are accompanied by laughter and humour. The use of humour has been theorised as a form of 'joke-work' in which the laughter works to manage 'anxiety' or 'anxieties' by displacing them "on to others" (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 80; Lyman, 1987; Pascoe, 2013). I want to complicate the argument further by explicating the precise mechanisms of how this displacement works. Laughter and humour act both as 'preventive' and 'defensive' practices (Goffman, 1959, p. 24) for both the challenger and challenged. For the challenger, smiling and/or laughter while *directing* an insult can function as a 'preventive practice' (Goffman, 1959, p. 24). 'Preventive practices' are performances which serve to prevent the self from being discredited within the immediate future of an interaction (Goffman, 1959). In other words, humour can serve to (re)define the situation (Goffman, 1959) in a way as to imply that the insult and the whole proceeding interaction is not meant to be taken seriously and hence, functions as an insurance mechanism against a possible future discrediting rebuttal by the opponent. This implies that humour, as displayed through smiling and laughter is not merely produced by a performance that is inherently funny, as an organic affect or spontaneous emotional eruption that results when some boundary has been

transgressed. Laughter is also not simply a biological 'catharsis' that naturally displaces anxieties as Scheff (1994) would argue. Rather, the enactment of humour by laughing, sniggering or smiling constitutes a form of 'impression management' that can serve to (re)define the situation (Goffman, 1959) as one in which no serious claims to identity will be on the line. As Goffman (1967, p. 112) argues, humour and laughter can constitute "a way of saying that what occurs now is not serious or real".

For the challenged, laughter while *receiving* an insult can act as a 'defensive' (Goffman, 1959) practice in two ways. First, similar to the direction of an insult, it can give the impression that the person does not take the insult or the implications of a duel to be a serious reflection about himself (Goffman, 1967) or as least that "the self that has failed" through the implication of the insult "is not one that is important to him" (Goffman, 1952, p. 10, sic). Second, the performance of humour and laughter constitutes a form of 'face-work' (Goffman, 1967, p. 12). Specifically, it is a 'face-saving' practice (Goffman, 1967, p. 13) that is designed to uphold the 'feeling rule' of not displaying hurt or vulnerability. Laughter helps to convey composure, 'poise' and good spiritedness in the face of discrediting insults. This does not mean however, that humour can always successfully displace and protect against these anxieties as has been documented in some studies (Barnes, 2012; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) (see also Chapter Seven). This was exemplified by the example where a young man became unnerved from being called 'gay'. What the threat of unease, anxiety, embarrassment and shame which these competitive 'verbal duels' highlight are the compelling dynamics (Scheff, 1988; Stoudt, 2006, p. 278) of what Scheff (2013, p. 108) calls the 'pride-shame system' and shows that normative ideals of masculinity are not merely 'powerful and pervasive' (Phoenix and Frosh, 2001, p. 33), but powerful and *persuasive* (Scheff, 1988).

One final point can be made regarding how these duels have implications for the masculine self. As the discussion up to now has largely implied, there are negative motivations for participating in these 'verbal duels' - negative in that insulting rebuttals and 'face-saving' laughter is partly about avoiding the spectre of shame - the spectre of discredited masculinity. This does not explain why a young man may direct an insult and start a 'verbal duel' in the first place. This points to one limitation to Scheff and Goffman in terms of their analysis of power within the context of face to face interaction. As I have highlighted in the Chapter Three, Scheff (2003, p. 243)

argues that Goffman's work highlights how individuals are "sensitive to the exact nuance of deference they receive". Scheff's (1988) deference model pertains to real or imagined threats to the self within face to face interaction. The implication is that performances of masculinity such as 'verbal duels' and the use of humour are ways or managing these threats. However, there is also a positive motivation to these duels. As Goffman (1967, p. 24) reminds, a 'threat' to another's 'face' (or masculinity) can "be wilfully introduced for what can be safely gained by it". In other words, 'face work' (Goffman, 1967) can be put to an aggressive use in that an individual can start an interchange from the belief that 'face' can earn esteem from the interaction, or at least that esteem will not be lost.

6.2.3 'Game-plays'

As the previous discussion in relation to insults and 'verbal duels' has shown, humour can take on a competitive edge. Huuki, Manninen an Sunnari (2010) have argued that a focus on the language of humour does not capture the materiality of humour. Indeed, within both youth cafés, there was a materiality to humour which was evident in the way humour and laughter were also encoded through the body by engaging in what are called 'game-plays' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) - competitive physically tactile interactions which end (like 'verbal duels') with a winner, loser or a draw. For example, in the Fusion café, Jack and James sometimes engaged in 'punch-'n'-runs', the object of which "is to hit an opponent and run off before he or she has time to retaliate" (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 75). There is an obvious link between these 'game-plays' and how they are constituted or enabled by the physical space of the cafés. 'Punch-'n'-runs' did not occur at Retro for example due to its small size, exemplifying how the physical materiality of both youth cafés in terms of size both supported (in the case of Fusion) and constricted (in the case of Retro) different behavioural possibilities.

Another variant of these 'game-plays' involved physical wrestling or what might be called 'rough-and-tumble' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a), an instance of which, was already highlighted in the previous section. This 'rough-and-tumble' encompasses a broad range of physical playful interaction. I have further characterised some of these interactions as 'push play(s)', 'pull pranks' and 'pull fights' which were performed by

appropriating some of the material affordances of each café. ‘Push plays’ involved attempts to use either the pool cue or just hands to physically push an opponent back - the opposite of tug of war. The pool cue was also humorously used for ‘pull pranks’ and ‘pull fights’. ‘Pull pranks’ involve swiping the cue away just as the opponent is about to grab it, working to construct an agile image of self by simultaneously making the opponent look clumsy. ‘Pull fights’ involved attempting to pull the cue from another person like tug of war. These performances were competitive and worked to give the impression of strength, but they were also used to put the opponent off balance by suddenly letting the cue go, again making the opponent look clumsy.

These ‘pull pranks’ and ‘pull fights’ were performed between both young people and against and between young people and café workers. Indeed, I became the victim of many of these ‘pull pranks’ and ‘fights’. During one pool game with Liam and his friend for example, at various points they held out the cue stick when it was my turn, but sometimes took it back before I could grab it. These constituted a form of mini ‘wind-ups’ (Back, 1993). I felt that my reflexes were being tested and that the intention was to make me look clumsy or ‘stupid’ (see also Back, 1993). At one point, I grabbed the cue but eventually had to leave go “in the fear [in terms of embarrassment] that I could fall over the pool table” as a struggle ensued between us (fieldnotes, Retro). This happened on other occasions between Liam and I, but it also occurred with other volunteers and between young men themselves. Although some of these mini ‘game-plays’ lasted for not more than ten seconds, it is hard to describe fully how much movement and space they require for an outcome to be decided. These ‘push plays’ often meant that Liam and other young men were moving around the Retro café space in a manner which interrupted others, especially those playing pool. On one occasion, he refused to give the cue to Anne despite her repeated requests for it, since the ‘push play’ was dominating the space of the café and became dangerous to others’ physical safety. She eventually grabbed it and recommended that he do three laps around the block "to drain some of that energy" (fieldnotes, Retro).

Anne’s ‘motive theory’, that Liam’s performance was the result of ‘energy’ that needs to be drained captures the way in which the laughter and bodily movement through which these ‘game-plays’ were sometimes performed appeared to be infectious and almost uncontrollable. This was also captured in Anne’s response in the previous section to one of these ‘push plays’ - that “you can’t simply come in here and do

anything you want". Her reaction also captures the particular 'interactional format' (Goffman, 1983) of some of these 'game-plays'. They can be conceptualised as not only 'focused interactions' (Goffman, 1966, 1967) but as 'spontaneous involvements' (Goffman, 1967, p. 113) where some young men were "unthinkingly and impulsively immersed" and "carried away" with them, "oblivious to other things", bumping into objects and other young people (see also Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015). Goffman (1967, p. 113) argues that a 'spontaneous involvement' is characterised by a "binding and hypnotic effect" and "is a *unio mystic*, a socialised trance". His conceptualisation captures the way in which on some occasions young men who engaged in many forms of these 'game-plays' were carried away with the infectiousness of them such the case of Liam as mentioned.

Some theoretical points can be made in this regard. As outlined in Chapter Three, Scheff (1988, p. 296) argues that a 'shame spiral' may occur both *between* and *within* interactants. The 'infectious' or "binding and hypnotic" (Goffman, 1967, p. 113) appearance of some of these 'game-plays' suggest that the opposite to a 'shame spiral' can occur within face to face interaction, although my notes here are preliminary ideas. I suggest that a 'pride spiral' may occur both *between* and *within* individuals in a state of 'focused interaction'. A 'pride spiral' may occur *within* an interactant if performances work to continually (re)affirm and/or elevate the interactant's projected image of self. A 'pride spiral' *between* interactants may occur if both interactants' performances mutually (re)affirm their images of self within an interaction of which they are part. Goffman's concept of 'euphoric interplay' which is defined as "social interaction that is not self-conscious" (Schudson, 1984, p. 641), best describes this 'pride spiral'. This contrasts with 'dysphoric interplay' where a calculating, instrumental and contrived image of self that is 'put on' due to the 'painful' feelings of self-consciousness elicited when individuals feel that their "definition of self is threated" (Goffman, 1967, p. 119).

In sum, some of these 'game-plays' constitute examples of 'euphoric interplay'. The important point is that they are not naturally productive of 'pride' and 'euphoric interplay'. This 'pride' is produced from the enactment of performances which confirm the meanings relating to a masculine image of self. In these interactions young men's performances are not only reinforcing their idealised, historically contingent, masculine images of self, but each other's. I argue that this shows that masculinity is

not something that is always ‘contrived’ instrumental, calculating and painfully ‘put on’ (Goffman, 1959). Rather it can be pleasurable (see also Kehler, 2007, p. 265).

Although the mutual (re)affirming of images of self produced through the performance of these ‘game-plays’ may be productive of laughter, pride and ‘euphoric interplay’, I would argue that this smiling and laughing are not always products of these ‘game-plays’, but *constitutive* of them. Firstly, as per the function of humour within the context of ‘verbal duels’, smiling and laughter in the context of ‘game-plays’ can function to (re)define these interactions as one where no serious claims to identity will be put on the line. This is not simply an interpretation derived purely from Goffman’s (1959, 1967) work, but one made in the context of examining my own reflexivity and experience in the field. In the Fusion café for example, James and Jack had been engaged in a long ‘game-play’ match of hitting each other with the large bean bags and I eventually had to intervene. Like James and Jack, I was smiling as I tried to grab the bean bags. I was attempting to show that I was not publicly frustrated with my inability to control the situation and that I was not making much of an effort to grab the beans bags, even though I was. Thus, I wanted to convey composure, poise and good spiritedness (Goffman, 1967). Yet at the same time, I also made sure to grab and let go of the bean bags in a way that would prevent the embarrassment of being pulled to the floor by one or both of the young men.

6.2.4 Sexualised Exchanges

As the first subsection on the exchange of insults has shown, some insults were encoded with sexualised, homophobic, racialised and misogynistic meanings. Overall, as I will show again in the next section of this chapter, the content of much of the humour performed by young men in both cafés was implicitly or explicitly sexualised. In the context of this subsection, one way in which sexualised humour was performed was through the appropriation of physical props in each café for the purposes of mimicry, parody and ironic performances of humour. In many sessions in the Retro café for example, Liam inscribed the pool cue with sexualised meanings (Allen, 2013) by putting it between his legs, implying it to be a penis. He simulated sexual intercourse by making thrusting movements, he bounced the cue up and down and on one occasion made a 'twirling sound' whilst spinning the cue in a circular motion with

his hands. On another occasion, he put the cue between Barry's legs and made thrusting movements, laughing - Barry was unaware of this until Anne called out Liam's name in disapproval. Presumably in this instance Liam was laughing at its sexualised connotations.

Within both cafés, 'ironic' performances of humour were interwoven with parody and mimicry. For example, during one session in the Retro café, a young man put one snooker ball in each of his pockets. As I note: "Liam jokily directed: 'take the balls out of your pants' where one of his friends humorously replied, 'I'll take your balls out from your pants', triggering snigging amongst the peer group" (fieldnotes, Retro). These humorous performances constitute examples of 'ironic humour' (McCormack and Anderson, 2010), because they involve explicitly or implicitly making a claim (whether verbal or implied through performance) which, if taken at face value and devoid of context, discredits the performers image of self. The 'irony' is twofold: the implicit or explicit image of self that is projected not only at face value distances the performer from (in the cases above) their heterosexual image, but in fact strengthens and re-affirms their heterosexual image of self, dynamics which are consistent with previous research (Huuki, Manninen & Sunnari, 2010; Pascoe, 2003). These ironic performances were also directed against myself as I explain later in this subsection.

Some theoretical points can be made in relation to these 'ironic' performances of humour. The term 'heterosexual recuperation' describes "the strategies boys use to establish and maintain heterosexual identities without invoking homophobia" (McCormack and Anderson, 2010, p. 846). McCormack and Anderson (2010, p. 846) use the term 'ironic recuperation' to describe "the satirical proclamation of same-sex desire, or a gay identity, to maintain a heterosexual identity". Several scholars have shown how this 'ironic recuperation' is "used when boys fear their heterosexuality is under question" (Anderson and McCormack, 2015; McCormack and Anderson, 2010, p. 846; Nayak and Kehily, 1996; Pascoe, 2007) but the attribute in question does not need to be heterosexuality as Barnes (2012) shows. McCormack and Anderson (2010, p. 852) also note that overall, the young men in the sixth form school in which they witnessed 'ironic recuperation' were "extremely tactile with each other, and there was limited heterosexual recuperation" among the students. Similarly, in both youth cafés, the performance of ironic humour was not (from what I observed) preceded by what might be called 'gender transgressive behaviour' (see also, Chapter Seven). Neither

did these ‘ironic’ performances seem to produce a momentary questioning of young men’s heterosexuality. In fact, as other research has shown (Epstein and Johnson, 1998; Huuki, Manninen & Sunnari, 2010; Pascoe, 2003; Robinson, 2005), what seems to be key for the performances of these forms of ironic humour is a perception that the masculine status or the “heterosexual orientation of the performer” was “unquestioned” (Huuki, Manninen & Sunnari, 2010, p. 375), thus, these performances worked to (re)affirm heterosexuality.

Sexualised ironic performances were also directed at myself and other café workers, involving mimicry and parody through the appropriation of physical props or affordances within the café to mimic male genitals and sexual acts. In Fusion for instance, Fred was once asked by James “Can I give you a spank?” (fieldnotes, Fusion) with a table tennis racket. Similarly, in Retro a young man jokily said to Emma “I want to slap you” (fieldnotes, Retro) with the ruler he was holding, prompting laughter from his peers. I show the extent of sexualised performances toward café workers in the extracts below. These extracts pertained to one single session at Fusion and I quote them at length since they summarise similar instances which occurred throughout the ethnographic work in both cafés. In this session, the long course of sexual parody and mimicry begun after Ciara asked me to supervise Gary and James in the storage room. While I was watching Gary, at the corner of my eye I saw James taking two snooker balls from a box in front of me where he put them between his legs, unaware that I knew what he was doing:

> [James] muttered my name in a mellow, serious tone. I looked into his eyes - his head was slightly lowered which exaggerated the stare of his eyes and seriousness of his expression... [he asked] ‘look at my balls’ in the same serious tone. I felt he would have made a scene of the situation had I looked down. Gary and another young man who was behind me laughed. I told James to ‘stop, put them back’. He hesitated before smiling and put them back in the box. (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

As I noted, I was immediately conscious that looking down may have provoked Gary and James to ‘create a scene’ (see ‘Creating a scene’ below) where they would both imply that I was *actually* looking at James's genitals. This would have been deeply discrediting, hence my awkwardness.

As a cognate of shame (Scheff, 2006), the feeling of awkwardness implies that a social bond has fractured or is on the course of fracturing. In this moment, I feared being seen as inappropriate and incompetent, not fit for interacting with young people, a breaker of child protection guidelines and/or a person who easily falls for pranks. It was this fear of future disapproval which incited my unease. This fear however, is particular to my role within the café because it is a role that is a situated amalgamation of multiple intersecting identities with their corresponding norms of expectation and interaction obligations (Goffman, 1967). These identities include that of being a *volunteer* within a *youth* setting, a *PhD student* and an *adult male* to name a few. As a volunteer within a youth setting, I am bound to various norms and expectations as well as the implicit expectation of acting as a 'role model'. These expectations include adherence to child protection guidelines and norms of appropriate conduct with young people. My identity as an adult carries cultural expectations regarding how adults are supposed to conduct themselves with young people There are also more situational expectations in terms of my vague notions of how other volunteers and Ciara (the coordinator) expected me to manage young people's inappropriate use of humour. These intersecting identities constitute the roles and identities of other café workers with some differences, such as age and gender. The point of course, is that young people are aware of these situated identities and of their corresponding intersecting expectations and use them to enact various modes of humour to attempt to infringe upon these multiple identity boundaries (see also, Kehily and Nayak, 1997a). This shows how café workers also constitute affordances which enable the performance and subsequent construction of masculinities.

In relation to the extract, my anxiety was of course, largely imagined. A minute later after James and Gary had left the storeroom, I was walking toward the kitchen when Gary (as I note) "asked for 'respect' from me. I put my knuckles up against his and he seemed delighted at my gesture" (fieldnotes, Fusion). This was confirmation that just like their joking about whether I did drugs earlier in the fieldwork, they were laughing with me rather than at me, yet this was not enough at the time to relieve my sense of awkwardness. About ten minutes later, I was behind the main bar counter in the Fusion café, looking out across the café space while Fred (a volunteer) had begun making the hot chocolate and toasties. I observed James, Gary and Cian sitting at the same table

at the far end of the café where I then realised what they were searching for (and had found) in the storage room - pipe cleaners:

> … I wondered what they could be making since I did not believe that it could be anything that would be appropriate.
>
> Cian got up from the table and showed Ciara that he has made his name out of the pipe cleaners. A few minutes later I noticed that James was by the pool table. He had put the pipe cleaners in an oval shape and put it between his legs, holding it as if to imitate a penis. Whilst I positioned myself to stand at the wall [near the bar countertop], he made his way over to the kitchen area. We exchanged eyes and I found myself making a conscious decision not to look down. I was about to say, 'take it out that's inappropriate' until I realised that James could use my words 'take it out' and twist them into a sexual meaning. This caused me to freeze as I struggled to come up with something else to say as my thoughts were stumbling from the awkwardness. James then came over and stood in front of me. He fixed his eyes on mine and maintained a deep serious stare. I realised that the prop was now touching my thigh. At the same time I said 'James' to tell him he was being inappropriate, he requested in the same tone as before in the storage room: 'Robert… look at my balls'.

James's request produced a burst of laughter from Gary and another young man as James then quickly walked away while "I could not help but smile to conceal the tiny awkwardness that I was feeling" (fieldnotes, Fusion).

The appropriation of pool balls and their equation with testicles to perform ironic heterosexual humour occurred on a couple of occasions in both cafés. Similarly, in one session in Retro during a pool game a young man showed me two pool balls and sarcastically declared "I like balls…especially yours" (fieldnotes, Retro), which also incited a burst of laughter from Liam, constituting another example of ironic humour. Continuing with the Fusion café, James continued with his ironic performances. A few minutes later, Kieran, who had been talking to Jack, turned on the Jukebox which was on the kitchen counter. He began to dance with Ciara and at this point the atmosphere of the café became very jovial, providing James and Gary the opportunity to use the music to make their own form of fun:

> When Ciara turned her back on Gary, James and I while dancing, James began twerking[56] towards me. I pretended that I did not notice him. He called my attention: 'Robert watch me!' I uncomfortably watched as he began twerking back towards me. I drew my eyes away to watch Ciara and Kieran, but James kept moving slowly toward me. Eventually James was about two to three inches from my crotch area. I repeated his name to signal to stop. I did not want to move out of the way as I felt doing so would indicate my discomfort and feeling of awkwardness. I also felt that James wanted to make me move as a type of one-upmanship. I told James to 'stop' repeatedly and progressively louder as the background music was very high…

James eventually stopped, moved away and started dancing, but then Gary proceeded to twerk in front of me and James began laughing. This time I raised my voice: "Gary stop that's inappropriate". Gary stopped and laughed with James and put up his clenched knuckles as a symbol of respect to me and I partook in the gesture.

In the extracts above, what I attempted to keep and project, was 'composure' and 'poise' (Goffman, 1967). I felt that overtly revealing my awkwardness would have meant that James and Gary would never have taken me seriously in the future. Of course, my feeling that James and Gary would imply that I was *actually* looking at their genitals and make a scene of such an interpretation was confirmed a couple of sessions later:

> … whilst playing a game of pool with James, he put the cue stick between his legs as it was my turn. At the same time as I put my hand on the cue, James held it from behind his back and stated seriously, almost in the same serious tone as before [in the storage room], "Robert… you're touching my stick". He stared at me with a very serious face, but he left go as I held my ground, not wanting to give into his trick, not before loudly declaring "Robert touched me!" I proceeded to take my shot, smiling from James joke, but I had to ask jokily, "Why do you do that?"
>
> (smiling) "I'm only messing with ya Rob". (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

[56] 'Twerking' or a 'twerk' refers to "A dance or dance move involving thrusting hip movements and a low, squatting stance" (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2017).

This extract shows how my anxiety over how James and/or Gary's may have created 'a scene' had dissipated by this point. James attempted to sexualise the situation by referring to the cue as his 'stick', whereas I proceeded to keep the 'definition of the situation' (Goffman, 1959) in line with how the cue is supposed to be officially used. Throughout the fieldwork at Fusion, James in particular repeatedly used these ironic performances to construct a heterosexual image of self. James's humorous performances and his confirmation (from the above extract) that he aimed to make a scene of these pranks again highlights how the particular situational identities of café workers provide fodder and possibilities for the production of humour. I argue that the humorousness of James's joke above would not be the same for each person it might be used upon. Since café workers are adults, who must adhere, as I have mentioned, to multiple interactional obligations toward young people, these performances are made more scandalous, discrediting and hence, more humorous. This is similar to the way in which young men's teasing of security guards at shopping centres provide humorous 'excitement', since it tests the guard's identities as people who are meant to maintain order (Arnesen and Laegran, 2003). The key point is that young people are aware of these particular roles and obligations (also Hart, 2016) that come with being a café worker and use and test the boundaries of these roles to enact various modes of humour.

6.2.5 Summary

This section has documented, explored and analysed how masculinities are performed and constructed through multiple 'regimes of humour'. Masculinity was performed through humour through the directing and trading of insults, 'game-plays', ironic heterosexual performances and toward peers and café workers. How humour was deployed and what images of self these performances aimed to bring into being related to meanings of perceived femininity and non-normative masculinity. The harassment of Michelle invoked traditional beliefs around female promiscuity, which served to construct heterosexual masculinity. 'Verbal duels' and 'game-plays' for example, were mediated through traditional hegemonic meanings such as emotional coolness, competition, physical strength and prowess and derision (Francis and Skelton, 2005). Heterosexuality was also constructed through 'sexualised exchanges' involving ironic

heterosexual performances of through implicit and explicit claims of homosexual desire.

Throughout this section, the reasons why these performances were interpreted or given the impression of being humorous related to how performances threatened images of self. Insults for example were humorous because they were direct verbal claims that the person is not who they explicitly or implicitly claim to be. 'Game-plays' threatened to impute undesired identities through the implications of losing, while most of the sexualised humour I have documented attempted to test and threaten the idealised identities of café personal, identities which are bound by numerous interaction obligations. In this section I have also suggested that an individual may not actually take something to be humorous but may give the impression of taking it to be so. In other words, humour was not merely a product of performances which create humorous situations or events but was also a managed impression. The same idea applies: the expression of humour is given to prevent threatening situations.

In this section I also drew attention to the 'interactional format' of these performances (Goffman, 1983). Each of the extracts discussed and analysed in this section all constitute what Goffman (1967, p. 132-133) calls 'focused interaction', involving "a single focus of cognitive and visual attention" between two or more individuals. Within interactions which were 'focused', there were some occasions which were further characterised by 'spontaneous involvements' whereby young men appeared to be so 'immersed' within the interaction that all other things became 'oblivious' (Goffman, 1967), constituting forms of 'euphoric interplay'.

6.3 Humouring *through* cafés

This section continues with the theme of humour and addresses the same four questions which have so far guided the analysis within this chapter. What separates this section from the previous will become clearer throughout this section, but it relates to how young men actively recognise and use the 'normative order' of the cafés to perform masculinity. I first explore and highlight what I have coined 'humorous improprieties', involving the blurting out of inappropriate terms and the mimicry of exaggerated sexual orgasm. The following section introduces another new term which I felt it necessary to develop - 'humour bombing'. This form of humour is quick,

spontaneous and momentarily disrupting of the cafés as spaces. Finally, I discuss humorous performances which were about ‘creating a scene’.

6.3.1 ‘Humorous Improprieties’

A fieldnote extract from the Retro youth café succinctly highlights some features of a ‘regime’ of humour that I have termed ‘humorous improprieties’:

> … Liam at one point seemed to randomly out loud and in a matter of fact delivery state ‘Dick. Sex. Pussy.’ This incited a light laughter from his friend. I immediately looked up from the draughts board [as I was playing a game with Jon] and saw him (Liam) standing up straight, soldier like with his eyes averting attention to Anne, who did not hear perhaps because she was texting. Liam seemed to test whether Anne heard what he had said - but Anne continued to text, and Liam smiled at his friend and got back to playing pool… when Anne and the other volunteer had briefly left the café space to down the corridor, Liam began stating these words again even louder along with the addition of ‘Penis’ and ‘Cock’ in a stuttered matter of fact tone. His friend was laughing at this but Liam suddenly stopped when Anne came back in… (Fieldnotes, Retro)

The content of these performances varied, with 'marijuana' being added to the mix on a couple of occasions. Another variation revolved around *how* these utterances were performed. In the above extract, Liam’s utterances had a ‘matter-of-fact’ delivery. On other occasions these utterances were stated in a rapid fire-like manner. This was enough to elicit some notice and sniggering from peers, but just not enough to attract the complete attention of the workers, either because the workers were distracted or since the utterances were audibly low and/or short enough in duration. In other words, the audience for these performances appeared to be the performers’ friends and immediate peers.

Another variation of these performances was the mimicking of sexual orgasm through exaggerated moaning. In the extract below, Liam begun moaning during a pool game. His friend also joined in, but eventually, as I note:

> ...Emma asked them both to "stop making those noises please". What was interesting about this interaction was the lack of humour between the two. Although they respected Emma's request, after beginning another game of pool, they began making the sounds again... [While I was still standing at the wall watching the pool match] Liam was at one point standing next to me watching his friend. He began to utter sexualised moaning again and his friend joined along. I asked him (Liam) why he was "making those noises". Both Liam and his friend sniggered, "Coz it's funny. I'm only having a laugh".
>
> From behind the counter Emma had heard his answer: "It's a bit inappropriate Liam though can you just relax with it?"
>
> Liam: (sniggering) alright. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

I often found myself perplexed on numerous occasions during the fieldwork in Retro by how young men would blurt out words and imitate exaggerated sexual moaning at no one in particular and in a manner that did not seem to have anything to do with the interaction they were already a part of. In many of these cases it appeared that others within the café did not notice or at least give attention to these performances and the performers themselves sometimes did not even laugh at their own performances. It is possible however, that these were performed with the possible intention of eliciting friends to join in with the performance. Nevertheless, this sexual moaning did sometimes elicit laughter from the young man's immediate peer group on a few occasions even when there was no visible reaction from café workers. I argue that this was because the moaning itself was interpreted to be funny, not because it was inherently humorous, but, in my opinion, because they tested the boundaries and norms of decency and decorum which café workers uphold within the café.

Another reason why these performances were humorous derived from how young men perceived that café workers lacked an awareness of their occurrence - being funny presumably because it discredited the worker as an all-seeing supervisor. This interpretation can be seen with the first fieldnote extract cited in this subsection, where Liam made utterances not toward, but with *reference* to Anne. Due to the seeming randomness of these performances and the appearance that café workers were sometimes partly and implicitly the object of attention, I characterise them not as purely 'focused' interactions but as subtle forms of 'interactional alienation' called

‘external preoccupation’’ (Goffman, 1967, p. 117) because Liam and other young men were slightly or directly conscious of café workers whilst giving these performances.

On other occasions where laughter by the performer and peers did ensue, it was only when a café worker voiced their disapproval of the performance, suggesting that it was not merely the act of transgression in itself that was valued (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a), but the signification or confirmation from café workers that an act of transgression did indeed occur. This is the point of ‘humorous improprieties’. These performances are given because they are humorous, but they are humorous because they are not conducive with the norms of appropriateness, decency and decorum that are upheld within the café by café workers. An example of this can be cited from one session at Retro. When a young man shouted aloud that he was not looking up pornography on his phone, the laughter of his peers was only elicited when Emma decided to check his phone.

Similarly, when two young men asked Emma if they could borrow her laptop to use the internet, she said that it was fine but as long as they were looking up ‘appropriate stuff’ (fieldnotes, Retro). They then humorously claimed that they were looking up pornography and ‘masturbation videos’, prompting Jessica (a volunteer) to check to see what they were doing exactly, which only incited more laughter (fieldnotes, Retro). In this case, I wondered whether they would have made this joke at all had it not been for Emma cautioning them to keep to ‘appropriate stuff’. It is possible that by reminding them of the unofficial[57] norms of decorum and appropriateness which café workers uphold with differing tolerances, she unintentionally gave them the idea to test these norms. In sum, it seemed that the humour was elicited by Emma’s reaction, which has been documented in other studies (McCann, Plummer and Minichiello, 2014). This was also Jordan’s interpretation when I asked him why a young man in another session began making ‘that (sexualised moaning) noise’ while playing the PlayStation where he was also surrounded by his friends:

> He’s just trying to get attention and be funny like he’s being immature. It’s stupid it’s to produce a reaction, trying to be funny.
>
> Robert: Well he’s not getting any reaction now it seems.

[57] I call them ‘unofficial’ because they were not on the noticeboard rule sheet.

Jordan: Yeah well… not this time anyway.

(Fieldnotes, Retro)

6.3.2 'Humour Bombing'

As I articulated in Chapter Five, in each youth café there were multiple 'encounters' where different friendship groups and young people were engaged with each other in some shared activity. These were what might be colloquially called conversations or interactions whereby (in the context of this thesis) young people and café workers were 'doing their own thing and minding their own business', whether it was through playing pool or discussing events at school. Although 'humorous improprieties' tested the normative order of the café, the humour and attention they elicited was, as a general rule of thumb, contained within the sphere of the performer's immediate friends, since they were predominantly performed for the recognition of the performer's friends. Other young people who were not involved or were not the intended audience continued to do what they were doing, oblivious or at least not showing that they were affected by these performances of 'humorous improprieties'.

I have coined the term 'humour bombing' to describe how the testing of the boundaries of the normative order of each café was noticed by almost everyone in both cafés, especially in Retro, again due to its small physical size. The term - 'humour *bombing*' - describes the (as I have written in the fieldnotes) 'out of nowhere' character of these humorous performances since they are similar to the phenomenon of 'videobombing' and 'photobombing', which refers to how a person or even an animal may unexpectedly appear in a video or photo. These appearances are sometimes deliberate on the part of the unexpected person, intended as a practical joke. In this way, the appearance is staged to disrupt the carefully scripted and/or idealised video, dialogue or image.

In the extract below, what is noteworthy is the extent to which the whole atmosphere of the café was affected by the deployment of 'humour bombing'. In this extract from the Retro café, I had begun a new game of draughts with Jon. Jordan was behind him standing at the counter. While I was contemplating my move:

> … seemingly out of nowhere Jon stated in a low volume 'Alluhu Akbar'. This was then repeated by Jordon out loud, and then by Jon again. Then Jon, Jordon and a number of other young people began humorously and loudly chanting it in a random fashion. This lasted about three seconds and stopped as suddenly as it started. I asked Jon 'what was that about?' where he explained jokily "it's funny that's what terrorists say before they blow themselves up". (Fieldnotes, Retro)

Anne was on duty during this exchange and did not react to it. A month later, precisely the same 'out of nowhere' exchange occurred again with laughter from most of the young people in the café, except on this occasion Anne asked everyone to 'calm down'.

These loud declarations of 'Allahu Akbar' involved a rapid contagion effect where a number of young people would join in. Other instances of 'humour bombing' however, were different in two ways: they were far less contagious, being instigated by one person and they were sexualised. They were similar however, by the way in which they interrupted the atmosphere of the café space:

> …Liam had asked Anne if he could take out the PlayStation Two. While he was setting it up, one of Liam's friends shouted from out of nowhere 'fuck her in the pussy!' and a light laughter ensued from many within the café. Anne cautioned however, that 'that's disrespectful'. Liam's friend asked: 'to who?', where Liam replied with his voiced raised 'to women!'

This vulgar instance of humour was blurted out on three occasions at Retro and on no occasion in Fusion. On each occasion it inspired some attention from other young people within the café and laughter from the young man's friends, along with Emma and Anne articulating their disapproval. Though the phrase is a declaration, on each occasion the young men were not referring to any particular young woman within the café. This phrase is a meme[58] and "gained notoriety online after it was widely thought to have been said by a video bombing prankster during the live broadcast of a local news report in Cincinnati, Ohio" (United States) in 2014 (Fuck Her Right in the Pussy

[58] According to the urbandictionary.com (2003) a meme is an "idea, belief or belief system, or pattern of behaviour that spreads throughout a culture either vertically by cultural inheritance (as by parents to children) or horizontally by cultural acquisition (as by peers, information media, and entertainment media)".

/ FHRITP, 2017). Although this original news report video was a hoax, it has led to actual (female) reporters during live news broadcasts being interrupted by a male individual shouting it either next to the reporter or into the reporter's microphone, interrupting the idealised decorous and inoffensive flow of a news report. This is what makes these performances humorous, for on each occasion in Retro, it was not blurted out during a banterous interplay, but during relative calm.

Although it did not refer to any particular young woman, it is not unproblematic because it relates to the broader social construction of gender. Embedded within this phrase are aggressive and objectifying meanings similar to the humour young men used in Daniel Wight's (1994, p. 722) study, in that it "implies that sexual intercourse is not a joint activity but something males *do* to females" [my emphasis]. Thus, it reinforces and is reflective of the traditional gendered binaries pertaining to notions such as female passivity and acquiescence and male activity and control.

Another way in which norms of decorum and sexual decency were interrupted was through the TV. As mentioned in Chapter Five, in both cafés the TV was always turned on by volunteers and was almost always kept on until closing. Though in Fusion it was violent Xbox games which transgressed norms of appropriateness for TV use, in Retro there were six occasions where norms of sexual appropriateness were transgressed through changing the TV channel, causing the atmosphere of the café to be changed with it – that of an atmosphere of humour for young people, but one of awkwardness for café workers:

> About fifteen minutes before closing, Jordon had left. Jon was not in tonight as he was on holidays, but Michelle was sitting on the windowsill looking at her phone. The group had now stopped playing the PS2 and had switched to the music channel. I was standing behind the counter. At one-point Emma's voice caught my attention as she called out 'lads'. I looked to see that the adult chat line channel had been turned on – the usual: a woman wearing lingerie spread out in some form across a couch or bed either talking on the phone or seductively asking viewers to call. This time, the situation became a little more awkward, as even though Emma was asking the group of young people to turn off the channel, they said they did not know where the remote control for the TV was located. Emma began to become more annoyed with the group while

> another volunteer, Jessica, asked me if there was a remote control under the counter. I looked and took out a silver remote control, gave it to Jessica, only to find that it was not working. Emma became increasingly frustrated while the group began to laugh and Jessica was now hurriedly looking for the remote control around the café. I became a little awkward, not knowing what to say or do. At this point the channel was on for at least 30 seconds… Emma came up the counter and began searching under a pile of sheets of paper and folders where she found the main remote and turned the TV off. Jessica came back over to the counter, where we exchanged looks. She threw her eyes up to heaven.
>
> Robert: That has happened I think about four times since I've been here.
>
> Jessica: They get a kick out of it they know we don't like it because they get told the TV will be turned off and sometimes it does get switched off. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

These performances show the way in which the impression of heterosexuality is given, especially since the young men were not immediately laughing thus, giving the impression that they were watching and taking the programme seriously. What this shows again, as in the case of 'humorous improprieties', is that that the humorousness of it was not solely inspired by the content of the programme in itself, but in how it provoked a scrambling and hurried reaction from café workers, giving the impression that they felt awkward. In other words, it was humorous because it tested the normative order to the café, a testing which was proven to be successful due to the reaction of café workers.

On another occasion, laughter was again elicited only when Emma attempted to turn the channel off. On this later occasion, I noted how "I was privately laughing" and "struggled to contain my smile" at the innocent expressions on the young men's faces, almost as if they tried to make out that watching the adult channel was a non-controversial thing in the café (fieldnotes, Retro). My struggle 'to contain my smile' was something which occurred a couple of times during the fieldwork. Vicky Plows (2010, p. 259) had a similar experience in her ethnographic study of 'challenging behaviour' in a youth club setting. She recounts how she felt 'uncomfortable' expressing her 'inner amusement externally' for fear of affecting her relationship with

the youth workers. She personally felt that it could have encouraged "the young people to 'misbehave' more" (Plows, 2010, p. 258). I held a similar belief. What amplified my concern with my image in the eyes of youth workers was the fact that youth workers had expressed the view up to this point that they thought I was a 'role model' (see Chapter's Seven and Eight), and I had consequentially imputed a positive self-image that then became dependent on my own conduct in the cafés, an image of self which I took on and was prepared to project. I discuss this aspect of the ethnographic work more in the next chapter, but for now it is worth noting that the extract above occurred near the end stages of the ethnographic work, and this 'role model' expectation had already been communicated to me.

6.3.3 Creating a Scene

As I have discussed, 'humorous improprieties' elicited attention from young mens' immediate peers. 'Humour bombing' captured the way in which norms of decency and decorum upheld by café workers were tested in a manner which captured the attention of most or all of those in the café for a few brief moments. With 'creating a scene', this 'attention' was captured by more than just 'a few brief moments'. In the Retro café there were two separate occasions whereby two young men opened the door of the café and shouted to adult female passers-by to catch their attention to imply they that found them attractive, constituting disrespectful and overt performances of heterosexuality. In Retro, a young man who was told to leave five minutes before closing began loudly knocking on the door while pressing his face up against the window, causing peers and other both inside and outside the café to laugh. On another occasion, a young man who was bard for deliberately spilling water in the hallway repeatedly attempted to try and enter the café. At one stage after managing to hide under the table near the entrance, almost all young people in the café began laughing. Anne exclaimed "that's not funny it's not fair to have someone clean up the mess that he made" (fieldnotes, Retro). In these cases, since these humorous performances were intended to elicit a reaction from a wider audience, most young people in the café had to be reprimanded by a worker. These performances meant that it was the *situation* which had to be managed rather than solely the behaviour of a single young person.

In another incident for example, a young man who was told not to come back for the remainder of the session humorously attempted to connect his mobile phone to the café's WIFI by waving his hand through the ajar door entrance. Barry could not help but laugh. Though Barry never caused upset or broke any of the rules and norms within the Retro café, he became suddenly quiet when Emma cautioned to him that "if you joke like that it only spurs him on and then you could get into trouble yourself" (fieldnotes, Retro). Since the young men who attempted to 'create a scene' did not participate in the research, I cannot go into much further detail in describing these incidences. The point is that these forms of humour constituted stressful situations for café workers, since they disrupted the atmosphere of the café spaces and interrupted (in some form) every individual in the cafés.

Performances which aimed to 'create a scene' are quite specific in terms of the 'interactional format' (Goffman, 1983). They constituted a form 'interaction alienation' (Goffman, 1967) called 'interaction-consciousness' (Goffman, 1967, p. 119) since the performer appeared to be overly concerned with how "the interaction, qua interaction, is proceeding" (Goffman, 1967, p. 199) in terms of the attention given to the performer by the audience. In this way the audience was not oblivious to the young men who staged these performances but were integral and conducive to the successful staging of these performances.

There was another form of 'alienation' present in these interactions. In some forms of humour which were directed at café workers such as those documented in the subsections on 'sexual exchanges', 'humorous improprieties' and 'humour bombing', although these humorous performances may have been situationally inappropriate and perhaps considered disrespectful, they also had their own odd respect to them. Though inappropriate, in these interactions I argue that the young person respected the café worker's directions and as exemplified by 'sexual exchanges' sometimes wanted café workers to join in the fun and help sustain the performance. When a café worker was disapproving of these performances it did not damage relations or cause dispute or antagonism between the young person and the café worker. Though in these moments workers may find them problematic, on the part of the young person there is a respect for the fact that the café worker is a person who has a responsibility to maintain certain 'involvement obligations' (Goffman, 1967) toward young people and to uphold certain norms. On the other hand, with humour that 'creates a scene' the needs of the

worker and/or volunteer(s) as persons who are deserving of respect and decency was neglected. The 'creation of a scene' became stressful, especially when other young people laughed with the performer. In these situations, the worker was not someone to laugh with, to involve them playfully in the performance that is given, but to *laugh at*. During these performances, the café worker(s) became an object, an instrumental resource for the performance of daring masculinity. The humour of these performances did not merely lie in the content of the instigators actions and neither solely in the way the norms of the café were tested and violated, but in the implicit implication that the successful and sustained violation of these norms implied that the café worker(s) could not effectively control and/or manage the situation that the job required them to handle and were, in these moments, discredited and put out of 'face' (Goffman, 1967).

6.3.4 Summary

This section has continued with the theme of humour which was a large part of the general culture throughout both cafés. Aside from the shouting of 'Allahu Akbar', the content of the humour was predominantly sexualised. There are a number of general points to be made about the forms of humour discussed. Firstly, in terms of the reason for the hilarity of these performances, these performances were humorous because they interrupted and/or tested the boundaries of the normative order through which the cafés are imbued. This is what the title of this section, 'humouring *through'* the cafés refers to: the cafés as spaces imbued with particular norms were required for the successful performances of particular modes of humour because the very testing of these norms were productive of laughter and humour.

There were some different subtleties in the way in which the café spaces were mutually constitutive of and constituted by these performances. With 'humorous improprieties', the humour was located within the immediate peer group with reference to the café workers. With 'humour bombing', young people and café workers outside the encounter were affected since the performances were more overt and noticeable. With humour which was about 'creating a scene', the performances which produced humour disrupted the café space entirely in terms of both causing stress to café workers and how they captured the attention of the majority of young people.

The performances of humour within this section were not directed toward any one person in particular within a context of 'focused interaction' (Goffman, 1967), but with *reference* to another person, namely, a café worker. Furthermore, much of the humour in this section was comprised of 'interactional alienation' (Goffman, 1967) called 'external preoccupation' and 'interaction consciousness' (Goffman, 1967, p. 119).

6.4 Conclusion

The length of this chapter owes to the fact that humour was both a large part of the general culture of both youth cafés and was also a complex social practice in the performance of masculinities. The four questions guiding the analysis of this chapter can now be answered. First there is the question of how youthful masculinities performed, constructed and negotiated through humour. The title of this chapter, 'I'm *only* having a laugh' [my emphasis] relates to one dimension of this question. The word 'only' speaks to the focus of power and power relations that has been a central focus of theorising within the masculinities literature. It is not simply that Liam and other young men were '*only* having a laugh'. This profession of innocence has been found within other studies (Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001; Huuki, Manninen and Sunnari, 2010; McCann, Plummer and Minichiello, 2010; Pascoe, 2007). The humorous teasing and trading of insults are not unproblematic. Gendered insults pertaining to the stigma of female promiscuity for example, were performed *through* Michelle, in order to amplify heterosexuality.

Teasing, insults and 'verbal duels' policed the boundaries of 'acceptable' masculinities (Barnes, 2012; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Kimmel, 2009) and were encoded with sexist, misogynistic and homophobic meanings. The content of the humour explored in this chapter was gendered in that it pertained to testing and policing masculine identities as well as to affirm masculine status through 'verbal duels'. I showed the many ways in which these duels can have implications for masculine status (Barnes, 2012, Curry, 1991). Through a discussion of these duels, I have outlined many of the complex ways in which humour functions to maintain an idealised image of self. I have suggested that laughter is not merely a spontaneous, uncontrollable and organic response to a boundary that has been tested or disrupted.

Rather, laughter and humour constituted an *impression* given as a 'preventive practice' (Goffman, 1959) to give the impression that the interaction is not meant to be taken seriously.

Laughter was also expressed as a 'defensive practice' to convey both that one has not taken whatever has occurred within the interaction to be a serious reflection about himself (Goffman, 1967) and to show that one has not been hurt. In other words, the performances that are given through humour can function to (re)construct or project an image of self, but an image of a masculine self is not merely something that is projected, but also defended. Using humour to (re)define a situation merely protects the (masculine) self against the implications of an event or interaction, but it does not change the masculine self itself nor the self-worth which is afforded to these images.

'Game-plays' constructed images of strength, agility and control through making others appear clumsy and exemplify that there was a materiality to humour. The impression of humour through the enactment of 'game-plays' also served to displace anxieties, but I also added to our theoretical understanding of these 'game-plays' by suggesting how some of the 'infectious' appearance of 'game-play' interactions suggest the mutual (re)affirming of identities in a way that produces 'pride spirals' and 'euphoric interplay'. The materiality of humour was also shown through how material affordances were sometimes appropriated to enact ironic heterosexual performances. Through the discussion on 'humorous improprieties', 'humour bombing' and 'creating a scene', I also highlighted performances which constructed a daring, humorous and heterosexual image of self. In sum, the overt forms of humour through which masculinities were performed constructed some of the characteristics associated with hegemonic modes of masculinity, described by Francis and Skelton (2005, p. 28) as:

> …characteristics such as humour, daring resistance, competition, physical strength and prowess, assertive heterosexuality and active sexuality, homophobia, aggression and derision.

The question of the *why* some performances and events were humorous moves the discussion here onto the question of how youthful masculinities were constitutive of and constituted by the café spaces. As I have shown throughout this chapter, humour is a socially situated dynamic. Nothing is humorous in and of itself but depends on

socially constructed boundaries where it is in the testing and the threat of puncturing these boundaries which incite or produce either spontaneous humour or the impression of it. The rationale for dividing this chapter into two sections will now become evident. Within the first section of this chapter, these boundaries pertained to that of the (gendered) boundaries of self and identity which was largely the object of humorous performances within this chapter. As developed in Chapter Three, each individual "intentionally or unwittingly" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32) projects various images of self in the hope of inducing others to hold this image in regard to him/herself, constituting what character (or 'sort of person') the individual claims to be (Goffman, 1959, 1967). These identity claims constitute everchanging (but not entirely free floating) boundaries which are also kept intact by implicitly or explicitly making claims of who one is *not*. Teasing, insults, 'verbal duels', 'game-plays' and 'sexualised exchanges' including 'ironic' heterosexual performances all threatened and tested the identities of self and others. Some 'regimes' of humour however, involved not only performing to produce humour through the testing of and threats to identities but to convey or give the impression that one finds something humorous. This was largely in the context of 'verbal duels' and 'game-plays' where humour and laughter functioned as both 'face-saving' (Goffman, 1967, p. 13) practices and as a way to convey that the individual views the 'definition of the situation' as one where whatever may happen in the proceeding interaction is not to be taken as a serious reflection of the self. In other words, the impression of humour functioned not so much to threaten the boundaries, but to buffer threats to these boundaries.

In the second half of this chapter in contrast, I argued that the hilarity of humorous performances did not come from the way in which the performances discredit and/or test the boundaries of another individual's identity, but in the way in which they discredit and/or test the boundaries of the normative order of the cafés. To clarify, in the first section of this chapter, teasing, insults, 'game-plays' and sexualised exchanges *do* break norms. Café workers have to intervene and discourage much humorous performances in this first section, but the point is that these insults, 'game-plays' and 'ironic' performances are not intentionally performed to break the norms of respect of the cafés. They are performed *regardless* of the norms, not *because* of them.

The overall question of how both the Fusion and Retro youth cafés were constitutive of and constituted by youthful masculinities can now be summarised. The literature on space and geography emphasises how spaces should be seen as imbued with power relations and mutually constitutive of identities rather than simply neutral 'containers' for social interaction (Arnesen and Laegran, 2003; O' Donoghue, 2006, 2011; Massey, 1994). As the performance of masculinities through humour has indicated, youth cafés are indeed anything but neutral spaces. Power relations and the attributes and discourses associated with hegemonic masculinity are negotiated through peer groups as non-normative masculinity and femininity is symbolically demarcated as 'other'. However, the youth cafés do provide a basic container for gender relations to be played out by virtue of their constitutive capacity of facilitating the 'co-mingling' (Goffman, 1966) of young people and café workers. I have thus, suggested that other young people and café workers also constituted 'affordances', since masculinity was performed by testing the identities of other individuals. I have attempted to structure this chapter in a way that shows how both cafés increasingly took on a more constitutive function in the performance of masculinities which simultaneously also meant that masculinities were more constitutive of the spaces themselves.

As a next step up, the presence of a pool table for example, provided the opportunity to enact a competitive image of self. It exemplifies how the provision of physical affordances or material props such as bean bags and pool cues facilitated the enactment of various modes of humour and subsequently, various modes of masculinities. The pool cues, bean bags, pool tables and pool balls were also appropriated and used to project strength, agility and ironic heterosexual performances of humour. The cafés in terms of size mediated this testing. In Fusion for example, 'punch-'n'-runs' could be enacted more freely due to its large size, in contrast to the small space of Retro. Next, the particular situational identities of café workers built up from a multitude of different roles, encompassing multiple obligations and expectations provided particular boundaries through which certain modes of sexualised and ironic humour could test. Sexualised performances of humour for example, come to be all the more scandalous and consequently funnier if a café worker falls for performances of sexualised mimicry and pranks. In each of the cases mentioned, they are humorous because they imply or have the potential to imply something discrediting about the person to whom they are directed at.

In the second section of this chapter, the main constituting role of the cafés lay in the fact that they are both spaces in which particular unofficial norms of decency and decorum are upheld by café workers. The differences between the 'interactional format' (Goffman, 1983) between the two sections of this chapter also exemplify this feature. In this second section humorous performances were not chiefly characterised by 'focused interaction' and 'spontaneous involvements' (Goffman, 1967) whereby performances are directed toward another person specifically. Rather, they were characterised by forms of 'interaction alienation' such as 'external preoccupation' and 'interaction consciousness' (Goffman, 1967).

This thesis thus, contributes to an understanding of how masculinities are performed in more unstructured spaces of two youth café in comparison to that of schooling contexts. In Barnes (2012, p. 239) research in the Irish context for example, young men's humour was deployed in response to the *Exploring Masculinities* programme which "offered an overt challenge to long-established and deeply felt understandings of what constitutes a 'real man'". In contrast to settings such as schools where humour may be deployed in response to institutional forces, young men in this research are not deploying humour to respond and defend against institutional practices. As I have highlighted, the 'preventive' and 'defence' mechanism of humour within the cafés pertained to the context of peer interactions. In both cafés, what young men are responding to is a normative order in each café that consists of a host of both official and unofficial norms such as the official policies of each café, child protection guidelines and duty of care obligations which café workers aim to uphold as well as norms of sexual decency and decorum upheld. They are not so much defending against this normative order than actively using it as means to build an 'idea' (Goffman, 1967) about their masculine selves. Thus, this normative order does not threaten youthful masculinities but helps constitute them.

Hence, regarding this normative order, it would be wrong to see both youth cafés as quite constraining for young people. Café workers including my own self at points attempted to divert young people away from certain modes of humour. Although there are norms, rules and regulations which young people must abide by, the paradox is that it is precisely these norms which make the café spaces humorous for young men. As George Orwell (2015) has said: "… we do know, in broad terms, what causes laughter. A thing is funny when – in some way that is not actually offensive or

frightening – it upsets the established order. Every joke is a tiny revolution". Youth workers and volunteers, including my own actions in the field were always reaffirming this 'order' and young men were always testing them. Although much of the sexualised humour could indeed be deemed 'tiny revolutions', they did not cumulate overtime to eventually change or eliminate these unofficial[59] norms as workers continuously tried to uphold them.

There are a number of ironies in regard to the performance of masculinities and Orwell's argument here. One irony is that the success of these 'tiny revolutions' could diminish some of the capacity for some performances to be productive of humour, because these norms or appropriateness, decency and decorum were not so much a constraint but fodder, a resource, prop and stage for the construction of humorous, heterosexual and daring masculinities. In this way the cafés provided the social, physical and normative architecture for humour to be enacted like how a wall provides the opportunity to play squash. There is another certain irony to this dynamic. As the subsection on 'creating a scene' highlighted, the testing of norms can sometimes prove to be stressful and highly interrupting to the café spaces to the extent that they constitute highly disrespectful performances. The few young men on these occasions 'gave off' the impression (Goffman, 1959) that they did not *value* the cafés (as the café workers also articulated to me) due to the disrespect and disregard their performances implied. Ironically however, the (very) few young men who did show this disrespect and disregard for the café spaces also were arguably heavily reliant on the spaces to perform and construct their daring and humorous masculine identities. This is value coming from a paradoxical but problematic place. This 'problematic place' constitutes another irony. Although these performances test the identities of other and the normative order of the cafés, they do not 'upset the established order' of hegemonic gender norms.

In all, the relationship between the space of both cafés and the performances of masculinities is akin to an ever-tightening process. The exchange of private insults between peers are loosely related to the café as a space, but the construction of ever more humorous and 'daring' performances of masculinities are tightly bound up with the café spaces. It exemplifies Goffman's argument that the (masculine) self,

[59] Young people generally felt that the official rules of each café were fair (see Chapter Eight).

constructed (in this case) through humour and masculinity are *products* of a scene and setting (Goffman, 1959, 1967).

Chapter Seven - Between Conflict and Intimacy

7.1 Introduction: "…everything can't always be kumbaya like. That's life".

This chapter explores and analyses two contrasting dynamics which I observed at both youth cafés. The first section explores the gendered dynamics of animosity, 'humiliated fury' (Scheff, 1988) and (homophobic) bullying between young people. I use interview material when necessary to help elucidate and contextualise these observations. Some other underlying tensions which were not overt and/or observable are discussed in the next chapter since the focus then is more on young people's opinions and experiences of their respective youth cafés. For now, it is only necessary to state here that in these interviews both young people and café personnel (youth workers and volunteers) felt that in general, everybody gets "on really well with each other" (Jordan, interview extract). Nevertheless, as alluded to by one young man in the subtitle above for this section, conflict between young people and youth workers is (supposedly) to be expected. Though we can surely sympathize with his view that this is just 'life', it is the duty of sociology to interrogate all common-sense assumptions, no matter how obvious, natural or 'a given' they may seem. By addressing the question of how youth cafés are mutually constitutive of and constituted by performances of masculinity, this chapter deconstructs this essentialist view.

The second section of this chapter explores a contrasting dynamic. I document and explore the enactment of softer performances of masculinities between young men. Most of these softer interactions occurred in the Retro youth café. The physicality of these 'softer' interactions involved touching and tickling along with symbolic rituals of 'deference' (Goffman, 1967). There was also an emotional aspect however, through the enactment of care and concern. I draw upon Anderson's (2011) 'Inclusive Masculinity Theory' [IMT] to facilitate the analysis of these interactions.

7.2 Defending and Projecting Masculinity

In the sections below, I explore interactions which were infused with tension, conflict and which were sometimes productive of 'humiliated fury' (Scheff, 1988) - that of

angry, vehement performances resulting from threats to masculine status. The subsection 'Humiliated Fury and Defending Masculinity' explores some examples of generic threats to masculine status while the subsection entitled 'Homophobia and Defending Heterosexuality' explores the more specific threats to masculinity relating to issues of heterosexuality and homophobia.

7.2.1 Humiliated Fury and Defending Masculinity

Part of the subtitle of this section - 'Humiliated Fury and *Defending Masculinity*' [my emphasis] - is a generic one because it relates to many different images of the masculine self which were on a few occasions virulently defended. As the previous chapter has shown, in both the Fusion and Retro youth cafés, there were some performances of humour, such as 'verbal duels', 'game-plays' and 'sexual exchanges' which provoked some anxiety amongst some young men and myself over our image of self. In these context's I argued that humour has 'preventive' and 'defensive' functions, serving to shield against the possibility of the discrediting implications of an interaction.

In Chapter Five, I introduced Jordan as someone who projected a confident and inflated image of self. In this chapter, we begin to see how Jordan's presentation of this grandiose self-did not always seem 'well oiled' (Goffman, 1959). There were occasions where his projection buckled, evident in his display of 'objective'[60] (Goffman, 1967, p. 97) signs of flustering and frustration at his attempts to ensure that his interactions with others are consistent with his 'face'.

In the Retro youth café for example, when I took the lead in a game of pool, Jordan said something which included the phrase "It's the participation that counts" (fieldnotes, Retro). This struck me as the type of phrase that youth workers and teachers would say, and I remembered that Anne (a youth worker) had made a similar comment to young people in the past at the beginning of the fieldwork. I immediately

[60] The question of 'objectivity' of course is a debate which ongoing within the social sciences. On the one hand, my use of the word here implies that Jordan's body language is giving me access to a truth (i.e. he feels that his self is faltering) underneath. In writing about embarrassment, Goffman (1967, p. 97) stated passingly that there are indeed 'objective' signs of embarrassment. Though perhaps the truth is that we can never fully trust what others bodily gestures are telling us, it would be hard to imagine how social interaction would function if we did not engage in this silent communication system.

wondered whether Jordan had learned this from Anne and was simply repeating it as a 'protective practice' (Goffman, 1959), or as a way of (re)defining the situation as one which ensured that his image of self would not be threatened by the possibility of losing the game.[61]

As a necessary aside to two incidents involving Jordan which I am developing here, the claim that 'It's the participation that counts' can at once protect an image of self from a loss but at the same time ensure that esteem can be gained upon winning. On another occasion at Retro for example, a young man who usually played pool in a competitive manner informed me that he was not going to be at his best and later in the interaction as we were each down to our last ball, he asserted that he needed to 'work' on his shots:

> I then asked, "your long shots like this one?" And just after I finished my question he hit his last ball in and won. His demeanour changed completely, becoming suddenly arrogant asking "what are you talking about I don't need to practice at all"... [he] left the café, seemingly gaining a recuperated sense of confidence. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

What happened here was he too, like Jordan, changed the 'definition of the situation' (Goffman, 1959). At first, he defined the situation as one where he implied that his possible loss should not be taken to be a serious reflection of himself, since presumably all he needed was some practice. This is similar to Chapter Six previous where I argued that the display of humour itself was deployed as a 'preventive practice' (Goffman, 1959) to guard against the implications of losing a 'verbal duel' or 'game-play' within the immediate future of an interaction. Following his actual win of the pool game however, he immediately redefined the situation in a way which enabled him to project 'effortless achievement' (Jackson, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994)[62] and to immediately imply that esteem was always up for grabs.

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[61] My feeling within the field that he was using this as a 'protective mechanism' constitutes an example of how I sometimes was theorising and interpreting while in the field itself.

[62] 'Effortless achievement' describes how some young men in schooling contexts project that their academic success has been based on the absence of having done hard work (Jackson, 2002; Mac an Ghaill, 1994). This enables them to protect themselves both from the possible 'self-worth' implications of actually doing poorly in a test itself and from being perceived as doing the non-normative masculine enactment of academic work (Jackson, 2002).

Following Jordan's claim that 'It's the participation that counts', I noted how I immediately became uneasy: "I did not want him to be frustrated or angry with me, so I began to play down my own skill" (fieldnotes, Retro). I acted in a way that protected Jordan's desired self-image, an image which I perceived to be based on winning and where I perceived that he would become frustrated or upset if he lost. This constituted an example of a 'protective practice' (Goffman, 1959), whereby one or more participants within an interaction acts to protect the image of self projected by another. In this particular case, it shows how my own re-adjustment constitutes an example of how men may support other men's self images (Kimmel, 1994). It is problematic however, because there was nothing I was *actually* doing wrong. It also shows how (masculine) social bonds and the maintenance of them may be based on such high demands to sustain a certain image of self that they are easily fractured (see Curry, 1991). Even so, as I experienced, although they may be problematic, these demands produce anxiety and unease and thus, work to produce conformity to these bonds (Scheff, 1988).

My unease with Jordan needs to be further teased out. In my reflective notes, I grappled with understanding both what my anxiety about winning and of Jordan's reaction was really about. I felt that this fear was a fear about the quality and breadth of data (Davison, 2007; Gobo; 2008), but also that it was more than this. It was also a fear about my bond with others, a bond that is bound up and related to the research, but also outside of it. It is bound up with the research in the sense that this research brought me into a space in which rapport and bonds with others are inevitably built. It is also bound up in that this rapport and the trust between myself and participants is necessary for the production of quality data (Gobo, 2008). On the other hand, it is a bond outside of the research because this fear of disapproval does not have to necessarily link to issues with ensuring quality data. Although good rapport is important (Gobo, 2008), my rapport with participants was not based solely on a crude transactional need to obtain data. In other words, it is not purely a fear of failure to achieve quality research, a fear related to a future fear of being a seen and disapproved of as a poor researcher, but an immediate 'all too human' (Goffman, 1959) fear of disapproval in the eyes of another (young man) (Kimmel, 1994).

Another example of this unease occurred three days later where Jordan's claim about the value of participation was contradicted and put to a painful test (for himself). While

I was playing a game of pool with a young man, Jordan and Michelle were playing draughts at the table under the TV. During the game of pool, Michelle and Jordan occasionally called me over to adjudicate on moves made in their game of draughts. As I played draughts with Jon in every session, I presumably grew a reputation for being knowledgeable about the rules:

> I sensed that Jordan was getting increasingly frustrated with Michelle's lead over him since after each call for my opinion on the validity of moves he wanted to make, they became increasingly invalid and I felt them to be desperate attempts to try and win the game. I found myself having to correct Jordan multiple times and affirm that Michelle was right in her explanations to him as to why he could not make certain moves over others… I felt increasingly awkward each time I was called to arbitrate a decision. I felt that Jordan could blame his loss on me or accuse me of taking Michelle's side, though I was honestly pointing out that he was 'going against the rules' … At one stage whilst playing pool I heard Jordan raise his voice. I looked over and saw him angrily swipe the board of some of the pieces, point his finger at Michelle, declared 'you cheated!', stood up and walked out in a huff, his face red and angered. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

There are many points which these fieldnotes raise. The first noteworthy aspect of these fieldnotes is my own unease in relation to Jordan. This was not the result of a personal sense of physical threat. I felt my arbitration and adjudication of the game had implications for Jordan's image of self, evident in his frustrated expression. I felt it possible that Jordan could have blamed his loss on me in order to attribute it not to a lack of skill on his part, but to his perception that the rules were set against him either by myself, Michelle, or both of us working to ensure Michelle would win and thus, had the possibility of damaging my rapport with him. This was the same feeling I felt during the pool game with Jordan as discussed, but his outburst toward Michelle indicated that my anticipation of his frustration was not unfounded. In other words, my anxiety stemmed from a personal fear of disapproval from Jordan (Kimmel, 1994). The second aspect to this incident related to Michelle's view of the situation. She thought little of Jordan's outburst and laughed as he left (fieldnotes, Retro).

It is the third aspect of this incident however, that is the most significant – Jordan's virulent performance. He took the loss to a seemingly simple game of draughts to be a deeply discrediting and threatening event to his image of self. There are a couple of dynamics likely at work here. The first relates to his own idealised self-image. As I have previously noted, Jordan 'gave off' the impression that his image of self is based on projecting knowledge, outgoingness, competitiveness, confidence and as evidenced by his outburst, someone who likes winning. In the interview for example, when I asked him to explain why he liked going to the café he mentioned proudly how he likes to supposedly "beat Jon in draughts" (Jordan, interview extract), but only once or twice did I see him play a game of draughts with Jon. I also asked Jon about this casually: "I think I did" [play a game of draughts with Jordan] (fieldnotes, Retro) but he was unsure. The second explanation lies in how he may have felt it to be discrediting to lose to a fourteen-year-old (Jordan was 18) and third, losing to a young woman. Fascinatingly, the fact that an opponent of a pool game was/may be a young woman was a source of brief anxiety once in one session at the Fusion youth café. Two young women who happened to be a couple had come from an LGBT youth group to participate in a pool tournament which Fusion was hosting. James and Gary asked me if both young women were going to play pool. Upon my confirmation, Gary quietly replied: "'but they're girls'. I reply 'so? That's ok. Are ye afraid?' They did not answer but had a genuine look of worry on their faces, displaying a naked vulnerability [on their part] I had not seen before". (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

The points I have made about Jordan relate to how Jordan's *personal* idealised image of self may have been discredited by losing in the game of draughts. The other main explanation lies in Jordan's perception of his image in the eyes of others. Of course, treating a game of draughts or pool seriously and competitively within the café spaces does have some rationale behind it beyond a personal wish to maintain a personalised image of self. As I highlighted in Chapter Six, young men endure some teasing if they are seen as lacking in skill in a game of pool.

Since I could not ask Jordan directly about this interaction, I have used Goffman's (1959, 1967) perspective as a 'thinking tool' to theorise what kind of images of self Jordan may have perceived could be imputed to him. He may have perceived that Michelle may have thought of him as not the winner he has projected himself to be. He may also have perceived that Michelle may have thought less of him for losing to

a fourteen-year-old young woman. Goffman (1967, p. 8, sic) outlines what may happen when an individual who has relied on an:

> encounter to support an image of self to which he has become emotionally attached and which he now finds threatened… His manner and bearing may falter, collapse, and crumble. He may become embarrassed and chagrined; he may become shamefaced.

I take Goffman's point on the embarrassment resulting from a threatened image of self to be important. Goffman (1967, p. 19) argues that when there is "an acknowledged threat to face" within face to face interaction, a ritual 'interchange' begins which ideally culminates with the reaffirmation of this 'face'. For Goffman (1967, pp. 19-22), there are four 'classic moves' which completes this process. There is 'the challenge', where the threatened person calls "attention to the misconduct" (Goffman, 1967, p. 20); the 'offering', where the 'offender' or instigator "is given a chance to correct for the offense" (p. 20); the 'acceptance' of the offenders offering; finally, a 'thanks' by the offender to the threatened person (p. 22). For Goffman (1967, p. 20), "the interchange seems to be a basic concrete unit of social activity and provides one natural empirical way to study social interaction of all kinds". For Goffman (1967, p. 22), "The phases of the corrective process - challenge, offering, acceptance, and thanks - provide a model for interpersonal ritual behaviour, but a model that may be *departed from in significant ways*" [my emphasis]. It is this 'departing', and the implication for masculinities which I now turn to.

When Jordan felt that Michelle was getting the better hand in the game of draughts, he presumably felt that the game was proceeding in a way that was incongruent with his 'winner' and 'knowledgeable' image of self - his 'face'. Following this threat, Jordan attempted to save this 'face' through an 'interchange'. The precise dynamics of this 'interchange' (Goffman, 1967, pp. 19-23) can be illuminated here, as what Jordan attempted to do was rig the game (literally and metaphorically) and 'define the situation' in favour of his self-image. First, Jordan called attention to 'the challenge' made to his 'face' to what he perceived to be Michelle's 'misconduct' (her supposed cheating) (Goffman, 1967, p. 20). This 'challenge' implicitly implied the next phase - 'the offering' (Goffman, 1967, p. 20). This involved giving Michelle a chance to correct for the offence (her supposed cheating). Ideally, in Jordan's view she would

have admitted that she was indeed cheating. Had this been so, Jordan could have accepted Michelle's admission and her honesty as an appropriate response which could have re-established the 'ritual equilibrium' (Goffman, 1967).

Of course, this was not how the interaction proceeded. Michelle did not agree nor accept that she was cheating (as she was not). She continued (in Jordan's view) with her 'offending' (as Goffman, 1967, p. 22, would put it), which shifted the play back to Jordan who now had to contend with the fact that his threatened image of self was not going to be repaired by Michelle, eliciting a sense of indignation on the part of Jordan for the disrespect given to his 'face'. When this situation or the 'departure' from the ordinary process of a 'corrective interchange' (Goffman, 1967, p. 22) occurs, Goffman (1967, p. 23, sic) argues that "some classic moves are open" to the offended (in this case Jordan):

> …they can resort to tactless, violent retaliation, destroying either themselves or the person who had refused to heed their warning. Or they can withdraw from the undertaking in a visible huff - righteously indignant, outraged, but confident of ultimate vindication. Both tacts provide a way of denying the offender his [her] status as an interactant, and hence denying the reality of the offensive judgement… both strategies are ways of salvaging face…

This "tactless, violent retaliation" (Goffman, 1967, p. 22) is precisely the tactic which Jordan enacted. As a rule of thumb, when identities are discredited, 'shattered' or threatened, individuals feel 'Shame' (Goffman, 1952, 1963; Scheff, 2006) which can be defined "as a class name for a large family of emotions and feelings that arise from seeing self negatively, if even only slighted negatively, through the eyes of others" (Scheff, 2006, p. 68).

Given the inflated image of self which Jordan projected within the café, it is likely that Jordan may have perceived his loss not merely to be embarrassing but humiliating. Goffman (1967, p. 9) argues that composure and 'poise' may be enacted "to conceal any tendency to become shamefaced during encounters with others" however, this may not have been possible due to the significance of the threat it posed to Jordan. As I pointed out in Chapter Three and Chapter Six in relation to 'verbal duels' however, the expression of these emotions may not only give the impression that an individual has acknowledged the discrediting, but also that he lacks masculinity, since vulnerable

emotions such as embarrassment and shame have in themselves been found to be non-normative for men (Bird, 1996; Kimmel, 1994; Pollack, 1999; Scheff, 2006, Seidler, 2007). I argue that these dynamics led to a 'feeling trap' within Jordan, resulting in the 'shame-rage spiral' called 'humiliated fury' (Scheff, 1988, 2006) due to being 'ashamed of being ashamed', unable to show this shame, yet too threatened to enact 'poise' and keep it hidden. For Scheff (1988, 1994, 2006) and Seidler (2007), acknowledging shame however, has a reparative and discharge function. Jordan's performance of 'humiliated fury' worked both to hide these feelings and to correct his loss of 'face' through a display of hostility (Kimmel, 1994).

As a side note to this interpretation, it is interesting that both through his explication of the 'classic moves' of a corrective 'interchange' (Goffman, 1967, pp. 19-22) and his essay *On Cooling the Mark Out* (Goffman, 1952) where he outlines all the ways in which individuals can recover from humiliation, Goffman does not outline or consider that the acknowledgement of vulnerable feelings can be a legitimate and reparative performance within face to face interaction. Thus, I argue that it is not that it "is *possible*" (Scheff, 2006, p. 162) [my emphasis] that a masculinist subtext underpins Goffman's work, but that it does *indeed* underpin his work.

This discussion also shows how the use of games with both cafés were gendered in two senses. The first, as I have already pointed out in Chapter Five, is that more young men played pool than young women. One explanation could be that there was simply more of a likelihood that young men would play pool given they numerically attended both cafés more in comparison to young women. This argument does not suffice however. It assumes that merely numbers are the issue and that young men and women supposedly have the same interest in playing pool. What factors which make up the level of individual 'interest' or attractiveness of playing a seemingly simply game of pool however, are many. 'Fun' and the relief of 'boredom' - "I dunno, fun, something to do" (Liam, fieldnotes, Retro) - constituted the main reasons. What makes something 'fun' for an individual however, is more complex than what might be imagined. I suggest that one of the factors which makes pool 'fun' does not have anything to do with pool in itself, but how pool as a game relates to (gendered) identity.

As this thesis up to this point has shown, pool was gendered in the sense that it had more of a constitutive part in the performance and construction of masculinities in

both cafés. Part of the ‘fun’ of pool is in the way in which it can (re)affirm masculinity through enabling performances of skill and competitiveness. Overall, despite the competition through which pool was played, it was predominantly in a manner which was friendly and ‘fun’, but being on the losing side in a game of pool was on occasion productive of light teasing. Furthermore, as this chapter has shown, it also meant that pool could sometimes be discrediting and threatening to masculinity. The young women who did play pool did not do so in the same competitive manner and neither did they seem to display much pride after winning and a loss of esteem from losing. Thus, although the concern over winning or losing a game of pool or board game might seem trivial and perhaps an issue relating to individual personality, especially given Jordan’s ‘humiliated fury’, they must be understood within the logic of the ‘gender regime’ within the café space itself and that of the wider ‘gender order’ (Connell, 1987).

In Chapter Six previous, I highlighted how the humorous exchange of insults can thread a fine line between hurt and humour. As Jordan also affirmed in the interview, “there’s a fine line between messing and maliciousness”. On another occasion at Retro I partly witnessed the exchange of insults between Jordan and Michelle. Since I was occupied with sweeping up the café and the back hall, I could only capture the spirit of the interaction:

> Jordan at one point remarked: ‘At least I'm not a ginger’ and Michelle (who stood her ground not moving much and with one hand on her hips) rebutted by complaining to him he "goes on and on" with his talking [see Chapter Eight]. I had to disappear down the hallway to take the rubbish outside and when I got back Jordan was still moving around, his fists clenched, seeming as if he was trying to control his anger.

This constituted yet another example of how Jordan appeared frustrated and angry. This interaction is similar to the competitive exchange of insults as discussed in the previous chapter, except there was no laughter but animosity between them.

Humour may also be interrelated with conflict. In Chapter Six previous, humour was defined in a general sense and related to what the instigator or performer interpreted to be humorous. I showed how humorous performances such as those performed through insults may be highly problematic and hurtful, but the performances did not

develop into a dispute. Conversely, insults may also be deployed as a friendly joke but may be interpreted as a serious threat to the self. For example, in Retro, I observed Liam suddenly putting one of his friends in what I perceived to be a dangerous and almost suffocating headlock. At first, I believed it was yet another instance of messing until I observed Liam's very angry expression. Anne and myself called out his name where he replied (still holding his friend in a headlock) "He said something about my mam!" (fieldnotes, Retro) (see also Curry, 1991; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a). Though he eventually let go of his friend, his face was red in colour and he seemed visibly angered, in contrast to his friend who unfazed and was smiling.

As I have argued in this chapter, young men can (re)define the situation to ensure that the implications of a loss of a pool game for their images of self can be buffered. In Chapter Six previous, I also highlighted one example of how being called 'gay' within a 'verbal duel' was productive of anxiety and tension but was subsequently relieved and not generative of further conflict or dispute. I also outlined the many ways in which these duels had implications for the masculine self. The same points which I made about these 'verbal duels' can be transposed to interpret Liam's outburst here, except on this occasion his anxiety could not be easily displaced, whether through giving the impression of humour or by launching an equalising rebuttal. As a method of interpretation here, I have again used Goffman's (1959, 1967) work as a 'thinking tool'. Firstly, Liam may not have been able to come up with a quick 'comeback' (Curry, 1991). This may have led Liam to feel that his peers may impute to him the impression that he lacks skill in art of the 'comeback' (Curry, 1991). This may have been slightly embarrassing, discrediting and shameful. One further consequence of the lack of a speedy rebuttal may have then been Liam's (real or imagined) belief that his peers may impute that the insult has some truth to it, one that is painfully discrediting (see Pascoe, 2005). As a 'face-saving' practice, 'poise' (Goffman, 1967) could have been enacted to prevent the display of visible 'objective' (Goffman, 1967) signs of embarrassment, hurt and shame. However, the hurt may have been so immediately deep that to abide by the 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1979) of normative masculinity may have been difficult. As I have mentioned however, the display of these emotions are non-normative for men. As per my argument in relation to 'verbal duels', the display of this hurt may also have signified that the Liam has also taken the insult about his mother to be true, which in turn could have been further discrediting. In all,

this back and forth process between imagining the implication of discrediting displays of hurt and of not being able to give a rebuttal led to a 'feeling trap' (Scheff, 1988) of a 'shame-rage spiral' that culminated in the performance of 'humiliated fury' (Scheff, 1994).

There are several other points that can be elaborated in relation to Liam's performance. Firstly, the line of argument I developed in the previous paragraph began with the assumption that it was merely the *initial* inability to quickly come up with an equalizing or better 'mother insult' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) which elicited hurt and embarrassment. It is also plausible however that it was the immediate hurt itself which may have put off his ability to mobilise an equally discrediting insult, leading to further embarrassment and the subsequent 'shame-rage spiral'. Secondly, my argument gives the impression that Liam may have actively, consciously and strategically thought through all of the possible implications of his every immediate action and following the insult. In reality however, individuals "move swiftly and unself-consciously between the viewpoints of self and other, as a pendulum swings…" (Scheff, 2006, p. 45). Thirdly, it is easy to focus solely on Liam and his performance of 'humiliated fury', since it was both overt and dangerous, meaning that the instigator is left off the hook. In my discussion of 'verbal duels' in Chapter Six however, I also highlighted why insults may be directed and performed in the first place. I argued that the instigator is as important, as this is precisely the way in which masculinity as a little economy of esteem and self-worth works. Instigators of masculinised light humour, teasing or hurtful insults may be motivated by two things. The first, is by a spectre of lack, whereby performances which are not repeated can 'give off' the impression of lacking masculinity. The other, as I discussed in Chapter Six, is that there can be something gained by insulting others (Goffman, 1967). It has the effect of warding off suspicion that the instigator is not the person which the insult signifies.

In all, this 'mother insult' (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a) crossed the boundaries of acceptability for Liam, and highlights Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman's (2003, p. 185) point that "while boys' relationships are characterised by joking and laughter, they generally do not want to be laughed at…" There is one final observation and interpretation to be made however, in relation to Liam's performance of 'humiliated fury'. In the last chapter, I argued that laughter and humour can function to (re)define the situation and/or act as a 'face-saving' (Goffman, 1967) practice to avoid

appearance of hurt. It is interesting that Liam did not deploy laughter in attempt to displace his anxiety, as laughter and humour has constituted one of the ways in which young men have been shown to relieve "the self of embarrassment" (Barnes, 2012; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a, p. 80). Scheff (1994, p. 172) argues for example, that laughter is one method by which to escape these 'feeling traps'.

I offer only a speculative interpretation as to why Liam did not deploy humour and it points to the limits of humour as a way of displacing threats to the self. Humour, as I have argued, can function to (re)define the situation as one where potentially discrediting performances within the immediate future of the interaction should not be taken to be a serious reflection upon an individual's image of self (Goffman, 1967). In this line of argument, humour functions to deny that the person actually possesses a discrediting attribute. Secondly, I have argued that humour can also function as a 'face-saving' (Goffman, 1967) practice, working to project the impression that one has not been hurt. For Scheff (1994, p. 172) however, humour can also be used both to "avoid entry into" and as a way out of a 'shame-rage spiral'. Scheff (1994, p. 172) does not state it explicitly, but his discussion implies that laughter is a means of *acknowledging* shame. In other words, it can function to acknowledge that something discrediting has been revealed. The implication of Scheff's (1994) argument is that humour may not always be about denying or deflecting attention from the possibility that a discrediting attribute exists as has usually been argued (see Barnes, 2012; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a), but in fact be used to admit and acknowledge the existence of a discrediting attribute. The difference is that this acknowledgement may not break social bonds. Goffman also alludes to this idea in two places (1967, p. 17 and 27). As Goffman also argues in *On Cooling the Mark Out*, Goffman (1952, p. 10, sic), in 'joking' about 'failure' the individual "can act as if the self that has failed is not one that is important to him".

My point is that the difference between this use of humour and that of the more defensive kind where the attribute is denied due to the fear of exclusion or subordination is that it can serve to (re)define the not merely 'the situation' (Goffman, 1959), but *the person* as someone who possesses a discrediting attribute, but where the person is defined as someone who is still fully human and worthy, despite the 'blemish' (Goffman, 1963). By giving this blemish 'joking recognition' (Goffman, 1967) however, Liam may have perceived that this situational insult may have become

part of his ‘general identity’ (Modigliani, 1968), effectively opening himself up to future ‘mother-insults’ that may veer toward mockery.

7.2.2 Homophobia and Defending Heterosexuality

Heterosexuality constituted one specific aspect of the masculine self which was on some occasions virulently defended. As I showed in Chapter Six, homophobic epithets such as ‘faggot’ and ‘gay’ in the Retro youth café were deployed as a policing mechanism towards peers who were perceived to be momentarily ‘stupid’. I argued that although these exchanges were not unproblematic, they were not directed in an intentionally hurtful and oppressive sense and neither did they lead to dispute between young men (though privately they could be hurtful). The opposite was the case in the Fusion café. In the example that follows, it was not clear whether Lisa intended to intentionally hurt Jack - her laughter indicated it was a joke - but it was his reaction for the purposes of this discussion, which is significant. In the extract below, myself and Fred (a volunteer) were standing near the kitchen counter when our attention was drawn to Jack, as he begun to chase Lisa. As I noted:

> … she appeared to be having fun as she was laughing almost in ecstasy, in contrast to Jack whose face was very serious and angry. Jack began chasing her around the other half of the café, using the pool table and the other couch as a barrier… At one stage, he demanded her to ‘stop laughing!’… Fred tried to get Jack’s attention by calling his name, but Jack ignored him. (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

Over the course of a minute, Fred repeatedly called Jack’s name, but Jack did not respond. I worried for Lisa’s safety since her ecstatic laughter was in sharp contrast to Jack’s angered, almost rageful expression - her laughter possibly fuelling it more. When Fred then demanded him to ‘stop chasing Lisa’ Jack protested, saying “no because she called me gay” (fieldnotes, Retro):

> [a little later] At the pool table, I watched the interaction. Lisa was protesting to Fred that she didn’t call Jack ‘gay’. Fred asked Adrian if she did so but said “no she didn’t call him gay”. Jack, angered, protested that “he’s just defending her because he likes her”. Immediately Adrian’s face contorted with disgust as

> he asserted 'no I don't'. Jack turned his back and muttered 'she's a bitch' under his breath as he sat down on the couch (fieldnotes, Fusion).

When I interviewed Lisa, she provided some clarification on the incident:

> Robert: I remember one-time Jack was chasing you around the place. I think he said you called him gay or something like that. Do you remember that?
>
> Lisa: (begins laughing) Yeah I goes 'you like Cian' and I was messing with his hair. He gets annoyed when you play with his hair.

This possibly explains why Adrian asserted against Jack's claim that Lisa 'didn't call him gay', since in a literal sense she did not. What is interesting about this is that Jack *interpreted* Lisa's claim ('you like Cian') as essentially calling him 'gay' which provoked 'humiliated fury'. This contrasts with other studies where homophobic bullying expressed by using terms such as 'poofter' or 'faggot' is often (but not always) due to being perceived as lacking masculinity and/or perceived as feminine rather than actual perceived homosexuality (Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Kimmel, 1994; McCann, Plummer and Minichiello, 2014; Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman, 2003; Plummer, 2001).

The above incident also raises an issue regarding the practice of youth work. Fred used Jack's interpretation of Lisa's claim and did not enquire as to what was actually said. This miscommunication between Jack and Fred resulted in the issue going unresolved. It shows how important it is for youth workers and volunteers to recognise that in conflictual situations at least, there may be an incongruency between what was literally said and the meaning of what was said. It shows how conflict resolution cannot begin until a 'working consensus' (Goffman, 1959) amongst all participants involved in an interaction on what was actually said is established, in contrast to an interpretation of what was said.

This hostility between Jack and Lisa was a once off event. In contrast, the dynamics between Cian, James and Gary at the Fusion youth were not once off interactions and neither was the humour between them friendly but was clearly designed for malicious purposes by James and Gary. Throughout my time at Fusion, there was at once a fluctuating but enduring open tension between Cian and James and Gary, which constituted explicit homophobic bullying. As I mentioned in Chapters Three and Six,

homophobic bullying and insults can be launched against boys and young men simply deemed feminine, ‘stupid’ or not adequately masculine (Pascoe, 2005). In the case of the antagonisms between Cian and James and Gary however, Cian was openly gay.

The first time this antagonism between the three became apparent was at an evening outing to a local football match. On our way back to the café after the match, Cian complained to Fred that James called him a ‘faggot’ during halftime. I had to supervise the younger under twelves group on the way back and missed much of the episode, except that Cian had become upset and left the café quickly as did James as soon as we got back. Three weeks after this it became clear that it was not an isolated incident, but symptomatic of homophobic prejudice against Cian. I was briefly supervising James and Gary as they had entered the storage room within the café. Cian came from behind me and as he was about to enter the storage room, James put his left arm on his hips, extended his right arm and enacted what is referred to as the ‘gay hand’, “a limp wristed gesture” (Barnes, 2012, p. 244; Curry, 1991) saying, ‘Hi Cian’ in a feminine tone of voice. As I noted, “I stated James’s name and looked at him disapprovingly. Cian did not seem to care or take notice however, as he was more focused on looking for something on the table in the room”. (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

There was no other indication of friction throughout the course of this session, but in the next session a week later, I begun to gain further insight into the underlying reasons for the hostility. During a game of pool I was playing with James, Cian came into the café from the outside entrance and briefly looked around. James then asked “Cian? Can I ask you a question?” in what I felt to be a suspicious tone of voice. Cian ignored him however, and left. I wondered what question he wanted to ask:

> “What question did you want to ask him?”
>
> James: Is he gay… because do you know he tells everyone that he’s gay but you know Laura? You know Laura who comes in?
>
> Robert: Yeah I know Laura.
>
> James: Well like he wants her but I want to know if he is bi (Bisexual) or what because he says he’s gay but then he wants Laura.
>
> I was unsure of what to say at this point and became stuck for words. The researcher within me wanted to tease out the issue he had with Cian more, but

> I felt my role as a volunteer also endowed me with some responsibility to gently offer education on how sexuality can be fluid. At the same time, I wanted to press that he should leave Cian alone about the matter. I ended up offering only the most basic and problematic answer:
>
> "Well people can change".
>
> James: But I want to know but he won't answer.
>
> Robert: But why does it matter?
>
> James: Coz he's just saying he's gay to get her.
>
> Robert: But still that's between Cian and Laura though.
>
> James: He's tricking her, pretending his gay…
>
> (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

In the extracts below, which relate to a single session at Fusion, James's belief that Cian is 'tricking her' is raised again and we also see the full extent of James and Gary's hostility played out in a vicious manner by three separate episodes of taunting, sneering and name calling. The bullying first began while I was playing a game of pool with James. Cian walked past behind me and informed me that he was going to the bathroom. As I note, James responded:

> …quietly, but with a bitter facial expression and tone of voice: "go on ya faggot". As soon as I stated his name disapprovingly, one of Cian's friends shouted from the other door "wait up I'll follow you!". James squirmed his face as he said 'eww ok like' somewhat in a disgusted manner. I told James that "there was no need to be calling Cian that" and said 'alright'. (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

About thirty minutes later, I was playing pool with Gary and a second more sustained episode unfolded. Cian and his friend came into the café with a Chinese takeaway and they sat at a table at the far end of the café to eat it. Gary mockingly asked, "aw are they on a date?" in front of them. I told him to 'stop', immediately thinking the situation could escalate. No sooner had Gary and I got back to playing pool, James made his way over to Cian and his friend. I followed suit, feeling that his intentions

were not friendly. James sat down in front of Cian and asked for some Chinese food, but Cian refused and I told James that he would have to buy his own food. James got up and left, but after I had another turn of pool with Gary, James walked back over to Cian with Gary following him:

> Gary asked: "how it your date going Cian?" I told Gary to "Stop. I know you're deliberately saying that to annoy him". James had now sat down next to Cian, facing him from the side. I told him to get up off the seat as he appeared to be taunting him, but I couldn't make out the words as he was taunting him quietly and in an intimidating manner. Cian was eating his food, but his head was lowered in what I interpreted to be a sign of ashamedness. I immediately became ashamed myself as I felt I was failing to de-escalate the situation. I also became angrier at Gary (who was watching the interaction) and James. I repeatedly called James's name as his face was serious in expression and seemed to be muttering something serious but quietly to Cian. I continuously glanced at Cian while at the same time asking James to get up. My anger and frustration deepened and my feeling of ashamedness continued to grow since (I interpreted) at every second that Gary and James stayed put, the further they demonstrated that they were not doing what I asked and hence, further feeling that that I was failing to implement a duty of care to what seemed to be a growing nastiness in Gary's (who also began taunting Cian) and James's taunting… James eventually got up and I for a moment thought that the situation was going to end but instead he sat down diagonally opposite Cian and asked: "Who do you like?" Cian raised his voice: "Leave me alone!" The antagonism continued to build. I told James to get up and walk away – "you're deliberately annoying him". James looked up at me, his face contorted with hostility towards me and then redirected his gaze toward Cian again. At this point Gary become more involved as he began explaining that Cian liked another girl but that another young man (outside the café) also liked her. Now I felt paralysed, not knowing what to do. I heard the word 'faggot' from James and I looked to see Cian's head lowered… A few seconds later Cian raised his voice and angrily exclaimed 'fuck off!' to James as he got up and stormed out of the café, not before James viciously shouted "go on you gay fucking bastard!"...

> … (a short while after, following the incident) I went behind the counter to cool off, wanting to hide whilst I recover from the incident. I felt a burning sensation on my face and needed some time out. After I told Ciara about the incident[63] Cian had come back and began talking to Ciara. He showed Ciara his iPhone, which she immediately dropped in a dramatic fashion and incited laughter from Cian. This made me feel as if I was affected more by the incident than was Cian.

In the interview, James elaborated more on how he felt about Cian. The interview extract below begins in the context of James talking about young people who annoy him:

> James: So is Jack. And (in a sudden bitter tone, emphasising the C in first 'Cian' that follows) Cian I hate Cian.
>
> Robert: Why do you hate Cian?
>
> James: Coz he's just annoying he gives out over everything […] he's always starting like he wouldn't even, you'd walk past him and you'd be talking to someone else and he be like (putting on a voice intending to mimic Cian) "what are you saying about me?" He's just annoying like.
>
> Robert: Why does he think that people talk about him?
>
> James: Yeah just coz he's gay like […] I'm not homophobic or anything […] I don't think he is gay […] Coz he'd always be trying to look at girl's boobs and shit […] I think he's just trying to use it to like to get close to girls like coz you know if your gay, girls like don't feel, weird.
>
> Robert: And what about like if a young person was actually gay like would you think like they would feel-
>
> James: Grand like my (female) cousin's gay […] Just coz you're gay like doesn't mean anything.

[63] I attempted to get Ciara's attention during the episode, but she was going through the roster sheet with Fred and Sharon and did not notice what was happening at the time.

The interview and fieldnote extracts thus far show how James justifies his hostility on the basis of two issues. The first is his perception that Cian is projecting a gay male front in order to 'get close to girls' hence, he does not think Cian is actually gay. Related to this are three further issues. The first, is that James may want to affirm the traditional male-as-protector mode of masculinity. The second issue could be that James may feel jealous that Cian may actually be able to 'get close' to many girls. Lastly, it may be that James has another hidden reason for his hostility but uses this excuse to deflect attention away from this hidden reason in the hope that café workers and others will understand his hostility.

The second general issue which James attributed his hostility to Cian was his claim that Cian 'gives out over everything' and that 'he's always starting'. I could see some truth in this as Cian sometimes came across as easily irritated. Overall however, this explanation seems to be partly a smokescreen as I never saw Cian provoke or antagonise James in the café in any way. It was in fact, the other way around, as near the end of the same session where the taunting of Cian occurred, James antagonised Cian yet again in what constituted the third episode of bullying in the session. Cian was at one stage lying face down underneath the disused pool table with a bean bag on his legs, presumably looking at his phone. James went over and pulled the bean bag off of Cian while shouting "come out you fucking mob!" James's explanation for his demand was bitter in tone and confusing in its attribution over the source of his hostility: "He thinks he can take over a spot!" (Fieldnotes, Fusion).

This is not to say that Cian has never annoyed or provoked any other individual within the Fusion café. For example, during one session near the end of the field work, there was some commotion between young people who did not use the café outside of the café door in which Cian and Gary became involved: "Gary was at the door which leads to the outside and he raised his voice to Cian protesting that 'you called me a fucking tramp and 'gay'" (fieldnotes, Fusion). Gary continued to voice his frustration over the next ten minutes. Cian later came back in and sat down near the door with other young people who did not use the café. Gary sat near him and protested to Fred that "Cian is whispering to me", which Cian refuted. During a conversation I had with Fred, he argued that Gary was "just being dramatic", but as I wrote: "I wondered whether Fred interpreted the situation wrongly as in my interpretation Gary looked angry, frustrated, anxious and upset. I wondered whether Fred was underappreciating his hurt"

(fieldnotes, Fusion). Like Jack (who was implicitly called gay by Lisa), Gary was visibly upset at being called a 'tramp' and 'gay'. Interestingly, during this commotion James did not utter a word, but seemed to enjoy the drama. At one stage, I saw him locking arms with Cian in a sincere gesture of respect while calling Cian "Topman. Topman".[64] This symbolic deference was an intimate gesture and was in stark contrast to the occasional revulsion James exhibited toward Cian as I have discussed.

A complete picture of these incidents would not be complete without considering Cian's view and that of the youth café as a space in mediating his experience. When I found out that Adrian and Cian were having a sleepover, I asked Cian about his relationships with others (such as how he got to know Adrian) in the café. Cian remarked that he felt 'used to' these verbal assaults and his way of resisting or coping was to refrain from reacting from the taunts: "if you react it could only get worse" (fieldnotes, Fusion). Although he resisted James's taunting by shouting 'Fuck off!', his general form of resistance through non-reaction, is something which I observed on occasion and was also confirmed by Ciara in the interview, who revealed that he had also articulated this method of resisting and coping to her.

Despite what might be called his personal 'thick skin' (see Chapter Eight also) in the face of homophobic taunting and bullying, broader support within the café space for his position could have been better initially. At the end of the session where James and Gary's homophobic bullying incident occurred, I discussed the evening's events with Fred, Ciara and Sharon. As I recalled the incident again, Ciara threw her eyes up to heaven, arguing that "that's Cian's fault now he's after putting himself into that telling everyone that he's gay. He should not have said anything… I mean I don't think he's gay". I was 'lost for words', but Sharon filled the brief silence with what I wanted to say, arguing (but not argumentatively) that "It doesn't matter though whether he's gay or not". (Fieldnotes, Fusion)

Ciara had managed to speak to James and Gary about the bullying incident before they left the café and Fred wrote about it briefly in a notebook[65]. Aside from a warning by

[64] To my surprise there seems to be no dictionary definition of the use of this word for this particular context. It may be a colloquial word indicating respect or admiration since at the time I interpreted it to be another way of saying 'great man' or 'good man' in an admiring sense. The 'locking arms' gesture also indicated this.

[65] This notebook is used to record any problematic behaviour and help Ciara and volunteers to decide if problematic behaviour warrants one-week suspension based on previous behaviour.

Ciara and the noting of the incident however, not much else was done to resolve some of the issues between Cian, Gary and James. The belief that Cian should have kept his sexuality 'hidden' and (in my view) the less than satisfactory response to Gary and James's bullying against Cian, is the bridge that connects hegemonic masculine *practices* to the ascendency of hegemonic masculinity *as hegemonic* within an establishment. By hegemonic masculine practices, I refer to performances which "legitimates hierarchical gender relations between men and women, between masculinity and femininity and among men" (Messerschmidt, 2012, p. 58). These practices may be maintained within the context of face to face interaction and between peers, but they may not have institutional support thus, may not become hegemonic within the institution or establishment and neither may they be dominant in the sense of being the most common within a given social setting or establishment (see Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015). I believe that Connell's (1987; 1995) work on hegemonic masculinity is especially powerful when the analysis is made with reference to institutions or establishments (see Anderson, 2005; Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Poynting and Donaldson, 2005; Swain, 2006). Indeed, Connell (1995, p. 77) argues that "hegemony is likely to established only if there is some correspondence between cultural ideal and institutional power".

The homophobic bullying of Cian and Ciara's problematic response further exemplifies how youth café spaces are not neutral spaces. In the previous chapter in relation to humour for example, I pointed out that in the most basic sense youth cafés constitute containers for social interaction in that they provide a space for gender relations between friends and peers to be played out. In the case of James and Gary's hostility toward Cian, the youth café also acts as a container in that it facilitates the 'copresence' (Goffman, 1966) of three young people, providing an opportunity to exert power over another young person. The highly problematic relations between these three young men show (as I have previously argued in Chapter Six) that this 'container' capacity is nowhere near neutral. Gendered power relations are played out between young people within face to face interaction, but more than this, they are played out and (unintentionally) legitimated through café workers (sometimes problematic) responses and (lack of) interventions in these interactions.

Child protection guidelines and expectations around 'duty of care' do put obligations on café workers, but I argue that these are not prescriptions for how to deconstruct the

ideology and identity beliefs which lay behind gendered and homophobic performances. Indeed, part of my own dilemma the bullying of Cian was in not knowing how to de-escalate or handle the situation. A couple of weeks later, unrelated to the incident, the café hosted an informal workshop on homophobia for other café workers as well as those from Fusion. This workshop was convened by an experienced campaigner for LGBT issues. One aspect of the workshop revolved around how to deal with homophobic bullying or insults within youth settings. The facilitator argued against the approach of telling an instigator 'don't be calling him/her gay' as this would imply that there is something wrong with homosexuality. The facilitator also argued against a purely disciplinarian approach, whereby the actual issue goes unaddressed. Instead, the facilitator argued that a discussion should be had with the instigator over his/her anxieties and issues relating to homosexuality and the person(s) they have targeted. Kehler (2012, p. 74) also argues for the same approach. Ciara had attended this session and informed Fred and I that she found it very helpful and inspiring (as we did). The advice given by the facilitator is consistent with the psychoanalytically informed interactionist approach of this thesis. Scheff (2006) argues for example that the individual's relationship to others and the anxieties which may underpin this relationship needs to be 'acknowledged' and 'worked through' (Scheff, 2006). I argue that a purely disciplinarian approach based on the threat of suspension works only to 'define the situation' in instrumental terms, whereby rules must be followed, not because they are just or moral, but because they simply 'are'. Such 'working through' (Scheff, 2006) of anxieties on the other hand, would help facilitate a development or change in a young person's 'moral career'.

In terms of the conservation at the end of the café session in which the bullying of Cian had occurred, the conversation moved onto other topics, but it came back to James and Gary, who Ciara argued, were both "drawn to you (myself) so you're like a role model" (fieldnotes, Fusion) (see Chapter Eight). That James and Gary seemed to be 'drawn' to me was something which I also felt and constituted *part* of the reason why I experienced frustration and ashamedness during the episode of bullying and thus, why I needed to 'cool off' (Goffman, 1952). In the last chapter, I outlined how Gary and James seemed to enjoy humorously winding me up. They also seemed to like talking to me and asked me many times to play pool. I felt my orders during this episode would have led them to see me in a different, lesser and more negative way.

The same held true with Cian as I interpreted that he may not have thought of as me in the same positive way as he perhaps previously did due to my failure to effectively de-escalate the situation. My rapport with them was thus, under strain when I attempted to de-escalate their taunting of Cian, since they did not listen to my instructions and in fact became momentarily hostile towards me.

A second reason for my need to 'cool off' comes from the fact that my position as a volunteer had produced a change in my 'moral career'. In Chapter Four and Five, I highlighted some of the anxieties I felt when I entered the field. I also alluded to these anxieties in Chapter Six previous, in relation to how I wanted Gary and James to take me seriously, hence my projected composure in the face their performances of ironic heterosexual humour. I mentioned how these anxieties proved to be unfounded and in fact, I interpreted them to be far off the mark. I had built up confidence as a researcher, but more significantly in the context of this incident, confidence and possibly *over*-confidence and pride as a volunteer. I had at this stage liked volunteering at both youth cafés and felt fond of the role thus, in a relatively short space of time my 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, 1963) changed, as I increasingly saw myself as competent at volunteering in both cafés. My failure to de-escalate the situation between Cian, James and Gary painfully eroded this self-image and thus, I literally had to 'cool off' (Goffman, 1952) behind the bar countertop, feeling a burning sensation on my face.

These points highlight how an individual's image of self is bound up with their relationship to others. First, I felt anger toward James and Gary to the extent that I wanted to physically escort them out of the café. Scheff (1988, p. 405) calls 'resentment', a 'shame-anger alteration' where the anger is 'directed out'. I interpret that this resentment was based on how their performances, and the images of self which these performances 'gave off', were not valuable to me, despite how my bond or rapport with them was valuable to me. Simultaneously and immediately following the interaction, I experienced a sense of failure and wanted to 'hide'. This is what is called 'guilt', which, in Scheff's (1988, p. 405) view is a 'shame-anger' sequence where anger is 'directed in'. My sense of failure constituted a disappointment in oneself - I perceived that I became less valuable to all three young men than I previously was.

What this theoretical discussion implies is that the loss of an image of self is not purely personal. It is a loss based on a real or imagined loss of another's value of this image of self thus, it is the loss of a bond or an attachment. What these points show is that grief is not something elicited by the death of another who is valuable. Grief occurs within the context of interaction when an image of self has been 'shattered' (Goffman, 1952). Although this self introspection may seem like 'naval gazing', I argue that the discussion highlights how images of self relate to attachments to and with others. As Butler (2004, p. 19) argues, "What grief displays… is the thrall in which our relations with others hold us, in ways that we cannot always recount or explain… Let's face it. We're undone by each other".

Of all the observations and encounters I had with young people in the field, this was the most vivid and most emotionally lasting. Three days later at the Retro youth café the interaction was still on my mind. During a quiet period in the café, Emma happened to ask how I was getting on at the Fusion café and I proceeded to discuss the incident. After I described my own feelings about it - such as how "I felt like a failure" (fieldnotes, Retro) - my unease and feeling of shame settled, though the interaction remains vivid. In this way I *acknowledged* shame (Scheff, 1988, 1994, 2006), though this was not my explicit intention at the time and did not realise I had done so until weeks later. It exemplifies Scheff's (2006) point that the acknowledgement of vulnerable emotions, which signify the state of an individual's bond or relationship to another has a discharge function.

7.2.3 Summary

This section has explored both generic and specific threats to masculine status. It introduced the concept of 'humiliated fury' and I have suggested that this is performed when discrediting threats to the self cannot be prevented or corrected through means other than virulence. I outlined the complex processes and dynamics which can lead to 'humiliated fury' and I posed some possible explanations as to the limits of humour in both displacing anxieties and of (re)defining the situation. The second subsection explored specific threats to masculinity such as heterosexuality. In the case of Jack within the Fusion youth café, he attempted to repudiate Lisa's implicit assertion that he was actually gay. In the Fusion youth café, Cian was openly gay, but at various

points he was the victim of homophobic insults, taunts and bullying. James and Gary's taunting exemplifies how the performance of gender within a youth café can become serious and highly problematic. Through these performances, the cafés become spaces where gender is not only performed, but where gendered inequalities are (re)produced. Lastly, I highlighted the problematic response to this bullying, but how a workshop on homophobia proved to be helpful for café staff in developing an awareness of these issues and how to approach them. I also suggested that the approach suggested in the workshop is consistent with the theoretical approach of this thesis.

7.3 'Why are you down?' Enacting Softer masculinities

In this section, I document and discuss 'softer' performances of masculinity which I observed mostly at the Retro youth café. The first subsection - 'Tactility, Intimacy and Social Fluidity' - documents the empirical examples of these softer interactions. The second section - 'Enacting 'Inclusive Masculinities'?' - discusses the implications of these softer performances by drawing upon theoretical insights from Inclusive Masculinity Theory (Anderson, 2011, 2013, 2016).

7.3.1 Tactility, Intimacy and Social fluidity

The first section of this chapter showed how virulent performances of masculinity stem from attempts to keep status or maintain masculine images of self. This need to maintain masculine status is consistent with the decades of theoretical and empirical literature, which has documented the way in which there is a hierarchy and policing of masculinities (Connell, 1995; Pascoe 2003; Stoudt, 2006; Swain, 2003). This research has shown how this hierarchy makes masculine status fragile (Curry, 1991) as the signifiers which confer and maintain a young man's desired position within this hierarchy must continually be proved. This 'proving' however, is one which has too often been enacted through homophobic bullying, the shaming of boys and men perceived as feminine or 'Other' (Renold, 2004; Stoudt 2006; Swain, 2006) and through the sexual harassment and shaming of girls and women (Renold, 2003; Robinson, 2005). During the fieldwork, there were interactions that were not merely characterised by the absence of conflict, dispute or virulent performances, but by the

enactment of physical and emotional intimacy and 'social fluidity', similar to those documented within the 'inclusive masculinities' literature (Anderson, 2009; Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015; McCormack, 2011).

For example, I observed two young men lying next to each other on the soft windowsill in Retro. One was turned on his side and put an arm around his friend's stomach. This is close to the practice of 'spooning' that has been documented within the 'inclusive masculinities' literature (Anderson and McCormack, 2015). On another occasion, I observed Liam (who was slouched on the couch) stroking one of his friend's exposed legs and who was resting his head on Liam's stomach. Liam continued to lightly tickle his friend for about a minute and both were giggling at various points. In another session, I also observed Liam fixing one of his friend's hair (as I note) "not up fast… there was in fact much care on his part…Liam looked very focused" (fieldnotes, Retro). The stroking of hair and legs by young men in the company of other male students has also been documented within the 'inclusive masculinities' literature (McCormack and Anderson, 2010; McCormack, 2011).

I also witnessed caring and emotionally intimate interactions between young men. One involved one young man comforting another, where he put his hand on his shoulder and asked, "Are you all right?" I could not grasp the full context, except that he looked very upset and that something had obviously occurred between himself and his girlfriend, who was sitting at the opposite side of the Retro youth café. Breakups or relationship issues can sometimes be discussed privately and in a supportive manner between male friends (Adams, 2011; Kehler, 2007), but there is also evidence that men who are experiencing distress from a breakup can be excluded temporarily from a friendship group because they are perceived to exhibit unacceptable (over) emotional responses (Arxer, 2011). Another example can be cited. In the following extract, Jon was talking to Michael, an older man, who previously volunteered at the café and had come to visit. As I noted:

> I was standing about three meters away from Jon and Michael near the counter looking at my phone for the time. This gave me the opportunity to (accidentally) listen in on an interaction between them both… Jon asked Michael "What's wrong you seem down today?"

> Michael: Down? (Jokily) I was down yesterday too but you didn't notice.
>
> Jon asked again and I was looking at both of them at this point. What surprised me was the genuine concern Jon seemed to portray toward Michael: Why are you down?
>
> Michael: Ah it's nothing just stuff. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

Jon and Michael were not whispering during this interaction. There were about six other young people present in the café at the time and I could listen to this interaction very clearly, meaning Jon and Michael could technically be heard by anyone in the café. Similarly, in another session, as I noted, "I overheard and briefly observed Jordan and Michelle (who were at the counter) say that they were attending counselling for reasons they did not say" (fieldnotes, Retro). Anne, Jon, Rebecca (a volunteer) and I were present in the café at the time. Though this may not have been as overly intimate as the aforementioned extracts, I was surprised by their openness. There was a four-year age difference between them and at this point I had built up the impression that Jordan was not someone who would show vulnerability due to his grandiose presentation of self. Here, he did not seem to display some of the objective signs of embarrassment, shame and vulnerability such as the lowering of the tone of voice or of the of the head or eyes (Goffman, 1967, p. 97) but talked straightforwardly as if this disclosure was not a 'disclosure' at all.

Within the 'inclusive masculinities' literature, one of the other dynamics which has also been observed amongst young men has been the emergence of a new form of hierarchy between young men, not maintained through 'hegemony' based on peer diminution and domination, but through 'popularity' based on 'charisma', 'authenticity', the "giving of emotional support" and of 'social fluidity' (McCormack, 2011, p. 93). 'Social fluidity' in McCormack's (2011, p. 95) definition refers to the 'ease' by which young men "move between social groups and how well they can befriend a broad range of peers". For McCormack (2011, p. 95), "while friendship groups exist, they lack the exclusivity, competitiveness, and rivalry that characterises many social cliques". School settings arguably afford greater possibilities with which to observe and document these dynamics given the greater number of young people and different peer groups. Although in terms of its small size many young people used the Retro café, the volume at any one time was still far lower than what could have

been observed in schooling contexts. Despite this practical impediment, there was evidence of the 'social fluidity' described by McCormack (2011) on the part of at least two young men who used the café regularly, one of whom was Barry.

In Chapter Five, I introduced Barry as a quite reserved individual with an interest in the sciences, technology and gadgets. In Chapter Six previous, Barry was only mentioned in the context of him being told off by Emma because he laughed at a situation which she was trying to manage. His general absence in Chapter Six and in this chapter up to now speaks to his overall socio-positive behaviour within the Retro youth café. He did not engage in any overt performances of masculinity. This is not the same as shyness however, in fact, although Barry could be described as generally reserved, he could also be described as 'socially fluid' in the way in which he interacted with a lot of other young people who would have otherwise kept their interactions within their own friendship groups. One example of this was the way in which Barry put his name down on the pool sheet without necessarily wanting to play with any particular person. Some young people preferred to play with their own friends and did not continue to play pool[66] if another young person outside of their immediate friendship group was next on the list. Another example was the way in which Barry would involve himself in the conversations of others and engage in light banter. One young man for example, who used the café was very popular both inside and outside of the Retro café. He was also quite charismatic (in the sense he smiled and laughed a lot) and 'fun loving' (McCormack, 2011). He made jokes and played pool simultaneously competitively but unseriously. Although he and Barry where very different personality wise, he asked Barry in one session if he if would like to 'come out' to a house party later during the week where there would be 'a few cans' and pizza (fieldnotes, Retro). Barry was not a close friend of this young man. Each had their own friendship groups, but they talked occasionally in the café and on this occasion, they began laughing and discussed the planned party with others. The significance of this interaction will become clearer in the next chapter when I discuss how Barry's social fluidity constitutes a quite a radical change from previous years where he struggled to fit in with others. For now, the important point is that although Barry was quite reserved and sometimes liked to listen to music by himself within the

[66] Under the rules, the winner of a game of pool is allowed to continue playing those next on the list until he/she loses.

café, he was not a person who kept mostly to himself or kept his interactions to certain young people only. This contrasted with Beth and Jon who were also reserved and kept their interactions with others limited. Beth and Jon were quiet individuals and did not associate with some other young people such as Liam, who was far more boisterous. On the other hand, Barry also talked to Beth, Jon and Liam and his peers, despite them being two to three years younger. I return to this dynamic in Chapter Eight, where I draw upon Barry's own perspective, coupled with the views of Anne and Emma and indicate how the Retro youth café has helped facilitate his social fluidity.

7.3.2 Enacting 'Inclusive Masculinities'?

The question Anderson (2016, p. 179) puts to readers in light of observing similar softer displays of masculinity as discussed above is "How do you theorise this?" It is useful here to broaden the discussion around the observations above by drawing upon other fieldnotes, interview extracts and the literature on 'inclusive masculinities'. Inclusive Masculinity Theory [IMT] is an archetype-based theory, involving the categorisation of young men into 'inclusive' or 'orthodox' masculinity. Generally, 'inclusive masculinities' are characterised by the acceptance of gay male peers, the eschewing of violence, aggression, fighting and 'hard' physicality and the enactment of physical tactility and emotional intimacy (Anderson, 2013; Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015).

To be clear, as deBoise (2015) and Anderson (2011) highlight, men's' physical tactility is not historically new in terms of the long-term history of men's relations with each other. What makes these softer interactions different however, is how they compare with previous empirical literature framed around Connell's (1987, 1995) work on the stratification of masculinities. This literature showed how physical tactility (David and Brannon, 1976; Kehler, 2007; Mac an Ghaill, 1994) and emotional intimacy (Anderson, 2011; Bird, 1996; Curry, 1991) can be coded as feminine or non-masculine. A young man in Kehler's (2000, cited in Kehler, 2007, p. 268) study explained for example, that "A lot of people that I know take a hug as a homosexual gesture". Although young men have been shown to *privately* enact physical tactility and emotional intimacy with each other (Renold, 2004), what is significant about the

'soft' interactions in this research however, is that they occurred in front of many others within the Retro café, with no policing or commentary from others, as if these performances were normalised.

These softer performances could be interpreted as examples of transgressions from norms of expectation. As I highlighted in Chapter Six, research has shown that when young men do engage in transgressive performances, they (but not always) 'recuperate' (McCormack and Anderson, 2010) or signify and (re)prove masculinity or heterosexuality through humour (Anderson and McCormack, 2015; Barnes, 2012; David and Brannon, 1976; Pascoe, 2007). The implication is that the young men discussed in the preceding paragraphs could have engaged in these practices because they were able (re)affirm masculinity through humour to ward off any 'homosuspicion' (Anderson, 2011). The problem with this explanation however, is that each of these softer interactions where *not* proceeded by recuperative or corrective performances and neither did I observe any sign of disapproval from male peers.

Relatedly, research has shown that young men who possess sufficient status or 'masculine capital' (McCormack, 2011) are able to flirt with or temporarily transgress collectively defined masculine norms (Kehler, 2007; Pascoe, 2003; Renold, 2003, 2007; Robinson, 2005) without derision. As I argued in Chapter Six, this explained how some young men were able to enact 'ironic' forms of humour without derision - they had built up a sufficient masculine and heterosexual image of self. In the US context, Pascoe (2003) describes this dynamic as 'Jock insurance', referring to how young men are able to 'get away' with expressing emotions around friends due to their high (masculine) social status. Reviewing Anderson's (2009) *Inclusive Masculinity: The Changing Nature of Masculinities* for example, Nagal (2010, p. 2) argues that the privileged status of the middle to upper class men in the book "is exactly what enables these men to engage in homoerotic, homosexual, and effeminate behaviours with impunity". Indeed, except for Jon, the young men (such as Liam) whom I observed enacting physical tactility and emotional intimacy were all popular and had high status in their own friendship groups.

These observations suggest that softer configurations of masculinity may also be present or are emerging in the Irish context, although further research is necessary to explore this. I argue however, that it is likely that these softer interactions are not mere

temporary situational transgressions but further examples of the broader shift in the performance and construction of masculinity (Adams, 2011; Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015; Cashmore and Cleland, 2012; Kehler, 2007; McCormack, 2011; Swain, 2006). However, although I agree with Anderson's (2011, 2013, 2016) main argument that the increasing cultural acceptance toward homosexuality is indeed opening up behavioural possibilities that would have previously been stigmatised amongst self-identified heterosexual men, I do not classify these young men as 'embodying' (Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015, p. 9) or enacting 'inclusive masculinity' however, for a number of reasons.

The first reason relates to the actual theoretical application of Inclusive Masculinity Theory (IMT) and the decision making around how individual young men can be "categorized… as either ascribing to either inclusive or orthodox masculinities" (Blanchard *et al* 2015, p. 11). The central problem is that IMT is an archetypal theory and is not able to capture the complexities of what I have observed. Two of the young men who I observed enacting these softer masculinities did not want to participate in this study. One of them was difficult to talk to in the first place and his general behaviour in the Retro café was not consistent with the traits of 'inclusive masculinity'.

In terms of Liam, whether he 'eschewed' violence (McCormack and Anderson, 2014) or 'hard physicality' such as 'play-fights' (Blanchard *et al* 2015, p. 9) is questionable, given his performances of physical 'game-plays' and 'humiliated fury'. Every young person I spoke to at the Retro youth café said that they either had not seen or could not remember seeing any serious physical fight in the café, something which also confirmed by the three youth workers. What did occur on numerous occasions was various forms of 'rough and tumble' and 'game-plays' as highlighted in Chapter Six. Although Liam's engagement in a variety of these 'game-plays' were not conflictual and violent in the café, they did indicate an attempt to (re)assert status, something which is generally absent from the inclusive masculinities literature (McCormack and Anderson, 2010; McCormack, 2011) with the same age group. On a small few occasions Liam did engage in whispering with one of his close friends, and on two occasions he engaged in 'physical tactility' such as fixing up his friend's hair and stroking another one of his friend's legs as mentioned. These were the only instances of these dynamics however, and it is questionable whether I would have seen more of

these performances had I continued the observations for even a month or two more. The added problem in relation to this, is that Liam's friend did not always attend the café at the same time as Liam, further reducing the possibility of observing this. Offering 'social support' (McCormack, 2011) has been cited as another 'trait' of 'inclusive masculinities' but I did not see Liam enact what could be called 'social support'. In fact, as I have showed in Chapter Six, he sometimes policed his own friends.

Liam could be described as 'popular' (he articulated how he knows many young people), but the extent of this popularity and how he related to these other young people was difficult to observe and measure given the small space of the Retro café. Studies on 'inclusive masculinities' within school contexts for example are able to 'schematically' map friendship groups (see McCormack and Anderson, 2010) and arguably depend on this mapping to get a more bird's eye view of the level of 'social fluidity' and popularity enacted by young men. This methodological problem constitutes the second issue with adequately accounting for thee dynamics. The problem with classification is that the small space of the Retro youth café did not provide the birds-eye view necessary to come up with a firmer conclusion. In sum, the young men who did enact performances similar to those documented in the 'inclusive masculinities' literature defy easy categorization.

Relatedly, there is also a problem in terms of the politics of the term 'inclusive' itself. For O'Neill (2015, p. 106) the term "seems to denote something much more all-encompassing". As deBoise (2015, p. 334) asks, "to whom is masculinity now inclusive?" The simple answer, as Anderson and McCormack (2016, p. 3) have articulated is that the terms 'inclusive' and 'inclusivity' in IMT "refers primarily to inclusivity of gay men and same-sex sexual desire more broadly". I do not want to contest Anderson and McCormack's (2016) definition here, but I want to highlight O'Neill (2015) and de Boise's (2015) points around how 'inclusive masculinities' relate to other social groups. O'Neill (2015) argues for example, that IMT may overemphasise how homophobia relates to the construction of masculinity and highlights that there are other things at play in the construction of masculinities, one of which is how masculinity is generally defined against femininity.

Barrett (2013, p. 71) points out that that there does not seem to be an abjection of feminine 'others' on the part of young men within the inclusive masculinities literature, however, research within the inclusive masculinities literature generally lacks how 'inclusive masculinities' relate to women. Rachel O'Neill (2015) notes that although McCormack (2012) states that there is no misogyny in young men's boasting about sexual conquests, McCormack did not interview young women to ascertain their views and experiences to evaluate this presumption. In the Retro youth café, young men who enacted interactions similar to those documented by the 'inclusive masculinities' literature did not have unproblematic relations toward young women. In the case of Liam, I showed in Chapter Six how he engaged in hurtful gendered humour toward Michelle in labelling her as a 'slut'. In another session, I also overheard a small part of an interesting conversation between two young men, one of them arguing:

> …he called Sophie a slut. I don't like when a man goes onto a woman like that. If he thinks that he's that big of a man to say that to a woman, then he should say it to another man. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

I witnessed this young man give emotional support to one of his male friends in another session in the Retro youth café. This fieldnote highlights how young men who enact 'softer' performances may still hold traditional gender beliefs around protecting women. What this extract and Liam's interactions show, is that softer performances of masculinities do not necessarily mean a neat shift from traditional views of gender and gendered constructions. Indeed, as I have documented in Chapter Six previously on humour, there was a culture of competition and of one-upmanship through play-fights and insults within the Retro youth café. I also highlighted that the performance of humour in both cafés was also conspicuously encoded with heteronormativity and sexism. The inclusive masculinities literature has tended to neglect these issues of sexual politics (O'Neill, 2015).

Another criticism raised against the notion of 'inclusive masculinities' relates to the continued inferiority/superiority dynamic between men. Barrett (2013) for example, highlights how researchers should be cautious about presenting softer configurations of masculinity as consistently inclusive, egalitarian, progressive and hence, 'superior' to 'inferior' 'intolerant others' such as working-class men, who by implication are

constructed as backward. His research on male straight-gay friendships highlights gay men's positive experiences of 'coming out' to their straight friends. Barrett (2013, p. 67) noted that the straight-gay friendships in his study did not reveal any "paranoid maintenance of distance between gay and straight male bodies". However, some of the straight men in the interviews regraded 'real' men and 'true' masculinity as one based on a "bravery to engage in the expression of personal truths or emotions" (Barrett, 2013, p. 72). As Barrett's (2013) research shows, this representation of 'orthodox' and 'inclusive' men in the framework of IMT may lead to troubling discourses along the lines of 'a real man' is 'emotional' and 'caring'. These may produce yet another superior/inferior hierarchy among men based on class lines, rather than realising as Kaufman (2014) puts it, that care and compassion are 'human qualities' which all genders can practice and not merely 'real' men or women.

Jordan held similar condescending and 'othering' views. Jordan presented himself as inclusive of gay men and thought that everyone should be treated equally during a conversation I had with him during a quiet period in the Retro café. When interviewed for example, he informed me that he was "very open to feminism" (interview extract). He also positioned some young people as 'other' in classed terms however (see Chapter Eight) and placed himself above young men who he found to be 'backward' and troublesome in the context of discussing another case of sexualised moaning (as I also highlighted in Chapter Six): "they're just stupid and backward like. I mean they don't even know what they're even saying half the time. But as I said before [referring to the interview, see Chapter Eight next], if I was in charge I'd be more eh, strict with them shall we say" (fieldnotes, Retro). What I am highlighting here is Jordan's quick dismissal of some young men as inferior due to their beliefs and/or behaviour in the café. It shows that even when young men may proclaim to be 'open to feminism' and not homophobic, this does not necessarily mean there is an absence of a superiority/inferiority dynamic where other social groups are concerned.

Another example of the way in which the enactment of softer masculinities are made complicated by this research is the slight Islamophobia exhibited by Jon at the Retro café. In Chapter Six previous, I highlighted how Jon joined in on a 'humour bombing' exchange which involved the all of a sudden shouting of 'Allahu Akbar' In the extract below, I had just sat down to talk and watch Jon and Michael (a former volunteer who had come to visit the café) play draughts:

> At one point during the game, Jon turned his head around quickly and asked (what I thought he had asked) "Is that a muzzle?" He turned his head around again "oh its Michelle". I looked to see that it was Michelle he was referring too. She wore her pink jumper around her face and head like a headscarf. "I thought that was a muzzle". Michael sniggered. I asked, 'a muzzle?'
>
> "No a Muslim, I said I thought that she was a Muslim". I looked at Michelle again and then to Emma who was sitting down close to her. I did not know if she (Emma) heard what he said but she was looking at him. Michael, who was playing draughts with Jon then said something which I could not remember but he sniggered again. I froze, very surprised at the dehumanization (i.e. 'that' was a Muslim) implicit in Jon's language and found myself staring at the draughts board not knowing what to say or do. I was conscious that Emma might have been looking our way and I wanted to say something… (Fieldnotes, Retro)

In another session I noted that he agreed with Donald Trump's 'Muslim ban' because it (supposedly) helps "keep terrorists out", so Jon's beliefs may stem from wider discourses around terrorism and Islam. In sum, this research shows how there is reason to heed O'Neill's (2015, p. 107) argument to be cautious about the "cheery optimism" implicit within Inclusive Masculinity Theory. Young men can enact softer performances of masculinity and proclaim to be open to other social groups and ideas such as 'feminism', but the implicit or explicit identity beliefs around these softer performances may not be extended to other social groups equally (Barrett, 2013).

7.3.3 Summary

This section has documented performances of 'softer' masculinities which I observed predominantly in the Retro youth café. These involved displays of physical tactility, emotional intimacy and included young men enacting 'social fluidity'. I used insights from the 'inclusive masculinities' literature to help account for these observations. I argued that both the application of the categories 'orthodox' or 'inclusive' masculinities is problematic methodologically and theoretically. They are problematic methodologically because of the physical size of the Retro café and the small number of young people and peer groups who used the café at any one time *relative* to

schooling contexts. They were problematic theoretically because either category could not be applied to any individual young man, since young men enacted a multiplicity of performances. Some of the young men who enacted physical tactility for example also performed various forms of sexualised humour which were occasionally encoded with misogynistic meanings. Some also performed 'humiliated fury' and engaged in competitive physical 'game-plays'. I argued that most performances were enacted by young men with already popular within their friendship groups. Relatedly, I also highlighted how young men who enacted softer performances also displayed Islamophobia and condescension toward others.

7.4 Conclusion

The title of the chapter, 'Between Conflict and Intimacy' reflects the contrasting performances of masculinity observed in this study. The first section broadly focused on some of the observable tensions which occurred within both café spaces. It highlighted implicit (losing in a game of pool) and directly threatening events (such as insults) to masculine images of self to the extent that some young men enacted 'humiliated fury'. This 'humiliated fury' was performed due to being 'ashamed of being ashamed'. Young men performed humiliated fury to resignify masculinity and to hide vulnerable feelings of shame. The interactional process which leads to 'humiliated' fury may be read as if a tendency to enact 'humiliated fury' is (like homophobic bullying, see Pascoe, 2013) an "individual psychological disposition" (Pascoe, 2013, p. 93; Plows, 2010). Indeed, 'humiliated fury' is the end point of a 'feedback loop' called a 'shame-rage spiral' (Scheff, 1988, 1994) where situations can neither be (re)defined nor a performance can be mobilised to prevent or 'correct' an increasingly threatened image of self. Relatedly, the performance of 'humiliated fury' may give the impression that it is something which is pathological, because of the *apparent* trivialities which give rise to the interactional processes which elicit it (such as losing a board game). Indeed, the concept comes from the work of psychoanalyst Helen Block Lewis (1971), but this chapter has shown how this process is interactionally constituted.

In the introduction to this chapter, I argued that 'it is the duty of sociology to interrogate all common-sense assumptions'. The point is that the tensions and

moments of dispute observed in the café spaces are not merely symptomatic of 'life', which is akin to common sense understandings that 'boys will be boys' (Bird, 1996; Kehler, 2004). Such understandings have the potential to pass off homophobic bullying for example, as the result of some biological disposition or innate fear (Redman, 2000).

Performances of 'humiliated fury' are produced by immediate threats to images of self, but these images and the social worth that is attached to these images are not simply natural but based on historically contingent boundaries of acceptable and idealised masculine images of selves. Thus, instead of thinking of 'humiliated fury' as pathological, we should think of it as *normative*, symptomatic of the broader social construction of gender which construct a repertoire of normative images of self for individuals to project, images which may be difficult to prove and maintain. In other words, although these performances were situational, stemming from the contingencies of face to face interaction, they were also sociologically *situated*, since these contingencies related to both the broader norms of expectations around shame and embarrassment and the identity norms which give rise to this shame and embarrassment. I highlighted for example that it is the socially constructed stigma of shame and cognate emotions such as embarrassment and humiliation in relation to masculinity and how this stigma comes to be constitutive of the interactional processes that led to the performance of 'humiliated fury'.

The social construction of masculinity was also exemplified in the second section of this chapter in that the enactment of 'softer' performances of masculinities such as physical tactility and emotional intimacy show how these performances and interactions are not naturally productive of anxiety. The chapter has highlighted how the archetypal categories of 'inclusive' and 'orthodox' masculinities are problematic in attempting to classify young men who enacted these performances thus, the chapter adds to a growing body of literature which suggests that there are broader shifts in the boundaries of the acceptable masculinity.

Through the elaboration and explication of the tension, performances of humiliated fury and overt bullying in the café spaces, the thesis further highlights the point I made in Chapter Six that youth cafés are not neutral spaces. The dynamics of gender can be productive of highly problematic taunting and bullying and work to exclude or

marginalise young people who identify as gay. The responses and identity beliefs of café workers can also subtly legitimate these dynamics. Furthermore, the performances of humiliated fury and overt homophobic bullying documented in this chapter problematises and makes complex, studies (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Brady *et al* 2017; Coburn, 2012; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018; Ritchie and Ord, 2017) which have suggested that youth work settings and open access provision such as youth cafés are safe, inclusive and relaxing spaces where young people can 'be themselves'. Certainly, this is also not to suggest that youth cafés may highly exclusionary to the extent that one group dominates or that young people cannot feel a sense of confidence and safety in the spaces. As the next chapter shows, the café spaces can be one of the few spaces which enables some young people to not only 'be themselves' but also develop more confident images of self.

Chapter Eight - The (Gendered) Experience of Youth Cafés

8.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to explore young people's and café worker's perspectives on the café spaces by drawing largely (but not exclusively) on the interview data and fieldnotes relating to informal conversations in the field. It aims to explore further, the question of young people's and café worker's experiences of the spaces and how these experiences might relate to the performance of masculinities.

The first section of this chapter explores young people's experiences and perspectives of their respective cafés which they attend. Young people describe positive experiences of the café spaces, but also express some reservations they had about the spaces themselves, other young people within the spaces and of café workers. These experiences make up how the cafés constitute their experiences and identities, but the dynamic is not top down. Implicit and explicit in these accounts is the way in which this constitution and these experiences have been shaped by the performance of masculinities within both cafés.

The second section of this chapter focuses on the perspectives and experiences of the café workers. This section helps to contextualise and further understand some of the material from the first section of the chapter. It also shows how café worker's attempt to subtly mediate and constitute the café spaces through a what Kiilakoski and Kivijärvi (2015) call a 'pedagogy of loose space'.

8.2 The Experience of Youth Cafés

Drawing primarily on the interview data and informal conversations in the field, this section explores young people's experiences of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. In the first subsection, I young people's (and not just young men's) positive experiences of both youth cafés are explored. In this subsection, young people speak about the general atmosphere of the cafés and the friendliness of café workers. The following subsection explores three categories of reservations young people had about the café spaces and helps to shed further light on the previous chapters by showing how the

performance of masculinities are constitutive of these reservations. Finally, by drawing upon Barry's experience, the last subsection complicates the binary presentation of these findings. It suggests that the particularities of the café spaces can help facilitate a change in a young person's 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, 1963).

8.2.1 "…I like this place and I don't want to kind of leave" (Adrian)

Part of the attraction of both the Fusion and Retro youth cafés are the actual facilities, activities and "free services" (Jon, Interview extract) that are on offer – in other words, things to do. Barry and Jon liked the availability of free WIFI in the Retro café while Adrian liked the fact that there was an Xbox to play: "I'm particularly interested in technology so you know that's good for me" (Interview extract). Other young people also availed of the free WIFI in Retro and the Xbox in Fusion (such as Jack for example), but Adrian, Barry and Jon used this WIFI to a greater extent due to their interest in 'technology' and web-based hobbies and interests such as surfing YouTube. As mentioned in Chapter Five, Adrian liked to play the game Minecraft on the Xbox. Jon liked to watch film trailers, music videos and other YouTubers' content frequently in the Retro café. Barry on the other hand, liked to bring in his wireless Bluetooth mobile phone speaker. What these highlight is that the material affordances within each café can facilitate the enactment of many different young people's identities.

At the Retro café, young people could take up the opportunity to bake things such as cupcakes, rocky roads and brownies to name a few. This was attractive to many young people, but especially to Barry, who always took the opportunity to bake and said that it is "one of the main [good] things because it gives you something to do on a Saturday" (interview extract). For him, the café helps to get "rid of spells of boredom that happen" (interview extract). Both boredom and the notion of needing somewhere to go, to have something to do and to 'stay out of trouble' has been raised by young people in other studies (In Defence of Youth Work, 2011; Merton *et al* 2006; OMCYA, 2007; Ritchie and Ord, 2017). These notions were also raised by young people both within the field and interviews contexts. Michelle did not elaborate much on why she felt the café helped her to 'stay out of trouble'. In the interview she cited a time where she 'got in trouble' for hanging around with two young men while they were breaking windows of a derelict building over a kilometre away. Liam also drew

upon this discourse and explained that that his 'trouble' consists of 'bad stuff' such as "kicking the [football] off cars" (interview extract).

There were other more social elements to young people' positive experiences of the cafés. In informal conversations I had with young people in the field, many spoke of the friendliness of café personnel, how easy it was to talk to them and they respect they afforded young people. Jon maintained that youth workers and volunteers "tend to be a bit more calm" in comparison to teachers who "are just gonna shout their heads off" (interview extract). Barry, Beth, Jon and Jordan for example, felt that the three youth workers in the Retro café were easy to talk to: "They're very friendly, they're very down to earth they're very approachable like if you have a problem you can talk to them" (Jordan, interview extract). Similarly, Barry felt that "you could be a bit more open to them than you would with a teacher. You'd regard them more as friends" (interview extract). Similar sentiments about youth workers and volunteers have been echoed by young people in other research on their experiences of youth services (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Brady *et al* 2017; Merton *et al* 2004). In the interview, after Beth said she felt she could talk to the youth workers "about anything", I asked Michelle if she felt she could do the same: "No. That'd be just embarrassing". This was not consistent with my observations within the field. On many occasions Michelle came in to the Retro café looking visibly unhappy about something. The issues mostly pertained to strained relations with her best friend and Michelle seemed to confide more in Emma than with the other café workers.

Some other positive aspects can be mentioned. The majority of young people in Retro, when asked within the interview context and through informal conversations in the field, liked to attend the café because they could go with friends to 'relax' and 'chill'. Some young men also cited the pool table as an attractive feature of the Retro café. For Jordan, his main reasons for using the Retro café were to "Chill out, go for a snooze, beat Jon in draughts if he's being annoying so that it would shut him up for a while… to get cuts of tea, cups of coffee" (interview extract). Besides to 'chill out', Jordan's motivations here did not chime with my observations in the field. Only once or twice did I see him play a game of draughts with Jon. I am sure I only ever saw him drink juice and it was Jordan himself who liked to talk a lot, something which Michelle claimed to find 'annoying' when interviewed. Despite this disparity however, the

important point here is that although Jordan sometimes did not attend for up to two to three weeks, he was a consistent user of the Retro café in the long-term.

Part of Jordan's liking for the Retro café was that it is "just a great place to go and there's a sense of community too, which is always important" (fieldnotes, Retro). This 'sense of community' was also mentioned by one other young man early in the fieldwork. A 'sense of community' was also cited by young people in Forkan *et al's* (2015; also Brady *et al* 2017) profile and evaluation of youth cafés in Ireland as a positive aspect of attending youth cafés. These points also relate to the sense of atmosphere which young people described. For Barry, Retro has "a good atmosphere [and] there's grand craic… it's a really comfortable environment…" (interview extract). For some young people, the environment of the café was spoken about in contrast to that of other spaces in their lives. Both Adrian and Jordan said their respective café provided a 'break' for them. For Jordan this was in terms of his already busy life schedule. For Adrian, the Fusion café provided in his words, "a break from my two little sisters" (interview extract) at home. Escaping from the stresses of spaces beyond open access youth provision has also found in other studies something young people have articulated in other studies when asked to explain their reason for attendance (Brady *et al* 2017; In Defence of Youth Work, 2013; Ritchie and Ord, 2017). Adrian's fondness for the café is exemplified in the fact that he feels the age limit for Fusion should be raised: "…because I like this place and I don't want to kind of leave" (interview extract).

It was Jack's experience of the Fusion youth café however, which stood out the most. In the third session at Fusion, I asked him how often he attended the café and he proudly replied "I come here every week and I've come since the beginning. I've never missed a day" (fieldnotes, Fusion). In the interview with him months later, he highlighted how meaningful the café has been in his life:

> Robert: Are there any people who might not feel welcome in here or not included or something do you think?
>
> Jack: Eh if you're like that then you're probably not going to be included like because if you're getting bullied now, I, I get bullied a bit like.
>
> Robert: In school is it?

Jack: Yeah but like we're getting it sorted out now there like and eh like if you don't talk to anyone then like if you're being bullied like you're not going to feel included and you're gonna feel like a piece of shit then like.

[…]

Robert: […] So what are the differences so between like school maybe and here like do you think? For you.

Jack: Well school feels like you're in prison […] and the youth café then it feels like you're in Funderland.

[…]

Robert: And how do people get on with each other here than like in school is there bullying as you said or-

Jack: Yeah there is bullying like I like because we have to get that sorted out because like it's been going on for me in the last few years. I've reported it and told my Dad like I finally broke down like I had a breakdown there last week. I told my nan everything and then I told my dad there […] I told my dad yesterday because the guidance counsellor rang my nan and said em [INAUDIBLE][67] go home like because I wasn't able to stay in school at all like and then like half the teachers now like I'm best friends with half the teachers […] Eh they all care about me like and I care about them as well you know like […] all they (the bullies) are is cowards they are cowards because it's the same three people every day but like when it's only one of them there they'll say nothing to me but when there's three of them there they do.

Robert: Do they do it to other people like in the class or?

Jack: No it's me. I'm the only person in my year who gets bullied […] if someone, if one of my buddies tells me I'm dumb or like you know if like you know sometimes I'm smart like in classes and they call me a nerd and I go I say to them then "I'm not a nerd at all I just don't wanna work in McDonalds in the future" […] but it's not verbal bullying at all it's also physical like there would be a load a times where I told the guidance counsellor like the three of

[67] Probably something around the lines of 'Jack wants/needs to go home'.

> them one day after school they could em, be outside the school gates and just bring me up somewhere and just beat me, beat me up like […] That would be my biggest fear like. The only reason why I'm in the bad classes now is because I failed all my tests from like coz this has been in the back of my head for the last three years like.

This extract highlights the way in which some young people's experiences of other spaces outside their respective cafés (such as school feeling like 'prison') mediates how they perceive and experience their respective youth cafés. For Jack, the Fusion café acts as a safe space where he can be himself and feel relief from the gaze of others (also Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Devlin and Gunning, 2009; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018).

8.2.2 "They just mess around and cause chaos" (Jon)

While young people in both the interviews and in the field spoke of their many positive experiences of their respective cafés[68], they also expressed reservations about some aspects the cafés, which I have divided into three categories. One category of these reservations related to the materiality of the cafés, in terms of having more 'things to do'. Jon for example would like to have access to the computer room during the café sessions at Retro while in terms of Fusion, Adrian expressed a wish see the addition of computers which would enable him to play the "PC version of Minecraft". What both Jon and Adrian are highlighting here is their wish for their respective cafés to provide further physical affordances which would enable them to enact their YouTube (as in the case of Jon), gaming (in the case of Adrian) and general 'online' and computer-based identities even more. Jordan in contrast, expressed a wish to see more types of food being cooked and available to eat on Saturdays in Retro. He also stated he would like to make more hot food in general to be "available to the 'kids'[69] on a Friday and on a Saturday" (interview extract).

[68] Though in the case of Fusion, which has poor attendance, the views of young people who do not use the café may show that they might have negative perceptions and perhaps experiences of the café. It was outside the scope of this thesis to investigate this further, but as Forkan et. al (2015) argue, future research could investigate the views of young people who do not use the youth cafes in their communities.

[69] 'Kids' was Jordan's positioning of those younger than him, especially those around 12 and 13.

In the previous section as mentioned, young people spoke positively about the overall 'environment' of the cafés in terms of the atmosphere. For some young people however, the atmosphere could become less than comfortable for different reasons. There is again a material aspect to this, relating to the small size of the Retro café. Jon for example argued "if a lot of people come in, it can be a bit cramped". This was echoed by Michelle (interview extracts). For Barry, who had said the Retro café is a "really comfortable environment", the atmosphere can change depending on "who's in… like if there's a lot of people in then like it can get a bit crowded like if it gets really noisy it kind of disrupts the mood" (interview extract).

It was mostly the performances and perceived socio-negative behaviour of others and not merely physical size however, that were the focal point of some participants critical views about their respective cafés. For Barry, 'big' confrontations can lead to feelings of being "out if place in the situation" (interview extract) in terms of the awkwardness these confrontations may elicit. This generally pertains to situations whereby young men attempted to 'create a scene' as highlighted in Chapter Six, where café workers had to sometimes manage highly disruptive situations. Jon, Jordan and Michelle had more elaborate feelings about performances of masculinity however, beyond that of disliking 'confrontations'. Interestingly, after I had asked Jon, Jordan and Michelle as to what they thought about the Retro café, they first responded by highlighting some of what they perceived to be problematic socio-negative behaviours within the Retro café:

> Robert: So what do you think of the youth café overall?
>
> Jordan: (Blows out air using lips) Erm (thinking), 7 out of 10 times it's fairly good but then there's sometimes like, most of the time it would be 8 out of 10 but then sometimes it would be closed and then you don't know why its closed but other than that it's fairly good! Eh, (voice suddenly lowers in volume) now, eh, there only problem I would have with some of people coming in here.
>
> Robert: That was one of my questions actually-
>
> Jordan: The only problem I would have is, some of the younger people coming in here are, how would I put it, are not from one of the best [correcting himself], from one of the highest social classes shall we say.

Robert: Right.

Jordan: So like they kind ruin it for everyone else then like their behaviour towards certain aspects of life.

For Jon, "there's not really much bad bits to it apart from some people's attitudes" while for Michelle after I had asked "What are the good and bad things about the café?" she immediately responded, "Bad things because there's ugly people [in here]" (interview extracts). Anne argued that although youth cafés are 'great', a youth café can be perceived "as a rough place and can be seen as somewhere like where only rough and young people who are in trouble go to" (interview extract) (also Robertson, 2005). Indeed, Michelle pointed out that she (apparently) knows "loads of people that don't come here and they're in first year like because of people being here" (interview extract). Although she articulated (in the interview) that this was because of one particular young man[70], it does highlight how the presence of one person based on the repeated socio-negative performances or reputation of that person can inscribe the café space with meanings for those who do not attend the café themselves.

The interviews with both young people and with Anne, Emma and Sarah confirmed many of the things which I witnessed in the Retro youth café. For Jon, his framing of what consists of the problematic aspects of 'some people's attitudes' took the form of words and phrases that spoke to the general culture and atmosphere created by these performances:

Jon: … it's a bit mixed up sometimes they tend to go a little wild…

[…]

Robert: How do you think some of the other young people get on with each other?

Jon: They (sniggering) don't.

Robert: They don't?

Jon: They just mess around and cause chaos. The majority of them cause chaos.

[70] He did not want to participate in the research.

What this ‘chaos’ consists of is multifaceted but pertains to a general atmosphere and culture of ‘messing’ and related performances such as loudness. As Barry argued, the ‘messing’ is “kind of hard to pinpoint, just shouting at each other, the odd throwing themselves at each other” (interview extract). For Jon, this ‘messing’ also consists of how young men attempt “to annoy the staff or just mess around with the TV. Like you’ve seen where they put it up full blast and it’s deafening everyone in the room” (interview extract). These dynamics were shown in Chapter Six, especially in relation to ‘game-plays’.

What these extracts show is the way in which performances of certain modes of masculinity can produce reservations about the café spaces in which some performances are constructed as forms of nuisances. Jordan and Michelle however, expressed not only reservations about the Retro café as a space, but more classed and gendered animosity towards specific young people because of their performances in the Retro café. Jordan, as highlighted in his interview extract above, had a personal problem with a few young people who attended Retro (see also the next subsection) and linked their ‘behaviour’ to social class in a stigmatising manner It was Michelle however, who expressed the most reservations about the Retro café as a space because of the performances of particular young men. In the interview, she was particularly aggrieved by the behaviour of other young men in the two sessions previous to the interview, where she felt that Emma (youth worker) received a considerable amount of “cheek” (interview extract). Michelle’s negative feelings were largely directed at Liam and some of his friends and in articulating her annoyance she said that “in the night they actually go through my brain… Liam and all them I swear they’re annoying so much”. She also stated that “boys just get on my nerves” (interview extracts). This comment was made in the interview in the context of discussing the numerical dominance of young men in the café:

> Robert: […] Did you say that nobody gets on [well]?
>
> Michelle: Sometimes like. (Pause) There’s barely no girls here.

Up to this stage in the interview, I had not previously mentioned or asked about the gendered dynamics of the Retro café, so it is noteworthy that it was Michelle who

brought up the subject. All participants except Barry in this research felt that young men use both cafés more than young women. As Jordan comments:

> Erm mostly the time I've been here it has been [either] sixty percent guys forty percent girls, seventy percent guys, thirty percent girls it's because, the lads kind eh, like I'm not being sexist now but it's eh the lads kind of take over and kind of like, its very kind of hard then for the girls then… (interview extract)

Jordan highlights two issues here. The first is the numerical dominance of young men who use the Retro youth café, which was confirmed by my own observations, café workers and the other participants in this research, except Barry. The second issue Jordan raises is the gendered 'take over' of space. His language here has connotations beyond that of mere numbers. It is best encapsulated through Jon's description of how he perceived that the Retro café sometimes fell into 'chaos' or "utter anarchy" (interview extract). As I mentioned in Chapter Six in relation to humour, it is difficult to articulate the way in which some young men dominated the space in the qualitative sense. I take Jordan's point not to mean that young men actively attempted to territorialize space through subordination. Instead, what it does imply and refer to in my view, is the way in which some young men performed masculinity overly loudly and moved around the Retro café space freely and fluidly. This was captured in Chapter Six especially regarding the 'game-plays' that were enacted by young men. In this chapter I noted how some 'game-plays' were characterised by 'spontaneous involvements' (Goffman, 1967) and captures the entitlement to space exhibited by young men. As Jordan explains, young women who did use the café did not partake in practices that could give the same impression of having an entitlement over the space:

> Robert: Do you think that there's a difference between what young men and young women do in the café?
>
> Jordan: Like the couch the girls would just slouch around on the couch while the lads would be just be in here messing. Like the girls just wanna watch music channels but the lads just wanna mess, play with each other play pool, play checkers, play cards. (Interview extract)

Within the context of discussing some of the socio-negative behaviours including the

gendered dynamics of the café, both young people and youth workers had what I have termed ‘motive theories’ or explanations for some of the dynamics within the cafés:

> Michelle: Daniel doesn’t do that (mess) when he’s by himself.
>
> […]
>
> Robert: So what kind of stuff would the boys annoy you about?
>
> Michelle: Thinking they’re class.
>
> Robert: Thinking they’re class? And what sort of stuff do they do then that they think they’re class.?
>
> Michelle: [mumbling, inaudible] … so much stuff.
>
> Robert: Showing off?
>
> Michelle: Yeah. Like Jerry oh my god.
>
> […]
>
> Michelle: And when you’re walking past him he drops his shoulders as if he thinks he’s class. (Interview extract)

Beth and Jon held similar views. All three seemed to recognise the homosociality of masculinities (also Kehler, 2004), or of the way in which performances are made to gain recognition from other young men. More than this, Michelle’s use of the term “thinking they’re class” is similar to Jordan’s view that the reason for young men’s ‘messing’ is a “show of superiority basically”. Interestingly, Jordan himself ‘gave off’ (Goffman, 1959) an impression of superiority in the way he positioned some young men as ‘other’ in class terms. As mentioned previously (Chapter’s Five and Seven), Jordan projected an inflated image of himself and was sometimes quite defensive. It is possible that Jordan’s explanation above stems from his own anxieties in relation to his position in relation to other young men (see below). For example, Jordan also felt that the minimum entry age of thirteen “is fair enough… because twelve-year olds, they think they’re bigger than what they are…” (interview extract).

As this subsection has shown thus far, performances of masculinity constitute both young people’s perspectives and experiences of the cafés spaces themselves and can also lead to a build-up of personal friction and dislike toward other young people in

the cafés. The final reservation some participants had of the cafés related to how these performances had implications for Beth's, Jon's, Jordan's and Michelle's view of the café workers in Retro:

> Eight out of ten times they get on really well with each other but then you have certain individuals that wreck it for everybody else and the staff aren't really how would I put it… (he pauses, thinking) aren't really… (he hesitates, trying to think of the right word), it's not that they're not really bothered like it's just that they don't want to be mean to 'oh get out would yeah stop messing'. They can't do that because they have to be seen to be open to the public as in they have to be inclusive to everybody. (Jordan, interview extract)

Beth, Jordan and Michelle all felt that café personnel should be 'stricter' with young people within the café with Jordan and Michelle both expressing the belief that café workers should adopt a no-nonsense authoritarian approach. For Michelle, one of her ideas for improving the Retro youth café was to permanently 'kick' two young men out, one of whom was Liam. Jordan was even more elaborate on his own approach. In the interview, when describing how he would approach some of the socio-negative behaviours in the Retro café if he was a worker, he utilised bodily performances such as the clapping of his hands to convey his imaginary role as a tough, no nonsense authoritarian youth worker:

> [one] thing I would do is I would be a bit stricter on who I was letting in if I knew they had a reputation I'd be like 'sorry (claps hands), you're not going to ruin it for everyone else (claps hands), you're not welcome here' and that's what I'd do. (Interview extract)

What the explicit and implicit reservations around the perceived lack of discipline by personnel show is how performances of masculinities which are boisterous or problematic not only construct and (re)assert masculinity for the young men themselves and in the eyes of others, but also create situations that can hold implications for how other young people view and construct what 'kind of person(s)'(Goffman, 1959) café workers are.

8.2.3 "You kinda have to have a thick skin to put up with it" (Jordan)

Jordan's opinion as to why youth workers may hold off on discipline ('they have to be inclusive to everybody') also highlights the way in which there was both an implicit and explicit view that within the Fusion and Retro youth cafés, a particular image of self needs to be projected and maintained. Beth, Jon, Jordan, and Michelle for example, had their own 'motive theories' around the relationship between the perceived socio-negative behaviours in the Retro café and the café workers' own inaction regarding these behaviours. Jordan attempted to empathise with the position of youth workers regarding their role in maintaining the values of inclusivity. On the other hand, Beth argued that "they're (the workers) way too scared", Michelle echoed this claim, feeling "It's like Emma is afraid to do something" (interview extract). Jon did not specifically state that he felt that the personnel should be 'stricter'. Nevertheless, he did believe that one of the reasons why some young people may be 'abusive' toward Anne was due to the perception amongst some young people "that she's weaker than the others in how she responds" (interview extract).

Young people and youth workers explicitly referred to the way in which a person's embodiment within a café requires them either to project a composed image of self or actually helps them to learn how to project a composed image of self. For Jordan for example, some of the insults which are sometimes exchanged within Retro, such as "ah you're a dickhead", mean that "you kind of have to have a thick skin to put up with it" (interview extract). For Ciara (youth worker, Fusion), it is not 'kind of have to' as Jordan states, but "you *have to* grow *leather skin*" [my emphasis] (interview extract). For Sarah, there are times - although cautioning that they are 'rare'- where an argument between a young person and a youth worker "would turn into a personal". Over time, she argues that "You do *grow scales* really [and] you just have to ignore what they say you know…" [my emphasis] (interview extract). The word 'personal' is important here because it shows that projecting or needing to maintain 'composure' (Goffman, 1967) or a 'thick skin' is not only about developing (to use the proverb) the 'virtue' of patience in relation to ignoring the (to use Jon's words) 'chaos' or 'anarchy' which may occur in the youth cafés. Rather, as Sarah highlights, maintaining composure and a 'thick skin' is also about not taking assaults upon the self too seriously or at least not *showing* that they have been hurtful or taken seriously.

This is not to say that this 'thick skin' is always either successfully maintained or that hurt, and vulnerability is never shown. In the interview, Anne explained that there have been times where she had to "go into the kitchen and count to five" and at one point it seemed her hurt was very apparent to young people:

> Michelle: (to Beth) Remember when Anne had to leave the room the last time?
>
> Beth: Yeah that's, that's what I was just thinking about.
>
> Michelle: Yeah I know. Coz Dennis called her a name.
>
> […]
>
> Michelle: She didn't even say anything she just stood up and left.
>
> Beth: But, I was like just looking around at everybody going… (mimics how she was looking around in disbelief, with mouth open) (Interview extract)

Anne's experiences here demonstrate that there are sometimes occasions whereby even an experienced youth worker needs time to 'cool off'. While Anne was honest about her need to sometimes 'count to five', in Jordan's case, matters were more complex.

As this thesis has shown, young people and youth workers were in a variety of ways affected by the performances of masculinity. For Michelle as highlighted, these performances can produce personal animosity toward other young men such as Liam. Of all the young people (and not just participants) within both cafés including Michelle and Cian (despite his own difficult situation) however, it was Jordan who appeared to me, in the context of the observations, to be the most affected and upset about events that transpired in the Retro café. In the interview situation itself and the subsequent analysis and re-listening of the interview recording, the impression which he *gave off* (Goffman, 1959) - one of upset and (hidden) vulnerability - was very different from the impression he attempted to *give* (Goffman, 1959) - that of being 'thick skinned'. On three occasions within the context of the face-to-face interview itself, I immediately recognised and was aware of this disparity. The first of these was in the context of discussion about the insults between young people which he said he observed within the Retro Café:

> Robert: […] Has any of that made you feel uncomfortable at any point?

> Jordan: [Immediately in a loud confident voice] No! I, (quickly reverting to his original tone of voice) you see like, I'm kind of like I'd be used to it anyway with my friends out on the street like pushing, slapping each other, like but kind of like I kinda feel sorry for some of the kids who wouldn't be used to it? I'd go up and say [to them] "look, stop would yeah" [INAUDIBLE]… cop on and then they get back on their bike.' (Interview extract)

The key phrase in this extract is "No! I…" where (as I write within the extract) the tone he projected was one of assurance and confidence. Although I write '[Immediately…]', Jordan's answer was in fact bordering on interjection and interruption. Jordan here intended to give the impression that he is not and does not become vulnerable to slights or that he becomes easily frustrated with the boisterous performances of others. The irony however, is that the tone and manner in which he responded to the question actually 'gave off' the impression that he was immediately uncomfortable with the question (which was about comfort!), upon which he (as I noted) 'quickly' reverted to his original tone. Another extract from the interview may be cited:

> Robert: Is it easy like to relax in the café or does it depend?
>
> Jordan: Yeah like I don't really take much notice of anyone in here like so it's easy for me to relax I can flip out the switch and I could be-
>
> Robert: You can switch off?
>
> Jordan: Yeah. I don't get phased by anyone like so if someone was going "ah you're a [emphasising] dickhead" I'd just be there: [putting both hands to his hips and pretending to look at someone behind me] "buddy I couldn't give flying feckin fuck".
>
> Robert: And would you think some other people like wouldn't be able to relax because of that?
>
> Jordan: Like, you kind of have to have like a thick skin like to put up with it but 80% of the people don't, even 90% of the people don't mind but then you maybe have one or two that get annoyed then and they go off and come back in ten minutes later when yo man's gone and they be like "oh thank feck yo man is gone I don't really like him"… (interview extract)

The phrases ‘I don’t really take much notice’, ‘I don’t get phased by anyone’ and his gesture of putting his hands to his hips while mimicking all constitute examples of expressions given. Jordan’s projected image of self within the interview as someone who is able to keep ‘composure’ (Goffman, 1967) within the Retro café is contradicted by the discussion in Chapter Seven in relation to his performance of ‘humiliated fury’. When challenged with an event or interaction that threatened his image of self, Jordan exercised ‘preventive’ and ‘defensive’ practices (Goffman, 1959) to ensure the coherence of his image of self. Though ‘defensive practices’ do not always mean practices which appear to be overtly ‘defensive’, some of Jordan’s embodied performances appeared to me, at least, to be quite overtly ‘defensive’ including the phrases used within the interview context.

This defensiveness however, was not always overt. Jordan’s interview highlights the importance of transcribing accurately and listening acutely. Following multiple re-readings and listening’s of the interview with Jordan, some further points can be made around the impressions which he ‘gave’ and ‘gave off’ in the interview transcript. His focus in the interview on what he perceived to be some of the socio-negative practices within the Retro youth café indicates that he was indeed frustrated by events in the Retro café. First, it was evident in his claim that there are ‘one or two’ young people who he is not ‘really fond of’. The second (as previously highlighted) is the way in which he articulated the more authoritarian approach he would use in dealing with these performances. His no nonsense approach is indicative of the feelings he has about these performances and in turn how he was affected by performances of masculinity within the Retro youth café[71]. Thirdly, but closely related to the previous points, lies in Jordan’s own reasoning for why these performances are problematic. This was already captured in his phrase that ‘they kind of ruin it for everybody else’, however, Jordan also spoke about how (as mentioned) ‘I kinda feel sorry for some of the kids who wouldn’t be used to it’. In his view there are also ‘kids” who use the Retro café “who are more placid and would kind of get a bit scared”. For some of these ‘kids’, “They might come from very troubled background or they might come from backgrounds where they are not used to violence…” (interview extracts). Although there may be young people who may find some of the ‘messing’ within the Retro youth

[71] As his previous interactions with Michelle in the Chapter Seven showed however, he was also affected and threatened by young women.

café intimidating, the point here is that Jordan may be exhibiting the psychoanalytic concept of 'projection'. In other words, Jordan may not simply be describing what he believes to be the anxieties of others, rather he may be describing his own anxieties.

In sum, there was a view among some participants that a 'thick skin' is required to 'put' up with some of the performances that are enacted in both cafés. There was also the view that a 'thick skin' is developed, or in other words, that performances of masculinity which repeatedly threaten the self help to develop a 'thick skin'. Jordan's interview and his performances within the field were contradictory and indicated that his own image of self and his patience is frequently threatened due to events and performances within the Retro youth café space.

8.2.4 "[in the café] You can be a lot more open about yourself" (Barry)

From the previous subsections discussed within this section and also the first section of Chapter Seven which explored examples of 'humiliated fury' and homophobic bullying, the impression may be given that both youth cafés are suitable only for those young people who indeed, have a 'thick skin' (as Jordan implied) and can keep and project a sense of 'composure' and patience. The discussion may have also given the impression that there is a clear binary between what young people and café personnel see as 'good' and/or 'bad' about their respective cafés, with the 'bad' aspects or even socio-negative performance of masculinities bringing nothing but nuisance to the café environment. This impression is problematised when Barry's experience is considered.

In the interviews, Anne, Emma and Sarah argued that a part of their job in both the Retro café space and the youth centre as a whole, is to help "empower" (Emma, interview extract) young people to hold their ground if they are met with abuse from others in the café. In Anne's view, this does not mean helping a young person 'challenge somebody' physically, but in the sense of standing "on their own" and standing "up for themselves" (interview extract). A case in point is Barry.

In Chapter Seven, I noted how Barry seemed to enact social fluidity in the way he interacted with many different young people. The 'inclusive masculinities' literature has highlighted that the observed social fluidity of some young men within schools

(McCormack, 2011, p. 95) contrasts with the cliquishness and "exclusivity, competitiveness and rivalry" that characterised some of the previous literature which had documented the hierarchical stratification of masculinities (see Adler and Adler, 1995). Barry's social fluidity is significant however, not only in terms of how this corresponds to the 'inclusive masculinities' literature (McCormack, 2011), but also in terms of how this social fluidity contrasted to his past image of self as he, Anne, Emma and Sarah all articulated.

In the interview for example, Anne recounted how while watching a pool game a young man declared to Barry "I'd beat you hands down at this pool like". Barry responded by saying "yeah but I'd academically excel against you". She also recounted this story early in the field with precisely the same wording. In Goffman's (1963) terms, this interaction counts as a 'moral experience' since it had implications for Barry's image of self. Observing Barry respond in this way was a source of pride for Anne: "… so like that kind of moment when that person felt confident in their self-esteem, that's the lightbulb moment like for them and for me to see it that's my reward" (interview extract). Emma elaborated further on Barry and how he has changed since he first engaged with the youth service:

> he's a completely different young person than when we started working with him three years ago, he was very much socially awkward, not able to interact, was probably bullied a good bit you know… I feel quite proud when I see him at the moment. I feel he's standing tall, he's comfortable in his own skin I mean he was *not* (assertively) [my emphasis] like that a few years ago… I do think here has played a strong role in that because I think that the café can reflect a model of the bigger world so I think learning how to hold his own in there has taught him how to hold his own outside if that makes sense? (Interview extract)

The sentiment Emma feels about the positive development of Barry's 'moral career' (Goffman, 1959, 1961) is similar to Anne's. Emma speaks of her pride ('I feel quite proud') and uses the phrases 'standing tall' and 'comfortable in his own skin' to describe the change in Barry's 'moral career', similar to Anne's use of the word 'self-esteem'. Anne, Emma and Sarah attributed these dynamics to the way in which the café space enable them to 'back up' young people when they appear to struggle to deal with threats from other young people themselves.

Anne's story of Barry impacted how I saw Barry from then on. During one session while playing a game of pool with him, I asked him about what I felt to be his social fluidity. He laughed, saying that before he was "more socially awkward". He meant this not just in the café but a general sense, though when I said that I would not have thought he "was socially awkward" he said (as I note) "something like 'I dunno in the café you get used to people I think'" (fieldnotes, Retro). As mentioned in the beginning of this chapter, Barry liked the 'craic' and atmosphere of the café. In the interview, I also asked him how the café might compare to "other places like school or something?" and his answer supports the observations made by Anne and Emma:

> Barry: You can be a lot more open about yourself.
>
> Robert: Yeah and you can't then in school?
>
> Barry: Yeah because I don't know I feel like, people, kind of, there's a wider range of people that are in the school than are in here. (Interview extract)

Barry's use of the term 'open about yourself' is similar to the idea of 'being yourself' (Forkan *et al* 2015). For example, after I asked if he felt he has to be a certain type of person (for example see Robb *et al* 2015) in the community he replied "…If I'm with friends then I'm completely open with myself like I'd be fine talking to them about anything but like if I'm just in public with people then I wouldn't really be the same" (interview extract).

The idea, as Jordan argues that you 'have to have a thick skin to put up with' some of the social practices in the café, may have left the reader with the impression that both youth cafés are stressful spaces which constrain young people's modes of being and that what is required is considerable skill in the art of 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959). Barry's (to call it) 'thick skin' however, was not merely characterised by the ability to engage in smart, defensive verbal rebuttals but through his ease in engaging in friendly interaction with a variety of young people. Barry's experience problematizes Jordan's implied impression that young people need to be on guard within the cafés. Rather, in Barry's case at least, the Retro youth café seemed to facilitate the idea of 'being yourself', a finding echoed by other studies which have explored the impact of youth services on young people (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Brady *et al* 2017; Coburn, 2012; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018). Furthermore,

what is implied is that the café itself enabled him to develop skills of 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959).

This is not to say that these 'role' performances can be completely relaxed. As I showed in chapters Six and Seven, within both youth café's young men had to re-assert and perform masculinity to avoid being discredited. Neither is it also to suggest that youth cafés can be solely responsible for the development of impression management skills, as Emma cautioned. Nevertheless, from his own experience, which is supported by Emma and Anne's own observations, we can see how youth cafés can facilitate a change in a young person's 'moral career', which is also supported by other studies with youth work or open access settings (Brady *et al* 2017; Coburn, 2012; Devlin and Gunning, 2009; Forkan *et al* 2015; Ritche and Ord, 2017).

8.2.5 Summary

This section predominantly explored young people's experiences of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. As shown in the first subsection, young people had many positive views of their respective cafés, some of which have been consistent with Forkan *et al's* (2015) profile and evaluation of the youth café initiative and other studies on youth work and open access settings (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Devlin and Gunning, 2009; Ritchie and Ord, 2017). Young people spoke about the availability of free services and material affordances, some of which (such as WIFI and the Xbox) enabled them to enact parts of their identities. Young people also spoke about the opportunity to relax and socialise with friends. The friendliness of café workers was also highlighted, consistent again with the broader research (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Merton *et al* 2004).

Young people also had some reservations about the cafés and related these to young men's performance of masculinity. First, there were reservations about the space itself in relation to how it falls into 'chaos' (Jon and Adrian) or how the perceived socio-negative behaviour can "ruin it for everyone else" (Jordan). Second, this perceived socio-negative behaviour of others also translated into the inflation and development of personal animosities toward particular young men as highlighted in Jordan, Michelle's and Beth's accounts. These reservations generally constructed some young men and their performances as nuisances. Finally, these perceptions translated into

reservations about café personnel themselves and meant that some interviewees imputed images of a 'weak', lenient and frightened self to café workers hence, performances of masculinity produce events and situations which have implications for other young people view what 'kind of person(s)' (Goffman, 1959) café workers are.

As a consequence of these performances, there were also explicit and implicit perceptions around the need for a 'thick skin' on the part of both young people and café personnel. Beth and Michelle explicitly stated that the workers are 'afraid' or 'scared'. Jon and Jordan's accounts also implied that café workers should project a tougher image of self. Jordan and Ciara explicitly argued that a 'thick/leather skin' is indeed required to 'put up' with some of these performances. Sarah argued on the other hand, that a 'thick skin' is in fact, developed from spending time volunteering or working at a youth café. As Barry's experience has highlighted however, there is not a totally neat boundary between what may be perceived as the 'good' and/or 'bad' aspects of both cafés. Although Jordan and Michelle's accounts would imply that the Retro youth café can sometimes be threatening for young people, Barry's experience shows how the Retro café constituted a safe space with which to learn how to negotiate interaction and develop a more confident image of self.

8.3 The Pedagogy of Youth Cafés

This section draws upon the voices of café workers to show how workers attempt to mediate young people's experiences of the cafés through what what might be called the 'pedagogy of loose space' (Kilakoski and Kivijari, 2015). The first subsection explores both the direct and subtle practice of 'information education' which café workers enact within the café spaces. In this subsection, some of the reservations young people had about the café spaces are contextualised and better understood, as café workers implicitly reveal why some of these reservations may be produced. The second subsection explores the 'role model' discourse and how café workers attempt and hope to implicitly teach young people about the kind of self they should enact by believing themselves to be potential examples of good conduct.

8.3.1 Informal Education

Within the Retro youth centre, the Ballymore youth service provides informal education through activities, skills building and developmental work. Although the café is a recreational space, the skills building and developmental work is not confined to the other spaces of the youth centre only. Informal education was also practiced within the Retro youth café but was much more limited in contrast to the other activities and developmental work which occurs outside of the café time. Much of the informal education that is practiced within the Retro café takes the form of advice giving (also Hilton, 2005) and attempts by Anne, Emma and Sarah at trying to get young people to think about their actions and discourses. As Anne argued, "there's an awful lot of good work done like in a youth café and even if somebody at the end of their time here can ask politely for a cup of tea like that's my job done…" (interview extract). Learning how to politely ask for tea may seem mundane in the greater scheme of things, but I found this simple politeness significant in the Retro youth café. When a café worker made a cup of tea for young people, there were those who did not say thank you and those who did, mostly under their breath, but in the Retro youth café there was one young man who, despite his frequent conflict with Anne, Emma and Sarah, always expressed a very audible and polite 'thank you'. This politeness always stumped me, being in stark contrast to the general disrespect he displayed in the café space itself, toward other young people and to café workers. It shows how even young people who may be disruptive can and do learn manners among other things by engaging in youth work services[72].

Some of the more practical life skills which young people can learn in a café session can include baking and clean-up. Sarah argued that she "find(s)" the kitchen to be "amazing" because even the most basic cooking and cleaning tasks can spark a conversation which can "go anywhere" between a café worker and a young person (interview extract). One way the conversation can 'go' is the giving of advice, which constitutes a form of informal learning. As Anne explains, "young people seek us out for particular reasons… I mean they ask a lot of questions about drugs and smoking and drinking quite a lot…" (interview extract) This seeking out can also revolve around personal projects which young people may be working on. One example of

[72] I say 'youth work services' because at Retro having manners such as saying 'thank you' is emphasised in the youth café and the other spaces within the centre.

this was when Jon brought in his script for his audio drama which he intended to upload to YouTube, asking if I could suggest any changes which could be made to it.

In terms of questions which young people may ask café workers, for Sarah, there is a gendered element to how these questions are asked:

> … the boys sometimes take longer. They take longer to come around to you and when they do you have them for life… boys would have the same or very similar conversations [as young women] but they would do it in a different way. They'd make sure it's very quiet they'd make sure nobody else is around, but a girl would be more free in front of her friends but with the boys it's like "I really need to ask you this but I don't want them listening"… (Interview extract)

For Sarah, this advice giving is "what's good about the café… it gives you opportunities to put those snippets [of advice] in there you know… It gives us a chance to start a conversation to start these ideas…" (interview extract). The manner through which this advice is given is also important. Anne talked for example, about how "we kind of give them subtle advice without actually going overboard…" (interview extract). Similarly, while discussing how she confronts the use of racist language by asking young people "do you realise what this means?", Emma explained that she tries not to be too confrontational and authoritarian: "It's trying to find the balance without wrecking their heads…" (Interview extract)

All five café workers interviewed for this research spoke about how they attempt to keep the café spaces inclusive and open to all young people. As would be expected, café workers stated that they have a zero tolerance for bullying, but café workers' rationale for intervening in young people's behaviour extends beyond that of ensuring that no bullying occurs in the spaces. There is also an attempt to ensure that other young people do not feel that the space is unwelcoming due to the actions of others. Furthermore, as Emma argued in the interview, insults that that may be "acceptable" between friends can still be problematic even if nobody else outside these interactions are effected by them: "I think they all deserve a level of respect… I'd say [to them] I don't think that's a nice way to speak to each other". (Interview extract)

At the same time, as Emma's statement about not being 'too confrontational and authoritarian' indicated, there was also a wish amongst café workers to allow young people to be "who they are" (Sarah, interview extract). As Emma further articulated:

> … just because they're shouting and roaring and messing with each other with the pool table doesn't actually mean that there's anything, your tolerance levels I think as well for like noise and that type of thing would change and you realise, teenagers are noisy you know its ok they're not actually [doing anything bad]. (Interview extract)

Nevertheless, there were times where Emma took a more direct approach in terms of directing young people toward expanding their modes of being:

> After Barry and Beth sat down with Rachel [a volunteer] and other young men to begin playing Snakes and Ladders, Emma asked Jon (who was sitting at a table looking at his phone with his earphones plugged in) to see if he was going to play. He looked over and shook his head slightly. While walking towards the counter she explained (in a manner in which everyone could hear) "I want to try and encourage you to join in rather than being on your phone all the time". Jon didn't answer but looked at the group again and turned back ambivalently to continue looking at his phone. (Fieldnotes, Retro)

On the other hand, Sarah was of the (strong) opinion that "not every young person in the youth café needs help, but they do need you know role models and they need guidance… I'm a strong believer in working with the young person if the young person wants to work and if not back off and leave them alone. Back. Off" (interview extract).

These extracts show the different approaches adopted by youth workers in the café spaces. In the interview, Emma highlighted that due to her previous experience in another youth work setting, she is influenced by a more developmental approach and she articulated that her aspirations for the Retro youth café was to reconfigure it into a more developmentally focused space in the future, believing that youth cafés should not be solely recreational. Sarah on the other hand, emphasised what is called 'working with' rather than 'working on' young people' and thus, described herself as a 'traditionalist' (interview extract). This is not to say that Emma does not value the idea of 'participation' as she also articulated that she would also like to see young people to be afforded more of an opportunity to participate in the management of the Retro

café and in the governance structures of the Ballymore youth service. In relation to the Fusion youth café, Ciara was of the strong opinion that the café should facilitate workshops on various topics in the future. She was of the strong belief that young people should be 'targeted' at a lower age "because that's where the trouble starts you see" (fieldnotes, Fusion).

8.3.2 Role Modelling

Another part of the 'pedagogy of loose space' which informed café workers approach in interacting with young people was through attempting to be 'role models'. In the interviews and conversations during the observation work, youth workers and volunteers commented on what they saw as the importance of 'role models', especially of 'male role models'. Ciara, for example, felt that male volunteers and youth workers have the potential to teach young men that alternative 'gentle' and 'empathetic' modes of masculinity can be enacted. Fred and Sarah argued that young men may find common identification with male volunteers and workers about particular aspects of life such as sharing a common interest in football. Sarah also felt that young men may be more likely to listen to male volunteers and workers because they may conflate the "women [volunteers and workers] as the mommies" in terms of "'she's fucking giving out [again]'" (interview extract).

My official roles within both cafés were those of being a volunteer and student researcher. Informally however, my own presence in both youth cafés was also one which incited speculation that I was implicitly acting as a 'role model' for young people (or more accurately, young men). In one session in the Retro youth café, Anne asked if I could go upstairs with Darren and Liam to a room which contained an electric piano since Darren wanted to try it out. I played a fast piece and when we were back in the café space, Liam told Anne about my piano playing skills. As I noted: "Anne then quietly said to me 'that's good for role modelling, playing the piano'" (fieldnotes, Retro). Similarly, in the Fusion youth café, while having a discussion about Gary and James's behaviour toward Cian, Ciara mentioned argued that "Gary and James are drawn to you so you're like a role model" (fieldnotes, Fusion).

As I noted in Chapter Six, there were times in the field where I became conscious of my interactions with young people in terms of 'giving off' the impression that I

supported some of their performances (see also Plows, 2010), meaning that I attempted to self-police in the form of hiding my smile. Other volunteers also felt that they must self-police in case their actions could have an influence on young people. While I was walking toward the Retro youth café one evening for example, I came across Jessica (a volunteer) who was smoking her e-cigarette about twenty meters away from the café. During my conversation with her, she revealed that she wanted to stay away from the youth café while she smoked so as not to be a 'bad' influence on the 'young fellas'. This self-policing is not merely an imagined fear of disapproval from other personnel however, as there were two occasions within the Retro youth café where Emma had to remind Rachel (a volunteer) about how she should conduct herself within the café space. For instance, as a young man came into the Retro café, Rachel appeared to look up toward him as she was preparing teas and muttered "oh shit". Emma cautioned her, stating "we don't want to be negative. We want to try and be positive and welcoming". There were two other young men standing at the counter waiting for their teas at the time and Emma's volume was loud enough for them to hear, but they were busy talking and did not seem to notice (fieldnotes, Retro).

Later, in the same session, the café became quiet for a short time. Jon took the opportunity to turn on a music channel which played heavy metal music - his favourite genre. Rachel, who was playing pool with another young man, let Jon know in a light-hearted manner that she did not like the music and began pleading to Jon to change the channel. After a few minutes of arguing in a joking manner, Rachel took the remote, put on a different music channel and placed the remote in her pocket. Jon took the interaction light heartedly, but Emma was not too pleased. She asked Rachel for the remote and told her she needed to let Jon decide what he wanted to watch and turned the channel back on while declaring "we want to encourage diversity too Rachel and be inclusive as we can" (fieldnotes, Retro). This shows that in the Retro café at least, there is a constant attempt to maintain what Emma called a "solid culture" (interview extract) around what café workers expect both of young people in terms of how they treat others and what young people should expect of café workers.

Batsleer (2014, p. 15) argues that "The acceptance that youth workers can and should be role models seems to be a taken for granted aspect of current professional common sense". This 'role model' discourse is not confined to youth work however, but is a 'powerful and popular' truth claim (Tarrant *et al* 2015) within broader societal

discourses pertaining to boys' and young men. The general idea is that older men can implicitly or explicitly teach younger men how to interact appropriately and in the educational context, the idea is that male teachers can teach in a specific 'boy friendly' way simply because they are male (Francis, 2008). There are many problems with this discourse however. It assumes firstly that men are a homogenous group when in fact masculinity and gender is fluid, as shown in the varied teaching styles of male teachers (Francis, 2008; Martino and Frank, 2006). In their study of young men's experiences of youth services, Robb *et al* (2015, p. 25) found that the 'transmission' idea of the 'role model' discourse did not "…seem like a useful concept to apply to the relationships described by participants" in the research. They found 'mentoring' to be a more appropriate term since it implies "[youth] workers and young men co-constructing identities and relationships" (Robb *et al* 2015, p. 25). As I have also found in this research through the interviews, young men did not have a preference for male or female youth workers. Instead what was more important was the individual characteristics and qualities of café workers (also Robb *et al* 2015).

8.3.3 Summary

This section has highlighted the 'pedagogy of loose space' that is enacted by café workers in youth café spaces. Youth work activities or programmes did not take place in either the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. Instead, café workers attempted to practice informal education through advice giving and through questioning problematic performances. Furthermore, café workers aimed to be good role models for young people. The section has highlighted that rather than acting in a purely supervisory capacity, there is some attempt to develop some soft skills among young people and facilitate a change in their 'moral career'.

8.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored young people's and café worker's perceptions and experiences of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés. Through the interview accounts, the chapter has explored both the way in which certain boisterous and hegemonic performances of masculinities constitute and produce the space of both cafés and how

café workers in turn attempt to mediate people's 'moral careers' (Goffman, 1961, 1963) through subtle informal education and role modelling within the café spaces.

The chapter highlighted how the performance of certain modes of boisterous and hegemonic masculinities can produce antagonisms toward other young people. As chapters Six and Seven has shown, young men perform masculinities to sustain recognition from peers, but the validation and recognition which young men may receive from their immediate peers privately does not always and necessarily extend to other young people who use the café spaces. As the interview extracts have shown, some young people recognised that young men enact performances to act 'cool' in front of their peers, but the very performances which aim to produce this recognition can lead other young people to impute less than positive images of self to these young men. In other words, successful performances of masculinity give perhaps, the right, favourable impression to peers, but 'give off' (Goffman, 1959) a different impression to those who are not the audience. This is an important point. It exemplifies how the 'audience' for the performance of masculinities does not constitute every individual in the café spaces. Masculinities are performed for the recognition of other young men, but what this chapter shows is that there is a 'spilling over' effect of these performances. This chapter has shown that performances also constitute other young people's perception of the space, describing it as sometimes falling into 'anarchy' or 'chaos'. Relatedly, performances lead other young people outside the audience of peer groups lead them to impute images of self to café workers.

The interview material with cafés workers show that what young people do not realise is that café workers are in fact, to the best of their ability, attempting to ensure that the café spaces maximise every young person's freedom to 'be' themselves. This includes both allowing boisterous performances of masculinity to be enacted within reason and ensuring that these performances do not impede too much upon other young people's comfort and their ability to perform their own identities without fear of disapproval. As Jordan recognised, the café workers 'have to be inclusive to everybody'. When problematic performances are enacted, café workers attempt to direct young people's 'moral careers' and performances toward egalitarian and considerate modes of being and constitutes part of the youth work pedagogy that is practiced in the café spaces. On the other hand, the chapter has also shown how young people may undergo a change in their moral careers, not merely from the direct influence of café workers,

but through how the contingencies of the café spaces themselves may facilitate the development of more confident images of self, with Barry cited as a case in point. The chapter has shown that the ability to ‘be oneself’ is contested and open to change in youth café spaces.

Chapter Nine - Conclusions

9.1 Introduction

This study has been concerned with "how masculinities are played out in different spaces" and "how those spaces shape the very nature of the experience of masculinity" (Hopkins and Noble, 2009, p. 814). It sought to explore how youth café spaces may be mutually constitutive of and constituted by the performance of young masculinities. In the section 'Key Findings and Contributions', I explicate the main findings of this thesis and highlight how it contributes to the broader theoretical and empirical literature on theorising and understanding young masculinities. The 'Key Findings - Conclusion' of this section summarises 'the thesis' of this PhD research. In the section 'Implications for Policy and Practice', I outline the implications of these findings for wider policy, the practice of the youth café model and other youth work settings. Finally, I suggest some ideas for future research.

9.2 Key Findings and Contributions

9.2.1 Youth Cafés as Theatres

Open access provision such as youth clubs and youth cafés have been both described as and have been found to be places where young people can 'hang out', 'chillout', 'relax', feel 'safe', 'be themselves', have 'someone to talk to' and to feel a sense of 'belonging' and inclusion and equality (Brady *et al* 2017; Coburn, 2012; Forkan *et al* 2010a; 2010b; 2015; Foróige, 2013; Moran *et al*, 2018; Ritchie and Ord, 2017; Robertson, 2005). In Chapter Two, I mentioned that the findings from Forkan *et al's* (2015; also Brady *et al* 2017; Moran *et al* 2018) evaluation of the youth café initiative regarding how young people felt that they could 'be themselves' in their respective youth cafés are important, given how this thesis relates to issues of gendered identities. Indeed, research has shown that in youth work settings generally (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Devlin and Gunning, 2009) and open access provision such as drop in centres (Coburn, 2012) and youth cafés (Brady *et al* 2017; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018) specifically, young people report feeling relieved of 'role' performances. In their evaluation of the youth café initiative in Ireland for example, Forkan *et al* (2015, p. 44) argue that youth cafés enable young people "just to be". The findings of

these studies are a useful starting point with which to unpack the research questions of this thesis, because this study certainly complicates, without completely disagreeing with these findings.

In general, 'role' performances are based on 'role' expectations and are enacted in a 'frontstage' to impress an 'audience' (Goffman, 1959). In the 'backstage' this performance is "knowingly contradicted as a matter of course" (Goffman, 1959, p. 114), where "the performer can relax" and "drop his front" (Goffman, 1959, p. 115, sic). Since youth cafés are inside spaces, it could be implied that they are 'bounded' by "some degree by barriers of perception" (Goffman, 1959, p. 109), meaning that a front and backstage dynamic can occur due to the possibility of 'segregation' between performers and an audience. However, in the café spaces, the audience is not one singular and homogenous static group who are located in another region. Rather, as Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis highlight, masculinities are performed in both youth cafés because the 'audience' for performances are young men's immediate peers. O'Donoghue (2006, p. 26) makes the key point that although many ideas about masculinity are "presented, enacted, contested and negotiated" in schooling contexts, "young men enter schools "with already gendered identities". This study has shown that the same dynamic occurs in youth cafés. As Goffman (1971, p. 28) argues "At the center of social organisation is the concept of claims…" This thesis shows that within the café spaces, young men always "knowingly and unwittingly" (Goffman, 1959, p. 234) seek to 'define the situation', and as part of this they "intentionally or unwittingly" (Goffman, 1959, p. 32) claim a *gendered* 'face'. Both café spaces afford young people the space "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44) in the sense that they do not have to partake in any activities, as has generally been the case with the youth café model (Forkan *et al* 2015). In line with O'Donoghue's (2006) point however, this study finds that young men continue to work on, perform, (re)affirm and defend masculinities within youth café spaces. In other words, they work to 'be' and maintain a certain kind of **gendered self**.

The youth café *Best Practice Guide* (Forkan *et al* 2010a, p. 18) argues that youth cafés can be situated "within youth development theory". Forkan *et al* (2015) argue for example, that the dynamics and benefits of youth cafés can be understood with the help of psychologically orientated theories such as social support theory, attachment theory, resilience theory, civic engagement and participation theory, social capital

theory and positive youth development theory. In contrast, this thesis has shown that theories of gender and the concept of 'impression management' are also useful for understanding the dynamics at work in youth cafés.

Relatedly, through the deployment of Goffman's (1959, 1961, 1963, 1966, 1967) dramaturgical perspective, this study has shown that in youth café spaces, masculinity comes into being based on socially constructed performances which are intended to give the impression of a masculine image of self. It highlights how the 'work' to be a certain kind of masculine self is not natural and so, implies that this 'impression management' is **not neutral**. Masculinity is performed in relation to an 'idea' about the gendered self (Goffman, 1967, p. 43) and this 'idea' is not merely a personal choice Connell (1989) but is historically contingent and derived from the logic of the 'gender order' of broader society.

This thesis has been concerned with the way in which youth cafés are mutually constitutive of and constituted by the performance of masculinities. Indeed, the 'idea' of masculinity cannot be maintained or given recognition without the presence of another person, since it is through others that images of self are validated (Goffman, 1967; Richardson, 2010). Through their capacity in facilitating the 'co-mingling' of more than one individual, this thesis shows that youth cafés afford possibilities for masculinities to be (re)affirmed and threatened. As Goffman (1983, p. 4) argues, "there are enablements and risks inherent in co-bodily presence". The thesis highlights that one of these 'enablements' is the way in which young men perform masculinities through other individuals. Young men can put each other 'on the spot' for example, such as through insults which can be productive of 'verbal duels'. The analysis and interpretation of these duels has highlighted the usefulness of Goffman's perspective not merely as a set of hard tools and micro concepts that can be transposed onto data but rather, as a '**thinking tool**'. Goffman's work, coupled with an ethnographic approach, allows us to understand what images of self may be imputed to individuals based on expressions both directly given and not given. I showed for example, that young men can be compelled into rebutting to an insult due to the implications of not doing so, since expressions not directly given can still 'give off' (Goffman, 1959) an impression, one that may be discrediting (see Barnes, 2012; Pascoe, 2005). Relatedly, by using Goffman's work as a 'thinking tool', the thesis has expanded on the existing literature (Back; 1993; Kehily and Nayak, 1997a; Pascoe, 2005; Plows, 2010) in terms

of how it explicated the complex dynamics which underpin these duels. Curry (1991) argues for example that the purpose of these duels to top another's insult. The thesis expands on these simplistic explanations by detailing the multiplicity of contingencies which underpin the workings of these duels.

One of the dynamics which underpinned the enactment of verbal duels was the use of humour, which was a large part of the general culture of the cafés. I argue that humour is enacted in relation to the testing of some boundary, whether it is the boundary of another individual's identity or that of the norms that are upheld and imbued within the café spaces. One key finding of this thesis is that **humour can be deployed as a managed impression** and not merely a spontaneous emotional eruption. The role of humour as a managed impression in the performance of masculinities is that of a protective function. First, it works to 'define the situation' as one where potentially discrediting performances within the immediate future of the interaction should not be taken to be a serious reflection on an individual's image of self and thus, functioned as a 'preventive practice'. It also functioned as a 'defensive' practice and form of 'face work' to help maintain the 'feeling rule' (Hochschild, 1979) of concealing vulnerable emotions.

The thesis has also highlighted the limitations of humour however, as an interactional resource which prevents an image of self from becoming discredited. This was evident through young men's performance of 'humiliated fury'. Through the deployment of this concept, the thesis has shown the usefulness of incorporating psychoanalytic insights that are compatible with interactionism in masculinities theorising. The thesis is the **first to deploy** Scheff's (1988, 1994, 2006) expansion of Goffman's (1959, 1967) work within an ethnographic setting. Previous studies have deployed Scheff's explication of 'humiliated fury' cycle to understand the 2011 London riots (Ray, 2014), school shootings (Scheff, 2011), and intimate partner homicide (Websdale, 2010). These studies have also been desk-based. This thesis has shown how the ethnographic methodology facilitates an understanding of the observable, embodied and theatrical contexts in which 'humiliated fury' is performed. By using Goffman's (1959) perspective as a 'thinking tool', the ethnographic methodology facilitates a moment to moment understanding of what images of self are projected, how these images are threatened and how they are corrected through 'humiliated fury'. The thesis contributes to a deeper understanding of 'humiliated fury' by showing how the concept

is relevant for understanding more (seemingly) mundane situations and interactions rather than the extremes of riots or mass shootings (see Scheff, 2011).

The thesis has shown for example, that humiliated fury is performed to project toughness and to hide vulnerable feelings of shame (Scheff, 2006). It related these performances to how they stem from threatened images of self and situated this explanation within the sociology of masculinity. The display of vulnerable feelings can give off the impression that an image of self has been discredited, but these feelings are also discrediting displays in themselves (Seidler, 2007). Furthermore, I have argued that Goffman's (1952) discussion in *On Cooling the Mark Out* and *Interaction Ritual* (Goffman, 1967, p. 19-25) reveals a **masculinist underpinning** to Goffman's work. Goffman does not explicate on how shame may be acknowledged through rituals in face to face interaction. Instead, he explicates how images of self are maintained and how embarrassment and vulnerable emotions are managed and kept hidden. Related to this discussion, through my own emotional experiences in the field, the thesis also shows how a researcher's own embodiment in the field through the ethnographic methodology can be productive in the interpretative process. I too experienced a 'shame-anger alteration' (Scheff, 1988) and the healing potential of acknowledging shame (Scheff, 2006).

As the thesis has showed, the enactment of 'humiliated fury' is a problematic performance. Some other problematic performances included examples of the "aggressive use of face work" (Goffman, 1967, p. 24) and what they show is that other individuals themselves can constitute 'affordances' (Clark and Uzzell, 2002; Volkoff and Strong, 2013, p. 823), which enable the projection of masculine images of self. The thesis has shown how this form of 'face work' can sometimes be highly problematic. Chapter Six discussed for example, how an image of heterosexuality was projected through the performance of the gendered insulting of Michelle. Another key example was the homophobic bullying of Cian and what I perceived to be the less than satisfactory approach to dealing with the issue by Ciara. This was because Ciara placed some responsibility onto Cian by suggesting he had come out about his sexuality too early. As I argued in Chapter Seven, these beliefs constitute the 'bridge' that connects hegemonic masculine practices to the ascendency of hegemonic masculinity as hegemonic within a particular social establishment. In this way, the thesis highlights how gendered social interaction may not merely be neutral and "micropolitical"

(Brickell, 2003, p. 164), but also how these problematic "micropolitical" practices can constitute **youth cafés as "micropolitical" spaces**. This is because café workers may implicitly and unintentionally uphold problematic beliefs around, for example, whether or not a young person should reveal their sexual orientation. In sum, gendered performances are not only reproduced gendered inequalities in the café spaces but are also subtly enabled by the spaces.

Furthermore, the thesis shows that the performances of 'humiliated fury', gendered insulting and overt homophobic bullying **problematises and makes complex**, studies which have described (Bowden and Lanigan, 2011; Brady *et al* 2017; Coburn, 2012; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018; Ritchie and Ord, 2017), from the basis of interviews conducted with young people, open access provision such as youth clubs and cafés as spaces which are 'safe', 'inclusive' 'relaxing' spaces where young people can 'be themselves'. Moran *et al* (2018, p. 7) argue for example that the "concept of 'being oneself' emerged powerfully from interview and ethnographic materials collected" for the *operational profile and evaluation of the perceived benefits of the youth café model in Ireland* (Forkan *et al* 2015). These 'ethnographic materials' consisted of interviews with young people who were *selected* by the ten café managers themselves and of stakeholders involved in the development of youth cafés. This thesis shows the value of an ethnographic approach that utilises *observations* in adding nuance to findings that open access is provision may be 'safe'. This thesis shows for example, that 'safety' and the ability to 'be oneself' lies on a continuum within youth café spaces.

Many studies have highlighted the way in which masculinity is enacted to fulfil the collective expectations of peers (Plummer, 2001), but both the dynamics which elicit 'humiliated fury' and the phrase 'impression management' itself implies that masculinity is a 'strategic' (Laurie, 2015) and instrumental enactment. Indeed, young men themselves articulate how their desired modes of being are constrained by these norms (Kehler, 2007). The thesis complicates the implicit assumption that the 'work' of performing masculinity through impression management is something 'strategic' and that is always calculatingly and painfully put on, as may be implied by the unease which may be elicited by verbal duels. On the contrary, as I have highlighted in Chapter Six, some performances of masculinity are constitutive of what I have defined as '**pride spirals**'. A 'pride spiral' occurs when performances or events continually

work to reaffirm an interactant's image of self, leading to unselfconscious interaction. This leads to 'euphoric interplay' or unselfconscious interaction (Schudson, 1984) that is pleasurable and 'infectious'. Relatedly, the thesis has also highlighted the performance of softer masculinities which were not stigmatised by young men and thus, adds to the broader literature on 'inclusive masculinities' by showing how these enactments are also evident in the Irish context. The thesis highlighted that many (and not all) of the young men who enacted these softer performances were quite popular within their friendship groups. It showed that these **softer performances co-existed with more hegemonic modes and problematic** performances of masculinity and thus, suggested that these young men cannot be said to be enacting or 'embodying' (Blanchard, McCormack and Peterson, 2015) 'inclusive' or 'orthodox' masculinity at all times.

The deployment of an ethnographic methodology in combination with Erving Goffman's (1959, 1966, 1967) dramaturgical perspective has shown the many other ways in which the café spaces enabled the performance of masculinities. The physical size of the Fusion café facilitated the projection of an agile image of self through 'punch-'n'-runs'. The affordance of bean bags in Fusion similarly enabled the projection of strength. Both cafés facilitated 'physical clowning' or 'rough-and-tumble', consequentially facilitating projections of strength and competitiveness. Through 'game-plays' such as 'push plays' and 'pull plays', the pool cues facilitated the projection of strength and competitiveness, while 'pull pranks' facilitated the projection of agility and control through the way an opponent could be imputed with a clumsy image of self. In other words, images of self, relating to the body, could be projected within the cafés.

As shown in Chapters Five, Six and Seven, the pool table provided the opportunity for scenes to be played out in which a skilful, agile, competitive and a 'winner' based image of self could be constructed. On the other side, it also meant that an unskillful, uncompetitive image of self could be imputed. Thus, on occasion games of pool elicited unease in which young men had to 'define the situation' so that these images of self could not be imputed to them. The pool cue and pool balls also enabled young men to project heterosexuality by inscribing them with meanings pertaining to male genitalia, enabling the enactment of 'ironic' performances of humour. Furthermore, the particular, situated images of self which café workers are expected to uphold,

inflated the humorousness of some performances which were directed toward them. In sum, the material affordances or props within the café spaces provided opportunities for the projection of different images of self.

An affordance, as has been implied however, is normally something material, such as a physical object or another individual (Clark and Uzzell, 2002). Through the discussion of the humorous regimes in the second half of Chapter Six however, this thesis expands on studies (Allen, 2013; O'Donoghue, 2006, 2007) which show the way in which gender, sexuality and masculinity are "spatially and materially contingent" (Allen, 2013, p. 57) by suggesting that 'affordances' can also comprise the **norms and expectations** which imbue spaces and social situations rather than material objects. I coined the terms '**humorous improprieties**' and '**humour bombing**' when undertaking the inductive analysis of the fieldnote data to capture the ways in which these norms are disrupted.

In sum, in both youth cafés, young men used the multiple contingencies in the café spaces to perform and construct masculinity for the recognition of peers. Indeed, just as schools have been found to constitute "a staging ground for identity formation" (Pascoe, 2003, p. 1475) in which young men can "validate and amplify their masculine reputations (Mac an Ghaill, 1994, p. 53), this thesis also shows that **youth cafés constitute a 'stage' for the performance of masculinities**. Both youth cafés are neither 'natural' nor 'neutral' stages. Instead, performances of masculinity inscribed the affordances within them with meanings related to historically contingent and socially constructed ideas about masculinity which enabled young men to do their identity work. Performances of masculinity were also expressed to an audience to give an impression of masculinity, meaning that the cafés themselves were inscribed as 'front' stages. Young men as performers of masculinity cannot 'relax' or 'be' in the sense that they "can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude" (Goffman, 1959, p. 166). In both café spaces masculinity is actively worked on, defended and maintained, which humour helps to protect and 'humiliated fury' aims to restore. The finding that youth cafés may constitute front stages for the performance of masculinities could be criticised as something that could have been predicted at the outset of this study. However, what may not have been predicted is the complexity of how masculinity is performed and maintained. Relatedly, it might be imagined for example that the youth cafés, which function as 'hang out' spaces, are unexceptional

and that not much may be going on within them. However, in the seemingly simple recreational, hangout and the respectively underused and small spaces of the Fusion and Retro youth cafés, masculine performances are enacted within interactions, which unintentionally inscribe and constitute youth cafés as, like youth clubs (Robinson, 2005), **microcosms of society**. In sum, there is much going on within the café spaces and more as I show next.

9.2.2 Contesting the Stage

While the café spaces constitute front stages for the performance of masculinities, the findings of this thesis indicate that this 'front stage' metaphor does not completely encapsulate how the café spaces are mutually constitutive of and constituted by young masculinities. The thesis has shown that performances on this stage are both privately and publicly, subtlety contested on different levels. This was also shown through the interview data in Chapter Eight where young people (especially Jordan) privately **contested the legitimacy** of some of the more boisterous and problematic performances of masculinity. Although Chapters Six and Seven showed how performances of masculinity are expressed to foster and maintain a positive impression from the audience, Chapter Eight showed that some young people privately imputed a negative image of self to some young men based on their performances in the café spaces. This was not 'negative' in the sense that young people imputed a discredited image of self but more of a 'nuisance' image of self. This is because the café spaces do not constitute a completely homogenous 'front stage' in which every individual embodies a binary role of either 'performer' or 'audience'. Consequently, what happens is that performances of masculinities constitute the café spaces for others in ways different from that which the audience for these performances might hold, might expect, and might desire.

The interviews with café workers revealed how workers recognise the boisterousness of some performances of masculinity, but that their attempt to afford young people's wish to 'be' a variety of different selves also includes performances which may be constructed by others as a 'nuisances'. Nevertheless, café workers also do contest performances of masculinity, in that they can directly intervene and regulate problematic performances within the spaces. Thus, they place *direct and explicit*

limitations on the extent to which youth cafés afford young people the opportunity 'just to be'. This is because letting some young men work on their masculine selves, or to afford them the freedom "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44) could mean that masculinities which are not contrived, but rather feel natural, "routinized" and "automatic" (Edley, 2001, p. 195) yet *problematic*, may be enacted. As Chapters Six, Seven and Eight have highlighted, performances of masculinities may and do, compromise the freedom of other young people to 'be themselves' and may and do, place limits on other young people's "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44). Consequentially café workers aim to create a space where young people can perform whatever identities they want without fear of hurt or ridicule and do so by upholding various rules and norms such as those of inclusivity, belongingness and equality. As Chapter Eight also showed, there is also an element of the policing of other café workers to ensure that café workers themselves act in a manner that respects the individuality of different young people.

I suggest however, that the aim to direct performances toward more considerate and egalitarian modes of being does not and should not purely relate to the café spaces themselves. Connell (1987, p. 119) argues for example, that "We live most of our daily lives in settings like the household, the workplace and the bus queue, rather than stretched out in relation to society at large…" Connell's (1987, p. 119) argument is that the "intermediate level of social organization" should not be skipped because it is within these settings that unequal gender relations are (re)produced, reinforced and thus, brought into other spaces (O'Donoghue, 2006). In other words, hegemonic performances of masculinity that may go unquestioned or unproblematized within both youth cafés can have a **cumulative effect on young men** (see Curry, 1991), not merely in the sense that it implicitly implies that these performances are acceptable *within* the space, but also that they are acceptable *in spite of* the café spaces. Hence, successful performances of masculinity do not merely 'spill over' and constitute the café spaces as 'chaotic' or as unwelcoming and threatening in a situational sense. They also 'spill over' in the trans-situational sense in that they reinforce the gendered 'moral careers' and 'general' (Modigliani, 1968) gendered identities of young men. In sum, café spaces are also not neutral in regard to how they play a (small) part in disrupting or reinforcing this cumulative effect.

As Emma explained in the interview, café worker's interventions in regard to problematic performances are not merely about keeping the café spaces inclusive. They are also about subtly attempting to change a young person's 'moral career' (Goffman, 1961, 1963) by asking and questioning them as to why they enact certain performances and by explaining to them why some performances are problematic. In this way café workers subtly contest the images of self through which performances aim to construct. Thus, the thesis shows that rather than acting as simply supervisors as Powell *et al* (2012) have queried, **informal education can and does take place in youth café spaces** through café worker's discussions with young people.

As Hilton (2005, p. 18) found in her study of young people's perceptions of their youth club, I suggest that the general perception that both cafés are safe and have a friendly atmosphere are based "at least in part" on the "efforts of the youth workers" and volunteers. With the exception of Cian to an extent[73], who sometimes experienced homophobic bullying in the Fusion café, the youth cafés generally provided a safe space for young people to 'be' (Forkan *et al* 2015; Ritchie and Ord, 2017). Jack's experience of bullying in his school for example, placed limitations on his freedom to 'be' in school, in contrast to the space of the Fusion café where he could relax. The Retro café also **simultaneously constituted a front stage and back stage** (Goffman, 1959) for Barry. It acted as a back stage because it helped (re)develop his 'moral career' from being a 'socially awkward' young man to one where he could enact a more confident image of self. The thesis suggests that the limited number of young people and the backup provided by café workers helps to ensure that threatening or discrediting 'scenes' which may transpire in the café spaces are buffered. In effect, with his fluid co-mingling with other young people and open playing of his favourite music, the café transformed into a front stage where he could enact his identity.

These findings are significant. In school contexts, hegemonic masculinities can be played out and given institutional support (Mac an Ghaill, 1994; Poynting and Donaldson, 2005). Young men, who may be subordinated within these contexts, have no choice but to attend school. In contrast, young people do not have to attend youth cafés. Yet, in spite of the boisterous and sometimes highly problematic performances

[73] I say to an 'extent' because despite the taunting he received from James he still attended the Fusion café and remained fond of the space.

of masculinity which sometimes frustrated (Jordan especially) and hurt (for example, Cian and Michelle) some young people, the café spaces contained a **mix of young people** and **contained multiple masculinities** thus, I argue they also constitute spaces of **association** (Ritchie and Ord, 2017; Robertson, 2005). The café spaces were not dominated by any particular 'crew' (Kiilakoski and Kivijärvi, 2015) of young men however, in the sense that they actively attempted to exclude others to gain ownership of the spaces. A limitation to this point is that young women used both café spaces less than young men consistent with observations of other open access provision (Kiilakoski and Kivijärvi, 2015; Robertson, 2005). Nevertheless, the thesis affirms Brady *et al's* (2017, p. 9) point that "the unique selling point of the youth café model lies in its capacity to respect and encourage individuals preferences for engagement".

9.2.3 Key Findings - Conclusion

My thesis is that youth cafés constitute frontstages for the performance of masculinities and in doing so constitute youth cafés as 'micropolitical spaces'. The thesis complicates the suggestion that open access provision such as youth cafés provides a space which affords young people the space "just to be" (Forkan *et al* 2015, p. 44; Ritchie and Ord, 2017). Young men cannot 'be' a masculine self in the sense that this self is a given and is possessed. Rather this self is on 'loan' from society. Youth cafés are another space by which young men bring in their "already gendered identities" (O'Donoghue, 2006, p. 26). Young men use the multiple affordances and contingencies of the café spaces to pay off this 'loan' by actively working to project, maintain and defend the socially constructed and historically contingent 'idea' about the masculine self through 'impression management' (Goffman, 1959).

It is the fact that masculinity is an 'idea' that constitutes the café spaces as 'micropolitical' and not neutral. Within the micro spaces of youth cafés, the gendered face to face interaction that is played out is symptomatic of broader gender relations "at the level of whole society" (Connell, 1978, p. 183) that is sometimes problematic and works to (re)produce inequalities. The café spaces are 'micropolitical' in the sense that some problematic performances may be implicitly legitimated through the inaction and identity beliefs of café workers. They are also 'micropolitical 'in that some performances of masculinity are privately and publicly, subtly and overtly

contested. Some young people privately contest the legitimacy of performances and in doing so implicitly imply that young men should 'be' and enact another kind of self. Café workers also directly and subtly contest performances which are problematic and in doing so aim to encourage young men to change their construction of masculinity and to 'be' and enact more egalitarian modes of being. The thesis suggests that this informal regulation works to maintain a balance between allowing young people to enact varying modes of being and ensuring performances do not overly threaten other young people's identities.

The thesis has also highlighted the value of the ethnographic methodological approach. Research on open access provision such as youth cafés (Brady *et al* 2017; Forkan *et al* 2015; Moran *et al* 2018; Ritchie and Ord, 2017) highlight the many benefits of open access provision, which has been supported by this study. The ethnographic approach however, has shown how youth cafés are not spaces where safety and inclusion are static but are continuously tested thus, the approach adds nuanced understands of youth café provision. The ethnographic approach has also captured the complexity of performances of masculinities. Coupled with Goffman's dramaturgical perspective, the approach has shown the precarity of masculinity and the performances which aim to maintain the 'idea' of masculinity. Furthermore, the thesis has shown the usefulness of Scheff's expansion of Goffman's framework in highlighting the role of shame in constituting performances and being constituted by threatening situations.

9.3 Implications for Policy and Practice

The findings of this thesis have implications for wider policy, the practice of the youth café model and other youth work settings. One of the key findings of this thesis is that youth cafés are not neutral spaces. Within the café spaces, ideas about the gendered self are projected and defended, some of which are problematic and work to (re)produce gendered inequalities within the spaces themselves. This was exemplified through direct misogynistic insults, homophobic bullying and the brief displays of 'humiliated fury'. I have highlighted that these performances cannot be reduced to common sense understandings that problematic performances of conflict, bullying or

animosity are simply ‘life’. These performances are sociologically situated and relate to a concern about constructing and maintaining an ‘idea’ about the masculine self.

This sociological understanding has implications for the training of all café workers. In the Fusion youth café, I highlighted the issue of homophobic bullying and how it was initially dealt with in an unsatisfactory manner. A workshop on addressing homophobia which was hosted by the café proved to be very useful and inspiring to other café workers. Part of the advice given was to try and ask the instigator questions around his/her anxieties and issues relating to homophobia and the person targeted by the taunting and insults. This was advocated rather than a purely disciplinarian approach, which could lead to the actual issue going unaddressed and to a reinforcing of the stigma around the word ‘gay’ itself. This advice is consistent with the psychoanalytically informed interactionist approach of this thesis whereby anxieties (or ‘shame’) need to be acknowledged and ‘worked through’ (Scheff, 2006).

As part of continuing professional development and volunteer training, such workshops would be useful for those working within (and of course beyond) a youth café context. These workshops would ideally discuss issues relating to multiple forms of prejudice and discrimination, not merely homophobia. Within these workshops, the identity beliefs of volunteers and youth workers could also be explored in relation to other vectors of identities such as gender, sexuality and race. What would a curriculum for these workshops look like? My proposals here are only tentative. First, although the issues in abstraction could be explored and discussed, homophobia and performances of ‘humiliated fury’ are always related to an individual’s *relationship* with others (Scheff, 1994; 2006). Any discussion which focuses *only* on notions of ‘why homophobia is wrong’ or ‘what’s wrong with being gay’ glosses over the anxiety over the relationship the individual has with the person. Anxieties need to be ‘worked through’ (Scheff, 2006) rather than ‘worked on’ in rational terms where a young person is simply threatened with suspension. Part of this conversation particularly in relation to more problematic performances of masculinities could be to ask or inquire into the anxieties which underpin performances. This could take the form of directly asking young men how they *feel* when they do enact ‘humiliated fury’, when they experience threats themselves or when they directly threaten others.

Since vulnerable feelings can be stigmatising for young men, this would have to be non-judgemental form of questioning. This also pertains to how young people may exhibit problematic views regarding others' identities. Those involved in youth work settings should prepare for honest and prejudicial feelings on the part of those who may have anxieties and issues relating to homophobia. Only through such honesty and frankness can the issue be directly addressed. In the interview situation for example, James's use of the defensive phrase 'I'm not homophobic or anything' could be interpreted as him feeling that I am disapproving of homophobia and hence, his sense that I may judge him.

Through a discussion of the work of Helen Block Lewis, the psychoanalyst who conceptualised the idea of 'unacknowledged' shame, Scheff (2003, p. 737) infers that acknowledging shame and anxiety involves explicitly naming 'shame' "or its near relatives – embarrassment, humiliation". The 'working through' (Scheff, 2006) of anxieties, which Scheff suggests, could involve youth workers teaching young men to acknowledge shame, anxiety and vulnerability by helping them to express feelings through phrases such as 'this is embarrassing/humiliating', 'I'm embarrassed/humiliated' or 'I felt/feel ashamed'. As other research (Barnes, 2012; Frosh, Phoenix and Pattman, 2001) and the interview with Jack shows, young men can express feelings when the setting feels comfortable. Such phrases could be accompanied by humour as an added way to resolve shame and reduce psychic tension and anxiety. Workers could also teach this through role play. Indeed, part of the successful 'working through' of anxieties is for workers themselves to be confident in talking about these issues. These suggestions need not entail specific targeted interventions or programmes, but through informal conversations.

In sum, I propose this form of intervention against a purely (but not completely absent) disciplinarian approach based on the threat of suspension, which works only to 'define the situation' in instrumental terms, whereby rules must be followed, not because they are just or moral, but because they simply 'are'. The aim should be to facilitate (and not impose) a development or change in a young person's 'moral career'. A disciplinarian approach does not change the 'moral career' and the deeper identity beliefs and anxieties of the individual. Thus, the rule to 'respect' others may be followed in the café, but outside the café these anxieties may continue to work to hurt others.

9.4 Ideas for Future Research

One of the findings of this research was an echoing of Forkan *et al's* (2015; also Brady *et al* 2017; Moran *et al* 2018) research that youth cafés can help enable young people to experience a change in their 'moral career'. This was exemplified in the case of Barry, who was at one stage during his overall time using the café a very shy young man and socially anxious. Yet, I observed that despite his reserved character, he was quite 'socially fluid'. I cannot claim that this is representative of what youth cafés or other forms of open access provision can do for young people, but further ethnographic studies over a longer period of time could analyse and explore these dynamics further. Relatedly, this research was conducted in youth cafés which had a purely recreational purpose, in a youth café that was underused (Fusion) and another which was located in a small space physically (Retro). Further ethnographic studies could investigate and explore the dynamics of larger youth cafés in terms of size, numbers and service provision.

This research has also documented performances of softer masculinities. Research has documented 'inclusive masculinities' in the UK context, but research is lacking regarding possible parallels within the Irish context. Within this study I have pointed out the methodological issues regarding the limitations of the youth café space to capture these broader dynamics. A school based ethnographic study would be a fruitful setting within which to examine the contemporary construction of young Irish masculinities. Sports settings could also be examined, since they have also been the focus of some studies employing Inclusive Masculinity Theory (for example, Channon and Matthews, 2015; Jarvis, 2015). Crucially, there is a need to include the perspectives of young women within any such research design given the way in which young men who enacted softer performances also engaged in insulting Michelle.

Finally, the 'role model discourse' was mentioned a couple of times to me in the field and in the interviews with café workers in terms of my own supposed ability to be 'role model' for young men. For the young men in this study, the gender of the volunteer and youth worker did not seem to matter, which is consistent with previous research (Robb *et al* 2015). On the other hand, there was a belief on the part of workers and a volunteer that gender does matter, and that male volunteers or paid workers

could act as models for young men to imitate. Further research could be conducted in the Irish context to investigate how assumptions about gender may inform policy and practice within youth work.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Colour A4 Sized Information Poster

Who am I? Why am I here?

(Face picture here)

- **Who am I?**

  My name is **Robert.**
  I am a student at University College Cork (UCC) and I am studying for a PhD degree.

- **What am I doing here?**

  To get a PhD degree at University College Cork, I have to do a research project. My project is mostly on young men's experiences of their youth cafés. Young women will also be a part of the project. I will be hanging around the youth café for a couple of weeks.

- **Why am I doing a project?**

  I am interested to know why young men attend the youth café and what they do in youth cafés and how they feel about their youth cafés

- **Will you be in my Project?**

  I can only write about and interview people who have signed the consent forms themselves and who have got their parents to sign them. You do not have to participate in the project.

  At first I will write about what I see in the café and write about my conversations with young people. But after a few months have passed, I will conduct interviews with young men but also some young women.

- **What if you have more questions?**

  You can ask me questions at any time about my project. You can also email me at r.bolton@ucc.ie

Appendix 2: Parent Information Sheet and Consent Form

PARENTAL INFORMATION SHEET FOR PhD RESEARCH PROJECT



Dear parent/guardian,

I am a student at University College Cork (UCC) and am studying for a PhD degree. As per the requirements of this degree I am undertaking research mostly on boys and young men's experiences of the youth café. Young women will also be included in the research. Your child has been asked if he/she would like to participate, however, parental consent is also required.

Please read the information below to help you decide whether to grant permission for your child to be involved in the study.

Aim of project: My project is mostly about young men's involvement in youth cafés, however the experiences of young women will also be ascertained. My aim is to learn about what young men do in their youth café and to ask them (through interviews) about their experiences of the youth café in comparison to other places and spaces (such as school).

What will the study involve? The study will involve me observing what goes on in the youth café and what young people do in the café. I will write down what I have seen but all participants will be given pseudonyms. I will have informal conversations

with young people and write down what they have told me.

Later on in the study, I will conduct a photography project with young men. I may ask your child to take photos of 'places and spaces' he wants to talk about. Near the end of my research, I hope to conduct individual and group interviews with your child.

What will happen to the information my child gives should I grant consent? Your child's information will be kept confidential throughout the project, available only to me and my research supervisors. Your child's identity will be protected by giving him/her a pseudonym in the final report. My notes, audiotapes, transcripts will be kept in my own locked safe at home. I will only take these out when I need to use them for writing up my report and for publishing articles about my project. On completion of the research project, the information will be kept safely and securely for a further seven years and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results of this research project? I will write up my results in a long report called a PhD 'thesis'. This will be read by my two supervisors and two examiners. My thesis will be kept in the library and might be read by future students. The results of my research may be published as shorter articles in academic journals and/or conferences.

Does my child have to take part? No. Your child's participation is completely voluntary. No harm will come to your child should you not like your child to take part. Even if you have signed this consent form, your child can choose to drop out of the study at any time up until the 30th of June 2016. Following my interviews, you can choose to withdraw your child's consent up to 14 days after being conducted.

Does my child also have to give consent? Yes. I am also obtaining consent from your child. However, your consent is also required for your child to participate. Your child can choose to drop out at any time and I will have explained to your child in a language understandable to him/her what the research is about.

Who has reviewed this study? The social research ethics committee in University College Cork has reviewed and approved my study.

Further Information

If you would like to know more about the research and/or want to ask me any further questions, you can contact me by email at r.bolton@umail.ucc.ie. You can also contact my research supervisor Dr. Caitriona Ni Laoire by email at c.nilaoire@ucc.ie

Alternatively, you can contact me on my mobile at:

Many thanks _____ (Robert Bolton)

PARENTAL CONSENT FORM FOR ROBERT BOLTON'S RESEARCH



I……. consent to my child's participation in Robert Bolton's research study and am willing to allow my child to participate in an audio recorded interview, group interview discussion and to being observed while in the youth café.

- I understand that my child's participation is voluntary. I understand that my child can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, whether before it starts or while my child is participating up until the 30th of March 2016.

- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the data obtained from my child within 14 days of the interview and group interview having been conducted, in which case the material will be deleted.

- I understand that my child's anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising his identity.

(Please tick one box:)

I agree to quotation/publication of my child's extracts his interviews ☐

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my child's interviews ☐

Child's name: ..... Date:…….....

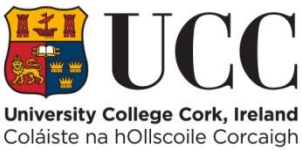
Signed (parent/guardian):…..…….....

PRINT NAME:……...

Signed (researcher): .....

Appendix 3: Information Sheet and Consent Forms

INFORMATION SHEET FOR ROBERT'S RESEARCH PROJECT



Thank you for taking an interest in my project. I am a student at University College Cork (UCC), and I am studying for a PhD degree. In order to get this degree, I have to carry out a research project and write a long report called a 'thesis'. The sheet explains why I am doing this research project, how I will get the information I need and what I will do with the information if you decide to participate.

What am I doing for my research project? My project is mostly about young men's involvement in youth cafés. I want to find out what they do in youth cafés and their views and experiences of youth cafés and how might they compare to other places and space.

Why am I asking you if you would like to take part? I am asking if you would like to take part because you attend the youth café and I think you will have a helpful opinion on the topic of my research. But you do not need to participate, nobody is forcing you to participate and no harm will come to you if you choose not to participate.

What will the study involve? The study will involve me observing what goes on in the youth café and what young people do in the café. Later on, I will ask some

participants to take photos of 'places and spaces' they want to talk about. Near the end of my research, I will conduct interviews with those who want to participate.

What will happen to the information which you give? The information will be kept confidential throughout the project, available only to me and my research supervisors. My notes, audiotapes, transcripts will be kept in my own locked safe at home. I will only take these out when I need to use them for writing up my report and for publishing articles about my project. On completion of the research project, the information will be kept safely and securely for a further seven years and then destroyed.

What will happen to the results? I will write up my results in my long report called a 'thesis'. This will be read by my two supervisors and two examiners. My report/thesis will be kept in the library and might be read by future students. The results of my research may be published as shorter articles in academic journals and/or conferences.

Do you have to take part?

No. You do not have to take part. Your participation is completely voluntary and is completely up to you! Nothing bad will happen if you don't want to be involved in the study. By signing the consent form, you are agreeing to participate.

What if I get involved and then change my mind?

Even after you have signed the consent form, you can still drop out of the research and let me know that you don't want to be involved anymore up to the 14th of March 2016. Also, up to 14 days after I have officially completed the interview with you, you can still choose to say that you do not want to participate. This means that the information

you have given me will be destroyed and I will not use it.

Will my name be in your project report? Will people know that I have said certain things?

No. If I use what you have said in my report, I will not use your name. Instead, I will make up a name, or you can choose to make up a name for me so that you will be anonymous. I will also make up a name for the youth café. Both of these will make sure that nobody knows who I am talking about in my project report and that nobody will know who said what.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part? I don't think there will be any disadvantages or any negative consequences for you if you choose to take part in my project.

What if there is a problem?

If you have any issues at any stage of the research, don't be afraid to tell me. . Remember you can choose to not take part in my project and if you have already signed the consent form, you can still choose to drop out at any time up to the 14th of March 2016. If there is a problem during the interview, it can be stopped. At the end of all interviews, I will just ask you how you found the experience and ask how you are feeling. If you feel upset and/or distressed in the interview or after it, I can give you a list of contacts that will be helpful to you.

For more information: If you want to know more about the research and/or want to

ask me any further questions, you can ask me in person or send me an email at r.bolton@umail.ucc.ie. You can also contact my research supervisor Dr. Caitriona Ni Laoire by email at c.nilaoire@ucc.ie.

If you agree to take part in the study, please sign the consent form overleaf.

CONSENT FORM

UCC
University College Cork, Ireland
Coláiste na hOllscoile Corcaigh

I……. agree to participate in Robert Bolton's research study and am willing to be interviewed individually and to being observed when in the youth café setting.

- The purpose and nature of the study has been explained to me in writing and verbally in a language that I understand. All the questions I had about the study have been answered. I understand what will happen during the interview and what is expected of me.
- I am participating voluntarily. I understand that I can withdraw from the study, without repercussions, whether before it starts or while I am participating up until the 30th of April 2016.
- I give permission for interviews with *Robert Bolton* to be audio-recorded and to being observed while in the youth café.
- I understand that I can withdraw permission to use the interview data up to 14 days after being conducted, in which case the material will be deleted.
- I understand that anonymity will be ensured in the write-up by disguising my identity. My name will not be used nor any other information that could identify me.
- It has been explained that sometimes the researchers find it helpful to use my own words when writing up the findings of this research. I understand that my name will be changed should my own words be used in the report.

I agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview ☐

I do not agree to quotation/publication of extracts from my interview ☐

Signed: ……..... Date:…….....

Print Name: …… Age: ……

Appendix 4: Café Worker Interview Schedule

1) How did you become involved in working at the café?
2) How would you describe/sum up your experience working/volunteering at the café?
3) How would you the describe the relationship between workers and young people in the café?
4) Are there times where the relationship between workers with young people become strained? Why would this be?
5) What are the general type of things that young people would ask you about?
6) What type of conversations would you normally have with young people in the café?
7) What are some of the main rules that young people must follow while in the café?
8) To what extent are these rules followed by young people who use the café?
9) How would you normally intervene when somebody breaks the rules?
10) Is there a difference between young men and young women in terms of who breaks the rules and what kind of rules are broken? Could you elaborate and give examples?
11) What would be the extreme end of a young person breaking the rules or of behaving problematically?
12) Has there ever been a time where a young person or young people were asked to leave?
13) Has there ever been a time where the café would have to close due to problematic behaviours? Could you give an example?
14) How do you think young people get on with each other generally in the café?
15) Is there a difference between what young men say/do in the café and what young women say/do?
16) Have you noticed any differences in the number of young men/women who use the café? Would the café be generally mixed in number terms?
17) Has there been any tensions between some young people in the café? Could you give examples?
18) Do you think that whether the youth worker/volunteer is male of female matters when dealing with young people?
19) Do you think that there needs to be more men involved in youth work? (whether as youth workers or volunteers) Could you explain?

Appendix 5: Interview Schedule for Young People

1) How long have you been coming to the café? How did you find out about it?
2) What do you like/dislike about…(area)
3) What else do you do in your spare time besides coming to the café?
4) What do you think of the café overall?
5) What do you like/not like about coming to the café?
6) What would be some of the main reasons why you come to the café?
7) What things would you improve about the café?
8) How you think other young people get on with each other in the café?
9) How would you say you get on with others in the café?
10) Are there times where some young people do not treat each other with respect in the café?
11) Has there ever been a time where something going on the café made you feel uncomfortable? – maybe because of something someone else was saying or doing?
12) Do you think more young men or more young women use the café?
13) What are some of the things which young men and women might do in the café differently?
14) Would you prefer a space just for young men/young women to hang out only?
15) How easy or hard is it to have private conversations in the café?
16) Do you have a favourite spot in the café?
17) What are the sort of things can you do in the café that you think is difficult to do anywhere else?
18) What do you think about the activities that are on offer in the café?
19) Would you think that that café is a place where everyone can feel included?
20) How do you generally feel when you are in the café?
21) Is the café a place where young people/yourself can relax?
22) What sort of rules do young people have to follow in the café? What do you think of them?
23) What would happen if there were no rules do you think?
24) How do you think young people get on with volunteers and youth workers in the café?
25) How do volunteers/café workers compare with other adults outside the café?
26) How do you feel about whether the volunteer or youth worker is a man or woman?
27) How do you feel about the age group that is allowed come into the café?
28) Are there young people who would like to use the café but cannot for some reason?
29) How safe is the café?
30) Do you feel that you have to be a certain type of person around the community?
31) Is there anything else you want to talk about or that you think is important?