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A Critical Realist Analysis of Masculinity: Men Gravitating to a Dominant Masculine Norm

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I would like to extend a big thank you to all of the men who contributed to this study through their participation in the focus groups and one to one interviews. Although the majority of them did not know me and found what I was doing very strange, they went out of their way to contribute and for that I am very grateful.

Abstract

This thesis documents a qualitative study investigating common patterns that cut across the behaviours of white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men. Previous literature has reported that men's behaviour during their micro social relations is often risky and potentially harmful. This study provides an important contribution to knowledge regarding the motivation behind these patterns of behaviour.

The research is rooted within a critical realist philosophical perspective. Of key importance are the concepts of a dominant masculine norm, as a pre-established representation of social reality, common patterns of men's behaviour, as occurring during relations between men, and social class dynamics, specifically amongst the working and middle-class. Data were gathered from four focus groups, two with working-class men and two with middle-class men, and from one to one interviews with the same respondents. Template analysis was used to thematically organize and analyse the recorded accounts.

Masculinity emerged in the data as a dominant, socially pre-established representation which establishes the transcendence of vulnerability as an esteemed form of men's behaviour. Following the data, masculinity constitutes but one of a multitude of men's social identities; with men gravitating to the dominant masculine norm within those contexts when they perceive their status as 'masculine' to be under threat. In this sense, men and masculinity emerged as separate constructs, with some men and women having the freedom to gravitate to both masculine and feminine gender norms. Men, during relations between men, police one another's gravitations to the dominant masculine norm, ostracising those who expose vulnerability. As such, all-male domains emerged as the main context in which men demonstrate their masculinity. The data suggested that patterns of subordination and domination are common among groups of white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources. The subordination of women and less valued varieties of masculinity emerged as being a by-product, rather than a direct objective.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis documents a critical realist analysis of masculinity, and provides an explanation for the common patterns of behaviour demonstrated by white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men. Despite contemporary authors, such as Speer (2001), Wetherell and Edley (2003), Allen (2005) and Paechter (2006), suggesting that masculine identities are in constant flux, often contradictory and have no underlying foundation to reality, researchers continue to identify common patterns among the behaviours of men (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Rather than a list of specific tenets, these common patterns can be viewed as a variety of verbal and behavioural practices indicative of the transcendence of physical and emotional vulnerability. For example, studies have found that men use their verbal practices to portray themselves as physically and emotionally invulnerable (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009); and to place emphasis on their heterosexuality and sexual prowess (Allen, 2005; Plummer, 2006; Richardson, 2007). Authors suggest that homophobia is commonly used by men to socially disgrace those men whose behaviours are recognised as failures to approximate stereotypical heterosexual masculinity (Plummer, 2006; Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). Additional to these verbal practices, many authors have identified common patterns of risk-taking and physically aggressive behaviour, as performed by men (McDowell, 2003, Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). These can again be linked to the transcendence of vulnerability.

Conceptualisations which link masculinity to specific behaviours have been criticised for failing to take into account the complex nature of the social world (cf. Speer, 2001; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Nevertheless, some of those authors that avoid normative definitions of masculinity tend to provide no explanation for the identified

common patterns of men's behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Rather than defining masculinity as an identity within itself, these often define it as an antithesis of femininity (Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008 [1995]). However, since gender identities are seen as multifarious and often contradictory (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005), this can lead to an ambiguous conceptualisation. Moreover, if masculinity is not defined as an identity distinguishable in the absence of femininity, it hinders the identification of men's demonstrations of masculinity during relations between men, in the absence of women. Owing to findings suggesting that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007), such a conceptualisation seems problematic.

This study provides a contribution to the field of men and masculinity. It seeks to contribute to approaches for conceptualising masculinity, focussing on a conceptualisation that bridges the gap between theories which define masculinity as a specific identity and those which avoid normative definitions. The thesis proposes a critical realist analysis of masculinity, which simultaneously explains the common patterns of men's behaviour while acknowledging the multifarious nature of men's identities.

The study is based on a 'data-driven' assumption that men and masculinity, although related, are independently constructed. This notion is consistent with literature suggesting that men demonstrate a multiplicity of social identities which are contextually influenced (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006), but that few of these constitute specific demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). From this perspective, men only feel pressure to demonstrate their masculinity within certain social contexts (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003). The thesis also focuses on relations between men, arguing that these relations constitute the main forum where masculine identities are performed (Hall, 2002; Houtte, 2004;

Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). By distinguishing men and masculinity, this also concurs with literature suggesting that men can be viewed to behave in feminine-typical ways, and likewise, women in masculine typical ways (Palan et al., 1999; Vogel et al., 2003). In this sense, men are likely to view one another's demonstrations of vulnerability as being 'feminine-typical', rather than examples of masculine complexity.

1.1   The research questions

The thesis seeks to answer two sets of research questions:

1. When discussing masculinity, can common patterns be found in the verbal practices of white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men, during relations between men?

2.

a. Are patterns in men's talk regarding masculinity indicative of a socially pre-established representation (dominant masculine norm) which influences men to transcend vulnerability?

b. To what extent does the concept of a dominant masculine norm assist understanding?

1.2   Key Terms and their Definitions

Before discussing the main assumptions underlying these research questions, it is necessary to define the main terms incorporated within them. As it constitutes an integral part of the study, I will begin by explaining what I mean by the term 'dominant masculine norm'. The term 'dominant', pertaining to 'dominance', was derived from the Latin, meaning 'ruling' (Reber & Reber, 2001). It can be defined as meaning 'the most

common' or 'to exert a controlling influence over' (Collins English Dictionary, 1998). In this instance, however, I use the term for its combined meaning. In other words, I am talking in terms of a stereotypical representation of masculinity that is the most common among men because it dominates over various other representations of masculinity. 'Dominant', in this sense, is used in the same way as Payne (2006) when speaking about 'dominant cultural beliefs'.

I am using the term 'norm' - also often referred to as 'social norm' - to refer to the shared beliefs among the members of a group or society regarding notions of appropriate conduct (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). Although these shared beliefs are likely to result in common patterns of behaviour among group or society members, it is the cognitive aspect of its meaning that is implied when I speak of the 'dominant masculine norm'. I wish, therefore, to distinguish this usage from social norms as referring to observable patterns of behaviour as typical of a society or social group (Reber & Reber, 2001). In this study, the term 'norm' refers to a socially influenced mental representation of social normality; common among the members of a society (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002). I, therefore, speak of common patterns of behaviour demonstrated by members of society as being influenced by these mental representations, but refer to the mental representations (norms) and observable behaviours (common patterns) separately. This enables me to discuss an influence that norms, as cognitive mechanisms, can have over the behaviour of social agents, while not implying that they enforce them. From this perspective, an agent's social practices result from a transactional relationship between competing norms and the contexts in which the behaviours are performed (Wilson & McCormack, 2006). Furthermore, the creativity of human agency can be taken into account, with various different behaviours being available that might be viewed by an individual as serving the same function (Archer et al., 2001; Gorman, 2003).

Dictionary definitions of the term 'representation' refer to mental symbolisations of verbal and pictorial portraits (Collins English Dictionary, 1998). This is similar to the definition provided by cognitive psychologists Eysenck and Keane (2001), who state that a representation "stands for some thing in the absence of that thing; typically that thing is

an aspect of the external world [linguistic or pictorial] or an object of our imagination (i.e., our own internal world)" (Eysenck & Keane, 2001; page 244). Moscovici and Duveen (2000) documented a socio-cognitive argument that these mental representations, although unique to an individual, are heavily influenced by the way objects are socially constructed via the linguistic practices dominant within their society. From this perspective, individuals are unable to objectively construe aspects of the external world and, through strategies of negotiation, form and harbour corresponding renderings of social reality (Moscovici & Duveen, 2000). These common representations are suggested to result in structures and practices that privilege some groups and disadvantage others (Bourdieu & Passerton, 1990; Blackledge, 2001; Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006).

Within this study, the dominant masculine norm, as a socially pre-established representation of masculinity, is theorised as being closely related to the transcendence of vulnerability. Dictionary definitions of vulnerability suggest the term pertains to being exposed to physically or emotionally harmful external factors (Jordan, 2008; Schroeder & Gefenas, 2009). Consistent with this, the thesaurus offers synonyms such as 'defenceless', 'exposed' and 'weak' (Chambers Thesaurus, 1999). In contrast, femininity is often defined as an antithesis of masculinity (Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006), and was traditionally viewed as constituting the embracing of vulnerability (Cabezali et al., 1990; Jordan, 2008). Therefore, in this study, vulnerability could be defined as those behaviours which expose weakness and, in the eyes of men, more closely gravitate to the historic stereotype of femininity than masculinity.

This thesis will argue that, although the social practices and experiences of women are likely to vary a great deal, men still harbour the traditional representation that femininity constitutes the embracing of vulnerability. As such, men's and women's behaviours which demonstrate vulnerability are seen by them as 'feminine'; whereas, men's and women's behaviours which demonstrate the transcendence of vulnerability are seen by them as 'masculine'. Literature suggests that men often attempt to demonstrate a masculinity which is uncompromised by any sense of femininity (Light & Kirk, 2000; Allen, 2005; Plumber, 2006); and furthermore, police the behaviours of one another,

ostracising and abusing those whose practices are not recognised as 'masculine' (Reay, 2002; Phillips, 2005 & 2007). Congruent with this perspective, I will make the argument that many men, during relations between men, contribute to, and experience, a pressure to transcend vulnerability. In this sense, men compete as rivals, rather than allies. During chapters six to ten, I will look at the social contexts in which the pressure to transcend vulnerability is likely to be experienced, demonstrated, or resisted by men, as emerging from the data.

Generally speaking, there are two main definitions of the term 'transcend'. One definition pertains to the meaning of 'superiority' and 'degrees of excellence' (Collins English Dictionary, 1999). This version contrasts with the meaning I wish to imply when referring to the transcendence of vulnerability. The second definition, and context in which it is used within this study, pertains to 'passing beyond the limits of' (Collins English Dictionary, 1999). This is often characterised by synonyms such as: 'eclipse' and 'overstep' (Chambers Thesaurus, 1999). Thus, when something is eclipsed, it is understood to remain in existence but become hidden or obstructed by something else (Collins English Dictionary, 1999). When I refer to the transcendence of vulnerability, then, the vulnerability is implied to exist, being deliberately hidden by performances aimed at preventing its exposure to others.

The concept of 'social class' is very complex. As with any social division, pigeonholing individuals into broad, socially constructed categories of class is problematic. It belies many possible overlaps between those individuals placed into different classes, and differences between those placed into the same class (Payne, 2006). Many other social divisions, such as sex, sexuality, ethnicity and age, intersect social class and, moreover, it can mean different things to different people (Payne, 2006). Nevertheless, despite its critics, class is still suggested to influence the structuring of society (Reay, 2002; McDowell, 2003; Gorman, 2003; Nayak, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Nayak, 2006). This influence is reported to impact on cultural values and belief systems, employment and recreational pursuits, and language and dress codes (Nayak, 2006; Payne, 2006). Measures which take these factors into account are, however, very time consuming and

not appropriate for the simple divisions of people into working and middle-class categories (Crompton & Scott, 2000; Devine & Savage, 2000).

Social class is often measured via reference to economic social divisions (Payne, 2006). Government measures, distinguishing social agents by their type of employment (Chandola & Jenkinson, 2000; Scott, 2006), fail to directly address educational attainment; a factor found to be a key distinguisher of working and middle-class men (Archer et al., 2001; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006). In contrast, many health and social researchers tend to use socioeconomic status, referring to academic attainment, occupational prestige, and income, as a means of defining class (Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2003; Veenstra, 2005). This technique is suggested to be less time-consuming to employ and provide a clearer division regarding which individuals constitute working and middle-class (Crompton, 2008). As such it was considered the most appropriate measure within this study. Further discussion of social class can be found within chapters three and four.

1.3   Philosophical Assumptions

There are three main assumptions informing this research.

First: that there is a socially pre-established representation of masculinity (dominant masculine norm) that plays a role in the informing of men's understandings of how to 'appear' masculine. In this understanding, the dominant masculine norm is perpetuated in society through the impact it can exert over men's behaviour within certain social contexts. This theory has similarities with the conception of a 'masculine ideal', as defined by Phillips (2007). Phillips (2007) focused on the ways men, during relations between men, police one another's demonstrations of masculinity in accordance with, and perpetuating, a narrow and pervasive notion of masculinity. This thesis concurs with the notion that men's common patterns of violence are born out of relations between men, as suggested by Phillips (2007). However, in its focus on men's micro social relations, this study will look at how the subordination of certain social groups emerges as a by-product

of white, heterosexual men, as individuals, attempting to avoid subordination during man to man competitions for masculine status. This argument will receive a more thorough discussion within Chapter Ten. The study, as informed by the research questions, will not aim to focus on the respondents' understandings regarding patriarchy and the macro structuring of society.

A second main assumption of the study is that not all of men's social practices actually constitute demonstrations of their masculinity. This relates to the arguments that men's varied identities in all social contexts are unlikely to constitute demonstrations of masculinity, and that men are particularly likely to demonstrate their masculinity when perceiving threats to their masculine status (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al, 2003; Vogel et al, 2003; Whitehead, 2005). From this perspective, identities such as husband and fatherhood might be distinguishable from the ways men derive a sense of themselves as masculine, or attempt to define themselves as such.

A third assumption is that masculinity is predominantly demonstrated during relations between men (Hall, 2002; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). The current study will attempt to identify how a common representation of successful masculinity might link working and middle-class men, even if their behaviours indicate overt differences in their general identities. This implies an assumption that differences in the social practices of the two groups of men pertain, not to differing representations of successful masculinity, but to the men's differing social and material resources (Anderson, 2001; Gorman, 2003). The study aims to examine how helpful it is to understand the transcendence of vulnerability as constituting a stereotypical representation of masculinity; this representation being a product of socialisation and a motivator of men's behaviours within certain social contexts. These assumptions will be critiqued in relation to the data and existing literature throughout the thesis. However, in order to orient the reader, brief information regarding these key themes is provided below.

Referring to the research questions, the term 'verbal practices' refers to the spoken accounts of the interview respondents. Unlike a post-structuralist perspective (Gergen &

Davis, 1997), these will be viewed to bear some reflection of an individual's underlying representations of masculinity and femininity and understandings regarding the origins and nature of these identities. They will also be assumed to bear some relation to common patterns of behaviour that the respondents claim are typical among men, during relations between men. Moreover, their own verbalized demonstrations of masculinity will be viewed to be influenced by, and therefore likely to reveal something about, their underlying representations of masculinity. This philosophical perspective regarding 'what exists' and 'what can be known' is consistent with the critical realist philosophical perspective (Dobson, 2002; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008).

At the philosophical foundations of this study is the assumption that individuals harbour relatively stable understandings of the world (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001) which are simultaneously unique to them but also influenced by their social environment (Zembylas, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In this sense, the behaviours of social agents are informed by a society's pre-established representations of reality, for instance, meanings, beliefs, values, and conventions (Corson, 1997; Madison, 2005; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In critical realist terms, this is referred to as the 'transitive dimension of knowledge' (Sayer, 2008). Owing to the limited vantage points of social agents, this transitive dimension of knowledge is often internalised as natural and inevitable (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). As such, critical realism can be viewed to contrast post-structural and social constructionist epistemologies which are more relativist (Burr, 2007; Sayer, 2008). The distinction here is that critical realism speaks of an intransitive dimension of reality and a transitive dimension of knowledge (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008; Sayer, 2008), whereas relativism can be characterised by the notion that specific realities are neither accessible nor existent (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999).

1.4 Overview of masculinity theories

There is a broad spectrum of masculinity theories with differing epistemological foundations. These will be reviewed in some detail in chapter two. However, in order to

locate this critical realist analysis within the spectrum, I will now provide a very brief overview of some of these.

It is possible to map masculinity theories on an essentialist-constructionist continuum. At one end there is biological essentialism, which is based on the realist assumption that an essential truth underlies men's common patterns of behaviour, and that this truth can be examined through scientific research (the methods of which will be critiqued within Chapter Two). Therefore, additional to their grounding within ontological realism, biological essentialist studies operate along the lines of an objectivist epistemology. At the same time, however, many biological essentialists acknowledge that gendered behaviours are likely to result from a transactional relationship between innate and environmental influences (Berenbaum, 1999; Simpson, 2001; Gaunt, 2006). Moreover, some have gone beyond the notice of a sex binary, and identify increasing ranges of intersexuality (Fausto-Sterling, 2011). The acceptance that social factors have some influence on gender development highlights the complex nature of social research, and how studies rarely fit neatly into specific philosophic positions. Biological essentialism is, however, beyond the scope of this thesis, which will instead retain its focus on the influence of the social environment.

Like biological essentialist theories of masculinity, many psychodynamic theories also speak in terms of an essential 'truth' underlying men's common patterns of behaviour. Again, the social environment is assumed to play a role in a man's acquisition of a masculine identity, with this being viewed as the only healthy outcome (Stevens, 1991; Kahn, 2002; Covington, 2003). As such, psychodynamic theories, which will be critiqued within Chapter Two, can also be seen to have roots within ontological realism, but also acknowledge the impact of the social world. As they are based on the assumptions that an inherent masculinity resides below the surface of men's consciousness and that boys discover their 'true masculine selves' by identifying with the father, this category can include the Mythopoetic Men's Movement (Bly, 1991). Adopting the Jungian psychodynamic explanation of masculinity (Jung, 1991 [1968]), this approach focuses on

how the industrial revolution has resulted in a consequent crisis of masculinity, owing to the father's absence from the home (Bly, 1991).

In contrast to psychodynamic theories, some of the more recent usages of hegemonic masculinity theory acknowledge the subjective nature of research and reject the existence of a singular reality or conception of gender (Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Sheff, 2006). Unlike earlier usages of hegemonic masculinity which focused on the patriarchal structuring of society (cf. Carrigan et al., 1985), such authors draw heavily on relativist ontology and post-structuralist thinking (Gergen & Davis, 1997). As such, these focus on men's discursive constructions of normality, and how these are but one version of a reality that can be construed in a myriad of contrasting ways (Gergen & Davis, 1997). In general, conceptions of hegemonic masculinity attempt to make visible the ways dominant groups of men legitimise and perpetuate patriarchal privilege within society (Carrigan et al., 1985; Gergen & Davis, 1997).

Other paradigms with post-structuralist foundations include Queer Theory (Sullivan, 2006) and anti-categorical intersectionality theories (McCall, 2005; Anderson & McCormack, 2010). Queer theory is primarily concerned with the constraints brought about by normative categorisations of sex and gender (Sullivan, 2006; Richardson, 2007), and aims to deconstruct such fixed divisions (Plummer, 2005). Based on the assumption that they have no grounding in any single, stable, or coherent truth, the aim is to fracture the sex and gender binaries, and all categories of sexuality – including heterosexuality (Monro, 2005; Plummer, 2005; Richardson, 2007).

Intersectionality theories focus on the ways that normative categorisations of ethnicity, class, sexuality, and so on, intersect and result in the hierarchical ordering of some groups over others (Messner, 2011; Taylor, 2011). Being more akin to a post-structuralist epistemology than 'inter' and 'intra-categorical' forms of intersectionality (McCall, 2005), the 'anti-categorical' approach sees these categories as discursive constructions of reality (McCall, 2005; Monro & Richardson, 2010). Moreover, they are seen to be responsible for the subordination of some groups and dominance of others (McCall,

2005; Messner, 2011). The other aforementioned approaches to intersectionality work with the socially pre-established categorical divisions, focusing on how they are experienced, perpetuated, and resisted within society (Taylor, 2011). According to Anderson and McCormack (2010), as these divisions are not seen as essential, they can still be considered compatible with post-structural and social constructionist epistemologies. Nevertheless, as an underlying assumption is that imprecise and incomplete social representations of reality form a common social dimension of knowledge, this notion of what exists is closer to critical realism than relativism (Sayer, 2008). This thesis, however, seeks to identify how masculinity, as a transitive dimension of knowledge, cuts across the division of social class, rather than how social-class impacts on men's representations of masculinity. As such, an intersectional approach was not adopted.

In terms of a philosophical continuum, critical realism - the perspective informing this study - could be viewed to retain an ontological position somewhat between realism and relativism. I will not be attempting to make any claims regarding the influence of biological essentialism in relation to men's common patterns of behaviour. Instead, the thesis will focus on the influence of the social environment. I am arguing that, via the processes of social construction and reconstruction, a stereotypical representation of masculinity has been brought into being; furthermore, that within certain social contexts, this can exert some kind of an influence over agents' social practices, as evidenced by men's common patterns of behaviour. As this argument is at the heart of the study, it will be referred to, and elaborated upon, throughout the following chapters.

1.5   Putting myself in the research

During analysis I will be attempting to form a meaningful interpretation of respondents' experiences of reality, while accepting that these could never be complete nor precise representations of them (Bergin et al., 2008; Sayer, 2008). As I will be an analytical tool within this research (Fade, 2004), I acknowledge that as well as bringing my own position, values and experiences, I am also a member of the target population of my

research. Therefore, in accordance with the guidelines of Korth (2002) and Schostak (2006), I consider reflexivity to be a vital part of this investigation. It is therefore appropriate for me to acknowledge and report my subjective position at the start of this project. How my experience of this position changed throughout the research process will be acknowledged and reported within the final chapter.

In basic terms, I would consider myself a middle-aged, white, heterosexual, working-class man. I had never really thought of myself in terms of social class until, at the age of thirty-one, I entered higher education. Until then, being surrounded by other working-class individuals, I simply thought in terms of some people having cleaner, better paid occupations than others. When higher education suddenly brought me in contact with what I would now regard as middle-class people, I came to realise that my experiences of life and understanding of social normality were not shared by them. Early into these new relations, my choice of words and sense of humour – typical among my previous acquaintances – seemed to make them squirm as opposed to endear me to them. At the time of conducting this research I had acquired new life experiences and broadened my representation of social normality. I feel I can now competently adapt my social performances to conform to the behavioural codes of either class. However, this has come at a price as I feel like I am in limbo between two worlds, having a good understanding of both but not really belonging to either.

Before entering into higher education, fifteen years of my life were spent working in traditional working-class occupations. During this time I was made redundant twice, and left five jobs because I could bear them no longer. The negative times by far out-number the good, and it is these that colour my memory of factory work. In my experience factories are hostile environments and men's anger always seemed close to the surface within them. Annoyance among colleagues was often vented through verbal abuse; these insults most frequently implying a severe lack of intelligence in the person to whom they were aimed. Harsh terms such as "thick cunt" and "retard" were part of the daily language and bellowed at people for the most mundane of reasons. However, on those occasions when verbal abuse was met with retaliation, this could lead to physical

aggression. This was especially the case if, as in my case, the person retaliating was known to be fearful of physical conflict and therefore unlikely to pose much of a threat. The men most respected within factories seemed to be those who were the most verbally and physically aggressive.

I feel that the interactions typical within this environment have had a residual effect on my self confidence. During any kind of verbal confrontation my automatic physiological responses still tell me to expect physical violence. This understanding of what I am experiencing has been made clearer to me through counselling I have been given in attempts to overcome my social injuries. Over the years, this fear of confrontation has made me very careful of the ways in which I speak to people. Particularly during interactions with people outside of my close social network, I tend to second think what I say and how I say it before I actually speak. In many ways this is problematic. Sometimes it might make me appear standoffish, guarded or boring. It often prevents me from expressing myself in the ways I desire, and is probably responsible for my increasingly socially reclusive nature.

On the other hand, however, my desire to avoid confrontation means I make a conscious effort to attune my language to suit that of the person with whom I am interacting. As a very basic example, if a person seems poorly educated, I try not to allow my education to elevate my position during the power dynamics of our interaction. By striving not to belittle, alienate or patronise the other person, I tend to perform myself as their equal. In fact, though detrimental to my own self-esteem, my interactions with others often see me assuming the position of underdog. As such, I feel that this 'problem' was actually an advantage during the interviewing stages of the research. Years of practice enabled me to word my improvised questions and, therefore, facilitate our conversations in ways which I felt made some of the respondents more comfortable with me. Via my concerted effort to reduce the threat posed by my position as group outsider and social researcher, this seemed to provide me with more of an insider access into their individual and group representations. In my view, this was evidenced through the rich data the respondents provided and the seemingly uninhibited ways in which they conversed.

Returning to my account of life before higher education, whenever I had suggested desires to seek non-traditional working-class employment, the reactions of work colleagues, and male friends and family members had dissuaded me. Despite anticipating some criticism from them when I eventually did leave factory work to enter higher education, I was shocked by the negative reaction I actually faced. The aired opinion that I entered education to avoid 'hard work' and claim benefits is still common among the men within my close social network. This has made it a very sensitive subject with me. As such, it might have had some impact over my ability to probe respondents' understandings of masculinity in relation to work and unemployment during the data collection process. For instance, when men from the first working-class focus group joked that I should 'get off my arse and get a proper job', I failed to question them how my chosen pathway impacted, if at all, on the way they viewed me as 'masculine'. Had I followed this line of questioning, I might have gleaned consistent or conflicting data regarding accounts suggesting men's career choices can help them to demonstrate, but remain separate from, their identities as 'masculine'.

Owing to my social anxieties and emotional sensitivity, I do not expect to be regarded by others, or indeed regard myself, as being very masculine. It is also likely that some of the respondents view social research as feminine rather than masculine-typical. This was in fact insinuated by some of them before and after the interviews when they inquired about my reasons for working in the area. Owing to the possibility that I was perceived as non-masculine, the respondents might not have felt the same pressure to demonstrate their masculinity as they would have had I appeared more of an alpha male. This is particularly pertinent owing to findings regarding the contextual triggers of men's masculine performances, as will be discussed during the following chapters. Moreover, as the data began to suggest, the respondents viewed there to be a link between men being gay and their participation in 'feminine-typical' practices, I became conscious that I might be subject to this judgement. How this might have affected the research will be discussed within chapter eight.

On a final note, I personally see vulnerability as being an inevitable aspect of life. In my view, it is human nature to have and want to express feelings of pain and emotions such as fear, love, and sorrow. If staying in a particular predicament places a person's health at risk or life in danger, it is better to admit fear and walk away than attempt to appear fearless by remaining. If we lose someone dear to us, it is natural to want to grieve. Likewise, it is natural to sometimes yearn for or require the help of another. From this perspective, therefore, it is much healthier to embrace rather than attempt to 'transcend' vulnerability. However, during this study, I noticed how being in the company of other men also impacts on the way I behave. In consistence with the emerging data, I realised that I also attempt to transcend vulnerability when socialising in the company of other men.

1.6 Situating the research

With the exception of one of the middle-class respondents, all of the research participants (and I) live and have grown up in neighbouring towns within West Yorkshire. These included Batley, Cleckheaton, Emley, Heckmondwike, Liversedge, Ossett, Roberttown and Scholes. West Yorkshire was at the heart of the English industrial revolution, and this long heritage has had an effect on local culture. Some researchers have suggested that, at present, the profound restructuring of the industrial landscape has paradoxically resulted in a strengthening of regional identities (Beck, 1998; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2003; Cohen, 2005). Traditional cultural values have been found to be retaining their prominent influence over the representations of those living in the areas most affected by change (Marusza, 1997; Johnston et al., 2000; Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2003; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak, 2006). Despite forced vocational shifts, then, people have maintained their cultural identities through the reproduction of attitudes, values, and leisure activities during relations amongst each another (Marusza, 1997; Johnston et al., 2000).

In this sense, regardless of their social class, the respondents of this study are likely to have been in contact with similar social representations, not necessarily typical of those

constructed in regions with differing historic legacies (Inglehart, 1990). The regional work ethic is likely to constitute an aspect of this. For instance, within my experience, even unnecessary work-related health complications are constructed as normal, inevitable aspects of life: for instance my father's loss of hearing due to loud machinery and no available ear protection, and my grandfather's death at the age of fifty-two brought about by anthrosilicosis (black lung caused by the inhalation of coal dust). I have often felt frustrated by the fact that nobody around me (family members, work colleagues and friends) seem able to actually 'see' the injustice regarding workers being expected to operate within hazardous conditions without the correct safety equipment. Nevertheless, work ethics are likely to be but one aspect of difference between men raised within different regions and social classes. Other differences might lie among their cultural values and ideologies, discursive practices, dress codes, and leisure activities (Nayak, 2006).

Many authors do indeed speak of different cultures giving rise to different masculinities. Intersectionality theorists, for example, look at how various factors, including race, sexuality, ethnicity and class, intersect and play a role in the ways agents' gender identities are performed (Taylor, 2011; Zinn et al., 2011). Pre-established regional norms might also be a factor contributing to identified differences in the social practices of working and middle-class men (Connell, 2000; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006). However, numerous authors have also identified similar common patterns of behaviour among the varied social practices of men from different cultures. For example, in an ethnography of black American men, Anderson (2001) spoke of them demonstrating common patterns of behaviour which revolved around shows of 'nerve' and campaigns for 'respect' (during relations between men). Showing 'nerve' and gaining 'respect' involved these men transcending emotional and physical vulnerability in ways which those men around them could acknowledge. Likewise, Levinson and Sparkes (2003) identified common patterns of behaviour during a study of gypsy men. These also revolved around their attempts to transcend vulnerability during relations between gypsy men and non-gypsy men alike. Additionally, despite men from different regions demonstrating practices which appear distinctly

different (Connell, 2000; Gorman, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006), these are often indicative of their differing social and material resources (Gorman, 2003; Nayak, 2006). As such, a common representation that successful masculinity is demonstrated via practices indicative of the transcendence of vulnerability might underlie behaviours which, on the surface, seem unconnected (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006).

Another factor common among the rest of the respondents and myself was that we all identified ourselves as 'heterosexual'. It would be problematic to assume that our experiences of social life as heterosexual men would be similar to the experiences of men identifying themselves with a different category of sexuality (Messner, 2011). Furthermore, the fact that everyone involved in the study was middle-aged and white are other factors that were likely to have had a limiting effect over what data the interviews could have hoped to gather. Theoretically, if they have been exposed to the same dominant representation of masculinity, I would expect this to have some influence over men's behaviours regardless of their age or ethnicity. Differences in the masculinities demonstrated by white and non-white men might reflect cultural and socialisation differences, as suggested by Frosh et al. (2002), or might relate to their differing resources with which to demonstrate invulnerability. However, so not to limit the depth of the analysis (Boeije, 2010), such an investigation is beyond the limits of this project.

1.7 Thesis Structure

The thesis will be divided into ten chapters. Following this introductory chapter, chapter two will critique some of the most influential theories of masculinity in relation to their perspectives regarding the common patterns of men's behaviour. It will be argued that explanations of men's identified common patterns of behaviour are provided by many essentialist, psychodynamic, and socialisation theorists. As these theorists tend to speak of masculinity in terms of a specific identity within itself, their conceptualisations enable it to be identified in the absence of femininity. This facilitates investigations which focus

on masculinity as demonstrated by men during relations between men in the absence of women.

In comparison to essentialist, psychodynamic, and socialisation theories, the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as documented by Carrigan et al. (1985), will be argued to provide a more critical focus regarding the inequalities of the existing gender power relationship. Moreover, in comparison to those theories that identify more rigid definitions of masculinity, it can be seen to account for the complex nature of the social world (Connell, 2008 [1995]). Nevertheless, it will be argued that it constructs masculinity and men as inextricably linked. Furthermore, other than explaining the unequal power relations that exist between men and women, and men across class (for example, marginalised masculinity) and sexuality (for example, subordinated masculinity), it is limited in its explanation regarding the common patterns of dominance and subordination that emerge during relations between men in the same social category (cf. Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006). It will also be suggested that a recent shift towards discursive approaches reflects a wider post-structural turn; many contemporary authors concurring with the notion that men demonstrate multiple, often contradictory, masculinities which are temporally and contextually influenced. Nevertheless, this will be countered by the notion that men's multiple identities are unlikely to all constitute demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005).

Chapter three will explore in what ways this critical realist approach to masculinity links to the literature. It will be divided into four sections. The first, 'Myth: Possible Origins of a Dominant Masculine Norm', will look at the argument that myths have played a role in constructing and perpetuating a dominant social representation of masculinity. Through the work of Johansson (1990), Samuel and Thompson (1990), and Campbell (1949/1993), it will be argued that many myths communicate the ideology that successful masculinity constitutes the transcendence of vulnerability; and that this model of masculinity can be seen to relate to the identified common patterns of men's behaviour.

The second section ('The Common Patterns of Men's Behaviour') will proceed to offer further critique of men's common patterns of behaviour, as identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), building on the brief account offered earlier. This will be followed by 'Behaviours which cut across Class Boundaries'; a section looking at how the transcendence of vulnerability can be seen to underlie the similar and contrasting behaviours demonstrated by men with differing social and material resources (Gorman, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006). Finally, a section entitled: 'Men's Contextually Motivated Gravitations to a Common Notion of Successful Masculinity', will focus on the ways social settings are likely to impact on men's behaviour. Based on a number of studies, it will be argued that men's demonstrations of masculinity are sporadic and tend to be motivated by perceived threats to their masculine status (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Sabo, 2011); moreover, that such threats predominantly emerge during relations between men (Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011).

The methods, philosophical perspective and methodology will be described within chapters four and five. Within chapter four, critical realism will contrasted with other philosophical perspectives, including other forms of realism and positions with leanings towards relativism. In contrast to discursive approaches, grounded theory, and interpretative phenomenological analysis, it will be shown why template analysis was considered the most suitable methodology for thematically organising and analysing the data. This section of the chapter will document the process through which the final template was developed, as informed by a detailed, hierarchical coding of the data. Chapter five will include all the relevant details regarding the sample selection, the amount of fit between the participants and the social class into which they categorised, the development of the interview schedule, and the conducting of the focus group and one to one interviews.

The findings of the study will be presented in chapters six, seven, eight and nine. The first of these will focus on 'The Dominant Masculine Norm' as an integrative theme permeating the discussions continued in the following three chapters. It will look at how

masculinity emerged from the data as a common social representation constituting the transcendence of vulnerability. The chapter will feature data referring to certain social contexts in which men's demonstrations of masculinity are most likely to occur; the men's accounts predominantly referring to relations between men. Moreover, the chapter will look at how the roles of father, husband and provider emerged as separate identities to masculinity.

Chapters seven, eight and nine will focus on codes that relate to the specific themes of: 'Affectivity', 'Sexuality', and 'Physical Aggression'. Men's treatment of affectivity, as suggested by the data, can be seen to relate directly to the notion that to be masculine is to transcend vulnerability. Chapter seven will feature detailed accounts suggesting that men, during relations between men, experience pressure to hide emotional vulnerability, feel guilty for experiencing emotions, and compete as rivals, attempting to expose the emotions of one another. Chapter eight will focus on data suggesting that men harbour a common notion that gender performances are linked to sexuality and femininity to vulnerability. In this way, heterosexuality emerged as constituting successful masculinity. Some difference will be discussed regarding the way that middle-class respondents demonstrate more of a positive attitude towards gay men than the working-class respondents. Chapter nine will explore data suggesting that men view physical aggression during relations between men as a means by which to hide vulnerability. It will identify conflicting accounts that imply that the respondents hate physical aggression but themselves perpetuate it as a valuable masculine quality within male-only settings.

Chapter ten will be split into a discussion and conclusion. The discussion will provide an overview of the main findings and look at the ways that the respondents' accounts regarding the nature of masculinity are consistent with the critical realist philosophical perspective. It will also include sections that focus on the implications of my adopted methodology and the limitations of this investigation. The conclusion will contain a brief summary of the investigations contributions, theoretical and real world implications, and ideas for future research.

Chapter 2

Competing Theories and Perspectives on Men's Patterns of Behaviour

This chapter will focus on biological essentialist, socialisation, psychodynamic, hegemonic and discursive approaches to masculinity, particularly in relation to their competing theories regarding men's common patterns of behaviour (as discussed in chapters one and three). Emerging from this review will be the notion that authors rooted in essentialist, socialisation, and traditional psychodynamic approaches often provide explanations for men's identified common patterns of behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). However, there is a tendency for these theories to overlook the complexities of the social world and to take for granted inequalities in the power relations between men and women. A more critical focus of the unequal distributions of power is taken in uses of hegemonic masculinity, as documented by Carrigan et al. (1985), and those discourse approaches adopting post-structuralist adaptations of hegemonic masculinity approaches. These also can be seen to provide a greater acknowledgement of the complexities of the social world. More widely, however, there are tendencies for these authors to conceive masculinity and men as being inextricably linked and view masculinity as being demonstrated during relations between men and women (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Connell, 2008 [1995]), despite some studies providing contrasting findings (Halberstam, 1998).

2.1 Biological essentialist theories

Gender essentialism tends to appeal to people's common sense understandings of gender (Taylor et al., 2009) and could, therefore, be used to justify and perpetuate imbalances of power between the sexes (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005; Gaunt, 2006). It is based on the notion that sex specific gendered behaviours are innate (DeLamater & Hyde, 1998; Kelly

et al., 1999; Cahill, 2003; Cohen-Bendahan et al., 2005) and the result of evolution (Alexander, 2003; Ellis, 2006; Vandermassen, 2008), hormones (Campbell et al., 1998; Kelly, 1999; Ellis, 2006), and genes (Lochner et al., 2004; Alanko et al., 2010). It must be noted, however, that many contemporary authors rooted within biological essentialism take into account the influences of both the prenatal and postnatal environments (Berenbaum, 1999; Simpson, 2001; Gaunt, 2006).

Identified common patterns of men's behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009) - which can be viewed as being linked to the transcendence of vulnerability - have, according to some essentialist theories, evolved in the interests of human reproduction (Vandermassen, 2008). In this sense, through a process of natural selection, it is those men whose psychological and physiological traits benefited their hunting and protecting capabilities who became the most effective competitors in obtaining sexual resources (Barrett et al., 2002; Cahill, 2003). As such, greater numbers of offspring would inherit these successful 'masculine' traits, and the process would continue (Barrett et al., 2002).

Authors, such as Alexander and Hines (2002) and Alexander (2003), have theorised that, owing to men and women's sexually differentiated roles as hunters and gatherers, male and female visual systems have evolved sex-specific object and colour preferences. One aspect of this argument is that boys are born with preferences for activity toys, and girls with preferences for toys which enable them to express biological propensities to nurture (Alexander, 2003). However, in suggesting that masculine and feminine attributes have evolved over thousands of years, this argument fails to explain how recent changes to men's and women's gendered behaviours have occurred over a short space of time (Smiler, 2004). The theory also ignores the postnatal influences of an infant's social environment (Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; McHale et al., 2001; Errante, 2003) and is contested by theorists rooted in a number of different sociological and psychological paradigms which will be covered in this literature review.

Some gender essentialists argue that men's common patterns of physical aggression (Simpson, 2001), and other stereotypical masculine attributes (Cahill, 2003; Ellis, 2006; Pound et al., 2009), are due to high levels of the sex hormone testosterone in comparison to women's levels. However, if testosterone is responsible for men's aggression, this fails to explain why such aggression tends to be discriminately vented onto weaker targets, such as intimate partners, with men remaining submissive when faced with dominant rivals (Mullender, 1996). Furthermore, according to Clare (2001), studies have found that men prosecuted for physical and sexual abuse exhibit normal levels of testosterone, suggesting this hormone was not responsible for their criminal behaviour. Clare (2001) also put forward the argument that, rather than testosterone instigating masculine-typical behaviour, the correlation may work in reverse. For instance investigations have found that testosterone levels increase in sports stars during and directly after tournaments, and in men already perceiving threats to their masculine status (Clare, 2001). Socialisation factors have also been found to have a moderating effect over these testosterone levels (Cohen, 1998).

As a means of supporting essentialist gender theories, researchers have attempted to show that masculine and feminine typical behaviour is influenced by genetically occurring processes during prenatal development (Beek et al., 2004; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). In boys, for instance, the release of testosterone during sensitive periods of prenatal brain development is assumed to cause permanent organisational effects to the structuring of the brain, resulting in postnatal behaviours recognisable as masculine (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005); moreover, that during a number of sensitive periods, different regions of the brain are genetically altered and, likewise, the postnatal behaviours they later influence (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005).

However, very few human studies have produced findings which support the prenatal testosterone theory (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005), with some human studies suggesting that social factors exert a stronger influence over men's stereotypical masculine behaviours (Campbell et al., 1998; Simpson, 2001; Wallen & Hassett, 2009). Furthermore, gender essentialists have had very little success in finding evidence of

higher levels of testosterone in the blood of pregnant mothers carrying a male foetus as opposed to a female foetus (Beek et al., 2004); and in finding higher levels of testosterone in the umbilical cord blood of male newborns in comparison to female newborns (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005).

In addition to studies examining the sex hormone levels in blood, gender essentialists employ a variety of methods for collecting data. However, many of these investigate the gendered behaviours of nonhumans (Alexander, 2003; Cohen-Bendahan et al., 2005; Wallen & Hassett, 2009), experiments often being conducted with primates (Alexander & Hines, 2002; Wallen & Hassett, 2009) and rodents (Caldarone et al., 2000; Weigl et al., 2004). The assumption is that if genetic processes can be linked to the gendered behaviour of animals, these same processes might be responsible for gendered behaviour in humans (Cahill, 2003). However, even in different species of animal, the sensitive periods, types of sex hormone, and sex-specific neural restructuring have all been suggested to differ greatly (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). Moreover, there is arguably an enormous gulf in complexities between the social worlds of humans and animals (Clare, 2001).

Gender essentialists have also conducted investigations into the gendered behaviours of males and females affected by steroid 21-hydroxylase deficiency; the most common form of congenital adrenal hyperplasia (CAH) (Berenbaum, 1998; Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2004; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). This is a clinical condition occurring when the adrenal cortex is unable to produce cortisone and instead exposes the foetus to high levels of adrenal androgens (Speiser & White, 2003). This is suggested to happening roughly between seven and eight weeks into gestation (Speiser & White, 2003; Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2004). Again, however, CAH studies are more frequently conducted with nonhumans than with humans (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). Masculinising effects have been observed in CAH females in various species of rodents, monkeys and pigs (Wallen & Baum, 2002). Even so, some of the findings from CAH animal studies have been observed in CAH studies with humans (Berenbaum, 1999; Brown, 2002; Wallen & Baum, 2002; Meyer-Bahlburg et al., 2004).

CAH in humans, as well as in animals, results in chromosomal females being born with male external genitalia, although the genitalia of CAH boys can often appear unaffected (Speiser & White, 2003). Additional to physical affects, CAH has been argued to influence the gender-typed behaviour of humans. In particular, when compared with non-CAH girls, CAH girls have often been observed to behave in more stereotypical masculine ways, for instance, exhibiting higher levels of aggression and preferences for boys' toys (Berenbaum, 1999). On the other hand, human studies of CAH boys have produced more varied findings, some suggesting their behaviours, when compared with non-CAH boys, appear hyper-masculinised, others suggesting they are relatively unaffected (Brown et al., 2002).

Despite the above findings, Cohen-Brendahan et al. (2005) reported that some human CAH studies have failed to identify differences between CAH patients and control groups. Moreover, because CAH girls have externally ambiguous genitalia, those displaying masculinised behaviour might have been socialised in more male-typical ways (Buitelaar et al., 2005). This would mean that their masculine behaviour was influenced by the social environment rather than innate. Some essentialists have collected data via parent self-reports which suggested that masculinised CAH girls were treated in only feminine-typical ways, therefore refuting the notion of social influence (Berenbaum, 1999). Other studies have found parent self-reports to be problematic. For example, Messner (2000) found that parents, in self-reports, claimed that they treated their sons and daughters in exactly the same ways, despite observations suggesting this was not the case.

Another method essentialists use to examine the ways sex hormones influence neural structures during prenatal development is to compare the behaviours of opposite sexed twins with those of same-sexed twins (Rogers et al., 1998; Buitelaar et al., 2005; Alanko, et al., 2010). The assumption is that girls sharing the uterus with a twin brother are likely to have been exposed to higher levels of testosterone and, therefore its masculinising effects, than girls sharing the uterus with a twin sister (Buitelaar et al., 2005). Likewise, boys gestating adjacent to girls are theorised to be exposed to less testosterone than boys

sharing the uterus with a twin brother (Resnick et al., 1993; Buitelaar et al., 2005). As with the CAH studies, opposite and same-sex twin comparisons are more commonly conducted with nonhumans; these suggesting that female rodents and pigs exhibit masculine postnatal behaviour when gestating between males (Miller & Martin, 1995; Loehlin & Martin, 1998; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005).

The findings from human twin comparisons have been more varied than with animals (Loehlin & Martin, 1998; Buitelaar et al., 2005). For instance, using data from questionnaires measuring attitudes, Miller (1994) and Miller and Martin (1995) found that the responses of opposite-sex twin females, in contrast to same-sex twin females, closely correlated with the responses of opposite and same sex twin males. These were interpreted as evidence of hormone transfer (Miller, 1994; Miller & Martin, 1995). On the contrary, Buitelaar et al. (2005) reported similar levels of testosterone in opposite and same-sex female twins, measured no differences in their personality traits, but reported slightly higher levels of aggression in opposite-sex twin females, compared with same-sex twin females. On the other hand, when observing opposite and same-sex twins during toy-play activities, Rogers et al. (1998) found no evidence of hormone transfer. More specifically, the opposite and same-sexed twins (ranging between 7 and 12 years) consistently played with toys stereotypically appropriate for their sex-type (Rogers et al., 1998).

Although masculinising neural restructuring during gestation may explain common patterns of masculine behaviour in animals (Beek et al., 2004; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005), it arguably fails to explain the infinitely complex nature of human social reality (MacInnes, 1998; Allen, 2005). Even when research findings are interpreted to suggest evidence of prenatal hormone transfer, it is difficult to determine whether these are not in fact the result of an individual's social environment (McHale et al., 2001; McHale et al., 2003). In particular, as the social world is unknown until after birth, it can be argued that common patterns in men's attitudes towards issues such as politics and religion are learned (McHale et al., 2003; Phillips, 2005; Whitehead, 2006) rather than innate, as suggested by Miller and Martin (1995). Psychodynamic theories assume that masculinity

develops from a transactional relationship between innate and environmental influences. These will be the focus of the following section.

2.2   Psychodynamic theories

Many psychodynamic approaches to masculinity can be seen to have some leanings towards gender essentialism in the sense that they refer to men's acquisition of a masculine identity as being the only healthy outcome (Stevens, 1991; Kahn, 2002; Covington, 2003). However, rather than primarily focussing on inherent attributes, these approaches assume that gender acquisition emerges from a transactional relationship between innate and environmental influences (Bly, 2001 [1990]; Segal, 2004). There are two traditional psychodynamic approaches: the Freudian and Jungian paradigms, each providing very different explanations of gender development. The main focus of this section will remain with these, while very briefly acknowledging some later adaptations of the psychodynamic approach in relation to gender acquisition.

Freudian psychodynamic explanations of gender development are rooted in a theoretical phallic stage of psychosexual development (occurring between the ages of three and six), and an infant's eventual identification with the same-sexed parent (Kahn, 2002). Girls are theorised to develop an 'Elektra complex', emerging from penis envy. Boys, on the other hand, are suggested to develop an 'Oedipus complex' in which they sexually desire the mother and feel aggression towards the father, who is viewed to stand in the way of these affections (Kahn, 2002; Covington, 2003). Thus, a boy's desire to emulate his father's success with the opposite sex, but fear of castration at the hands of this more powerful rival, is suggested to eventually lead to his identification with the father (Covington, 2003). Therefore, according to this paradigm, a boy's masculine identity emerges as the father's masculine attributes are incorporated into his own psyche (Stevens, 1991; Kahn, 2002). Speaking of incest in this literal sense (Covington, 2003), then, the 'unconscious' is theorised to constitute a reservoir of 'repressed instincts' that develop after birth (Jefferson, 2002; Segal, 2004; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007).

In contrast, incest in Jungian theory symbolises the developing infant's desire to retreat back to the unconscious world of instinct as a means of escaping the demands of developing a conscious understanding of reality (Jung, 1991 [1968]). From this perspective, because a child starts life with no conscious understanding of itself, it is considered to exist as one with its mother, taking sanctuary in the 'feminine' care and affection she provides (Jung, 1991 [1968]). In short, this understanding of incest is symbolic of a child's occasional yearning to return to its mother and infantile past (Jung, 1991 [1968]). A further contrast is in the Freudian and Jungian conceptualisations of the 'unconscious'. The Jungian paradigm views the unconscious as being an 'inherited' reservoir of primitive, unprocessed memories, otherwise known as 'archetypes' (Jung, 1991 [1968]). Unlike detailed life-memories, these are never made conscious, but are suggested to be crude images which predispose individuals to interpret and respond to situations in certain ways (Stevens, 1991). Argued to be among these genetic memories are archetypes of the father and the mother (Stevens, 1991; Segal, 2004). It is theorised that through a bond that develops between father and son, the boy is handed down his father's masculine 'wisdom' (Samuels, 1989), which enables him some experience of the unconscious in the sense of self realisation (Samuels, 1989; Bly, 2001 [1990]). From this perspective, gendered behaviour develops as the social environment influences infants to identify with the same-sexed archetype (Bly, 2001 [1990]; Segal, 2004). A boy's adoption of masculine patterns behaviour is viewed to be indicative of healthy development (Bly, 2001 [1990]; Segal, 2004).

On the other hand, even though the Freudian psychodynamic theory suggests that the unconscious develops after birth (Jefferson, 2002; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007); its explanation of gender acquisition can also be viewed to relate to the essentialist argument. This is owing to the assumption that, provided infants are parented in a home with both mother and father figures (Kahn, 2002), they undergo specific stages of psychosexual development. Thus, subject to whether they are biologically male or female, agents are assumed repress the same naturally occurring instincts (Storr, 2001). As with the Jungian paradigm, then, the development of what is considered to be a 'normal' gender identity (Kahn, 2002; Whitehead, 2006) is viewed to occur through a

transactional relationship between inherent proclivities and the social environment. In this sense, like essentialist theories, they justify imbalances of power between the sexes (Whitehead, 2006), and fail to explain swiftly occurring changes in masculine-typical behaviour.

As Freudian and Jungian paradigms acknowledge the importance of social factors (Jefferson, 2002; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007), they provide an explanation regarding why not all men demonstrate masculine-typical behaviour. For instance, those boys reared in the absence of a father figure could neither develop an Oedipus complex (Kahn, 2002), nor come to identify with the father archetype (Bly, 2001 [1990]). However, some authors have suggested that children develop stereotypically gendered identities despite being reared by single or non-heterosexual parents, whereas not all children from conventional homes demonstrate them (Patterson, 1992; Gartell et al., 2005). Moreover, in those cases whereby a father figure is absent, such notions of gender development have been criticised for presenting lone mothering as unnatural and unhealthy for male development (Reay, 2002).

Further criticisms include the fact that neither position is supported by empirical evidence, and gender identities have been found to develop before the age specified by Freud's psychosexual model of gender acquisition (Carlo et al., 1999; Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). Like the aforementioned essentialist theories, these psychodynamic paradigms also fail to explain the complex and multifaceted nature of masculinity, as identified by authors adopting post-structural discursive approaches (Reay, 2002).

Some theorists have further developed these psychodynamic explanations of gender acquisition. These tend to veer away from an exclusive focus on the role of the father (central to the Jungian approach) and the male anatomy (central to the Freudian approach) (Gadd & Jefferson, 2007). Kaschak (1993), for example, concurs with the Oedipal theory as an explanation of how boys come to develop masculine identities, but responds to identified limitations regarding Freud's explanation of how girls adopt

feminine identities. According to Kaschak (1993), girls develop an Antigone complex[*] as a result of them internalising the dominant social representation of femininity, as being subservient to masculinity. As society is viewed to be structured around this representation, it is seen to be an obstacle preventing many women from resolving this complex (Kaschak, 1993).

Still speaking in terms of a sex and gender binary, Chodorow (1978/1999 & 2000), on the other hand, places the infant and mother relationship at the heart of gender acquisition. This position is based on the notion that, because they are the same sex, mothers tend to experience their daughters as being like them and, therefore, identify more with them than they do their sons (Chodorow, 1999 [1978]). Chodorow (1978/1999) argued that mothers tend to experience their sons as a separate 'male opposite', often resulting in their differing treatment of them and an early psychic separation. Theoretically, the result of this is that boys become more independent than girls and, in rejecting their mother's femininity, develop patterns of behaviour culturally recognisable as 'masculine' (Chodorow, 1999 [1978]).

Recently there has been a growing interest in a psycho-social approach which, very broadly, could be described as an attempt to unite discourse research and research into the unconscious (see Hollway & Jefferson, 2000; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007). From this perspective, the social (discourse) and the psyche (unconscious) are viewed as being reciprocal in the constitution of one another (Hollway & Jefferson, 2000). Agent's psyches are neither assumed to be essentially sexed nor gendered (Gadd, 2000). Instead, the gendering of the psyche is viewed to be the result of an agent's internalising of broader societal structures (Redman, 2005). In one example of this approach, Gadd (2000) reported that masculinity, as demonstrated through men's common patterns of physical aggression, might often constitute attempts to deflect away 'psychic threats to their sense of vulnerability' (P. 445). In this sense, such demonstrations of masculinity are related by Gadd (2000) to social discourses and structures constructing physical

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[*] In Greek mythology Antigone was the daughter of Oedipus who sacrificed her own independence in order to care for her father who had blinded himself out of disgust at the revelation of his own actions.

aggression as a masculine resource. In a further example of the psycho-social approach, Redman (2005) linked masculinity, as demonstrated through men's common patterns of physical aggression and the subordination of effeminacy and non-heterosexuality, to the processes of 'unconscious splitting' and 'projective identification'[*]. Again, this might be seen as a result of men's psychic investments into societal constructions of masculinity (Gadd, 2000).

Psycho-social approaches transverse relativism and realism (Clarke, 2002) and, therefore, unlike exclusive post-structural discursive approaches (cf. Wetherell & Edley, 2003), acknowledge men's common patterns of behaviour (Redman, 2005; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007). In contrast to traditional psychodynamic approaches, men's patterns of behaviour, as constituting demonstrations of masculinity, are no longer referred to as the outcome of healthy gender development. Because they take into account the inequality of power afforded to masculinity over femininity by current constructions of social reality, and view the psyche as essentially gender-neutral (Gadd, 2000), they do not necessarily justify the subordination of women to men.

Psycho-social assumptions that societal constructions of masculinity are likely to be internalised by men, thus influencing their common patterns of behaviour (Gadd & Jefferson, 2007) are congruent with this thesis. However, whereas the 'unconscious' is of key importance within both psychodynamic and psycho-social theory, its existence or relevance will not be contemplated during analysis or discussion of the findings. If the psyche is gender-neutral and gendered behaviour derives from agents' personal, but socially influenced, representations of reality, I take the position that the focus should remain with those representations. Thus, from analysis of their talk on masculinity, if these can be interpreted to emerge as having an impact on men's behaviour it seems unnecessary to complicate this via discussion of the psyche. Instead, I would argue that it is more beneficial to focus on the socialisation of stereotypical gender norms and the

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[*] Unconscious splitting and Projective identification refer to an agent 'splitting off' and displacing into others the aspects of the self which are experienced as threatened or intolerable (Redman, 2005).

contexts in which 'masculine-typical' behaviour is likely to be activated. The following section will focus on socialisation theories of masculinity.

2.3   Socialisation theories

Unlike the aforementioned approaches, socialisation theories focus on the social world, assuming that masculinity is shaped solely by environmental influences. From this perspective, the common patterns of men's behaviour are simply habits that have been learned (Maccoby, 2000). De Beauvoir (1997 [1953]) was one of the first authors referring to men and women being 'gendered' as opposites owing (in full) to social and cultural processes. Socialisation theories became prominent in the late sixties with the rise of second wave feminism (Pilcher & Whelehan, 2004). This section will look at direct and indirect forms of socialisation and how these are suggested to masculinise men and femininise women.

Findings of studies by Tallandini (2004) and Giles and Heyman (2005) suggest that males and females, as distinguished by their genitalia, lack freedom to develop social identities that are purely their own. Instead, their choices are documented as being constrained by a socially pre-established gender binary (Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005). This refers to two distinct catalogues of behaviour that have been socially constructed around the biologically determined bodies of men and women (Carlo et al., 1999; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006).

According authors, such as to Phillips (2005), discourse takes a dominant role in the production and normalising of gender; with individuals adopting as their own the gender identities that are discursively assigned to them from birth. So, although these gendered attributes are not innate, the 'artificiality' of them is obscured from their vantage points by the ideological preferences of their society and the way its agents continuously represent and reproduce them (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). As such, these seemingly natural gendered identities are argued to impinge

on all of the individual's vocational and leisure choices (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Smiler, 2004).

Maccoby (2000) distinguished between direct and indirect forms of gender socialisation. Direct socialisation refers to gendered behaviours that are actively shaped by socialisation pressures, whereas indirect socialisation refers to vicariously learned behaviours deriving from observations of male and female-typical behaviours (Maccoby, 2000). The family is an institution viewed to play a strong role in the direct socialisation process (Grieshaber, 1998; Carlo et al., 1999; McHale et al., 2001; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; Errante, 2003; McHale et al., 2003). It has been documented that, from early infancy, parents socialise boys and girls with contrasting gender norms, such as encouraging girls to be passive and boys to be aggressive (Grieshaber, 1998; Carlo et al., 1999; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; McHale et al., 2001; Errante, 2003; McHale et al., 2003). Studies suggest that children as young as two years of age have a socialised understanding of what constitutes appropriate masculine and feminine social practice (Jordan, 1995; Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005). Moreover, having an understanding of these norms, young children are likely to behave in ways consistent with them (Carlo et al., 1999; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006).

Parents' treatments of their sons and daughters are not suggested to differ all of the time and neither are they assumed to constantly revolve around gender expectations (Messner, 2000). Nevertheless, authors, such as McHale et al. (2003) and Kane (2006), have identified general parental tendencies to enforce some gender boundaries. This is a trend that has been found to occur regardless of a parent's ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation (Kane, 2006). In particular, heterosexual fathers have reported parenting their children, especially their sons, in line with their normative expectations of gendered behaviour (McHale et al., 2003; Kane, 2006). Furthermore, in addition to heterosexual fathers, the Kane (2006) study found that gay fathers and heterosexual and lesbian mothers felt an accountability to indoctrinate their sons with the masculine norm predominant within their culture.

Numerous strategies through which parents masculinise their sons have been documented. These include strategies of positive reinforcement when gendered norms are met, and negative reinforcement when gender boundaries are crossed (Maccoby, 2000). For example, when a boy cries a parent may offer him less sympathy than he has observed being offered to his sister for the same behaviour. Also, in contrast to the comforting words offered to her, he may instead be called a baby, or told to 'toughen up' (Maccoby, 2000). In many cases, parents are likely to be unaware of the ways they go about influencing their children's gendered identities (Messner, 2000).

A number of authors have documented that the learning and moderating of appropriate masculine behaviour is most observable during school (Forrest, 2000; Swain, 2002; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2005; Hatchell, 2006). In particular, boys and girls have been found to police the gendered behaviours of their same-sexed peers (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Maccoby, 2000; Maccoby, 2003 [1998]; Houtte, 2004; Kane, 2006; Pascoe, 2011). According to Reay (2002), male hierarchies are formed, being determined by how close boys' behaviours approximate the dominant representation of masculinity. Those perceived to demonstrate successful gravitations to this stereotype tend to achieve status among their male peers (Forrest, 2000; Houtte, 2004). In contrast, poor gravitations can result in ostracism and intimidation (Reay, 2002; Phillips, 2005 & 2007). Phillips (2005) argued that this intimidation is performed by boys as a strategy of promoting their own masculinity. In this sense, then, boys (and girls) do not passively adopt the codes of conduct that are influenced by adults, such as teachers and parents, but actively perform their own codes of conduct in order to regulate relationships with their peers (Kane, 2006). This is what Maccoby (2000) refers to as 'indirect socialisation'.

Benjamin (2001) provided evidence of the pressure boys experience in trying to achieve status among their peers. In this study of boys attending a special educational needs school, Benjamin (2001) found that the boys' desires to maintain micro-cultural status within an all-male hierarchy overpowered any aspirations of academic achievement (Benjamin, 2001). The boys' identities as pupils were reported to be inseparable from

their demonstrations of masculinity within this all-male group. Benjamin (2001) argued that, because of this, appearing keen to comply with formal curriculum work would serve to devalue their masculine status. Similarly, Forrest (2000) suggested that the often disruptive behaviour of boys during sex education classes derived from their fears of having their masculine inadequacies exposed. Again, this vulnerability was linked to an underlying fear the boys had of losing masculine status among their male peers rather than among girls (Forrest, 2000).

In contrast to essentialist theories of masculinity, socialisation theories provide an explanation regarding the relatively swift occurring changes to social notions of successful masculinity over relatively short periods of time (McHale et al., 1999). For instance, studies suggest that socialisation pressures change in consistence with the broader changing norms of a society (McHale et al., 1999 & 2003). So, contrasting the notion that masculinity is innate and therefore relatively unchangeable (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005; Gaunt, 2006; Taylor et al., 2009), socialisation theories suggest that patterns of social behaviour simply reflect transitive social realities (Blackledge, 2001; Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006). They can also be viewed to acknowledge the role of context and temporality in the shaping of agents' gendered behaviours (McHale et al., 1999 & 2001); hence, they take into account the differing impacts that cultural norms, family structures, and situation specific demands can have over learned behaviour (McHale et al., 2003).

Although socialisation theories are useful, as with the aforementioned essentialist and psychodynamic theories, they have been criticised for failing to explain the fluid and often contradictory nature of boys and men's performed masculine identities (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006). Therefore, despite these theories providing explanations for the identified common patterns of men's behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), to varying degrees, they can be criticised for failing to account for the infinitely more complex nature of social reality (MacInnes, 1998; Allen, 2005). Although socialisation theories do not justify imbalances of power between the sexes as biologically inevitable

or the only healthy outcome, they nevertheless tend to remain uncritical with regards to this issue (Carrigan et al., 1985). In contrast, this inequality forms the basis for the concept of hegemonic masculinity. The conception of hegemonic masculinity, as proposed by Carrigan et al. (1985), will be the focus of the following section.

2.4 Hegemonic masculinity

Theories of masculinity in which hegemony is important take a more critical approach in acknowledging inequalities in the power relations between men and women. The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as used by Connell (1983) and Carrigan et al. (1985), is based on the notion that men maintain and legitimate the subordination of women and marginalised groups of men on a global basis. Hegemonic masculinity is suggested to involve a strategy of behaviours, identities and role expectations which are continually constructed and adapted to perpetuate supremacy within developing social structures (Carrigan et al., 1985). Thus, rather than it being implied to function automatically, Carrigan et al. (1985) spoke of hegemony being the product of a constant struggle met by the contestation and resistance of those groups it subordinates.

The early development of hegemonic masculinity emerged from a number of theoretical influences. One key influence was the concept of 'hegemony', as developed by Antonio Gramsci (Hearn, 2004). Hegemony, in Gramsci's theory, referred to the power one social class exercises over others, in terms of coercive and consensual control (Jones, 2006). The latter of these pertains to the way the ideology of the ruling class obscures other ways of viewing the world, creating the illusion it is justified and inevitable (Stewart & Usher, 2007). In failing to recognise the artificial nature of this worldview, the other classes are viewed to be complicit in their own subordination (Jones, 2006). Nevertheless, the theory recognises that subordination is often met with resistance, hegemony requiring continuous renegotiation and construction in order to maintain social consent (Jones, 2006).

It is this notion of consensual control that resonates throughout the conception of hegemonic masculinity, as documented by Carrigan et al. (1985) and Connell (1995/2008). The state, the labour market and the family are argued to be structured in ways that favour men over women, granting and legitimating their social and material advantages (Connell (2008 [1995]). Configuring social practice, therefore, does not refer to the coercive control of women through violence, although this can be applied by individual men to impose their dominance (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Other influences on hegemonic masculinity include 'Socialist Feminism, Bourdieu, Practice Theory, Psychoanalysis, Pluralism, and Intersectionality' (Hearn, 2012). Moreover, regardless of links being forged through recent reinterpretations and adaptations of hegemonic masculinity, 'Foucault, Discourse Theory, and Queer Theory' were not an influence on Connell (Hearn, 2012). The concept of hegemonic masculinity, as developed by Connell (1983) and Carrigan et al. (1985), was more structuralist than post-structuralist (post-structuralist adaptations of the concept will be discussed within the following section).

In contrast to an essentialist model of masculinity, hegemonic models refer to a number of prescriptive social norms that men adhere to, to varying degrees (Demetriou, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Hearn (2004), however, drew attention to some confusion here, with Connell sometimes referring to hegemonic and other varieties of masculinity as 'types' of masculinity and at other times as 'processes'. According to Connell and Messerschmidt (2005), hegemonic masculinity does not refer to specific men within society, but rather the ideas, fantasies and aspirations of large numbers of men. In this sense, all men are viewed to situate themselves in relation to it, as it represents the most honoured way of demonstrating masculinity at a given time in history (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007; Connell, 2008 [1995]). Even those men not enacting high levels of masculine dominance are still viewed to benefit from the subordination of women and, by allowing the patriarchal order to continue, are considered to be displaying a complicit masculinity (Connell, 2008 [1995]).

Hegemonic masculinity places emphasis on the existence of a complex masculine hierarchy, with some groups of men having dominance over others (Demetriou, 2001). Such a hierarchical relationship between masculinities is established through strategies that exploit, oppress, exclude and include (Connell, 2008 [1995]). At the bottom of this hierarchy are subordinated and marginalised masculinities (Sheff, 2006). The men constituting marginalised groups are distinguishable from dominant groups owing to factors that are external to gender (Demetriou, 2001; Connell, 2008 [1995]). For instance, Connell (2000) referred to men whose social class, ethnicity, age or limited mobility render them less able to practice the configurations of behaviour which grant patriarchal privilege to the dominant group at a given point in history (Connell, 2008 [1995]).

Subordinate masculinities are found amongst groups of men whose sexuality or gender practices are 'seen' to place them outside of hegemonic groups for which heterosexuality is seen as pivotal (Sheff, 2006). Additional to non-heterosexual men, those who are unsuccessful in demonstrating a 'recognisable' common standard of masculinity are argued to be subordinated by dominant groups (Connell, 2008 [1995]). Rather than these groups of men being inferior, the hegemonic subordination of them is theorised to derive from the dominant group's policing of social practices that could undermine the structures of heterosexual patriarchy (Forrest, 2000; Demetriou, 2001; Connell, 2008 [1995]). Nevertheless, this conception of hegemonic masculinity can be seen to offer little explanation regarding common patterns of dominance and subordination that have been identified during relations between white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources (New, 2001; Hall, 2002). Rather than being motivated by the aim of perpetuating patriarchy, these common patterns can be seen as the result of men, as individuals, attempting to maintain masculine status during relations with perceived rivals (Whitehead, 2005). In the literature, there are various examples of the strategies men use to achieve this, which will be addressed in the following chapter.

From perspectives using hegemonic masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985), common patterns of men's behaviour might be viewed as those practices helping men to perpetuate patriarchal dominance at a specific point in history. However, rather than fixed, these

practices are theorised to be subject to a continuous process of re-negotiation by way of legitimating patriarchy in the face of re-emerging opposition (Hearn, 2004). As such, few attempts have been made in the literature to identify or define specific common patterns of men's behaviour (Connell, 2008 [1995]). Instead, Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) very loosely define masculinities as:

> 'Configurations of gender practice that are constructed, unfold and change through time' (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, P. 852).

However, such definitions have lead to ambiguity regarding what configurations of practice actually constitute hegemonic masculinity, and whether it refers to a cultural representation, general behaviours, or institutional structures (Hearn, 2004). Moreover, as suggested within chapter one, researchers continue to identify common patterns among the behaviours of men (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), for which this theory provides no explanation.

Though the concept of hegemonic masculinity refers to a form of masculinity which subordinates certain other aforementioned forms, masculinity in general is still linked to the behaviours of men and not women (Connell, 2008 [1995]). Thus, men's behaviours tend to be seen as configurations of masculinity and women's behaviours as configurations of femininity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Connell, 2008 [1995]). Moreover, masculinity and femininity are often simply regarded as antitheses of one another[*] (Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008 [1995]). This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to refer to a man as demonstrating feminine-typical behaviour or a woman as demonstrating masculine-typical behaviour. From this perspective, men demonstrate masculinity regardless of whatever form their behaviour takes. Hence, the constructs of men and masculinity are seen as inextricably linked, as are the constructs of women and femininity, despite identified overlaps in the social practices of men and women (Palan et al., 1999; Vogel et al., 2003).

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[*] The conception of a sex and gender binary is challenged by transgender theorists (see: Halberstam, 1998)

One way of avoiding such confusion would be to clarify the concept of masculinity and focus instead on the hegemony of men, as suggested by Hearn (2004 & 2006). Another way might be to view masculinity and femininity as dominant social representations which press definitions of sex-specific conduct, but also view social agents as autonomous entities. In this way, men's and women's behaviours are not necessarily indicative of gendered practice at all times and within all social contexts (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). Furthermore, men could be viewed to demonstrate feminine behaviour, and women masculine behaviour.

Over recent years, there has been a shift towards discourse approaches to masculinity which, in part, appears to have reflected a wider post-structuralist turn. Many of these theorists have argued that men demonstrate a multiplicity of masculinities, with different masculinities being demonstrated by the same man (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Demetriou, 2001; Speer, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Sheff, 2006), and masculinities being formed intersectionally with sexuality, class, age, and so on (See: Hearn, 2011). As many of these are concerned with the power men exert over women within society, there is a tendency for such authors to align themselves with hegemonic masculinity approaches. This has resulted in post-structuralist and social constructionist adaptations of the theory (Hearn, 2006). The notion of multiple masculinities will be discussed within the following section.

2.5 Multiple masculinities

Whereas Connell (1995/2008) spoke of hegemonic, complicit, marginalised and subordinated varieties of masculinity, authors adopting discursive approaches have tended to argue that individual men exhibit multiple masculinities (Wetherell & Edley, 2003). These are suggested to be fluid and under constant modification (Gough & Peace, 2000; Peace, 2003; Allen, 2005). In addition, meta-analytic reviews have found that men and women frequently exhibit behaviours stereotypically incongruent with their sex (Palan et al., 1999), and that their conduct is indistinguishable ninety-eight percent of the

time (Vogel et al., 2003). As such, critics have argued that any rigid, unitary definition of masculinity is problematic (Goodey, 1997; Hood-Williams, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Paechter, 2006). The following section will critique the notion of multiple masculinities. This will include some further discussion of hegemonic masculinity, regarding its more recent post-structuralist adaptations which draw links between the theories (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Demetriou, 2001; Speer, 2001).

To varying degrees, a number of contemporary masculinity authors have assumed ontological leanings towards relativism (Goodey, 1997; Speer, 2001). Among them, some authors assume that reality exists but is impossible to reach, whereas others adopt an altogether anti-realist perspective (Burr, 2007). In those cases when a relativist perspective is adopted, no attempts are made to discover any truth underlying discourse (Burr, 2007). Contrasting the notion that discourse provides neutral descriptions of an individual's reality, it is assumed to serve specific social functions (Gough and Peace, 2000; Peace, 2003; Wetherell et al., 2003). Men's discursive demonstrations of masculinity are seen as temporally and contextually influenced constructions of the 'self' (Wetherell & Edley, 1999 & 2003). In any given situation, a man is viewed to harbour the potential to portray himself using any one of a multiplicity of contradictory discursive positions (Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). During interactions, circumstances could be seen to influence or appropriate a man's construction of a masculine identity, which could be modified or reconstructed in accordance with the flow of a conversation (Gough & Peace, 2000; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Peace, 2003). In this way, the interlocutors are said to play a role in the constructions of each others' gender identities during the meaning making process (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003).

From this perspective, then, masculinity is not seen as a unitary conception that can be defined as representing a fixed number of behaviours (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Demetriou, 2001; Speer, 2001; Whitehead, 2003; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Such, definitions of masculinity are criticised for their failure to represent the far more complex nature of the social world and the changing motives and functions of self

presentation (Wetherell & Edley, 1999 & 2003). Authors, such as Goodey (1997), have provided definitions of masculinity consistent with this flexible understanding; for example:

> '*Masculinity, as experienced by the individual, is best understood as being anywhere on a continuum from what is traditionally perceived as feminine or masculine*' (Goodey, 1997, Page 403).

From this perspective, then, men's multiple behaviours, regardless of what they are, can be regarded as constituting demonstrations of masculinity. Arguably, however, if men's identities are performed to serve specific social functions (Gough & Peace, 2000; Speer, 2001; Peace, 2003; Paechter, 2006), only some of these functions are likely to constitute attempts to demonstrate masculinity (Whitehead, 2005). After all, it can be argued that men and women will not spend every part of every day using their social practices to define themselves as gendered individuals (Maccoby, 2000). Practices in some social contexts might be performed to serve different social functions. As such, studies which focus on men's multiple identities might be failing to retain their focus on the actual qualities of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000). For example, if a man does not experience any sense of masculinity from his role as a husband or father, it might be problematic to regard them as being expressions of masculinity.

Since negative reinforcement is a socialisation strategy only employed when sex-typical gender boundaries are crossed (McHale et al., 2003), it may be that men only attempt to demonstrate their masculinity when they perceive it to be under threat (McHale et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). This is consistent with the argument of Vogel et al. (2003), suggesting that men only gravitate towards stereotypical masculine behaviours when experiencing emotional vulnerability. Alternatively, viewing men's broad spectrum of identities across the social and domestic spheres as multiple forms of masculinity (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Allen, 2005) could be seen to make the concept redundant. Arguably, in such studies the actual focus is on men and not masculinity (Hood-Williams, 2001); an approach recommended by Hearn (2004 & 2006).

The problem is that to define which social practices constitute demonstrations of masculinity would contradict the very foundations on which a relativist informed theory is based. Yet, despite their theoretical fragmentation of the concepts of masculinity and femininity, some authors adopting this approach revert to operationalising them as antitheses of one another (Smiler, 2004; Paechter, 2006; Sheff, 2006). This paradoxically prevents an abolition of the gender binary. By maintaining this binary as opposing configurations of gender practice, but failing to define masculinity and femininity as distinguishable constructs, this conceptualisation becomes ambiguous. Moreover, if masculinity is viewed as being inextricably linked to men and only comes into being as an antithesis of femininity, how does one identify or investigate it when it is demonstrated during relations between men in the absence of women?

Despite the insistence of some authors that the focus should remain on relations between men and women (Carrigan et al., 1985; Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006), others have suggested that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). This does not necessarily mean that the power relations between men and women have to be overlooked. For instance, studies by Cowan and Mills (2004) and Hearn and Whitehead (2006) suggest a link between men's vulnerabilities, as emerging from relations between men, and men's violence to known women ('domestic' violence). Thus, rather than 'domestic' violence being the direct result of men demonstrating their masculinity during relations between men and women, it could be the result of them demonstrating their masculinity during relations between men and displacing their vulnerability onto a weaker target (Cowan & Mills, 2004).

An anti-realist perspective makes it problematic to talk about men harbouring relatively stable common notions of successful and unsuccessful masculinity. As such, it is incompatible with explanations of how large numbers of men demonstrate consistent notions regarding which men do or do not meet an approved standard. Hence, when

applying this perspective to hegemonic masculinity, it seems incongruent to speak of one variety of masculinity being celebrated over other varieties. Yet, the findings of a number of investigations suggest that among groups of men common patterns emerge regarding specific practices which are celebrated and specific practices which are subordinated (Anderson, 2001; Benjamin, 2001; Reay, 2002; Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007). These patterns have also been identified when the groups comprise of white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources (New, 2001; Hall, 2002). In this sense, then, the concept is limited because it fails to explain those common patterns of men's behaviour that cannot be attributed to the subordination of women and marginalised and subordinated masculinities at a given point in history.

2.6　　　Discussion

Essentialist, traditional psychodynamic, and socialisation theories of masculinity offer explanations for men's identified common patterns of behaviour. For instance, men have been found to demonstrate low affectivity (Bennett, 2007). One branch of biological essentialism might suggest that this is partially due to high levels of testosterone during sensitive periods of prenatal brain development impacting on postnatal behaviour (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). From a Jungian psychoanalytic perspective, this might be seen as a boy's healthy adjustment brought about by his social circumstances enabling him to identify with the same-sex archetypal image (Segal, 2004). Alternatively, a direct socialisation approach would be likely to explain this common pattern as being brought about by parents, teachers etc. discouraging boys' demonstrations of emotion (Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005).

As these approaches tend to define masculinity as a specific identity in itself, they refer to a conceptualisation that contrasts with femininity, but can be identified in its absence. For instance, masculinity might be linked to inhibited affectivity, contrasting a notion of femininity as linked to uninhibited affectivity (Bennett, 2007). This still means that men can be identified as transcending or demonstrating their emotions in the absence of women. Also, from a socialisation perspective, when making such a distinction between

the conceptions of masculinity and femininity, these distinctions can be seen to pertain to pre-established social representations (Stewart & Usher, 2007). In this sense, it is the construction of the concept 'masculinity' that might pertain to stoicism, and the construction of the concept 'femininity' that might pertain to affectivity. Hence, the nature, or lived experiences of men and women can be viewed as separate and distinct from these constructs. A man can be emotional and a woman can be stoic. However, this perspective holds that socialisation pressures are likely to constrain the behaviours of men and women in accordance with gender stereotypes (Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005).

Distinct definitions of masculinity can be seen as conducive to investigations focusing on how it is demonstrated by men during relations between men in the absence of women. However, they can be criticised for underplaying the complexity of the social world. In particular, they are limited in their explanations of the multiple and contradictory identities individual men appear to perform, as identified by post-structuralist informed discourse approaches. To varying degrees, they also fail to challenge the unequal proportions of power afforded to masculinity and femininity. The subordination of femininity and some varieties of masculinity is at the heart of the concept of hegemonic masculinity proposed by Connell and her associates (Carrigan et al., 1985), and the more recent post-structural adaptations of this approach.

In order to be flexible enough to account for the changing strategies of men that are aimed at legitimating patriarchy in the face of continuous struggle (Hearn, 2004), hegemonic masculinity approaches avoid distinct definitions of masculinity. Masculinities are considered to be neither singular nor fixed (Hood-Williams, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Paechter, 2006). As such, authors aligning themselves with these approaches would be unlikely to view inhibited affectivity as a tenet of masculinity, let alone attempt to explain it as an attribute that is typical of men's behaviour.

I have argued that the conception of hegemonic masculinity, as documented by Carrigan et al. (1985), offers little explanation regarding men's common patterns of behaviour emerging during relations between white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources. Moreover, there is a tendency for these authors to see masculinity and men as being inextricably linked. In particular, authors adopting post-structural discourse approaches tend to present men's behaviours at all times and in all places as demonstrations of various types of masculinity. As such, a man's demonstrations of affectivity would be viewed as but one of multiple versions of masculinity, rather than a demonstration of femininity. Likewise, a woman's demonstration of stoicism would be considered but one of multiple versions of femininity. In effect, this means that masculinity and men have come to mean the same thing, as have women and femininity. This can be seen to oppose the notion that masculinity and femininity are socially constructed conceptions which act as exemplars for sex-appropriate conduct.

Alternatively, some authors have suggested that not all of men's social identities constitute demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; Whitehead, 2005). Thus, because negative reinforcement socialisation pressures only come into effect when sex-typical gender boundaries are crossed (McHale et al., 2003), it might be that men only gravitate to the masculine stereotype with which they have been socialised when they perceive their masculinity to be under threat (McHale et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005; Sabo, 2011). According to the aforementioned findings of Houtte (2004), Phillips (2005), and Kane (2006), this perceived threat is likely to emerge during boys/men's relations between boys/men.

To avoid neglecting the disproportions of power afforded to men over women, Carrigan et al. (1985) recommended the focus of gender research be on relations between men and women. This notion is countered by literature suggesting that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007), and that women are used as a commodity to regulate these relations (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006).

In summary, a number of conceptions have emerged during this chapter. These are that: (i) masculinity and femininity constitute socially constructed stereotypes which are separate from the apparent nature of men and women; (ii) men can sometimes be seen to demonstrate behaviour consistent with stereotypical femininity, and women consistent with stereotypical masculinity; (iii) not all of men's multiple identities constitute demonstrations of masculinity; and (iv) men predominantly demonstrate masculinity during relations between men. These conceptions are relevant for my research questions, as presented in chapter one. More specifically, if masculinity is viewed to constitute a socially constructed representation, it can be discussed in terms of it influencing men to demonstrate behaviours which they otherwise might avoid. Thus, common patterns of men's behaviour are likely to emerge if men are socialised with, and harbour, a similar representation of stereotypical masculinity. Moreover, if men only feel pressure to demonstrate their masculinity within certain social contexts, this suggests that the research should focus on what constitutes a demonstration of masculinity and the contexts in which such performances are activated. Any identities men do not consider as aspects of their masculinity will not be regarded as such. Finally, if men experience increased pressure to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men; such relations are likely to be ideal for investigating their common patterns of behaviour.

Chapter 3

Towards a Critical Realist Analysis of Masculinity

Critical realism contends that a single reality exists but that social representations of it are incomplete and imprecise, thus forming a 'transitive dimension of knowledge' (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Transitive structures are viewed as creating the illusion that they are the only true ways of perceiving reality, making them seem justified and inevitable (Stewart & Usher, 2007). As such, they carry the potential to impact on social behaviour (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). Despite their unique perceptions of the world, agents are assumed to form similar interpretations of transitive structures and are able to act on these in ways that can be perceived as such by others (Dobson, 2001). Transitive structures are after all reliant on society perpetuating them through processes of reconstruction, and as such, are likely to alter over periods of time (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001). For critical realists, the activation of an agent's behaviour is seen to be context specific, with differing settings being linked to differing representations of appropriate conduct (Carspecken, 1996; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Zembylas, 2006). Moreover, agents maintain the freedom to behave in novel ways and employ different behavioural strategies to meet the same objective (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Therefore, the critical realist is not concerned with predicting behaviour, but instead attempts to acquire a rich understanding of transitive structures and the contexts in which they seem to be activated (Willig, 1999). This chapter will demonstrate why critical realism is appropriate for investigating men's common patterns of behaviour when assuming a non-biological essentialist position.

The chapter will be divided into four sections. The first section will focus on the processes and construction of masculinity as a socially pre-established representation of reality. It will look at similarities between models of successful masculinity constructed and perpetuated by myths (Johansson, 1990; Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Campbell, 1993 [1949]) and common patterns of heterosexual men's behaviour identified in the literature

(Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). This will be followed by a section providing a more detailed exploration of the common patterns of men's behaviour that were outlined in chapter one. It will be argued that these common patterns can be linked to a dominant masculine norm which revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability. The third section of the chapter will look at similarities and differences that have been identified in the behaviours of working and middle-class men. The final section will focus on the contexts in which men seem likely to experience the most pressure to demonstrate the transcendence of vulnerability. It will be argued that men are most likely to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm when perceiving threat to their masculine status (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Sabo, 2011); such threats predominantly emerging during relations between men (Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011).

3.1 The role of myth in the construction and reconstruction of a dominant masculine norm

Although this thesis will not attempt to provide a comprehensive explanation regarding the origins of the dominant masculine norm, an argument can be made that myths have contributed to processes by which stereotypical masculinity has been perpetuated. When defining 'myth', the Collins English Dictionary (1999) states, "An unproved or false collective belief that is used to justify a social institution". Segal (2004) suggests that, regardless of whether it is true or false, or read symbolically or literally, a myth is fundamentally a story. Moreover, such stories pertain to personalities either set in the past, present, or future (Segal, 2004). However, in order to be considered a myth, Segal (2004) pertained that a story has to be held firmly by adherents and be perpetuated through continued reconstruction. These rather loose definitions of myth are consistent with my use of it within this section. Thus, when referring to 'myth', my focus will go beyond traditional/classical mythology, also looking at stories, and reconstructed versions of them, that are told to convey a particular representation of social reality. More specifically, as the common patterns of men's behaviour are the focus of this thesis, myth

will be explored in relation to stories (traditional and contemporary) which can be viewed to transmit a similar notion of 'successful masculinity'.

This section will begin with a brief focus on classical myths. Despite these appearing random, unconnected and meaningless, Levi-Strauss (1978/2008) suggested that all countries have them and, under close examination, they seem to be variations of the same story. Similarly, Campbell (1949/1993) argued that different mythologies from around the world can be broken down into the same account of a 'hero's journey'. From this perspective, a boy's passage to manhood is depicted through the stages of departure, initiation and return[*], detailing a journey resulting in his rebirth as a hero. Regardless of whether the hero is depicted as a tyrant or saint, lover or fighter, Campbell (1949/1993) argued that myths construct a single representation of successful masculinity. This representation associates masculinity with strength, independence, heterosexuality, and the transcendence of pain and emotions (Campbell, 1993 [1949]). In short, this can be characterized as the transcendence of vulnerability. According to Campbell (1949/1993), female characters in myths take peripheral roles, either as goddesses assisting, or as temptresses trying to thwart, the hero, or as his prize at the end of the journey. By way of explaining similarities between myths, Campbell (1949/1993) drew on the psychodynamic theory of Jung (as discussed in chapter two), seeing them as metaphorical representations of shared unconscious archetypes. Thus, when interpreted metaphorically, these analogies were suggested to resonate with listeners, providing them with a means of experiencing the unconscious and informing their behaviour within given situations (Campbell, 1993 [1949]).

However, there is a body of scholarship that challenges this interpretation and explanation of myth. Some authors, such as Sjoo and Mor (1976/1991) Christ (2004) and Stone (1978/2005), have argued that female characters were of central importance in myths and religions that pre-date those of ancient Greece and Western Asia. This theory is based on pictorial and sculptural depictions seemingly representing God as a woman

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[*] According to Campbell (1972, 1995), myths sometimes charter the stages in different orders or focus on a single stage of the journey.

that were created during the late Stone Age (between 10,000 and 32,000 B.C.E.). During this period women are thought, by these authors, to have been revered for their importance as child bearers (Sjoo & Mor, 1991 [1976]; Christ, 2004; Stone, 2005 [1978]). Men's later dominance over women and the esteemed tenets of masculinity, as depicted within many classical myths, might have emerged as people began farming, resulting in man to man conflicts over land (Sjoo & Mor, 1991 [1976]). Therefore, rather than representations of unconscious archetypes, it has been argued that myths developed by men are likely to reflect patriarchal interests (Cabezali et al., 1990; Humm, 1995; Christ, 2004). They can be viewed to construct artificial models of gendered behaviour which, through their continued reconstruction, are internalised by men and women as natural (Christ, 2004). This 'false reality' therefore alienates sexed individuals, removing their freedom to discover fortuitous 'selves' independent of their sexed bodies, thus maintaining patriarchal privilege (Cabezali et al., 1990). In this way, such classical myths can also be viewed to exhibit men's vulnerability. Humm (1995) argued that the construction and reconstruction of myths which situate men in positions of dominance over women paradoxically show patriarchy to be vulnerable, requiring constant social indoctrination.

Authors, such as Johansson (1990), Samuel and Thompson (1990) and Malinowski (1926/1997), concur that myths constitute an effective means of communicating the past and maintaining its conventions and institutions. Myths, from this perspective, play a role in the functioning of a society, creating the illusion that pre-established representations of social reality are justified and deserved (Cabezali et al., 1990; Malinowski, 1997 [1926]). So, despite gravitations to these norms contradicting the best interests of many individuals, they are likely to meet the approval of their peers and seem self-satisfying (Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Malinowski, 1997 [1926]).

However, social representations of reality (the transitive dimension of knowledge) are likely to alter over time, thus being reflected in differing patterns of social behaviour (Averill, 2006; Stewart & Usher, 2007). These transitions are highlighted by authors such as Cohen [M] (2005), Whitehead (2006), and Brown (2010), in reference to the changing

definitions of masculinity/manliness from different periods in history. Whitehead (2006), for instance, documented that the Victorian and Edwardian conceptions of masculinity were characteristic of emotional and physical invulnerability, whereas Henry VIII set a standard in which demonstrations of emotion were typical. In reality, it is likely that the identities of men in medieval times, like those of today, would have been multiple and often contradictory (Karras, 2003). Moreover, hierarchies of men were more pronounced within medieval times (Karras, 2003). Nevertheless, like the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, medieval myths, such as those of King Arthur and Robin Hood, can also be viewed to promote a notion of chivalrous/heroic masculinity (Hadley, 1999; Karras, 2003). These were likely to define and perpetuate a model of masculinity according to which boys would be socialised throughout that period (Hadley, 1999).

Moving beyond classical and medieval mythology, studies have found that groups of men construct and reconstruct stories to promote a specific representation of successful masculinity. Exploring the world of Swedish lumberjacks, Johansson (1990) demonstrated how men's construction and reconstruction of myths plays a role in perpetuating the dominant representation of masculinity. Considering their poor incomes, months of isolation, and the dangers of their work, the only real advantage of the lumberjacks' industry was the status it earned them among the other men in their camp (Johansson, 1990). Although a man's lower output only affected his own income, he would be ostracised by his fellow workers for being weak and lacking stamina (Johansson, 1990). As no women were present within the camps, this could be seen as an example of men policing and demonstrating masculinity during relations between men. According to Johansson (1990), the men constructed myths about legendary lumberjacks who could transcend both physical and emotional vulnerability. This mythic 'quintessential lumberjack' could fell twice as many trees per day as any other man, demonstrated no fear of the job nor rival men, could physically overpower all those who challenged him, could out-drink anyone, and so on (Johansson, 1990). Such myths were passed down over generations of loggers, arguably as a means of perpetuating a pre-established representation of masculinity (Johansson, 1990).

Some literature suggests that, in contemporary society, myths are constructed by legions of schoolboys as a means of perpetuating a common notion of successful masculinity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Nayak, 2003). These tend to be exaggerated accounts of boys committing daring acts of rebellion against authority or winning fights despite being greatly out-numbered (Kehily & Nayak, 1997). In most cases, the boys transmitting these myths have not in fact witnessed the event first hand or even met the central character (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Nayak, 2003). Boys who resist what Jordan (1995) terms 'the warrior/hero narrative' - by not challenging school authority and actively avoiding fights - suffer ostracism and the loss of masculine status (Jordan, 1995; Nayak, 2003).

Similarly, when researching young and adult male gypsies, Levinson and Sparkes (2003) found that mythic storytelling played a role in perpetuating the transcendence of physical and emotional invulnerability as the key facet of successful masculinity. These myths spoke of heroic gypsy men, past and present, fearing no man and hospitalizing aggressive rivals. Descriptions of the wounds they inflicted tended to be particularly graphic, and on those occasions when the speaker positioned himself as the central character, scars were often shown as proof of his own endurance/masculinity (Levinson & Sparkes, 2003).

However, myths have not only been linked to men's violent and aggressive ways of demonstrating the transcendence of vulnerability. For example, a number of authors have linked them to men demonstrating their masculinity through leadership and management (Kaye, 1995; Clark and Salaman, 1998; Sinclair, 2005 [1998]). Some authors have documented that management is commonly associated with toughness, having control over others (Sinclair, 1998/2005), and being a 'man' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2008). According to Sinclair (1998/2005), the quest for leadership enables a man to demonstrate his masculinity in consistence with the model of successful masculinity communicated by the Classical Odysseus myth (Homer's Odyssey). Masculinity, in both cases, is demonstrated through the endurance of hardship and an ability to remain steadfast in the face of adversity (Sinclair, 2005 [1998]). For example, Clark and Salaman (1998) documented that senior managers often employ management gurus whose common practice is to help them identify with hero myths. Via a mentor's utilisation of the hero

myth, the manager is coached to convince himself and others that he harbours the necessary qualities (Clark & Salaman, 1998), consistent with those underlying the Odysseus myth as sited above (Sinclair, 2005 [1998]). Similarly, Kaye (1995) argued that, within organisations, a manager's identification with the hero myth is commonplace. Furthermore, that the telling of myths which construct heroic management role models serve as an aspiration for young executives in their quest for managerial positions (Kaye, 1995). Arguably therefore, this is likely to perpetuate a common notion among these men that successful masculinity constitutes the transcendence of vulnerability.

The media is another arena in which masculine hero-myths are played out in contemporary society. According to Segal (2004), the cinema takes a predominant role in constructing present day mythic heroes, particularly in the form of actors most renowned for starring in action films. Like the telling of myths in pre-cinematic history, films have been argued to have a strong influence over social representations of reality (Panayiotou, 2010). Panayiotou (2010) critically analysed several Hollywood films which were based on the theme of management. These were, again, found to construct a strong link between management and masculinity, and position endurance and invulnerability as its defining standard (Panayiotou, 2010). In addition, Panayiotou (2010) suggest that such films could be seen to follow the stages of the 'hero's journey', as identified by Campbell (1949/1993) in his analysis of classical myths. In this sense, the main character saves society and becomes a hero after a managing to successfully complete a difficult journey of self discovery (Panayiotou, 2010).

In contemporary society, television and the cinema are a main source through which classical and medieval myths are reconstructed (Segal, 2004). Many films and television dramas retell the myths of ancient Greece, King Arthur, Robin Hood, and so on (see: Harty, 1999; Olton, 2000; Hardwick & Porter, 2010). A number of authors, including Alleyne (2010) and Batty (2010), also argue that superhero films such as 'Iron man' perpetuate the association between masculinity and invulnerability. In addition, Varney (2002) suggested that, along with the male-oriented toys they promote, films aimed at male audiences often forge a link between men and machinery. Robots, Transformers,

Androids, Cyborgs, machine armour, and so on, were argued to marry with a representation that is already dominant within society, promoting masculinity as being characteristic of invulnerability, invincibility, and the absence of emotions (Varney, 2002).

During this section I have presented an argument that myths have played a role in perpetuating a dominant stereotypical construction of masculinity. Underlying this perspective are the notions that: (i) there is a socially constructed representation of masculinity that prevails over numerous other constructions of it; (ii) myths contribute to the construction and reconstruction of this dominant representation of masculinity; (iii); although an agent's perceptions of the world are unique, they are influenced by socially pre-established representations of reality; and (iv) agents are able to form a common recognition of such representations so to be of some agreement when discerning whether or not they are manifested in a person's behaviour. In critical realist terms, then, the dominant representation of masculinity could be regarded as a transitive structure, and myths an aspect of its construction and reconstruction.

3.2 Common patterns of men's behaviour

Building on the brief discussion in chapter one, this section will offer some examples of the common patterns of men's behaviour as identified in the literature. These are not assumed to suggest that masculinity constitutes a fixed identity represented by all men at all times, but rather that the varied social practices of men sometimes appear to reflect the same socially pre-established representation of masculinity (Phillips, 2007). This is characteristic of the assumption that not all of men's identities are performed with the purpose of demonstrating their masculinity (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). Rather than viewing men and masculinity as being one and the same thing, this position is based on the notion that it is only when a man perceives his masculinity to be under threat that he gravitates to the dominant masculine norm (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005; Sabo, 2011); and that such threats predominantly emerge during relations between men (Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Reay,

2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Cowan & Mills, 2004; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011).

Despite men's masculine performances being observed to be complex, fragmented and contradictory (Goodey, 1997; Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Hood-Williams, 2001; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Paechter, 2006; Swain, 2006), the literature still identifies common patterns of men's behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Rather than actual concrete modes of conduct, these can be viewed to be a variety of verbal and behavioural practices indicative of a transcendence of vulnerability; for instance, demonstrations of mental and physical strength, independence, and a transcendence of pain and emotions (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). For example, focusing on youths living in US inner cities, Anderson (2001) argued that common patterns of behaviour derive from men's intentions to command respect during relations between men. He documented that men use their discourse, gait and demeanour to demonstrate an ability to transcend vulnerability via the tenets of strength, independence, and so on. However, these performances were not suggested to reflect biological realities (Anderson, 2001). Instead, their aim was conveyed as a means of hiding underlying vulnerabilities and fears that perceived rivals will expose their individual demonstrations of masculinity as inadequate (Anderson, 2001). In this sense, the men observed in the study were viewed to harbour and gravitate to a common representation of successful masculinity similar to that communicated by the aforementioned myths (Cabezali et al., 1990; Johansson, 1990; Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Campbell 1993 [1949]).

3.2.1 The violations and violences of men

Some of the literature indicates a link between men's criminal behaviours and the transcendence of vulnerability. These studies suggest that crime is sometimes used by individual men to demonstrate fearlessness, and as a means of exerting power over others (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006). Despite cultural variations in the types of offence most frequently committed (Clare, 2001), the strong relationship between men and violation

and violence spans many countries (Clare, 2001; Walklate, 2004). In Britain, reflecting the broader problem, men constitute the main perpetrators of murder, physical and sexual violence, burglary, vandalism, and white collar crime (Delamont, 2001). In addition to the disproportionately larger amounts of criminal violations committed by men as opposed to women (Collier, 1998; Clare, 2001; Walklate, 2004), the offences committed by men also tend to be more violent and on a larger scale (Clare, 2001; Walklate, 2004).

A number of theories have been put forward to explain men's propensity to commit criminal acts. Hall (2002), for instance, argued that theft can be a means by which marginalised men obtain the possessions which, owing to their failures in education and legitimate employment, have eluded them. However, this argument fails to explain why marginalised women commit far less burglaries than marginalised men (Collier, 1998); and, furthermore, why white collar crime is so rife, despite being committed by men in possession of material resources (Delamont, 2001). Dobash et al. (2000) and Benson et al. (2003), on the other hand, suggest that men use violence as a means of maintaining their position of dominance over women. Nevertheless, as men are twice as likely to be the victims of violence, other than that which is termed 'domestic' (British Crime Survey 2006-07), this argument fails to explain why men's aggression is so often asserted against men rather than women (Hall, 2002). Again, crime statistics are indicative of the notion that men frequently demonstrate their masculinity in relations between men (Whitehead, 2005; Phillips, 2007).

Some authors have suggested that men's violence is triggered by macro political and cultural threats (Hague & Malos, 1998; Zosky, 1999; Hall, 2002) and micro threats during one to one interactions and intimate relationships (Cowan and Mills, 2004; Carlson & Worden, 2005; Felson & Pare, 2005; Hester, 2005; Logan et al., 2006). This theory, however, fails to explain why only small percentages of men turn to violation and violence when, throughout their lives, most men will have their masculinity threatened (Hood-Williams, 2001).

Despite their differing approaches, Collier (1998) and Messeschmidt (1999) suggested that men's bodies are inextricably linked with the ways they define their masculinity and, as such, are associated with men's high levels of violation and violence. Different physiques, through their appearance and physical capabilities, facilitate or constrain men's popularity with other men and women, their sporting abilities, and general efficacy (Messeschmidt, 1999; Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000). Therefore, as a result of these constraining effects, a man might assume that violation or violence is his only, or easiest, way to achieve efficacy (Messerschmidt, 1999). Arguably, however, without focussing on the actual criteria by which these men are attempting to define their masculinity, this theory still fails to explain why men, and not women, are the main contributors of violation and violence.

Although different men commit very different types of violation (Clare, 2001), Delamont (2001) suggested that they are usually distinguishable from the offences committed by women because they reflect 'core masculine values' (Delamont, 2001, Page 69). Thus, consistent with the other common patterns of men's behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), these criminal practices are not fixed, but can be viewed to demonstrate masculinity via the transcendence of vulnerability. In other words, as attributes such as strength and fearlessness are reflected in the violations committed by men (Delamont, 2001), it can be argued that the men committing them are demonstrating masculine identities which reflect the same representation.

3.2.2   Physical aggression

Physical aggression has also been identified as a common pattern of men's behaviour (Carlo et al., 1999; Weisbuch et al., 1999; Archer et al., 2001; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; Graham & Wells, 2002; Reay, 2002; Errante, 2003; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). Studies suggest that, other than 'domestic' violence, men's demonstrations of physical aggression usually occur during relations between men (Graham & Wells,

2002; British Crime Survey 2006/07; Phillips, 2007). This has been argued to result from men acting as rivals, attempting to expose one another's vulnerabilities during competitions for masculine status (Graham & Wells, 2002; Phillips, 2007), and has been linked to common patterns of fighting, manslaughter and murder (Graham & Wells, 2002). In contrast, men's violence towards intimate partners has been theorised by some authors to constitute the displacement of vulnerabilities emerging during relations between men (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006).

Some authors have argued that men's physical aggression is a result of boys and girls being socialised with differing pre-established gender norms (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Carlo et al., 1999; Benjamin, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006; Phillips, 2007). For instance, Tallandini (2004) and Giles and Heyman (2005) found that children of pre-school age consistently associated physical aggression with boys rather than girls. Parents have also been found to condone and encourage boys' demonstrations of aggression, while dissuading the same behaviour in girls (Grieshaber, 1998; Carlo et al., 1999; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; McHale et al., 2001; Errante, 2003; McHale et al., 2003). This trend might relate to findings suggesting that men are more likely than women to express positive attitudes towards the use of physical aggression (Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001). Furthermore, these attitudes are theoretically likely to materialise in the actual physical behaviours of boys and men (Carlo et al., 1999; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). Men's common patterns of physical aggression are, therefore, likely to create the illusion they have origins in biological reality (Graham & Wells, 2002; Phillips, 2007; Jagger, 2008).

Research suggests that adolescent boys often attempt to distinguish their behaviours from those they consider feminine-typical via an emphasis on strength and aggression (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Benjamin, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003). Men with fewer social and material resources are suggested to use physical aggression as a means of demonstrating their masculinity (Graham & Wells, 2002; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007; Phillips, 2007). Authors, such as Messerschmidt (1993), Bourgois (1996) and Gadd and Jefferson (2007), have argued that this is because

marginalised groups of men lack the options through which to demonstrate their masculinity in non-physically aggressive ways. Some of the literature also suggests that men's condemnation of those men actively avoiding physical conflict is common practice (Reay, 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Phillips, 2005). Men failing to provide adequate demonstrates of masculinity often fall victim to the abuse and ostracism of their peers (Phillips, 2007).

3.2.3   Discursive practices

Despite the identified complex and contradictory nature of men's discursive constructions (Wetherell and Edley, 1999; Allen, 2005), research evidence also suggests that common patterns emerge in men's verbal practices (Moynihan, 1998; Light & Kirk, 2000; Levinson & Sparks, 2003; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). These common patterns revolve around men using speech to demonstrate the transcendence of physical and emotional vulnerability (Moynihan, 1998; Light & Kirk, 2000; Levinson & Sparks, 2003; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). According to Benjamin (2001), many men also define themselves as strong, fearless and independent regardless of their body image or physical capabilities. Again, such findings could be argued to suggest that men harbour and gravitate to the aforementioned representation communicated by myths (Cabezali et al., 1990; Johansson, 1990; Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Campbell 1993 [1949]).

There are a number of empirical studies that focus on men's speech patterns in relation to the transcendence of vulnerability. Investigating male bus drivers and their dealings with aggressive and potentially dangerous male passengers, Bishop et al. (2009) identified common patterns in the ways the respondents emphasised their independence, fearlessness, and physical invulnerability. Underlying this finding was the notion that none of the male respondents wanted to expose their physical or emotional vulnerabilities. Thus, a commonality was suggested to emerge in the sense of them perceiving that to expose vulnerability would compromise their masculinity (Bishop et al., 2009). Similarly, Delamont (2001) and Phillips (2005 & 2007) argued that men

demonstrating fears of physical confrontation with rival men are often negatively regarded by their peers for not conforming to a socially pre-established masculine norm. Furthermore, this tendency for men to hide their fears may explain why men, although being the main victims of crime (British Crime Survey 2006-07), deny fearing it (Day et al., 2003).

In a further example, Bennett (2007), identified consistencies in the ways widowed men, regardless of their social class, suppressed their emotions and denied any breakdowns caused by their loss. Instead, the respondents in this study were interpreted to construct themselves through discourses which focused on independence, rationality and self control. According to Bennett (2007), when talking about emotional experiences, men place emphasis on such qualities in order to hide any evidence of vulnerability as this would, in their view, expose them as being inadequate in their gender role. It could be argued that these discourses were nothing more than social performances (Speer, 2001; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). However, as the transcendence of vulnerability was identified as a common practice through which the men demonstrated their masculinity (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), this suggests that they were discursive gravitations to the same socially pre-established representation.

Another common pattern of men's discursive behaviour that is identified in the literature is the emphasis on heterosexuality and sexual prowess (Gough & Edwards, 1998; Redman et al., 2002; Cowan & Mills, 2004; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Hatchell, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Dean, 2011; Messner, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). Among dominant groups of men, heterosexuality has been suggested to constitute the most celebrated form of masculinity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Connell, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Kehily, 2001; Redman et al., 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Plummer, 2006; Dean, 2011; Messner, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). According to the literature, heterosexual men, during relations between men, use heterosexual sex talk to regulate one another's behaviours in accordance with a common representation of successful masculinity (Messner, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). Heterosexual sex talk is also used by some men to demonstrate individual gravitations towards heterosexual masculinity, or

to conceal personally felt inadequacies (Kehily, 2001; Pascoe, 2011). As such, heterosexual performances were suggested play a role in the ways men establish status among men within masculine hierarchies (Kehily, 2001; Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Hatchell, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Richardson, 2007).

The value men place on heterosexuality seems to concur with the masculine exemplar which Campbell (1949/1993) suggested was communicated by myths. Additional to women often being the hero's prize at the end of his journey; mythic heroes were suggested to frequently find perfection or become whole when united with a goddess (Campbell, 1993 [1949]). Furthermore, before becoming heroes, their tests of character often involved them being tempted to stray from their journey through an overbearing attraction to a female seductress (Campbell, 1993 [1949]). This depiction of women as seductresses, also apparent in biblical stories such as Samson and Delilah, can be viewed to warn men that their attractions to women should remain physical, not emotional (Campbell, 1993 [1949]). This might explain why men, during relations between men, commonly present love and compassion as a weakness; emotional vulnerability emerging as a threat to a man's masculine status (Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005).

In addition to common patterns of men demonstrating their masculinity through an emphasis on heterosexuality, homophobia is commonly used by men to socially disgrace those men whose masculine performances poorly approximate the hegemonic norm (Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Plumber, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Richardson, 2007; Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). Statistically, one in three gay men have suffered physical assaults perpetrated by heterosexual men (Delamont, 2001), suggesting that men's discursive homophobia often spills into physical behaviour. According to Rust (1996), internalised homophobia can inhibit people from identifying themselves as non-heterosexual. Therefore, bisexuals who live heterosexual lives and choose not to disclose their bisexuality can avoid homophobia and reap heterosexual privilege (Blasingame, 1995). However, identifying oneself as bisexual can result in exclusion and prejudice from both the heterosexual and gay/lesbian communities (See Blasingame, 1995). Beyond issues of sexuality, homophobia is also documented as being used as a means by which men,

during relations between men, single out and ostracise those whose behaviours fail to reflect the common representation of successful masculinity (Jordan, 1995; Plummer, 2006; Pascoe, 2011). This includes boys disgracing peers who reveal weakness (Pascoe, 2011), avoid masculine-typical pursuits such as competitive sports (Plummer, 2006), and are recognised by other males to display stereotypical feminine behaviour (Plummer, 2006; Pascoe, 2011).

Homophobia, as a common pattern of men's behaviour, has also been identified as a means by which heterosexual men consolidate their own masculinity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Kehily, 2001; Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). As such, the widespread use of homophobia suggests that heterosexual men, during relations between men, are in a constant struggle to reaffirm their heterosexuality (Light & Kirk, 2000; Allen, 2005; Plumber, 2006; Richardson, 2007; Messner, 2011). Arguably, then, to appear 'masculine' a man's heterosexuality must be whole and uncompromised by any sense of stereotypical femininity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Swain, 2002; Dean, 2011). Therefore, some researchers have theorised that attempts to maintain masculine status during relations between men are likely to lead to feelings of inadequacy and increased vulnerability (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Whitehead, 2005).

It is important to note that there are differences and hierarchies concerning gender in the gay communities as well as the heterosexual ones. Authors, such as Bergling (2001), have documented conflict arising between effeminate and 'straight-acting' groups of gay men. According to this literature, large numbers of gay men demonstrate anger and disgust towards men that, rather than demonstrating the behaviour of 'a true man', 'act like a woman' (Bergling, 2001, page 18). This apparent rift between 'two opposing' sides suggests that the men from each also harbour a common representation regarding what constitutes 'masculinity' and 'femininity' and actively gravitate to one or the other. Furthermore, that this representation is consistent with the representation harboured by heterosexual men. For instance, when referring to 'masculine', the author quotes descriptions like 'rugby/soccer/tough guy' (page 11), whereas terms like, 'Nellie Queen' (page 18) are presented as typical descriptors of effeminate men. One reason for the

prevalence of anti-effeminacy within the gay community, as identified by Bergling (2001), is that it is considered by some to perpetuate a negative stereotype of non-heterosexuality that prevents its broader acceptance among heterosexual groups. Bergling (2001) also presented the counter argument of a number of effeminate gay men who implied that they deliberately traverse socially pre-established gender norms as a means of celebrating their freedom. Again, this refers to the socially constructed existence of dominant masculine and feminine norms, and agents, regardless of their sex or sexuality, having the ability to gravitate to either.

Emerging from this section are the arguments that: (i) only some of men's social practices constitute demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005); (ii) demonstrations of masculinity revolve around the transcendence of vulnerability (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009); (iii) men attempt to transcend vulnerability at times when they feel that their masculine status is threatened (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005) and; (iv) relations between men constitute a main setting where vulnerability is exposed and transcended (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Graham & Wells, 2002; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007).

The findings of this section can, therefore, be linked to the findings of the previous section. When conceiving masculinity as a set of stereotypes linked to the behaviour of men, it can be seen to constitute one of multiple socially pre-established representations of reality that have the potential to exert some influence over social behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). As such, the function of men's social performances might vary within the differing contexts they enter, and the pressure to demonstrate masculinity might be absent much of the time. Therefore, consistent with critical realism (Willig, 1999), an aim would be to acquire a richer understanding of masculinity, as constituting a transitive structure. This would include the patterns of behaviour it influences, and the contexts in which it is most likely to be activated. Explanations regarding the contexts in which heterosexual men tend to demonstrate their masculinity via gravitations to the dominant masculine norm will be provided within the

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final section of this chapter. Furthermore, as this is an important aspect of the study, it will be integrated within the findings and discussion chapters.

3.3 Behaviours which cut across class boundaries

Although the previous section looked at common patterns that have been identified among the various behaviours of men, authors have nonetheless identified differences between the behaviours of working and middle-class groups. As such, it has been suggested that working-class men demonstrate different versions of masculinity to those demonstrated by middle-class men (see: Messerschmidt, 1993; Willis, 1993 [1981]; Marusza, 1997; Collier, 1998; Connell, 2000; Courtenay, 2000; Gorman, 2003; Iacuone, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006). In terms of Connell (1995/2008), for instance, working-class men are seen to have marginalised masculinities. Moreover, some working-class men are suggested to construct varieties of 'protest masculinity', characteristic of increased risk-taking and aggressiveness, as a means of defying their subordinated position within the masculine hierarchy (Courtenay, 2000; Iacuone, 2005; Connell, 2008 [1995]). This variety of masculinity was also referred to as 'oppositional masculinity' by Messerschmidt (1993). By distinguishing the varieties of masculinity demonstrated by men of different classes, such authors are identifying patterns of behaviour common among the men within each group (Courtenay, 2000; Iacuone, 2005). Otherwise, if there were no within-group common patterns, there would be no way of identifying specific differences between the groups, just a myriad of idiosyncratic behaviours.

In review of the literature, this section will first identify behaviours which have been found to cut across social class boundaries. It will also make the argument that working and middle-class men harbour a common notion of successful masculinity, and in order to maintain or increase status during relations between men, gravitate to this socially constructed representation. From this perspective, differences in their behaviours can be located with their differing social and material resources (Gorman, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006).

Some authors have identified common patterns of men's behaviour that cut across social class boundaries (Light & Kirk, 2000; Redman et al., 2002; Allen, 2005; Marja & Kirsimarja, 2005; Hatchell, 2006). For instance, risk-taking behaviour (Houtte, 2004), emphasised heterosexuality (Allen, 2005), and an adversity to effeminacy (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007) are suggested to be common patterns exhibited by men regardless of their social class. Further common patterns identified to transcend class boundaries are the importance men place on competitive sports and physical strength (Light & Kirk, 2000; Skelton, 2000; Swain, 2002 & 2004), their drinking behaviour (Lewis & O'Neill 2000; Marja & Kirsimarja, 2005; Faulkner et al., 2006; Keller et al., 2007), criminal activity (Moore & Mills, 1990; Cullen et al., 2006), and use of discourse to emphasise their masculinity (Gough & Edwards, 1998; Redman et al., 2002; Hatchell, 2006; Bennett, 2007).

Boys, regardless of their social class, have been observed to resist education (Jordan, 1995; McDowell, 2002; Benjamin, 2001; Houtte, 2004). As the education system requires pupils to be submissive, it has been suggested to fit more comfortably with stereotypical femininity than masculinity (McDowell, 2000; Archer et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2004; Allen, 2005). This has been identified as a reason why boys have greater tendencies to resist the system than girls (McDowell, 2000; Archer et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2001; McDowell, 2002; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2004; Allen, 2005). Thus, owing to a common notion among boys that educational achievement constitutes submissive behaviour, it is likely to be damaging to a boy's masculine status in the eyes of his peers (Whitelaw et al., 2000; Archer et al., 2001; Benjamin, 2001; Reay, 2002; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2005; Kane, 2006; Phillips, 2007).

Despite some across-class patterns, working-class boys have been documented to demonstrate a greater resistance to education than middle-class boys (Willis, 1993 [1981]; Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Whitehead, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Because

working-class men traditionally demonstrated their masculinity via demonstrations of physical invulnerability rather than financial stability (Hall, 2002; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006), to achieve academically, working-class boys might place their masculine status in even greater jeopardy than middle-class boys (Benjamin, 2001; Reay, 2002). Consequently, they are likely to view higher education as a riskier option than maintaining their masculine status via a continued emphasis on physical strength (Archer et al., 2001; Hall, 2002; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Whitehead, 2003; Nayak, 2006).

These class dynamics are perpetuated in a number of ways. For example, failing in education often results in low status employment (McDowell, 2000; Reay, 2002). Having a low income can prevent a man from demonstrating his masculinity through consumerism (Dittmar et al., 1995; Nayak, 2006) and result in poor accommodation within high crime environments (MacDonald & Marsh, 2001). These may have an impact on the quality of education working-class children receive (Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Kosut, 2006), the language and social practices with which they are socialised (Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006), and the way they are judged by larger society (Lucey & Reay, 2002; MacDonald & Marsh, 2002).

Beck (1998), Gorman (2003) and Cohen (2005) have argued that the distinction between the social and material resources of the working and middle-classes is as prominent as ever. According to such authors, the life experiences and knowledge accrued by the middle-classes maintains the social and economic gulf and perpetuates the exclusion of the working-classes. Nevertheless, the literature also suggests that the working-classes themselves help to perpetuate the divide (Gorman, 2003; Nayak, 2006). For instance, despite the well documented collapse of the manufacturing industry (Jefferson, 2002; Hall, 2002; McDowell, 2002; Koballi, 2004; Hutton, 2005), working-class men are suggested to still aim for upward mobility through manual employment (Marusza, 1997; Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2000; Archer et al., 2001; McDowell, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006; Bishop et al., 2009).

Some literature suggests that white, working-class men in contemporary society continue to demonstrate their masculinity through the historical traditions of circuit drinking, fighting, bragging about sexual exploits, watching and playing competitive sport and, ultimately, socialising in all white, all male, heterosexual environments (Marusza, 1997; Tomsen, 1997; Gorman, 2003; Kimmel, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Furthermore, authors, such as Marusza (1997), Kimmel (2003), and Nayak (2006), have argued that, of all the investigated social settings, clubs and pubs are the environments where men's demonstrations of masculinity are most frequent and apparent. As such, this is another example of masculinity being demonstrated during relations between men (Gibson, 1994; Levi-Strauss, 1995 [1969]).

According to Phillips (2005 & 2007), a man's masculine status, judged by men during relations between men, is subject to how close his behaviour approximates a celebrated notion of masculinity. Some practices are recognised as 'successful' and afforded status, whereas others are recognised as unsuccessful and subordinated (Phillips, 2005 & 2007). This notion is apparent within a number of studies (McDowell, 2000 & 2002; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; Ribeiro et al., 2007). On the surface, then, working and middle-class men might appear to be demonstrating very different forms of masculinity. However, their differing patterns of behaviour might be motivated a common notion of successful masculinity, the aim being to avoid ostracism and abuse during relations between men (Anderson, 2001). From this perspective, men employ their differing social and material resources in ways which are likely to be recognised by men, regardless of their class, as successful demonstrations of masculinity (Nayak, 2006).

Men with fewer material resources through which to demonstrate their status have been suggested to place greater emphasis on demonstrations of fearlessness (Anderson, 2001) and physical invulnerability (Johansson, 1990; Hall, 2002; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006). In this sense, working and middle-class men might be employing their differing social and material resources in ways which demonstrate the same underlying attributes (Archer et al., 2001; Demetriou, 2001; Gorman, 2003). The behavioural differences observed in men sharing similar material resources might instead be accountable to their

differing physical capabilities (Messeschmidt, 1999; Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Benjamin, 2001), or their differing abilities to transcend emotional vulnerability (Phillips, 2006; Plummer, 2006).

According to Campbell (1949/1993), myths communicate the same masculine exemplar regardless of whether the hero is depicted as a lover, warrior, tyrant, or saint. Hence, because the transcendence of vulnerability is indicative of character attributes rather than concrete modes of conduct, it is flexible enough to be demonstrated in multiple ways. For example, the transcendence of fear could be demonstrated through extreme sports (Anderson, 1999), challenging job occupations (Whitehead, 2006), risk taking behaviour (Houtte, 2004), or daring criminal activities (Hall, 2002). Physical invulnerability could be demonstrated through an athletic physique (Wienke, 2008), competitive sports (Wellard, 2006), manual employment (Nayak, 2006), or physical aggression (Anderson, 2001; Zdun, 2008). Men's demonstrations of remote emotionality could range from them not crying at funerals to them declining emotional support at times when it might be necessary (Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004; Bennett, 2007).

Emerging from this section of the chapter was the notion that men can use different behavioural strategies and resources in order to demonstrate the same underlying 'masculine' characteristics. Consistent with critical realism (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008), this suggests that, despite the influence that social norms can exert over behaviour, agents retain some autonomy in the ways in which they gravitate to them. The following section will focus more closely on the role of context in relation to men's demonstrations of masculinity.

3.4 Contextualising men's gravitations to a common notion of successful masculinity

So far, this chapter has explored the argument that the constructs of masculinity and men are separate. In this sense, masculinity constitutes a transitive structure rather than an

inevitable aspect of men's behaviour. Thus, the two would only come into conjunction when men perform behaviours influenced by, or aimed at demonstrating, masculinity. At the same time, women could just as easily demonstrate the transcendence of vulnerability. Also from this perspective, men could be seen to demonstrate gender neutral and feminine-typical behaviours as well as behaviours relating to the dominant masculine norm. This section will, therefore, focus on the literature addressing the contexts in which men are the most likely to gravitate to masculinity, as constituting a transitive structure. It will be argued that the main motivation is the perception of threat to their masculine status, predominantly occurring during relations between men.

Some authors see settings and contexts as being linked to men's social practices, and the extent to which these constitute demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). These have suggested that men's demonstrations of masculinity only occur when they perceive threats to their masculine status (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Sabo, 2011). Research suggests that it is during relations between men that such threats most predominantly emerge (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011). In consistence with this, authors have focussed on the ways that men demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men, rather than between men and women (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). As such studies have documented the aforementioned common patterns of men's behaviour, it seems reasonable to make the assumption that these were influenced by a common social representation of masculinity.

The notion that men are not motivated by a constant pressure to demonstrate masculinity enables a distinction to be made between the conceptions of men and masculinity (McHale et al., 2003). Thus, from this perspective, masculinity is not inextricably linked to men's general behaviour. Being a specific identity within itself means that masculinity could be identified in the absence of femininity. Furthermore, rather than multiple masculinities, men's behaviours could be distinguished by differing motivations

(Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003). This means that men could be viewed to perform feminine identities and women perform masculine identities. Thus, men wanting to convey feminine identities could be viewed to do so without these being conceived as different forms of masculinity. In this sense, masculinity and femininity still remain as antitheses of one another (Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006; Connell, 2008 [1995]), but are identifiable within themselves, and not restricted to a person's sex. The fact that a man could demonstrate what could be recognised as a feminine identity means that his behaviour could render him vulnerable to the negative judgements of men policing one another's behaviour (Reay, 2002; Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007). For example, as a means of maintaining masculine status during relations between men, men working in service sector occupations have been found to use their discourse to either redefine the work as strenuous, or to present it as completely separate to the ways they define themselves as masculine (McDowell, 2000 & 2002). Likewise, men have been identified going to great lengths to verbally reconstruct their feminine-typical identities (for instance: as care-giving husbands) in ways which emphasise their fortitude but downplay their emotional involvement (Ribeiro et al., 2007).

Some of the literature indicates that men could be seen to perform a masculine identity when feeling social pressure to make behavioural attempts to be perceived as such (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). As discussed earlier in this chapter, then, in order for men's behaviours to be perceived 'masculine', they would have to appear as such to those social agents passing judgement. Arguably, this would require them to harbour a common representation of what constitutes successful masculinity. Moreover, common patterns emerging across different studies suggest a consistency in this representation revolving around the transcendence of vulnerability (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). From this perspective, the representation of masculinity would reside within men as a socially influenced understanding regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour for the male sex (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Therefore, its continued existence would be dependent on men perpetuating it as such through common patterns of physical and discursive behaviour indicative of a

transcendence of vulnerability (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Phillips, 2007; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Since the aforementioned common patterns of men's behaviour revolve around the transcendence of vulnerability (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), this representation might have more of an influence over men's behaviours than various other representations of masculinity. As such, it seems appropriate to refer to it as the 'dominant masculine norm'. As with other social representations of reality, the dominant masculine norm might also by perpetuated by the media (Gibson, 1994; Segal, 2004); some authors arguing that book, television and cinematic presentations of men communicate a notion of successful masculinity on a global, as well as national, basis (Phillips, 2007).

Pre-established representations of reality have been argued to constrain the behaviours of social agents in ways which remain illusive to them (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002). Therefore, the artificiality of the dominant masculine norm is likely to be obscured from men's vantage points by the ideological preferences of their society and the way its agents continuously represent and reproduce it (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Thus, the identified common patterns of men's behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009) are likely to be viewed as biologically motivated, even by those men perpetuating them (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). In this sense, rather than the subordination of women to men being sustained through, the conscious, strategic machinations of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005), it would take into account the strong influence of routine in the current reproduction of historic conventions (New, 2001).

As with any socially established representation of reality, the dominant masculine norm is likely to be challenged by emergent realities and competing social representations (Pilgrima, 2000; McEvoy & Richards, 2003; Bergin et al., 2008). As such, it is unlikely to remain completely stable over time (Bergin et al., 2008). For instance, Whitehead (2006) documented temporal variations to notions of successful masculinity, the most prominent being the aristocratic Renaissance man's openness to displays of emotion.

However, despite their temporal nature, these pre-established understandings of the world often impact on the behaviours of social agents, and through their reproduction, can be quite enduring (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001). As suggested earlier in this chapter, contemporary schoolboy myths have been found to construct and perpetuate a notion of successful masculinity (Jordan, 1995; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Levinson & Sparks, 2003; Nayak, 2006) that is consistent with the historic myths analysed by Cabezali et al. (1990), Johansson (1990) and Campbell (1993 [1949]).

Chapter two looked at literature suggesting that boys and men police one another's gravitations to a common notion of masculinity via the intimidation and ostracism of those whose practices are perceived as unsuccessful (Reay, 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Phillips, 2005 & 2007). In light of this, it could be argued that men's gravitations to the dominant masculine norm are motivated by the pressure they themselves place on one another (Phillips, 2005 & 2007). In addition, it might suggest that men feel less pressure to demonstrate their masculinity in the absence of other men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). From this perspective, the motivation behind men's common patterns of behaviour could be looked upon as serving a function other than the subordination of women and marginalized groups of men at a certain point in history; as implied by Carrigan et al. (1985) and Connell (1995/2008). Instead, men might see themselves as competitive rivals rather than a group united by a common goal. Hence, contrasting the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as documented by Carrigan et al. (1985) and Connell (1995/2008), men, as individuals during relations between men, might be motivated by the aim of avoiding subordination (Swain, 2002; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003) rather than a desire to perpetuate patriarchal privilege. In this sense, the subordination of some social groups could be viewed as a by-product.

3.5 Conclusion

The main argument emerging from this chapter counters the theory put forward by authors rooted in post-structuralist informed discourse approaches. These suggest that

masculinities are multiple, contextually influenced and under constant modification (Goodey, 1997; Hood-Williams, 2001; Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). Whilst this approach is useful, I have used the literature to argue that one particular socially pre-established representation of masculinity (characteristic of the transcendence of vulnerability) has a predominant influence over men's behaviour during relations between men. From this perspective it was argued that, although individual men demonstrate multiple identities, very few of these constitute demonstrations of masculinity.

It was suggested that myths, and the continued telling of them, can be seen to construct and perpetuate stereotypical exemplars of masculinity and femininity (Cabezali et al., 1990; Johansson, 1990; Campbell, 1993 [1949]). As these exemplars are likely to reflect the interests, values and ideologies of dominant social groups at given points in history (Cabezali et al., 1990; Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Malinowski, 1997 [1926]), the gender representations they portray remain separate to the sexed individuals with which they claim to be associated. From this perspective, men and women possess the ability to see themselves and behave in ways contradictory to these stereotypes. Put forward by this chapter, however, was the notion that the masculine exemplar constructed by myths (Johansson, 1990; Campbell, 1993 [1949]) is congruent with the identified common patterns of men's behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). This might suggest that men, via their social practices, continue to perpetuate it as a common notion of successful masculinity. As such, it was referred to here as the 'dominant masculine norm'.

Focussing on literature that identifies criminal violations as a common pattern of men's behaviour (Collier, 1998; Walklate, 2004), it was argued that the violations of men are often distinguishable from those demonstrated by women as they reflect stereotypical masculine values, including strength, power and fearlessness (Delamont, 2001). Using the literature, then, the chapter has argued that this pattern of behaviour is motivated by men perceiving 'successful masculinity' as being related to the transcendence of vulnerability. This relationship between men's notions of masculinity and the

transcendence of vulnerability also emerged when the chapter focussed on what the literature has identified as being a key motivation behind men's patterns of physical aggression (Anderson, 2001; Cowan & Mills, 2004) and patterns in the way heterosexual men discursively emphasise their sexual prowess (Kehily, 2001; Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011) and use homophobia to subordinate those men (regardless of their sexuality) who expose vulnerability (Phillips, 2005; Plumber, 2006; Pascoe, 2011).

Being characteristic of the transcendence of vulnerability, the social constructed dominant masculine norm pertains to a character attribute rather than specific social practices. As such, it enables men freedom to employ their differing resources to demonstrate their masculinity in ways which can be recognised as successful or unsuccessful in the eyes of other men. Hence, even during relations between men, multiple behaviours can be used to demonstrate the same characteristic. This was argued to explain general common patterns of difference identified in the behaviours of working and middle-class men.

Chapter 4

Philosophical Perspective and Methodology

Throughout this chapter, I will write in the first person in order to acknowledge my part in the research. Within the first section (*Critical Realism*) I will define the critical realist philosophical perspective explaining why it is the appropriate position in which to situate the current study. In order to do this, I will compare the position with other forms of realism, positivism and social constructionism in relation to answering the research questions. This will be followed by a section (*The critical realist approach to methodology*) looking at the importance of there being an interrelation between the chosen philosophical perspective and research methodology. I will emphasise this point by demonstrating why radical relativist informed discursive approaches are inappropriate for the investigation. Then, during three sub-sections, I will provide my reasons for choosing *Semi-structured interviews* and *Focus groups and one to one interviews* to collect the data, along with my use of *Reflexivity*. During the final section of the chapter (*Template Analysis*) I will compare template analysis with grounded theory and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). This comparison will demonstrate why a template analysis was the most suitable technique for thematically organising and analysing the data.

4.1 Critical realism

Wilson and McCormack (2006) maintained that when designing a piece of research, in addition to the appropriateness of the sample and methods chosen to answer the research questions (Smith, 2004), an essential element of its rigour is the appropriateness of its philosophical foundations. Moreover, because the researcher's perspective with regards to the nature of the world (ontology) and what knowledge can be gained about it (epistemology) underpin the entire investigation (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Bhaskar,

2009), these philosophical foundations must be in place in advance of the actual research being undertaken (Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bhaskar, 2009). Consistent with this perspective, I had adopted a critical realist perspective before any decisions were made regarding the investigation's method and methodology.

Critical realism assumes a distinction between two dimensions of reality, namely the intransitive (ontological) and the transitive (epistemological) (Sayer, 2008; Bhaskar, 2009). Similar to the assumptions of physical and scientific forms of realism (Ellis, 2005; Psillos, 2005), the intransitive (ontological) dimension refers to a physical reality that exists independent of, and remains relatively stable regardless of, how it is represented by the observer (Bhaskar, 2009). However, according to Bhaskar (2009), running parallel to the intransitive dimension is the transitive (epistemological) dimension. Contrasting the reality defined by physical and scientific forms of realism (Ellis, 2005; Psillos, 2005), the transitive dimension refers to the established social and cultural representations of reality that, through construction and reconstruction, are dominant within society (Pilgrima, 2000; Dobson, 2002; McEvoy & Richards, 2003; Stewart & Usher, 2007). In this way, the transitive dimension could be suggested to both reside 'in the person' as an agent's socially influenced representation of the world (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006), and 'outside the person' as it is reliant on the ways it continues to be represented and reproduced by social agents (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Hence, spanning the agency and social structure divide (Sayer, 2008), social representations, such as gender appropriate behaviour, persist as transitive realities for as long as they continue to be reproduced as such through intentional human agency (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Likewise, agents' personal representations and behaviours are constrained by society's pre-defined understandings of masculinity and femininity (Thomas, 1993; Madison, 2005).

A critical realist starts with the assumption that these transitive ideas about the world are inevitably a part of reality as they have been brought into being by social agents (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Thus, the philosophy purports that these understandings of reality act as important generative mechanisms that underlie and

influence people's actions in the social world (Thomas, 1993; Madison, 2005). In this sense, additional to a natural reality that mirrors the laws of physical and scientific realism (Ellis, 2005; Psillos, 2005), it is also the non-physical, transitive way in which phenomena are interpreted that influences people to act in particular ways (Corson, 1997; Wilson & McCormack, 2006). So, although less enduring than intransitive reality, the transitive dimension is explicably a part of reality (Zembylas, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Furthermore, despite its temporal nature, values and conventions are often handed down through history and through their reproduction are often themselves quite enduring and stable (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001).

As noted above, the critical realists' choice of method and methodology is governed by the ontological nature of the investigated phenomenon rather than his/her methodological interests and previous experiences (Dobson, 2002; McEvoy & Richards, 2003). This contrasts with post-structuralism which, in rejecting the possibility of our discovering any underlying reality (Belsey, 2002), positions epistemology as the determining factor regarding the approach taken. As such, post-structuralism is incongruent with the nature of the subject matter as assumed by the research questions and aim of this investigation. Hence, I am assuming that the dominant masculine norm, though not a physical reality, 'exists' as a transitive structure that, in certain contexts, exerts an influence over men's patterns of behaviour. Therefore, concurring with critical realist thinking (Corson, 1997; Wilson & McCormack, 2006), I assume that men will demonstrate patterns of behaviour that play a role in perpetuating masculinity as a transitive dimension of knowledge.

So, consistent with my position that masculinity is not determined by genetic inheritance, I am assuming that the dominant masculine norm acts like a generative mechanism beneath the surface of observable reality. In this sense it resides 'inside the man' as a socially influenced representation of what constitutes successful masculine behaviour, and 'outside the man' as it is reliant on men reproducing it as such, not least through the continued common patterns of their behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). A further assumption underlying this investigation, then, is

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that reality exists beyond what is humanly observable and is to some degree elucidatory (Dobson, 2002).

Critical realism contrasts with other forms of realism. Both physical realism (Ellis, 2005) and scientific realism (Psillos, 2005) share a strong relationship with objectivism (Crotty, 2007), and are appropriate for explorations of physical phenomena that are directly accessible via the senses (Walsh, 2001; Gray, 2004). Moreover, with its positivist leanings, physical realism rejects the notion that such an ontological reality is distorted during observation to the point that a gulf exists between what actually exists and what is experienced (Ellis, 2005). Taking such a stance, it not only dismisses the notion of a transitive dimension of reality (Bhaskar, 2009), but, arguably, fails to explain optical illusions (Robinson, 1999), disparities in eyewitness testimonies (Loftus, 1996; Ainsworth, 2002), and why peoples behaviours often appear to be influenced by mechanisms other than what can be affirmed as either natural or physical (Cabezali et al., 1990; Samuel & Thompson, 1990; Malinowski, 1997 [1926]; Sayer, 2008).

Scientific realism acknowledges some degree of difference between scientific 'theory' and scientific 'fact' (Psillos, 2005). Nevertheless, it is preoccupied with explaining the intransitive dimension (Bhaskar, 2008 [1975]). Having their foundations in positivism, physical and scientific forms of realism attempt to identify observable cause-effect relationships (Gray, 2004), and ignore the influence that non-physical mechanisms exert over the social world (Patomaki & Wight, 2000). As such, these positions are inconsistent with the philosophical assumptions on which the current investigation is based. In contrast, the aim of the critical realist is to gain a rich understanding of the unobservable generative mechanisms that underlie social behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Davies, 2008). Whereas positivists aim to identify cause and effect relationships (Gray, 2004), critical realists concern themselves with producing detailed explanations regarding how, and in what circumstances, these causal mechanisms impact on the social world (Bergin et al., 2008; Davies, 2008; Bhaskar, 2009).

Critical realism also contrasts with anti-realist philosophical perspectives. For instance, despite some commonalities, there are differences between critical realism and social constructionism (Burr, 1998). Social constructionism covers a multitude of perspectives (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999) which, to varying degrees, have leanings towards relativism (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Dickins, 2004). How much the two positions vary rests with where the social constructionist positions him or herself on the continuum between relativism and realism (Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Burr, 1996/2007). Any approach is at odds with critical realism if it rejects the notion that reality can exist beyond, and be reflected in, people's representations of it (Dobson, 2001; Wilson & McCormack, 2006). Thus, if 'realities' are seen as nothing more than the fictions of those who construct them, talk of transitive structures could only refer to subjective renderings of reality rather than actual generative mechanisms.

In this study, I aim to explore and detail a relationship between men's socially influenced representations of masculinity and their common patterns of behaviour during relations between men, as described by authors such as Marusza (1997), Anderson (2001), Nayak, (2006), and Phillips (2007). Respondents' verbal performances will be viewed as serving particular social functions, but simultaneously, assumed to bear some reflection of actual underlying belief systems (Brown et al., 2002; Fade, 2004; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Hence, I will generally treat common patterns in the data as examples of the men harbouring similar representations of reality (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Such representations will be viewed to constitute transitive structures (Dobson, 2002; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008; Sayer, 2008).

Importantly, however, Dobson (2002) and Bergin et al. (2008) maintain that, although transitive structures can constrain people's behaviours through notions of how and how not to act, their behaviour is not solely determined by them. These structures are, therefore, suggested to constitute potentialities that may or may not be acted upon (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). As such, agents are always viewed to retain the potential to act in novel ways (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). For this reason, the

critical realist is not concerned with trying to predict behaviour (Willig, 1999; Davies, 2008). Instead, the critical realist strives to gain a rich understanding of these generative mechanisms and make informed interpretations of the ways in which they work and appear to be activated (Wilson & McCormack, 2006). Put another way, the aim of the researcher is to develop in-depth descriptions of the ways specific social agents experience and understand the world (Fade, 2004).

Critical realists, then, tend to base their work on the notion that social agents often fail to question socialised norms, tending to internalise them as natural, intransitive realities (Corson, 1997; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). For example, even if men's masculine attributes are not innate, the ideological preferences of their society are likely to make them appear, and even feel, natural (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). As such, the aim of critical realism is to make liberating changes to the social world, by making known and attempting to remove the myths that constrain the behaviours of social agents (Blackledge, 2001; Brown et al., 2002; Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006).

4.2   The critical realist approach to methodology

The critical realist philosophical perspective is an essential aspect of this investigation. The relationship between an investigation's philosophical perspective and methodology informs all areas of the research and encourages its coherence (Pilgrima, 2000; Dobson, 2002; Zembylas, 2006). During this section of the chapter, I will explain the relationship between critical realism and my adopted methodological approach.

Underlying this investigation is the notion that a transitive structure influences the way men demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men, resulting in the common patterns of men's behaviour identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Although, the transitive dimension is assumed to have a generative impact over behaviour, critical realism acknowledges human agency and that agents always retain the potential to act in novel ways

(Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). Therefore, I hope to gain a rich understanding of masculinity as constituting a transitive structure, and the ways and reasons it appears to be activated. This aim is best met by qualitative methodologies that are designed to collect rich data, rather than quantitative designs that attempt to identify cause-effect relationships (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008).

Numerous research methods are compatible with critical realism and capable of collecting information about the transitive dimension of knowledge (Bergin et al., 2008). These transitive structures are, after all, assumed to have a generative influence over social behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). As such, it is consistent with critical realism to view language as a practice that, to some degree, reflects an agent's socially influenced representations of the world (Dobson, 2002). Respondents' verbal practices can, therefore, be treated as a principal way through which information regarding transitive structures can be obtained (Bergin et al., 2008).

According to McEvoy and Richards (2003) it is not the chosen methodology that matters, but the way in which it is employed. However, methodologies such as conversation and discourse analysis are informed by a radical relativist perspective that refutes the critical realist assumption regarding the existence of transitive and intransitive dimensions of knowledge (McEvoy & Richards, 2003). As such, some authors have argued that these methodologies are inappropriate for a critical realist analysis[*] (Dobson, 2001 & 2002; Zembylas, 2006). Discourse researchers provide subjective interpretations regarding versions of social reality that are viewed to be constructed and negotiated through the performance of language (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Zajacova, 2002; Wetherell et al., 2003). A respondent's words and descriptions are assumed to be contextually influenced, being chosen by them to achieve certain social objectives (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Zajacova, 2002). As such, discourse researchers remain focussed on these discursive constructions of reality as these are seen to constitute the only information that is available (Zajacova, 2002; Willig, 2006). Moreover, their accounts of the data are

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[*] There is a growing critical realist approach within discourse analysis: see Riley et al. (2007)

deemed but one of a myriad of equally valid interpretations that can be constructed from the same discursive fiction (Burr, 1998).

For there to be congruence between this study and discursive psychology, the investigation would need to be about the ways men use their discourse to bring into being versions of themselves as masculine (Wetherell & Edley, 2003). Researchers adopting this position would not be making any inferences regarding men's cognitions. As such, discussion of men's behaviour being influenced by a socially pre-established representation of masculinity would compromise the investigation (Potter & Wetherell, 1987; Zajacova, 2002). In the current study, my underlying theoretical assumptions suggest that less detail is required with regards to the constructive nature of language because it is assumed to bear some reflection to the transitive and intransitive dimensions of reality (Dobson, 2002).

Consistent with my position in critical realism, I will treat the respondents' verbal practices as being influenced by and, therefore, in some ways reflective of a transitive dimension of knowledge (Dobson, 2002; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). This is not to assume a direct relationship between their talk and underlying representations of reality, as critical realism acknowledges the constructive nature of language (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Consistent and contradictive practices will be assumed to be the product of a transactional relationship between an agent's belief systems and the contextual influences present at the time of our conversing (Thomas, 1993). As documented in chapter one, the Northern hometowns of the respondents, and the fact that they were white, heterosexual men, will be assumed to have impacted on the data. The aim will be to build up an understanding of masculinity, as a transitive structure, via the incomplete and imprecise way it emerges in the data.

4.2.1   Semi-structured interviews

During the previous section of the chapter, it emerged that my best way of providing answers for this study's research questions would be to choose an interview technique

that is able to generate rich verbal data. Such data is not gathered by *structured interviews* (Smith, 2008). Instead, I considered a semi-structured format to be the most appropriate means of data collection. Combining techniques from structured and unstructured interviews, *semi-structured interviews* provide respondents with the freedom to express issues in their own terms, while enabling comparability between their accounts (May, 2001).

Compared to structured interviews, the semi-structured technique has a greater potential to facilitate empathy, trust and rapport within the research dynamic (May, 2001; Smith, 2008). This can help to balance the power relationship between the researcher and participant (Busso, 2007), and facilitates the researchers acknowledgment of his or her role in the investigation (Bannister et al., 1994). During semi-structured interviews, respondents are guided from straying from the subject of interest but given the opportunity to divulge rich information regarding their beliefs, understandings and experiences in relation to it (Banister et al, 1994; Mason, 1996; May, 2001; Schostak, 2006). Although schedules are developed, the interviews are not dictated by them. As such, interviewers can enable respondents to diverge into unanticipated areas that are relevant to the investigation (Smith, 2008; May, 2001).

In contrast to the semi-structured technique, *unstructured interviews* are conducted without an interview schedule and allow respondents even more scope to divulge information in relation to a general area (May, 2001; Willig, 2006). However, because the researcher's questions are guided by the respondent's accounts (Moyle, 2002; Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), this technique is not ideal for investigations that aim to probe specific areas of a subject. Hence, as a different person's frame of reference directs each unstructured interview (Moyle, 2002), their accounts can pertain to different areas of the same field. Therefore, unlike semi-structured interviews, this can prevent comparability between accounts (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), limiting the researcher's ability to identify common and contrasting patterns. Whereas interview schedules prevent researchers from missing specific areas of interest (Smith, 2008), not having them often necessitates a repeated re-interviewing of respondents to obtain relevant information (Cohen &

Crabtree, 2006). Such a practice is time consuming (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006), and might have necessitated my use of a smaller sample. This practice also requires respondents that are willing and able to meet this requirement, which I felt would have been problematic in this study.

4.2.2 Focus groups and one to one interviews

The literature informing my interest in the area (see chapter three) suggests that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Therefore, as my research was focusing on these relations, it made sense to conduct a number of exclusive male focus groups. As the members of focus groups are encouraged to converse between themselves, they enable researchers to investigate group dynamics in relation to a given subject (May, 2001). According to Sim (1998), group dynamics can have an influence over the data. Sometimes respondents might present themselves differently, or provide information they would not divulge if on their own (Sim, 1998). In this sense, the focus groups could be used to draw out common themes which I could then explore in greater detail during one to one interviews with the same respondents. In addition, these individual interviews - being conducted with the men from the focus groups - would be a further means of identifying common patterns in the ways the men chose to present themselves. This is bearing in mind that these individual interviews still constituted relations between men.

4.2.3 Reflexivity

Critical realism acknowledges the constructive nature of language and the impossibility of gaining an objective, complete and precise understanding of an agent's cognitions (Sayer, 2008). As such, Sayer (2008) recommended that critical realists make use of reflexivity. Reflexivity involves a researcher reporting how his or her subjective position and methods are likely to have impacted on the study and its findings (Peck & Secker, 1999; Anastas, 2004). One aspect of this is for the researcher to minimise and report

his/her subjective position regarding their interests, ideas and expectations in relation to the research (Fade, 2003; Mauthner & Doucet, 2003; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). My chosen analysis technique (described in the following section) proved particularly useful in assisting with this practice. Therefore, in the method chapter I will be able to clearly state the literature-influenced expectations I harboured prior to my interaction with the data without these conflicting with the theoretical foundations that inform this study.

Reflexivity also involves the reporting of contextual influences during the data collection process (Schostak, 2006). This can include factors relating to the settings in which the interviews take place (Schostak, 2006). Again, this information will be provided in the methods chapter. In relation to contextual influences, Kvale (1996) and Brinkmann and Kvale (2005) suggest that interview questions have a big impact on the data that are collected. Obviously, different questions will result in different answers (Finlay, 2002). Researchers' interview schedules reflect their specific interests, thus guiding the interaction in directions deemed important by them, though not necessarily by their respondents (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). However, an advantage of having pre-prepared questions is that they enable interviewers to focus on participants' responses and identify relevant, unanticipated information (Frankel & Devers, 2000; Finlay, 2002; Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). During the methods chapter I will document my construction of the interview schedule and my intentions to use it has a loose guide.

Authors, such as Morse and Singleton (2001) and Bailey and Tilley (2002), suggest that researchers should include sufficient excerpts from interview transcripts to enable readers to judge for themselves the levels of 'fit' between their interpretations and the data. This should include the reporting of data which do not support the researcher's theory (Anastas, 2004). Consistent with these guidelines, I will provide quotes throughout my findings chapters to show how my interpretations are grounded in the data. I will also document those occasions when data contrasts these positions.

4.3 Template analysis

Template analysis is ideal for identifying patterns/themes in the data (King et al., 2004), and I, therefore, considered it to be particularly appropriate for the current study. However, Grounded Theory and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) are two approaches that have some similarities with template analysis (King, 2004), and can also be used to analyse the data within critical realist informed studies. This section of the chapter will first examine my reasons for choosing to use a template analysis over these other approaches, and then will look at the main features of template analysis.

4.3.1 My reasons for choosing template analysis

Consistent with critical realism, I am adopting the perspective that researcher objectivity is impossible to achieve (Peck & Secker, 1999), and that researchers are never neutral in terms of values, interests, expectations and interpretations (Elliott et al., 1999; Fade, 2003; Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). Having conducted a review of the masculinity literature, this inevitably provided me with some prior understanding of the area. Armed with this understanding, I entered the field with some expectation regarding what I might find (Robson, 2002). However, when conducting a grounded theory study, it is essential that the developing subject of inquiry and methodological strategies are induced from the data (McGhee et al., 2007; Waring & Wainwright, 2008). Thus, through an inductive-deductive interplay, the collection and analysis of data always precedes and informs the emerging theory and further data collection techniques at each stage of the investigation (Hall & Callery, 2001; Neill, 2006; McGhee et al., 2007). Consequently, this has resulted in debate over whether or not a literature review should precede the initial data collection, as a researcher's informed understanding of the area could contaminate his/her interpretations (Cutcliffe, 2000; Heath, 2006).

While basing this investigation on a tentative theory that emerged from my critique of the literature, I recognised that reflexivity would be essential. Being reflexive would enable me to identify and report how my prior knowledge of the area might have impacted on

the data collection and analysis processes (Elliott et al., 1999; Fade, 2003; Anastas, 2004; Schostak, 2006). Unlike the grounded theory and IPA approaches, template analysis enables researchers to acknowledge and report their prior experience or literature-informed understanding of a subject and theories regarding what the data are likely to reveal (Stratton et al., 2006; Waring & Wainwright, 2008; King, 2012). When using template analysis, the researcher constructs a template that consists of coded themes that he or she has identified in the data (King, 2004). However, the template can also include a small number of a priori themes developed prior to the data collection, provided the respondents' accounts are found to coincide with them (Richardson et al., 2002; King, 2012). Regarding this practice, King (2004) warns against the development of too many or too few pre-defined themes. Whereas, too many a priori themes can cloud the researcher's focus, preventing the identification of novel or contrasting data, too few can leave the researcher lacking direction and unsure of where to begin (King, 2004; Waring & Wainwright, 2008).

Being able to document these a priori themes in the methods chapter (chapter five) will provide me with a means by which to specify my conscious personal perspectives and preconceptions at the initial phase of the analysis. According to Ahern (1999) and Anastas (2004), this is an essential aspect of the quality process. In doing so, it will enable the reader some understanding of how this information acted as a foundation on which the study was developed. Nevertheless, I acknowledge that it is unlikely that any individual could ever have a complete awareness of his or her own consciousness (Cutcliffe, 2003). As such, these a priori themes will only represent a small aspect of my subjective position at the initial stage of the research.

For this investigation, I chose my respondents based on the assumption that they closely approximated the social positions outlined by the predefined research questions and tentative theory (this process will be described in chapter five). As I had already begun to develop the research questions and theory prior to the data collection, this meant that 'purposeful sampling' (see Coyne, 1997; Cutcliffe, 2000; Draucker et al., 2007) was more appropriate than theoretical sampling. Again, this made the study incongruent with

the requirements of a grounded theory approach (Cutcliffe, 2000; Smith, 2008). After the initial phase of data collection, the grounded theorist is advised to employ theoretical sampling (Cutcliffe, 2000; Draucker et al., 2007). This is to enable emerging conceptions to be induced from the data. As such, the researcher continually selects further respondents for their assumed ability to provide data relevant to the emerging theory (Marshall, 1996; Coyne, 1997; Draucker et al., 2007). So, after each wave of data collection, the interviews are analysed and the findings used to direct the next wave of sampling; this process continuing until all the identified categories of data have been saturated (Cutcliffe, 2000; Draucker et al., 2007). However, because the data emerging from each wave of interviews dictates the following sample selections, this process can limit the findings by closing off certain avenues of investigation that did not arise, or were not identified, in the earlier interviews (Cutcliffe, 2000).

Rather than theoretical sampling, researchers using the IPA approach tend to select purposeful samples prior to the collection of data (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Whereas the grounded theorist may wish to make predictions about behaviour, or generalise findings to a broader population (Hall & Callery, 2001), researchers using the IPA approach or template analysis seek to make detailed explorations of participants' lived experiences regarding specific areas of interest (Fade, 2004; King, 2004; Smith, 2004). Therefore, such investigations tend to identify levels of convergence and divergence among small samples (Smith, 2004; Brocki & Wearden, 2006). However, despite some commonalities between the IPA approach and critical realism, IPA is grounded in hermeneutics and phenomenology (Smith, 2008). Based on the assumption that individuals form subjective interpretations of reality, the primary aim of an IPA analysis is to gain information regarding these individual experiences (Chapman & Smith, 2002). In contrast, a critical realist analysis is primarily concerned with the way socially pre-established representations of reality influence individuals' interpretations of the world, and aims to gain information regarding these transitive structures (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Davies, 2008).

Besides the fact that the IPA approach prevents researchers from developing a priori themes or identifying their expectations regarding the data, there are further practical reasons why I did not choose to use it for this particular investigation. As I documented earlier in this chapter, focus groups and one to one interviews were considered to be the most suitable means of collecting data for answering the study's research questions. In all, there would be four focus groups and sixteen one to one interviews, as will be discussed in chapter five. IPA takes an idiographic approach to data analysis (Larkin et al., 2006; Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). Therefore, this would involve me conducting an in-depth analysis of each individual transcript before bringing them together to identify general themes that cut across them (Smith, 2008). As such, the IPA approach can be very time-consuming, particularly when used to analyse data gathered from samples that exceed ten (King, 2012). Also, despite the fact that some analysts have attempted to use the IPA approach to analyse data gathered from focus groups (Brocki & Wearden, 2006), this can compromise its commitment to detailed idiographic explorations (Smith, 2004). As the aim of this study was to identify common patterns in the data - and each respondent's divergence and convergence in relation to these - I felt that it would be more logical to conduct an integrated analysis of the transcripts from the beginning. In addition to enabling this process, template analysis is also more suitable than IPA for handling larger data sets and analysing the data gathered from focus groups (King, 2012).

4.3.2 The main features of template analysis

A template analysis was found to be the most appropriate analysis technique for the investigation. This section of the chapter will provide the reader with an understanding of the main features of template analysis.

Rather than a single, specifically defined technique, template analysis can be characterised by its flexible nature, enabling a researcher to adapt it in accordance with his or her own requirements (King, 2004; Slade et al., 2009). A key feature is that codes, referring to interpreted themes within the data (Richardson et al., 2002), are identified

and hierarchically organised into a template of related higher and lower level categories (King, 2004; Waring & Wainwright, 2008). A final template usually consists of between two and four levels of codes, ranging from broad (high level) to narrow (low level) themes, which are supported by relevant exerts from interview transcripts (Slade et al., 2009). In some cases, specific segments of text can be used to support more than one code at the same level (King, 2004). By organising data in this way, the researcher has a detailed summary from which to anchor his/her analysis (Stratton et al., 2006), making it easier to identify patterns in the presented experiences of respondents (King et al., 2004).

The process starts with the construction of an initial template. This is developed by the researcher as he/she begins coding themes that emerge from a sub-set of the data (King, 2012). As stated earlier, the initial template can also include some a priori themes (Richardson et al., 2002). These preliminary codes are then clustered into hierarchically organised groups that structure the themes based on their broad or narrow relation to relevant aspects of a subject (King, 2012). Once an initial template has been developed, however, it is continually modified in order to allow it to adequately account for the further collection, reading, and interpretation of data (King, 2004; Stratton et al., 2006). In cases where none of the existing codes appropriately accommodate a section of text, the template is likely to require the insertion of a new code (King, 2004). Alternatively, a predefined code will be deleted if it fails to be supported by the data. This will also be the case on occasions when one code, although representative of a theme identified in the data, overlaps with another, more appropriately defined one (King, 2004). Another common revision is an adjustment of the hierarchal ordering of the codes with the aim of developing a more coherent structure (King, 2004). This modification process continues until all the data has been adequately accounted for (Slade et al., 2009).

Owing to the diversity of qualitative data, template codes do not necessarily have to accommodate data from every transcript (Slade et al., 2009). According to King (2004), it can be difficult deciding the stage at which the template can be considered sufficient. What is important, however, is that the final template has a coherent structure that appropriately accommodates all of the collected data that is relevant to the research

subject, irrespective of whether or not it supports a researcher's developing theory (Waring & Wainwright, 2008).

As the final template informs (and is a part of) the way the data are analysed and structured in the findings chapters it is appropriate to discuss this at the end of the methods chapter. As such, it makes structural sense within this thesis to have the method chapter culminate in an analysis section that discusses how the data were thematically organised into a template of hierarchically organised codes. This will conclude with the presentation of the final template.

4.4 Conclusion

I began this chapter by demonstrating how the underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions of this investigation are consistent with critical realism. The dominant masculine norm, as discussed in chapter three, can be seen as a transitive structure that vicariously reveals itself through the common patterns of men's behaviour, as identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Within critical realism, transitive structures are socially pre-established representations of reality (Pilgrima, 2000; Dobson, 2002; McEvoy & Richards, 2003; Bergin et al., 2008) that are internalised by agents (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006) and perpetuated in society via the influence they can exert over their behaviours (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Therefore, through their continued reconstruction, transitive structures can be relatively enduring (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001).

Critical realism does not refer to a cause-effect relationship between transitive structures and patterns of behaviour, and agents are always viewed to retain the potential to act in novel ways (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). Congruent with this assumption, I acknowledge that individual men demonstrate a multiplicity of different behaviours that are temporally and contextually influenced, as a number of authors have suggested (Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). My assumption is

that only certain patterns of their behaviour, particularly those demonstrated during relations between men (Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Whitehead, 2005; Phillips, 2007), revolve around actual attempts to appear masculine (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). In this sense, I am theorizing that the dominant masculine norm, as a transitive structure, only exerts an influence within certain social contexts. The aim of this investigation, then, is to gain a rich understanding of the dominant masculine norm, as constituting a transitive structure, and the ways and reasons for its activation.

As transitive structures are assumed to influence social behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008), verbal practices – though never complete nor precise accounts – are seen to constitute a means by which to acquire information about them (Dobson, 2002). It, therefore, emerged that this information is best obtained by qualitative interviews that have the potential to gather rich verbal data. During the chapter, I presented my case for choosing to use a semi-structured, rather than an unstructured, interview technique and to gather data during focus groups and one to one interviews. I also explored why radical relativist informed discursive approaches are incompatible with this investigation's philosophical perspective.

Template analysis, IPA, and grounded theory approaches are ideal for analysing qualitative data in critical realist informed research. Through comparisons between them, this chapter found template analysis to be the most suitable means of thematically organising and analysing the research data for this particular investigation. Whereas a review of the literature influenced my tentative theories and understandings of the subject, when using a grounded theory or IPA approach, these must be induced from the data (McGhee et al., 2007; Smith, 2008). A template analysis, on the other hand, enables researchers to acknowledge and report their provisional expectations via the development of some a priori themes (King, 2012). Unlike template analysis, IPA adopts an idiographic approach to data analysis (Smith, 2008), making it less comfortable with data gathered from focus groups (Smith, 2004) and samples in excess of ten respondents (King, 2012).

Chapter 5

Methods in Practice, Ethics, and Analysis

The first section of this chapter will offer a clear description of the methods I chose to gather data for answering the research questions, and will show how these are consistent with the adopted critical realist philosophical perspective. This section will also cover the sampling and recruitment of research participants, the equipment used, and how the interviews were carried out. The second section will be split into three sub-sections during which I will document my strategies to ensure participant confidentiality and safety, and aims to balance the asymmetry of power during the data collection process. The final section of the chapter will focus on my analysis of the data, detailing my use of the Template Analysis technique, and in particular, the ways I developed my template to adequately accommodate all of the relevant data.

5.1   Methods in practice

5.1.1   Participants

As individuals, men could be viewed as unique, therefore, making any rigid social groupings of them problematic. Nevertheless, as pre-established cultural meanings constrain the understandings and behaviours of social agents (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Stewart & Usher, 2007; Bergin et al., 2008), there are likely to be similarities among specific cultural groups of men. As such, men are often grouped into different categories, based on age, social class, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, marital status, mobility, sporting and recreational interests, and so on. This enables social researchers to narrow the focus of their investigations to specific aspects of social life.

An assumption of this investigation is that men's personal representations of reality are influenced by socially pre-established constructions, which are - to some extent - reflected in their talk (Dobson, 2001; Bergin et al., 2008). Therefore, provided men have been exposed to a similar representation regarding what behaviours constitute successful masculinity, there appeared to be no reason to exclude them based on any specific social grouping. However, attempting to investigate differences in age, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, and so on, in relation to this project's research questions, would severely limit the depth of the analysis (Boeije, 2010). Therefore, I limited the number of different samples that were required to collect the necessary data by focusing on working and middle-class men that were white, middle-aged and heterosexual. However, as it was explained within chapter one, as the participants fall into specific social categories, no assumptions can be made that the same findings would emerge from a non-white, non-heterosexual sample of younger or older men. For instance a sample identifying themselves as non-heterosexual men might be likely to problematise heterosexuality rather than use it to define successful masculinity.

Each social class consists of men with varying social and material resources (Hood-Williams, 2001; Phillips, 2005 & 2007). As such, it would be erroneous to consider them as constituting homogenous groups of men. Additional to education and employment, authors, such as Bourdieu (1979/2010) and Nayak (2006) have suggested that class is evidenced through cultural values, belief systems, accents, dress codes, and leisure activities. Crompton and Scott (2000) and Devine and Savage (2000) documented that analyses sensitive to these factors derive data showing how the complexities of social reality impede the placing of people into distinct categories of social class. Nevertheless, literature suggests that class continues to retain its prominent influence over the structuring of peoples' lives (Devine & Savage, 2000; Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak, 2006). Therefore, when choosing a measure, it is important not to obfuscate a basic distinction between the working and middle-classes (Crompton et al., 2000).

Since 2001, the government has referred to the National Statistics Socio-economic Classification (NS-SEC) in order to define social class (Scott, 2006; Office of National Statistics, 2008). This measure uses occupations to assign people into categories but, like its predecessor – the Registrar-General's Social Class Schema (Prandy, 1999) – does not commit to a distinction between which types of occupation constitute working and middle-class (Office of National Statistics, 2008). Instead, the NS-SEC defines eight analytic classes based on different types of occupation, ranging from higher managerial positions through to the long term unemployed (Chandola & Jenkinson, 2000). Rather than a measure of income, the focus here is on the prestige that society affords to specific occupations (Scott, 2006). A three category version defining a hierarchy of occupational prestige was proposed by the Office for National Statistics (2008). This is demonstrated in Table 1:

Table 1: The 3 Category NS-SEC Occupational Hierarchy

1. Managerial and professional occupations
2. Intermediate occupations = Small employers and own account workers
3. Routine and manual occupations = Lower supervisory and technical occupations + Semi-routine and routine occupations

Nevertheless, in light of the discussed evidence suggesting the continued existence of working and middle-classes (Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak, 2006), the NS-SEC can be considered inappropriate for clearly defining samples in the way this study requires. Moreover, the masculinity literature demonstrated how education was an important factor which distinguished working and middle-class men (Archer et al., 2001; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Nayak, 2006). Therefore, as the NS-SEC does not directly address educational attainment, it makes sense to employ a measure which does.

Health researchers frequently define social class by measures of educational attainment, income, and occupational prestige (Veenstra, 2005). A number of authors can be seen to equate class to these factors (Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2000; Hall, 2002; McDowell, 2002; Reay, 2002; Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Nayak, 2006). In addition to measuring variables which provide a clearer definition of social class (Crompton, 2008), socioeconomic measures are easier to employ than those which attempt to define class via non-socioeconomic means (Edgell, 1997). Moreover, as economic issues remain at the heart of social class, they are arguably too serious to ignore (Devine & Savage, 2000). As such, a majority of sociologists and health researchers tend to use them (Prandy, 1999; Chandola & Jenkinson, 2000; Veenstra, 2005). The aim of the sampling strategy in this study was to make general distinctions between groups of working and middle-class men, rather than to reflect a more complex mapping of the social strata. Therefore, this type of measure appears to be the most appropriate choice for the investigation.

Despite making a broad distinction between working and middle-class men, I am not suggesting that they will neatly constitute one category or the other. Indeed, within each of these classifications it is realistic to suppose that there are numerous degrees of differentiation and stratification, and a blurring of the boundaries (Chandola & Jenkinson, 2000; Scott, 2006; Crompton, 2008). I wish to acknowledge, therefore, that these ambiguities would be likely to become transparent if I employed a more complex measure of the respondents' lifestyle practices and cultural tastes (Crompton & Scott, 2000; Devine & Savage, 2000; Bourdieu, 2010 [1979]). However, the main aim of this investigation is not to identify these levels of difference. Instead, it is to see how helpful it is to understand men's common patterns of behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009) as being indicative of a dominant socially pre-established representation of masculinity.

Socioeconomic measures are not without their limitations. In addition to ignoring lifestyle practices and cultural tastes (Bourdieu, 2010 [1979]), they are not equipped to measure the social class of students, homemakers, and the retired (Crompton & Scott,

2000; Buechler, 2008). None of the respondents within this study happened to be students or retired. One of them did, however, identify himself as a house husband. Some researchers have argued that each individual within a household should have his or her social class measured separately, rather than judging them on the basis of the main breadwinner (Edgell, 1997). However, all the members of a household are likely to share similar socioeconomic conditions (Goldthorpe, 2007); for instance, they live in the same house, go on the same holidays, share the same social network, and so on (Gayo-Cal et al., 2006). As such, it seems reasonable to designate the same class to each (Goldthorpe, 2007). In this particular instance, the respondent – previously a kitchen fitter – was claiming disability benefits, and his wife had a part-time cleaning job. Other than CSEs, neither he nor his partner had any academic qualifications.

In order to define social class in this study, brief information was collected regarding the aforementioned socioeconomic factors (academic status - income - occupational prestige). After signing the interview consent forms, respondents were asked to fill in a very brief demographic questionnaire; a copy of which can be found in Appendix 12. Within this, income was divided into the salary categories: 'between £10,000 and £19,000', 'between £20,000 and £29,000', 'between £30,000 and £39,000', and '£40,000 and above'. Respondents ticked which bracket their salary fitted into. According to Rohrer (2009), the average UK salary for full-time employment in 2009 was £25,123. Therefore, those respondents falling into the 'between £20,000 and £29,000' category were loosely judged to have an average income.

Two further questions aimed at ascertaining information regarding the respondents' socioeconomic status enquired about their academic qualifications and the type of occupation they had. For instance, if a respondent answered: 'Kitchen Fitter', this would be regarded as a skilled, manual position. According to the NS-SEC, such positions, classified as semi-routine occupations, fall into category three of a three category hierarchy. As such, the NS-SEC can be viewed to afford them low prestige.

Since, in this study, the social-class of a respondent was being based on their responses to three questions; it made sense to define this on a 'best-out-of-three' basis. Hence, respondents scoring two out of three were linked to the social-class the majority leaned towards. For instance, a respondent with high income, but no qualifications and low occupation prestige, would be assumed to approximate the category 'working-class'. Occupation prestige, in this case, would be borrowed from the three category hierarchy proposed by the NS-SEC (Office for National Statistics, 2008).

5.1.2 Snowball sampling

With the exception of the second middle-class focus group, snowball sampling was used as a means of acquiring the research participants. This involved the first respondent from each focus group being obtained owing to his accessibility. These three men were then asked to invite their own acquaintances to participate in the study. Therefore, the acquired respondents were likely to share similar interests and representations of the world. As such, when respondents are obtained through a snowball strategy they do not constitute a random selection technique and are regarded as a non-probability sample (Bryman, 2008). Nevertheless, this was a qualitative investigation aimed at gaining a more in-depth understanding of the respondents underlying representations of masculinity. Hence the aim was not to make claims, grounded in positivism, regarding a comprehensive observation of an intransitive structure (Diefenbach, (2008).

The familiarity between three of these respondents and me might have also played a role in the data gathering process (Robson, 2002). For instance, desires to portray themselves in manners consistent with what they perceive to have established during our previous interactions might have constrained their responses (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006). However, this was less likely to occur during the focus groups, as they were accompanied by individuals they knew on a more intimate level. Moreover, as the majority of one to one interviews were conducted with men I had not met until the recruitment process, comparisons could be made between their responses. Furthermore, an advantage was that rapport had already been established before the interview, arguably limiting the

imbalance of power in favour of the interviewer over the interviewee (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005; Busso, 2007). This chapter will now discuss the focus groups, starting with the working-class respondents, followed by those chosen to represent the middle-class.

5.1.3   Working-class focus group 1

The process of obtaining the first working-class focus group began with me requesting help from a man (George) who had already provided rich data during an interview for the MSc project which had informed the theoretical foundations of the current study. In accordance with the adopted measure of socioeconomic status, I considered him to be working-class owing to his low bracket income, manual occupation and lack of academic qualifications. Gaining his approval, I arranged to join George and his friends, none of whom I had met before, during a number of their weekly gatherings at a local public house. During introductions with these other men, I provided them with basic information about my PhD and research interests. This information was succinctly compiled on an information sheet I presented to them. A copy of this can be found in Appendix 9. I also told the men that I was interested in finding respondents for a focus group and one to one interview. In addition to being considered a way of finding participants who already had good rapport between them, an assumption was that this group might consist of men with similar occupations, social values, and so on.

A limitation of using pre-established groups in focus group interviews is that it might increase the potential of respondent conformity (Leask et al., 2001). In this study, however, each of the respondents was interviewed separately following their participation in the focus group. This meant that they were each given the opportunity to divulge information in the absence of the group, and also that their responses during the one to one interviews could be compared with those they provided during the focus group. This working-class focus group (Working-Class Focus Group 1) consisted of seven men. Brief details of these are given in Table 2.

Table 2. Working-Class Focus Group 1: Respondent details

Pseudonym	Age	Academic Qualification	Occupation	Salary	Marital Status
Ted	35	None	Gas Fitter	£20,000 - £29,000	Married
James	39	5 CSE's	Warehouse Operative	£10,000 - £19,000	Married
George	39	None	Unemployed/disabled	£10,000 - £19,000	Married
Barry	43	University Degree	Council Housing Manager	£30,000 - £39,000	Married
Les	44	None	Bedroom Fitter	£10,000 - £19,000	Married
Grant	50	None	Ironmonger	£10,000 - £19,000	Divorced
Ross	56	None	Ironmonger	£10,000 - £19,000	Divorced

Regarding the socioeconomic details provided in Table 2, it is apparent that, when using this measure, Barry does not really fit into the working-class category. His academic attainment, high status occupation and high income all suggest him to be middle-class. However, as he is a long term member of the friendship group it made sense to include him, while remaining mindful of his differing class background. Ted's salary also fell into a higher category than the other men. However, his lack of academic qualifications and manual occupation, although skilled, place him more comfortably than Barry into the working-class category. The socioeconomic situations of the other respondents appeared to lend them to a classification as working-class.

5.1.4 Working-class focus group 2

The second working-class focus group was a snowball sample which comprised of men known to another of my acquaintances (Mel). Being a friend of my father-in-law's, I had had a couple of brief conversations with him prior to inviting him to participate in the study. After providing him with the same details I had supplied the respondents from the previous focus group (see Appendix 9), he said he would be interested in participating himself. In response to my request, he also introduced me to four other men with whom he socialised at a working men's club. At an arranged meeting with them at the club, they were also presented with the information sheet and, after reading it, agreed to participate. Details of these men are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Working-Class Focus Group 2: Respondent details

Pseudonym	Age	Academic Qualification	Occupation	Salary	Marital Status
Tom	51	None	Welder	£10,000 - £19,000	Married
Mel	54	None	Plumber	£10,000 - £19,000	Married
Stan	45	None	Engineer	£20,000 - £29,000	Married
Joe	42	None	Landscape Gardener	£10,000 – £19,000	Divorced
Nik	39	None	Window Fitter	£10,000 – £19,000	Separated

Referring to Table 3, Stan's income can be seen to fall into a higher category than the others. However, as with Ted in the previous focus group, having no academic qualifications and working in a skilled manual occupation can be viewed to approximate

him to the category of 'working-class'. According to this measure, the other respondents can be seen to fit neatly into this same category.

5.1.5 Middle-class focus group 1

I again used the snowball sampling technique in order to obtain the first middle-class focus group. Via Facebook, I contacted an acquaintance [Jack], who I knew held a position of police sergeant. Jack had been in my year at secondary school, and although we had never really spoken to one another back then, which was now twenty-four years ago, he had recently moved to a house around the corner from mine. As such, we had bumped into one another a few times and had stopped for brief, but pleasant conversations. It turned out that he was still friends with a couple of the boys he had associated with at school. I have named these Ben and John. Again, these had been in the same year as me but, although I remembered them, they were not people with whom I had associated.

In response to my request through Facebook, Jack showed the study brief I had first mailed him to Ben, John and a couple of other friends [Jed and Paul], with whom he played golf. All the men he asked agreed to participate in a focus group and one to one interview. A day and time which was appropriate for them was negotiated via a number of messages sent back and forth through Facebook. Table 4 contains the respondent details.

Table 4. Middle-Class Focus Group 1: Respondent details

Pseudonym	Age	Academic Qualification	Occupation	Salary	Marital Status
Jack	39	None	Police Sergeant	£30,000 - £39,000	Divorced
John	39	Degree MSc	Teacher	£30,000 - £39,000	Married
Jed	35	Degree MSc	Teacher	£30,000 - £39,000	Living with girlfriend
Ben	39	None	Company Manager	£30,000 – £39,000	Married
Paul	39	None	Company Manager	£30,000 – £39,000	Married

Table 4 shows that Jack, Ben and Paul lack academic qualifications. However, they fit the criteria I am using for middle class on account of their relatively high salaries and the lower managerial/professional nature of their jobs.

5.1.6 Middle-class focus group 2

Unlike the other focus groups which were acquired by snowball sampling, these respondents were obtained through convenience sampling. I circulated an initial request via the university email system to every member of the university staff. This message was constructed as a general invite to academics, and also included an attachment giving a brief overview of the study (see Appendix 5). As this was to be read by men more familiar with academic investigations, it included more detail than the information sheet presented to the non-academic respondents. Unfortunately, this first attempt received no interest whatsoever. I then used the university email system to contact clubs, societies and groups based at the university. Finding them from the University of Huddersfield Student

Union website, I sent requests to the organisers/leaders of the student union, snow sports incorporated, the climbing club, the caving club, the gaming society, the juggling club, the post-graduate society, the poker society, and the marketing society. In addition, I contacted the Course Leader for Initial Teacher Education and Continuing Professional Development. My messages, which can be found in Appendices 3 (clubs/groups), and 4 (student union), politely asked the recipients to forward my investigation information (sent as an attachment) to all the male members of their clubs. Unfortunately, this approach was also unsuccessful.

I then sent direct requests (via the university email system) to over fifty male members of the university staff. Rather than these requests being sent indiscriminately, as I had in my previous attempt, each one was individually addressed to potential respondents (see Appendix 6). These men's names and mail addresses were obtained from the Human and Health Sciences staff profiles link on the university website (http://www2.hud.ac.uk/hhs/staff/). A request was sent to every man that was included on this list. The study overview which was sent as an attachment can be found in Appendix 8.

This approach proved more successful, with eighteen men suggesting they would be willing to participate. However, there were difficulties when I attempted to find a time and date suitable for enough of them to attend. Numerous schedules were suggested, but what suited one did not suit any of the others. Finally, I managed to find a time that four of the men could agree on. Unfortunately, on the evening before the interview, I received a message from one of these saying he no longer wished to attend. As it was far too late to reschedule, additional to the fact that later dates were not suitable for the three other men, I decided to go ahead with the focus group. The respondent details can be found in Table 5.

Table 5. Middle-Class Focus Group 2: Respondent details

Pseudonym	Age	Academic Qualification	Occupation	Salary	Marital Status
Andrew	31	MSc	Finance Manager	£30,000 - £39,000	Married
Graham	60+	PhD	University Professor	Above £40,000	Widower
Richard	52	PhD	University Lecturer	Above £40,000	Divorced

5.1.7 The semi-structured interview schedule

This section will provide a brief explanation regarding the development of the interview schedule. Further details of the schedule development, including how the literature influenced my construction of the questions, and the subjects that each question was designed to elicit, can be found in Appendix 2.

As the intention of the follow-up one to one interviews was to explore, in greater depth, common themes that had emerged during the focus groups, only one interview schedule was developed for the study. This contained questions that enquired about masculinity and femininity in relation to men and women and the topics of friendships, relationships, sexuality, competition, sport, embodiment, and affectivity. My aim when developing the questions was for them to elicit rich information regarding what is meant by the term 'masculinity' and what a 'real man' looks like in the eyes of the respondents. This data would, therefore, enable me to determine whether the respondents shared similar representations of masculinity, and whether these compared with the dominant masculine norm identified in the literature. A copy of the interview schedule can be found in Appendix 1.

When developing the interview schedule for this study I followed the guidelines of authors such as Mason (1996), Arksey and Knight (1999) and Schostak (2006). I developed open-ended questions giving the respondents the potential to generate rich information (Mason, 1996). In order to make them easy to understand, I avoided the use of technical terms (Schostak, 2006), such as 'transitive dimension' and 'social representation' and had each question addressing only one point of enquiry (Arksey & Knight, 1999). Furthermore, I made the questions as short and simple as possible (Kvale, 1996), and avoided the use of emotive language as this is likely to have a greater influence over the respondents answers (Schostak, 2006). Note, however, that the interview schedule was developed to serve only as a guide. My reasons for this will be made clear during the ethics section.

5.1.8 Focus group procedure

To facilitate rapport (Smith, 2004), the respondents were asked to decide the time and venue of the focus groups. Other than the second middle-class focus group, which took place in an office within the university, the groups came to common agreements that these would be better taking place within my own house. On each occasion, my wife took the children out, and I arranged sufficient chairs around a table in the centre of the living room. At both ends of this table I placed an audio recording device; one digital and one a tape recorder. This was just to ensure that I would capture an audible record of the data.

Fortunately, the living room is quite a bit more spacious and more homely/less formal than the university office, making it more comfortable for the larger groups of men; particularly those not used to academic research. On the other hand, the office used for the second middle-class focus group was equally adequate as this sample only consisted of three academics that were very familiar with the university environment. Based on my own experiences as a member of each of these focus groups, and on the rich data they provided, the differing interview settings did not seem to impact on the data that was collected. In all four focus groups camaraderie, as indicated by men's humour and

laughter, was demonstrated by the respondents, and similar patterns of verbal behaviour were recorded.

As a means of affording myself time to gain composure, I made sure that the rooms were ready for the visitors more than an hour prior to each interview. In the time that this allowed me, I would re-read my interview schedule to re-familiarise myself with the questions. I felt this necessary as these were rarely asked in order and often prompted by respondents digressing into related areas of discussion. I would also listen to music which I find relaxing. However, regardless of my preparation, I tended to feel anxious until everyone had arrived and the interview had commenced. At the same time, I made every effort not to allow my anxiety to be apparent to the respondents, nor affect my interviewing skills.

On their arrival, respondents were offered tea and coffee. Each focus group began with me offering the men another briefing about the aims of the investigation and their ethical rights (see the ethics section). Apart from in the case of the first middle-class focus group, whose respondents were working to a tighter time limit, there would be up to fifteen minutes of informal talking before our commencing. Fortunately, the lack of informal banter did not appear to have any effect on the depth of data that was collected during the first middle-class focus group.

The focus groups lasted between one and two hours in total. At about ten minutes into each interview, any anxieties I had had beforehand tended to have vanished. In comparison to me, I always felt that the respondents arrived appearing relaxed, and remained so throughout the process. This might have been because they had less concern regarding issues of participant attendance and the quality of data collected. Throughout the focus groups, respondents tended to provide in-depth answers to my questions.

Based on my own judgement, all the focus groups were characterised by a relaxed, jovial atmosphere. I felt that the banter between us was consistent with my many previous experiences of men's group relations. Our talk as men, during relations between men,

was punctuated with crude humour, sarcasm, verbal sparring, and laughter. Particularly in the case of the working-class respondents, much of the men's talk crossed the boundaries of political correctness and was punctuated with swear words. Hence, despite the formality of the interview dynamic, the men appeared to portray themselves in ways very similar to how they had on the nights when their participation had been arranged. From my perspective, then, regardless of the different setting, the men continued to perform the same identities, the group dynamic remaining unaltered.

As a token of thanks for their participation I supplied both of the working-class focus groups with food and drink once their interviews had been completed. Beer was chosen because it became clear that they liked it during my initial meetings with them. This was promised to them as an after-participation show of gratitude at the initial stage of the recruitment process. Most of the men, however, had very kindly assured me that it was not necessary. Alternatively, comments were made by Les from the first working-class group that beer would not be enough, and that he wanted 'paying' for his trouble, and that he didn't 'come cheap'. Nevertheless, this was done in a very tongue-in-cheek manner that I perceived to imply humour. He, like the rest of the men, attended his arranged focus group and helped to provide rich data to my questions.

Via email, I offered to supply food and drinks to the men from the first middle-class focus group as we organised their interview. Unfortunately, we could only negotiate a sixty minute time frame when all of the men would be able to participate. This meant that there would not be enough time for the interview followed by my show of appreciation. However, they assured me that it was unnecessary and that, because most of them would be driving, they would have not been consuming alcohol in any case. At no point during the interview did this seem to have any impact on the flow or character of the conversation in comparison to the working-class focus groups. In my opinion, this is reflected in the common patterns emerging across the data. The interview did indeed run for the full duration of their availability, but I made every effort to verbally express my gratitude to each of the five of them.

5.1.9 Individual interview procedure

As noted earlier, the respondents were each requested to participate in a further one to one interview. Some of the times and locations of these had already been arranged at the time that the focus groups took place, as was the case with the three members of the university sample. The majority however, had to be negotiated through further emails and/or phone calls with respondents. All of the men had agreed to participate in these one to one interviews, and had offered me their contact details, saying that they preferred not to arrange them too far in advance. A common reason given for this revolved around uncertainties regarding whether or not they would be required to work overtime on particular nights or weekends, or in some cases, would be out of the area owing to their work commitments. Another common reason why they did not want to designate times in advance revolved around the weather, this determining whether or not would be free to participate or 'out with the family', 'out on the bike', 'playing golf', and so on.

Only four of the twenty respondents failed to participate in a further one to one interview. One of these was Tom from the first working-class focus group. He had been by far the most vocal member of his group during their interview, and it would have been good to see if his social practices had been similar outside of the group dynamic. On three occasions we had arranged a meeting, and unfortunately he had needed to cancel each time. The first two times were because he had underestimated his work load, which had caused him to work late into the evening. Both occasions he had been very apologetic with me over the phone, arranging a following meeting. To avoid the same occurrence a third time, we had arranged the interview for a Sunday afternoon. I received a phone call from him nearly two hours after he had been due to arrive. In a very jovial manner – punctuated with laughter – he told me how he had been involved in a motorcycle accident on the way to my house and was now lying on a hospital trolley waiting to go into theatre. Two months later, at the point I decided enough data had been collected, Tom had still not fully recovered. Fortunately, I have since learned that he has made a full recovery.

The other three men whose one to one data I failed to collect were members of the first working-class focus group. As this was the largest group, consisting of seven men, it meant that I at least got interviews with four of them. One of the men unable to attend was Barry. Unlike the other men in this group, his socioeconomic status could be seen to define him as middle-class. Therefore, it would have been problematic to regard his data as working-class. Nevertheless, it would have been good to see if his social practices had differed when not in the company of his working-class friends.

Ross and Les were the other two men who, like Barry, always suggested they were too busy to be able to participate each time I asked them. Both of these men had contributed a large amount of data during their focus group which would have enabled me to make comparisons between this and their one to one accounts. However, based on the consistent data provided by the other sixteen respondents during the two phases of interviewing, I can only make the assumption that a similar pattern might have occurred. All three of these men insisted that they were still willing to participate, but as my weekly requests were continually met by replies of 'not this week', I began to feel like I was hounding them. As such, I told them to get in touch if they had any spare time, and this contact was never made. This meant that, in all, I conducted eight working and eight middle-class one to one interviews.

Again, the respondents were asked to decide the times and settings of their interviews. Having found that the traditional tape recording device had provided a more audible copy of the focus groups, this was used to capture the data. According to Smith (2004), in comparison to note taking, audio recordings assist fluent communication. Moreover, as they capture all the detail, they reduce the risk of data selection bias (Banister et al., 1994). As before, each participant was reminded about the study aims and their ethical rights, and asked to read and sign a consent form recapping these. A copy of the one to one consent form can be found in Appendix 11. The one to one interviews tended to last between sixty and ninety minutes each.

Interviews with the university participants took place in the respondents' offices. Of the others, all but four chose to be interviewed at my house. In these cases, I used the same room as I had for the focus groups and my wife very kindly went out with our children so that the respondents and I would be alone. On their arrival, they were asked if they would like tea, coffee, or a soft drink. This was a reverse to the interviews in which I was the visitor, whereby I was the person being asked if I would like a drink. In some ways, this could be seen to help add balance to the power dynamics of their interviews. Nonetheless, in my perception, none of the respondents visiting my house appeared to be apprehensive, and I always felt that I that was the more nervous regardless of where the interviews took place.

The four men whose homes I visited were George, Nik, Mel, and Ben. On arranging these I had expressed that it was preferable they be conducted in the absence of other people in order to avoid possible distractions. As such, two of the interviews took place within unoccupied rooms (Mel and Ben), and the other two were arranged at times when their families were out (George and Nik). The data they provided within their own homes was consistent with what they had provided during their focus groups at my house. Furthermore, I felt that visiting their homes helped me to compose myself as I was not sat waiting, wondering whether they would actually turn up. My main concern while travelling to their homes revolved around me being able to find them from the directions I had been given and if we would indeed have a setting free from the interruptions of other people. In this latter case, I felt certain that, for instance, had their wives been present this would have had a big impact on their social practices. This notion reflected the data these men had provided during their focus groups, suggesting that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity in the absence of women.

5.2   Ethics

During this section of the chapter I will provide brief details regarding the strategies I used to ensure participant confidentiality, participant and researcher safety, and to balance the asymmetry of power during the data collection process.

5.2.1   Confidentiality

Before conducting the focus group and one to one interviews, I ensured that all of the respondents were aware of their rights to anonymity and the measures I would put in place to conceal their identities. I expressed this information both verbally and via consent forms which they were asked to read and sign. Copies of the focus group and one to one consent forms can be found in appendices 10 and 11. Consistent with the ethical guidelines of the Social Research Association (SRA, 2003), the respondents were informed that:

- They could withdraw their permission for my use of their quotes within a written report of the study
- Transcripts of the interview would not include their names or any information that could reveal their identity
- Audio recordings of the interviews would be destroyed after transcripts of them had been completed
- Only my supervisors and I would have access to the raw data
- They should not discuss with non-group members information that was disclosed during the focus group

5.2.2   Power dynamics

Power during interactions between interviewers and interviewees is not equal (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004; Busso, 2007), and is generally seen as stacked in favour of the interviewer (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005). It is the interviewer who determines the subject and which elements of the emerging data they wish to further pursue (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2005; Busso, 2007). Rather than to dictate the interview structure, I developed the interview schedule to act as a guide (Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008), and used it to avoid missing areas that I wanted to explore (Anastas, 2004; Biggerstaff & Thompson, 2008). I, therefore, enabled the respondents to lead the conversations much of the time and, as a result, each interview tended to have its own direction. Having the freedom to diverge

into related issues that were of interest to them, the respondents often divulged information that I had not anticipated, but that was relevant to answering the research questions. When this occurred, I improvised questions aimed at gathering detail regarding these new areas of information and, in a similar way to grounded theory (Cutcliffe, 2000; Draucker et al., 2007), probed them during subsequent interviews. While doing so, I did my best to conform to the guidelines of Arksey & Knight (1999) and Schostak (2006), as detailed in the section regarding the construction of the interview schedule. I also remained aware that, regardless of whether the questions were pre-prepared or improvised, they could never be neutral, and would still play an influential role in shaping the data (Horsburgh, 2003).

According to Neill (2006), another way of reducing data distorting differences in the power dynamics of the interviewer-interviewee interaction is for the researcher to select respondents with matching age, sex, ethnicity, and so on. Personally, I would identify myself as a white, heterosexual, middle-aged, working-class man. In addition to socialising with other middle-aged, working-class men, I am also accustomed to socialising with middle-aged men who I would regard as middle-class. Therefore, because I have chosen to conduct the investigation with respondents with matching categories, this will arguably help to balance the asymmetry of power by limiting language barriers and cultural misunderstandings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006; Neill, 2006).

5.2.3 Participant and researcher safety

Following the Social Research Association (SRA, 2003) guidelines, I provided the respondents with brief, easy to understand details of the investigation (see appendices 8 & 9) and informed them of the possible consequences that can arise through participation. During some of the interviews, this practice caused me to be mocked by the respondents, their comments implying the unlikelihood of me, or my interviews, being able to harm them.

Carefully developing an interview schedule allowed me time to word questions in ways that were sensitive and non-condescending (Kavanaugh & Ayres, 1998; Arksey & Knight, 1999). Once a first draft had been completed, my supervisors and I read over the questions, checking to make sure that they contained no words or phrases that a respondent was likely to find offensive (Kvale; 1996; Kavanaugh & Ayres, 1998; Arksey & Knight, 1999). When I improvised questions that were not part of the pre-prepared schedule, I took the utmost care to retain the same level of sensitivity.

Based on my judgement, had any of the respondents shown signs that an interview was causing them upset or concern, I had planned to halt it immediately. Had this occurred I was also ready to provide them with contact details for 'Supportline' and 'The Samaritans', as these services can offer professional help and advice. However, the literature and emerging data made me aware that men, during relations between men, attempt to hide their vulnerability to avoid being ridiculed. Therefore, I was forearmed with the knowledge that it would be unlikely for respondents to report this harm, and that to detect it I would need to rely on cues such as changes in their moods and their response strategies. Furthermore, had I needed to offer information about help lines, I would have exercised care not to do this in front of the other respondents.

In view of my own protection, I planned to halt interviews if I felt in any way intimidated by respondents, or that my personal safety was under threat. If the study had had any impact on my psychological wellbeing, I would have sought advice from my main supervisor. On those occasions when I met respondents in settings outside of my own home, I always provided my wife with details of my whereabouts. During meetings with the non-university focus groups I was always accompanied by the acquaintance who had first introduced me to them. When meeting these men in their local pub, had any of them shown anger towards me, my plan was to immediately remove myself from the setting.

5.3   Analysis

As it was documented in chapter four, template analysis was used to thematically organise and analyse the data. This section of the chapter will explain my use of the technique in relation to the development of an initial template, and how this was revised into a final template that adequately accommodated all the relevant data.

5.3.1   Initial template

An initial template is developed to accommodate a researcher's a priori themes and themes that emerge from a sub-set of the data (King, 2012). As such, the initial template is the product of both a top-down and bottom-up analysis. Prior to my interaction with the data, I began with a small number of a priori themes that had been informed by the literature review (see chapter three). Therefore, by documenting how this top-down aspect of my analysis informed the initial template, I will provide the reader with some insight into my subjective position at this early stage of the research. Furthermore, by explaining how the initial template was modified to adequately account for all of the remaining data, I will show the reader that my prior knowledge of the subject did not prevent me from identifying contrasting and unanticipated information. In order to do this, I will discuss the ways in which my a priori themes were inadequate for accommodating the emerging data, and how the developing template became far more complex than my literature-informed assumptions.

Informed by the masculinity literature discussed in chapter three, I began collecting the data with some expectation that, during relations between heterosexual men, a common pattern of their behaviour would be to verbally emphasise their heterosexuality. However, the rich detail that began emerging from my analysis of the data in relation to this theme was more complex than I had anticipated. Rather than being able to group the data into one specific theme, I found that I had to develop a number of different higher and lower level codes in order to accommodate the range of interrelated information. For instance, under a theme that I labelled/coded 'Heterosexuality linked to successful masculinity', I

found that my template required five third order codes to accommodate the emerging themes that I saw as relating to this area (see Figure 1). As all of these and a number of other emerging themes were related to the subject of sexuality, it made sense to make 'sexuality' a broad first-order code under which I could position them.

A large number of studies informing my understanding of the area also suggested that, other than aggression, men hide their emotions, especially sorrow and fear (Anderson, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; McDowell, 2003; Phillips, 2005; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Men are not only suggested to mask their own emotions but also be derogatory towards those men who demonstrate them (Anderson, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Plummer, 2006). Therefore, I began with the assumption that, in some of the interviews, remote emotionality and emphasised fearlessness might emerge during men's discussions of masculinity. Again, the data within this area was richer and more complex than I had at first anticipated. Therefore, I found that I had to develop a number of second and third-order codes in order to appropriately accommodate the complex array of themes that I was identifying. I then placed these under the broad, first-order code: 'Affectivity' (see Figure 1: The Initial Template).

'Masculinity Demonstrated via Embodiment' was a further literature-influenced theme that I had expected to emerge within the data. Literature suggests that the body is inextricably linked to men's demonstrations of masculinity (Messerschmidt, 1999; Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Plummer, 2006). During my analysis of the data, embodiment did emerge as an important factor of masculinity. The respondents suggested that men's bodies can facilitate or inhibit their 'appearance' as masculine and the ways they demonstrate their masculinity. However, I found that the majority of the data relating to embodiment revolved around the men's talk of physical aggression. Therefore, in order to reflect this balance, I placed the emerging themes into a number of lower order codes under a first order theme that I coded as 'Physical Aggression'.

My critical realist informed notion that transitive structures have an impact over agents' social practices (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007) was also in place prior to the collection of the data. As discussed in Chapter 3, Common patterns of men's behaviour, identified by previous authors (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009), can be linked to the transcendence of vulnerability. Therefore, rather than approaching the data free of any preconceptions, I approached it with a notion that it might reveal something about an underlying, socially influenced representation of masculinity (dominant masculine norm); moreover, that this might be personified as the transcendence of vulnerability. Consistent with critical realist thinking, I was assuming that this might, to some degree, permeate other themes that emerged in the data. This was an assumption that I found to be reflected across the data, as demonstrated in my initial template (see Figure 1).

Prior to my analysis, I had a subjective intention to gain a richer understanding of masculinity, as a transitive structure. Conforming to my philosophical perspective, aspects of this would be to identify the contextual influences that seem related to its activation (Wilson & McCormack, 2006), and men's regulatory practices in perpetuating it. The literature identified men's humour and mythic storytelling as important to the way boys and men construct consistent notions of successful masculinity (Johansson, 1990; Gibson, 1994; Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Reay, 2002; Levinson & Sparks, 2003; Segal, 2004; Phillips, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). As such, I approached the data with some expectation that themes relating to men's *regulatory social practices*, *mythic storytelling* and *humour* would be prominent in the data. Nevertheless, any data that did relate to these themes appeared to me to be interrelated with, and more relevant to, various other themes that I began to find. As a consequence, I did not include these as codes in the developing template.

Consistent with the guidelines of King (2012), I thoroughly read the first focus group and the first three one to one interviews that I had conducted and transcribed, noting every point that seemed relevant to the study. As I had guided the respondents to discuss masculinity during the interviews, I found that most of the data related in some way or

another to the subject. While conducting this reading, I also had beside me a sheet that listed my a priori themes, as discussed above. Rather than writing my preliminary code titles in the transcript margins, as suggested by King (2012), I chose to copy and paste excerpts of the data into preliminary codes that I listed in a separate file. There appeared to be little diversity in the respondents accounts of the subject, and very quickly the first themes began to appear. As they did, I colour coded the type to distinguish the different themes from one another. However, I was forced to abandon this idea as the number of coded themes rose beyond the amount of distinct colours I had to distinguish them. I then began a lengthy process of clustering the related preliminary codes into hierarchically organised groups and bringing these together to form the initial template structure, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Initial Template

1. The Dominant Masculine Norm
    Masculinity linked to the transcendence of vulnerability
    Respondents notions regarding the origins of masculinity
    Family/friends
    Society
    Media
    Nature
    Respondents notions regarding the nature of masculinity
    Contextual influences
    Transitive nature
    Social identities not associated with masculinity
    The effects of age

2. Affectivity
    Emotions viewed as a weakness
    After a sad experience, men only permitted a short grieving time
    Men experiencing self-guilt for having feelings of vulnerability
    Men experiencing but hiding vulnerability
    Men lying to hide vulnerability

Men using humour to hide vulnerability

Men using aggression to hide vulnerability

Men risk taking to hide vulnerability

Discursive transcendence of vulnerability

Relations between men inhibiting demonstrations of vulnerability

Facilitated demonstrations of vulnerability identified as therapeutic

Relations between women facilitating demonstrations of vulnerability

Women demonstrating emotions/honest about vulnerability

Men preferring to expose vulnerability to women rather than men

3. Sexuality

Effeminacy viewed as a deliberate social performance (not innate)

Occupations and recreations linked to sexuality

Heterosexuality linked to successful masculinity – Non-sexuality linked to unsuccessful masculinity

Men's concerns of compromised heterosexuality

Masculinity demonstrated via heterosexual prowess

Sexual promiscuity justified as biologically unavoidable

Expressed adversity to effeminacy

Men using humour to hide sexual vulnerability

Men competing for sexual resources

Intimate partners rendering men vulnerable during relations between men

Sex mediating power relations between men and women

Women more comfortable with non-heterosexuality/effeminacy

4. Physical Aggression

Men using physical aggression to hide vulnerability/increase status

Physical aggression linked to men with limited social resources

Men displacing vulnerability onto weaker targets

Discursive transcendence of physical vulnerability

Men's aggression expressed physically – Women's aggression expressed verbally

Men's age and physical aggression

5.3.2   Final template

The presentation of the findings is, according to King (2004) a part of the analysis rather than a separate process. Indeed, it was my attempts to describe the data that enabled me to highlight a number of inadequacies with the initial template. On some occasions, I found that the items of data I had situated under a single code contained meanings additional to what I had identified during my initial analyses. Amending these often involved me developing further codes to accommodate the novel data. For instance, I found that the data I had grouped under the second order code 1.1: '*Masculinity linked to the transcendence of vulnerability*' contained other important themes that were not highlighted in the initial template. Emerging from these data were the respondents' notions that not all of their behaviours and identities constitute demonstrations of masculinity, and that social agents consciously choose to gravitate to socially pre-established gender norms. Therefore, it was necessary to develop the two third order codes: 1.1.1 '*Identities not associated with masculinity*' and 1.1.2 '*Gendered behaviours viewed as deliberate social performances*' to accommodate these accounts. By comparing the initial and final templates, the reader can also see that I made some revisions to the wording of the codes. These revisions were either to make the codes more concise or more consistent with the data.

In general, I found that the initial template was too shallow regarding the hierarchal coding of the data. The application of the template, therefore, enabled me to develop it into a more coherent structure. This had greater depth brought about by the organising of data into fewer higher-level codes and an increase in third and fourth order codes. Whereas the initial template resembled a list format suggesting each code required a similar share of the discussion, this restructuring enabled the presentation to focus on the broader emerging themes. Data that were less relevant to answering the research questions could therefore be mentioned during discussion of these higher order codes, rather than having complete sections dedicated to it. For example, the second order codes 2.2: '*After a sad experience, men only permitted a short grieving time*', and 2.3: '*Men experiencing self-guilt for having feelings of vulnerability*' were made third order codes

under the new second order code 2.1: '*Affectivity linked to femininity* '. The final template is shown in Figure 2.

In accordance with the guidelines of King (2004), my completion of the final template was determined by the fact that I had repeatedly read all the data, coded it, and scrutinised these codes along with my hierarchical arrangement of them. At the same time, I recognise that the final template was a product of my interpretations (King, 2004).

Figure 2. The Final Template

1.	The Dominant Masculine Norm [DMN]
	1.1	Masculinity linked to the transcendence of vulnerability
		1.1.1	Identities not associated with masculinity
			1.1.1.1 Father
			1.1.1.2 Husband
			1.1.1.3 Provider
		1.1.2	Gendered behaviours viewed as deliberate social performances
			1.1.2.1 Gravitations to the socially pre-established realm of the masculine
			1.1.2.2 Gravitations to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine
	1.2	Men transcending vulnerability during relations between men
		1.2.1	Relations between men and women
		1.2.2	Relations between long-term/short-term male friends
	1.3	Notions concerning the origins of masculinity
		1.3.1	Pre-established social representation of masculinity
			1.3.1.1 Family/Friends
			1.3.1.2 Society
			1.3.1.3 Media
		1.3.2	Nature
	1.4	Notions concerning the nature of masculinity
		1.4.1	Transitive nature of the DMN
		1.4.2	The effects of age on men's gravitations to the DMN
		1.4.3	Contextual influences

2. Affectivity

    2.1   Affectivity linked to femininity

        2.1.1   Men only permitted a short time to express emotions

        2.1.2   Men experiencing self-guilt for feeling emotions

    2.2   Men experiencing but hiding affectivity

        2.2.1   Men experiencing social pressure to hide their emotions

            2.2.1.1 Men viewed to inhibit men's demonstrations of affectivity

            2.2.1.2 Men competing for status by exposing one another's affectivity

            2.2.1.3 Women viewed to facilitate men's demonstrations of affectivity

    2.3   Men's ways of hiding affectivity

        2.3.1   Lying

        2.3.2   Humour

        2.3.3   Aggression

        2.3.4   Risk-taking

3. Sexuality

    3.1   Gender performances linked to sexuality

        3.1.1   Gay men gravitating to the socially established realm of the masculine

        3.1.2   Gay men gravitating to the socially established realm of the feminine

        3.1.3   Occupations and recreations linked to gender and sexuality

    3.2   Sexuality and masculine status

        3.2.1   Heterosexuality linked to successful masculinity

        3.2.2   Non-heterosexuality as an antithesis of masculinity

        3.2.3   Tolerance versus intolerance of non-heterosexuality

        3.2.4   Compromised heterosexuality

    3.3   Sexuality and men's demonstrations of masculinity

        3.3.1   Masculinity demonstrated through heterosexual prowess

            3.3.1.1 Women viewed or presented as sex objects

            3.3.1.2 Men competing for sexual resources

            3.3.1.3 Sex mediating power relations between men and women

            3.3.1.4 Sexual promiscuity justified with essentialist arguments

4. Physical Aggression

    4.1   Nature versus nurture

5.4   Conclusion

This chapter began by documenting the methods I employed to conduct the investigation. Because I required samples that broadly represented working and middle-class men, these were defined by their socioeconomic status (academic status; income; occupational prestige) rather than by my use of a more sensitive measure. The methods section also provided the reader with details regarding my use of snowball sampling to acquire focus groups, and the way these and the follow up one to one interviews were conducted. This included a sub-section in which I detailed my construction of the interview schedule. Within the ethics section, I provided details regarding my compliance with the ethical guidelines as set by the Social Research Association (2003), and my chosen strategies to protect the respondents and me. This section of the chapter also documented the way that I attempted to reduce the imbalance of power that favours the interviewer over the interviewee (Brinkmann and Kvale, 2005; Busso, 2007). This included me choosing a category of men whose ethnicity, sexuality and age matched my own, as recommended by Neill (2006), and enabling them some freedom to direct the interactions and divulge unanticipated information, as recommended by Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008). The final section focused on my analysis. During this I detailed the development of the initial and final templates. The reporting of my a priori themes and the ways they required revision enabled me to be reflexive, while also showing how the data was given precedence in the informing of my interpretations.

Chapter 6

The Dominant Masculine Norm

This chapter will document an integrative theme that will permeate the data discussed in the following findings chapters. It will look at data suggesting that (white/heterosexual) men, during relations between (white/heterosexual) men, gravitate to a common notion that successful masculinity revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability. Chapters seven, eight and nine will look at the ways the issues identified within this chapter impact on men in relation to the areas of affectivity, sexuality and physical aggression. The chapter will be divided into four sections which are consistent with the first-order-codes 1.1 to 1.4 of the final template, as presented in chapter five. This and the subsequent chapters will relate the findings to the literature throughout.

The first section of the chapter (masculinity linked to the transcendence of vulnerability) will focus directly on the way men were suggested to perceive and manage vulnerability, as defined within chapter one. Men's transcendence of vulnerability emerged as a predominant theme throughout all of the interviews, regardless of their group or one to one setting, or whether the respondents were working or middle-class. This section will also look at data suggesting that identities such as 'husband', 'father', and 'provider' are not seen to impact on the way that men see themselves as 'masculine'. Furthermore, contrasts will be made between the data and the notion that masculinity and men are inextricably linked, as implied by some approaches to masculinity (Carrigan et al., 1985; Wetherell & Edley, 2003). This will involve looking at data which suggests that men are able to gravitate to a common notion of femininity, but become 'non-masculine' if they do.

The second section of the chapter (men transcending vulnerability during relations between men) will look at comparisons between men's relations with women and their relations with men, as emerging across the data. Whereas men were suggested to

experience less pressure to demonstrate their masculinity in the company of women, relations between men emerged as the main forum for these demonstrations. Analysis of this area will also look more closely at what types of exclusive male relations emerged as being the most likely to trigger men's demonstrations of masculinity. This will include focusing on data which referred to differences between men's long term, dyadic relations, group relations, and age in connection to an experienced pressure to transcend vulnerability.

The third and fourth sections (notions concerning the origins of masculinity; notions concerning the nature of masculinity) will focus on areas of the data relating to explanations of what masculinity is and how it has come about. While identifying some ways in which masculinity was linked to biology, the section will discuss how it predominantly emerged as a socially constructed representation perpetuated by men during relations between men. Also, how certain social contexts play a role in whether or not men experience pressure to demonstrate their masculinity. It will be argued that recent changes in men's behaviour pertain to their greater levels of tolerance demonstrated towards those men whose practices are seen to cross gender boundaries. In this sense, the data suggests that men's notions regarding what practices constitute masculinity and femininity have not actually altered. Instead, women and men were suggested to exercise more freedom in their choices of which gender norm they wish to gravitate towards.

6.1 Masculinity linked to the transcendence of vulnerability

One of the key themes that emerged from the data was the notion that men's spectrum of behaviours do not all constitute demonstrations of masculinity. However, when feeling a social pressure to demonstrate their masculinity, men tend to do this by gravitating to a dominant masculine norm. This section will look at how the data implied that the dominant masculine norm revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability, resulting in common patterns of men's behaviour.

Analysis of the data suggested that men, during relations between men, tend to demonstrate their masculinity via the transcendence of vulnerability. This was regardless of a respondent's social class, or whether the data were gathered during focus group or one to one interviews. Vulnerability seemed to be identified by all of the respondents as belonging to the realm of the feminine, not the masculine. In a majority of accounts, notions of successful masculinity and femininity were suggested to be informed by socially pre-established representations of reality. Such explanations took precedence over accounts indicative of an essentialist notion of masculinity.

Both working and middle-class respondents suggested that men suppress natural urges to express vulnerability through concerns that their masculinity will be perceived by others as inadequate. Accounts of this kind emerged during every interview. The respondents implied that men try hard to resist instincts to show pain and emotions, and to transcend vulnerability via shows of strength, despite knowledge of it conflicting with their best interests as individuals. For instance, respondents Jed and James made the following statements:

> *JED: Even if I did need to cry and I was at the point when I was going to crack, I wouldn't want to cry in front of anyone because I'd definitely feel less masculine* (Middle-Class Interview)

> *JAMES: Generally, most men don't want to show that they're scared* and a*gain, you're coming back to this bit where it would be a dent in your masculinity* (Working-Class Interview)

Often, the respondents provided long, detailed descriptions, arguably presenting the transcendence of vulnerability as being at the heart of what constitutes 'masculinity'. Continuous links were also made between femininity and the overt embracing of vulnerability. The respondents referred to a socially pre-defined gender binary, with two opposing poles based on prescribed differences in how men and women should deal with vulnerability. This implies that two distinct gender identities emerge through the differing

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social practices of men and women. Examples of this were common throughout the data and will be presented within chapters seven, eight and nine. The example below was provided in response to the question: '*Do you think that men and women exhibit similar emotions?*':

> *JACK: Men obviously do cry...* [*] *but I think they tend to do it when no one else is around*
>
> *JED: ... But women are always booing... they'll cry at anything... But it's like, even if something was really upsetting me... I'd hate to cry in front of anyone else*
>
> *INTERVIEWER: Why is that then? Why don't men like crying?*
>
> *JACK: I think that they see it as a weakness*
>
> *PAUL: It's not the masculine thing to do, is it*
>
> *INTERVIEWER: And if you did cry, say in front of your mates, how would that make you feel?*
>
> *JED: Less masculine, I suppose*
>
> *INTERVIEWER: Right. So you'd feel less masculine... why would that be then?*
>
> *PAUL: Well, I think it's one of those things where... generally a man's seen as soft if he cries in public... That's what you'd expect a woman to do*
>
> *JED: Yeah. A man's expected to be dependable... You're supposed to be strong and able to endure stress* (Middle-Class Focus Group 1)

In this sense, masculinity and femininity emerged as antitheses of one another, but also identities that are each identifiable in the other's absence. This means that: (i) masculinity can be observed during exclusive male relations, and: (ii) can be viewed as a construct that is separate from men rather than a feature of their every practice. This notion contrasts the perspective of some authors adopting a post-structural approach to masculinity, as critiqued within chapter two (see Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006).

Accounts of this nature were often volunteered after very little probing of the subject, and on a number of occasions respondents provided this information after no probing

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[*] I use the … notation to symbolise a pause in the speakers account

whatsoever. In other words, they would introduce it to the interview themselves, for instance, after providing responses to questions asking about men's friendships with other men and women. As such, it could be argued that these verbal practices reflected representations they harboured prior to the interviews. Furthermore, the transcendence of vulnerability emerged as a common pattern despite the men's differing class backgrounds, the differing interview dynamics, and the different focus groups having never met. One explanation is that these notions were influenced by the same dominant social representation of masculinity, or 'dominant masculine norm'. Otherwise, each of the men would arguably harbour different ideas regarding what constitutes successful masculinity.

The literature can be used to suggest that the notion of a dominant masculine norm can be contrasted with the social constructionist notion that versions of reality are negotiated during the context of a discussion, therefore, not reflecting an agent's cognitions (Wetherell et al., 2003). Thus, interlocutors are suggested to play a role in constructing one another's gendered identities during the meaning making process (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003). As such, these identities are viewed to be incomplete, inconsistent and in constant flux (Speer, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). However, the consistencies identified in the respondents' accounts suggested otherwise. Across the data, masculinity emerged as a specific socially constructed notion regarding what constitutes appropriate male-typical behaviour, learned through men's interactions with the social environment. During relations between men, the transcendence of vulnerability was repeatedly suggested to have an influence over men's behaviour. It, therefore, seems appropriate to refer to it as the dominant masculine norm.

Being described as a socially pre-established representation of reality, the dominant masculine norm – revolving around the transcendence of vulnerability – could be viewed to constitute a transitive structure (Zembylas, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In critical realist terms, the transitive dimension of knowledge refers to the social and cultural meanings that, through construction and reconstruction, are dominant within society (Pilgrima,

2000; McEvoy & Richards, 2003; Stewart & Usher, 2007; Sayer, 2008; Bhaskar, 2009). These relatively stable dominant representations of reality are suggested to influence agents own understandings of the world (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006) and, therefore, manifest themselves in their social behaviours. As such, agents are viewed to perpetuate the transitive dimension of knowledge (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007; Sayer, 2008). In this sense, socially pre-established notions of masculinity and femininity are likely to persist as transitive realities for as long as they continue to be reproduced through intentional human agency (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007).

Through its potential to influence men's social practices, the dominant masculine norm – as a transitive dimension of knowledge – could be viewed to materialise as a form of reality via the common patterns of men's behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). This conception starkly contrasts the essentialist notion of masculinity having origins in the intransitive (physical) dimension; masculinity, as a social construction, would remain separate from the essential nature of men Nevertheless, though not fixed, the transitive dimension is arguably enduring through its constraining effect over novel ways of viewing the world (Cabezali et al., 1990; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007), and social pressures to conform to behavioural norms (Archer, 1995; Dobson, 2001). Therefore, transient temporal and contextual pressures residing within differing social dynamics are unlikely to alter agents' underlying beliefs and understandings about the world, provided these are perpetuated within dominant social forums (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008; Bhaskar, 2008 [1975]). This might explain why the respondents' accounts were consistent across the different focus groups and the two interview dynamics in which they were produced.

Following the literature, the transitive dimension of knowledge is not assumed to dictate agents' behaviours but, instead, merely constitute potentialities to act (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). Thus, the activation of transitive structures is suggested to be brought about by a transactional relationship between these generative mechanisms and the contextual influences of the social environment (Wilson & McCormack, 2006). In this

sense, men would not be expected to demonstrate consistent behaviours at all times and in all places (Bergin et al., 2008). Moreover, in different contexts, and with differing resources, the transcendence of vulnerability is likely to be demonstrated through various social practices (Archer et al., 2001; Demetriou, 2001; Gorman, 2003). Based on the data, men's relations between men and their age are two factors that impact on their behaviour regarding the transcendence of vulnerability. As such, these will receive discussion in the following section of this chapter.

Additional to the influence of context, men's numerous social identities are unlikely to all be activated by the dominant masculine norm, as constituting a transitive dimension of knowledge. Some authors have argued that men are only likely to demonstrate their masculinity when perceiving threats to their masculine status (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). This is consistent with the notion that socialisation pressures predominantly arise when boys and men demonstrate behaviours that are perceived to compromise their masculinity (McHale et al., 2003). Furthermore, such socialisation pressures have been documented as being enforced by fathers (Kane, 2006) and male peers (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Reay, 2002; Phillips, 2005 & 2007). As such, men might perceive less threat to their masculine status and, therefore, less need to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between themselves and women (Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). Consistent with this notion, very few of the respondents' accounts implied that masculinity is demonstrated through identities such as husband, fatherhood and/or provider. In fact, none of the respondents seemed to view the maintenance of a masculine identity as a priority or even a conscious objective when reporting a range of social behaviours.

Although the men distinguished the roles of 'husband', 'father' and 'breadwinner' as being separate to men's demonstrations of masculinity, they still presented them as being male identities. In other words, these roles were not seen to interfere with men's attempts to appear masculine. According to the data, they are generally regarded as male-typical roles but, in themselves, neither challenge nor enhance a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men. It emerged that hard-working, married fathers face the same threat of

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losing masculine status as non-working, non-married men. For instance, despite being married and having two children, I lost masculine status in the eyes of the men from the first working-class focus group for wearing what they perceived as being feminine-typical clothing (see chapter eight). In other examples, as will be featured in chapter eight, Richard and Grant spoke of married fathers facing ostracism and homophobic abuse in the workplace for appearing non-masculine.

Being the main breadwinner for one's family was seldom brought up as an identity through which respondents suggested deriving a personal sense of masculinity. Relative to the transcendence of vulnerability, very little data made a direct connection between providing for one's family and masculinity. Respondents, such as Paul and Stan, spoke of viewing their role as main breadwinner as an important aspect of being a good husband and father but, again, specified that it did not enable them a sense of being 'masculine'. According to Paul, this emanated from '*being one of the lads and playing sport*'. Arguably, it is likely that before the restructuring of the workplace the respondents might have derived a greater sense of masculinity through being the main breadwinner. If so, their notions of masculinity might have evolved with the changing norms of society.

Those respondents whose interviews led to discussions about husband and fatherhood rejected the notion that they derived any sense of masculinity through these identities. For instance, when discussing fatherhood during his one to one interview, middle-class respondent, Paul, stated: '*I think that it's nothing to do with being masculine… it's just a different role*'. Working-class respondent, Stan, also suggested this, and implied that the roles of father and mother are indistinguishable in that they constitute the same forms of care and devotion: '*I don't necessarily think that that makes me masculine. I think that just makes me a parent… Whether it's masculine or feminine, I don't think you can really put that in any one box*'.

Rather than deriving a sense of masculinity through fatherhood, working-class respondent, Grant, suggested the reverse. During his one to one account of having a daughter, he implied feeling a pressure to navigate away from his usual 'masculine-

typical' behaviour and attempt to adopt behaviours he considered more 'feminine-typical'. This might suggest that he harbours a notion of what behaviours constitute the socially pre-established realms of the masculine and feminine; and, when assuming the role of father, consciously attempts to gravitate to realm of the feminine:

> *GRANT: You can spend a day with your daughter and be feminine... have some feminine ways with her because you've got to adjust to her* […] *It's hard, I found it very hard... to adjust from being a dominant-ish... to not dominant… To have been living in a dominant world and then going to see my daughter and trying to adjust... to a kinder... more caring world... you know, I found that hard to adjust* (Working-Class Interview)

Because Grant discusses shifting into femininity, these data contrast with literature suggesting that the varied identities of men, at all times and within all settings, constitute a multiplicity of contradictory masculinities (Goodey, 1997; Benjamin, 2001; Hood-Williams, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Kane, 2006; Sheff, 2006; Whitehead, 2006). Instead, data from all the interviews suggested that men have a tendency to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm (indicative of the transcendence of vulnerability) during relations between men; as will be explored in the next section.

Consistent with the above account, a majority of the respondents seemed to harbour the notion that men's and women's gravitations to the socially pre-established gender binary are deliberate social performances. Such accounts were overwhelming in comparison to suggestions implying a biological essentialist understanding. Middle-class respondent, Richard, suggested that men have the ability to gravitate to either masculine or feminine typical behavioural norms. In order for this to be possible, Richard implied that he and those around him are aware of which specific behaviours have been socially allocated to the realms of the masculine and the feminine. As such, he conveyed the notion that agents have a common, socially influenced representation of masculinity and femininity, and a biological ability to gravitate to either:

RICHARD: I think masculinity and femininity are kind of fluid enough for those kind of transitions to happen. I mean... In my life, at times, I've certainly been treated as one of the girls... and one of the boys, and you can kind of slot in loosely to that... although it's never a comfortable fit, I don't think

INTERVIEWER: And so, when you say you've been treated as one of the girls, is that when you're with purely girls? [Yeah. Yeah] And what happens if, say, you get used to mixing with this group of girls and then suddenly the men that you mix with also arrive –

RICHARD: Oh, well you'd gravitate back to your own group then... So if I've been sat with a group of women and been a couple of hours in their company, and then the guys arrive... It's like [coughs] 'I'll just go to the loo', and then when you come back, it's like you go for a wee and then come back as a man [Everyone laughs]... or go to the bar, 'I'll go get myself a drink', and you come back and you've changed to a man

INTERVIEWER: And is that trying to be courteous to the women?

RICHARD: No, I think it is to do with the switch... You know, I think it is about consciously... making the decision to change, to behave differently... or just feel different (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Many of the respondents spoke of gay men often making deliberate attempts to be perceived as 'feminine'. This will receive a more in-depth analysis and discussion during the 'Sexuality' chapter. Nevertheless, such data conveyed the notion that social agents are aware of very distinct masculine and feminine-typical behavioural norms. For instance, Paul suggested that men behaving in feminine-typical ways stand out as unusual among those with whom they interact. This 'obvious' traversing of the gender boundaries can, according to Paul, be demonstrated with the aim of amusing others. Alternatively, however, he expressed knowledge that many men view with disdain those men who behaviourally gravitate to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine. During his interview, Graham also stated: '*For a guy... if anybody comments that he has characteristics that are feminine... they're almost invariably perceived as... and intended*

to be... perceived in a negative way... If you're a man... it's not considered good to have feminine characteristics'.

This disdain was expressed first-hand by a number of the respondents. One example of this was provided by Ben, when he stated: '*It's up to you. You can either stand up and be a man or be stupid and mince about like a girl*'. In similar ways, many of the respondents spoke of men actively transcending vulnerability in order to avoid appearing feminine; and expressing a common dislike of men who frequently demonstrate behaviours indicative of vulnerability. As such, there might be some connection between this negative viewpoint and accounts characterising the concept of femininity as an embracing of vulnerability.

In summary, the data, regardless of whether it was gathered during focus group or one to one interviews, suggested that heterosexual, working and middle-class men demonstrate their masculinity by gravitating to a dominant masculine norm. Moreover, that the dominant masculine norm revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability, and its embodiment in men's behaviour is commonly recognised as such among groups of heterosexual men. Within certain social contexts, men were suggested to experience pressure to mask their vulnerability in order to appear 'masculine' and avoid appearing 'feminine'. However, the data implied that not all social contexts give rise to this pressure. For instance, men's identities as fathers and husbands did not emerge as examples of masculinity. In particular, it was relations between men that emerged as the main forum in which men demonstrate their masculinity. This will be the focus of the following section.

6.2   Men transcending vulnerability during relations between men

As suggested above, another of the themes emerging from the data was that heterosexual men predominantly experience pressure to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between one another, rather than in the company of women. Moreover, the data indicated that when men are in the absence of women, they are more likely to gravitate to the

dominant masculine norm in more obvious and extreme ways. This notion was expressed by every respondent within both the focus group and one to one interviews.

Analysis of the data revealed that the respondents saw the ability to expose the vulnerability of other men as a means by which men demonstrate their own masculinity. For instance, Ben spoke of acquaintances terrorising a friend with spiders because he showed symptoms of arachnophobia. When asked why they did this, he replied: '*They did it because he reacted... Because he showed weakness... they picked on him*'. Additionally, it was during relations between men that respondents suggested feeling the greatest threat of having vulnerabilities exposed. This notion is consistent with literature suggesting that men often view one another as rivals who compete for masculine status (Maruszy, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Reay, 2002; Cowan & Mills, 2004; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2007); furthermore, that men's pressure to demonstrate masculinity derives from the sense of threat that tends to be generated within exclusive male domains (Sabo, 2011).

Arguably, then, if threats to masculine status are viewed as triggering men's demonstrations of masculinity (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005), this threatened/reactive masculinity can be seen as a distinct identity within itself, rather than a phenomenon evidenced in the gamut of men's social behaviours, as is theorised by authors such as Speer (2001). As such, this might create a distinction between masculinity and men. This is in opposition to some social constructionist approaches which, in viewing men's spectrum of social identities as examples of masculine fluidity (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006), tend to collapse masculinity and men into one and the same thing. Arguably, a failure to distinguish masculinity from men renders the conception of masculinity meaningless.

In many of their accounts, the respondents made distinctions between men's relations with men and men's relations with women. According to the data, women are viewed to pose less of a threat to men in the sense of deliberate attempts to expose their vulnerability. As such, men's pressures to 'prove themselves' were described as often

being absent during relations between men and women. One example of this was provided by working-class respondent, Stan: '*There's always a different agenda with blokes... underlying pressures... When you're out with a woman, it's not about being the big man*'. Working-class respondent, George, also spoke of this during his one to one interview:

> *GEORGE: You don't have to try to prove yourself to women as much as men... With a female friend, they take you as you are* […] *You'll probably find more blokes try to talk you into doing something and women will try to talk you out of it* (Working-Class Interview)

During his one to one interview, Ben spoke at length (four pages of transcript) of a difference between men's relations with women and relations purely between men. Again, this difference appeared to be based on men, during relations between men, attempting to demonstrate their masculinity via a transcendence of vulnerability. Ben spoke of men deliberately singling out one another's vulnerabilities. Examples of this included:

> *BEN: You've got to cover up a lot more in front of men because they suss out your weaknesses... very, very quickly... and then pounce on you. Any sign of a weakness or any sign of... anything... then somebody takes the piss* (Middle-Class Interview)

> *BEN: Women wouldn't take the piss out of... half of the stuff that blokes take the piss out of* (Middle-Class Interview)

The transcendence of vulnerability very rarely emerged within the data as a transitive mechanism that is triggered during relations between men and women. However, it still emerged has having an impact on relations between men and women. This could be viewed to be at the heart of Grant's explanation of him being unable to prevent the break-up of his marriage: '*Your masculinity and your pride get in the way sometimes... I've had*

my pride dented me... and my masculine side has taken over and stopped me from... begging for another chance... you know, just bending and showing a weak side'. During this account, Grant suggested that, even in the company of his intimate partner, he found it too difficult to demonstrate vulnerability.

None of the respondents suggested that men were devoid of vulnerability. Instead, vulnerability was suggested to underlie men's demonstrations of masculinity. For instance, rather than emotional remoteness being presented as innate, the respondents seemed to view it as a consequence of what men, as social agents, have learned from the social environment and perpetuate during relations between one another - examples of which will be provided within the 'Affectivity' chapter. In this sense, men are likely to gravitate to a common notion of successful masculinity in order to avoid the ostracism of other men: '*When I'm with the lads... then a no nonsense-ish side comes out... Otherwise, you're going to get mugged... they are going to take the rip out of you*' (Grant). Simultaneously, men could be viewed to police masculinity in accordance with the dominant masculine norm by ostracising those men whose vulnerabilities become exposed, as will be demonstrated in chapters seven and nine. Arguably, if men harboured idiosyncratic notions of successful masculinity, such a common pattern would not emerge because the behaviours one considered successful, another would consider unsuccessful. It can be argued, therefore, that men's individual representations of masculinity have been influenced by the same dominant masculine norm.

The respondents' accounts referred to heterosexual men demonstrating their masculinity during relations between one another, rather than during relations between themselves and subordinated groups. Men's friendship and acquaintance networks emerged as being the main forums where demonstrations of masculinity take place; as middle-class respondent Jed described it: '*I think you're trying to be more masculine with your mates... Sometimes it might not be really what you're thinking, but you might say it... to be perceived as masculine*'. Importantly, this is not to counter the argument that men's patterns of behaviour have a subordinating effect over certain social groups. Instead, the data highlighted a further motivation behind men's patterns of behaviour other than that

provided by the concept of hegemonic masculinity, as proposed by Carrigan et al. (1985) and Connell (1995, 2008) and discussed in chapter two. Based on the data, it is men's aims of avoiding ostracism and abuse during relations between one another that act as a key motivation behind their attempts to transcend vulnerability. In this sense, the subordination of certain varieties of masculinity, as identified by Connell (1995, 2008), might sometimes be a by-product of white, heterosexual men competing as individuals to maintain their own masculine status.

Although the respondents identified relations between men as the main forums in which their demonstrations of masculinity take place, they also distinguished specific contexts that are likely to trigger or inhibit this behaviour. As suggested above, men emerged as being less likely to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm when being in the presence of women. The respondents also spoke of men, as individuals, judging the masculine performances of the men around them, and these judgements impacting on their own demonstrations of masculinity. Those men that introduced this notion to the interviews spoke of feeling less pressure to demonstrate their masculinity when being in the company of men that are not perceived to pose as much of a threat to their masculine status. Based on these accounts, this perception of threat is increased when the men (or man) with whom one is interacting with are judged to exhibit more extreme gravitations to the dominant masculine norm, and visa versa. Thus, the pressure to appear masculine is alleviated when in the company of a feminine-acting man, as suggested by Nik:

> *NIK: If you're in the company of a big, strong, physical man... you try to match up to their expectations... If it's a masculine man, you want to be masculine... but if it's a feminine man, you don't feel as if you have to be as masculine. So you adapt to whatever... people you're surrounded by... You'd react different than if... two big strong... deep voiced, men came in... You'd act softer towards... feminine men* (Working-Class Interview)

Different social contexts were also suggested to have an impact on the likelihood of men gravitating to the dominant masculine norm during exclusive male relations. For

example, among the middle-class accounts it emerged that men's behaviours are less likely to be motivated to appear masculine when they are in occupational, rather than recreational, settings; particularly within contexts that instil them with a sense of responsibility. This was emphasized by Paul:

PAUL: Obviously, if I'm away at a conference... and that might be all males... then... you've got to be careful how you present yourself... But then I'm representing [company name] and I've got my professional head on... But, when you're out with the lads... I think that's when you [Laughs]... That's when all the bravado comes out (Middle-Class Focus Group 1)

Long term and close friendships between men were distinguished from general man to man relations by some of the working and middle-class respondents. The same insensitive probing of the vulnerability of other men was suggested to continue. However, the exception was defined as an ability to converse at a more personal level at times of tribulation. For instance, middle-class respondent, Andrew stated: '*I can imagine it would take a very, sort of... long term, close relationship with a bloke friend... before a man will open up to them kind of thing... and to share feelings and stuff with them*'. Maintaining confidentiality and avoiding ridicule emerged as key reasons for this exception. An example of this was provided by middle-class respondent, John: '*I think, in general, if a man did speak to another man... Like I say, I think it'd be with someone they'd known for a long time... and someone they knew they could trust*'.

Even the few respondents claiming they could confide in close friends specified that demonstrations of vulnerability would need to take place outside of a group dynamic. This was even if the group consisted entirely of long-term, close friends. Thus, men seemed to be perceived by them as being more likely to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm during group relations. When in groups, men's tendencies to demonstrate and police one another's behaviours in accordance with a common notion of successful masculinity were suggested to prevail even at the expense of them emotionally harming close friends. According to John: '*You might get ridiculed, you know... and it could be*

something very important to you, you know… You could be laughed at, you could be ostracised'. With such caution emerging as an important aspect of men feeling able to disclose vulnerability, the perceived threat of lost masculine status appears to be omnipresent during relations between men. Accordingly, a majority of the respondents spoke of never exposing their emotions to men in general. Regarding social class, no patterns emerged as to which men spoke of feeling they could or could not demonstrate their emotions to other men. Neither did the type of interview affect these accounts; respondents tending to be consistent in both the one to one and focus group dynamics.

Another common theme that emerged was the notion that men feel less pressure to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm with increasing age. One factor of this was suggested to be men's diminishing physical abilities preventing them from demonstrating physical invulnerability; a theme that will be discussed within chapter nine. Long term intimate relationships and having children were another reason commonly suggested to decrease a man's perception of need to gravitate to the socially pre-established representation of masculinity. In addition to referring to men in general, many of the respondents expressed this as a personal experience. One example was provided by middle-class respondent Andrew during his one to one interview. While suggesting that younger men perceive there to be more value in demonstrations of masculinity, he suggested that increased responsibility is a factor that decreases its value. Furthermore, like Grant during his aforementioned discussion of fatherhood, Andrew suggested that such identities which men acquire with age constitute closer gravitations to the socially established realm of the feminine:

> *ANDREW: When you get older and look at it again… all the masculinity and femininity comes out of it and it's more about responsibility… or maybe, responsibility is more feminine… Your view is brought back to the feminine side of the scale* (Middle-Class Interview)

This section of the chapter looked at how relations between white, heterosexual men constitute a key setting for these men's demonstrations of masculinity. The data

suggested that men's attempts to transcend vulnerability belie their internal experiences. However, men police one another's masculine performances by ostracising those whose vulnerabilities become exposed. The respondents' accounts regarding relations between men implied that certain factors impact on the likelihood of men gravitating to the dominant masculine norm, thus narrowing this context. The presence of women, interactions with 'less-masculine' men, occupational environments, dyadic relations, and increasing age were suggested to reduce men's tendencies to demonstrate their masculinity. The following section will look at where the respondents felt that masculinity, as constituting invulnerability, has come from.

6.3 Notions concerning the origins of masculinity

During their accounts, many of the respondents disclosed ideas about the origins of masculinity. On occasion, these reflected essentialist explanations. During such instances, they would refer to men's common patterns of behaviour as being motivated by '*age-old instincts*' and spoke of looking at the animal kingdom as a means of explaining them. Furthermore, differences in the emotional, sexual, and physical behaviours of men and women were occasionally suggested to be nature, rather than nurture, related. These essentialist explanations will be considered at relevant points during the analysis.

Out of the twenty interviews conducted for this study, there were limited instances when essentialist notions were expressed. Each of the respondents that did make brief references to them, all reverted to socialisation explanations when speaking in greater depth about the origins of masculinity. Therefore, these nurture-related explanations were predominant across the data. The respondents each referred to men consciously adopting behaviours in accordance with a socially pre-established representation of masculinity. In contrast, as they tended to be expressed during very brief and sporadic statements, their essentialist explanations might have reflected commonly expressed social renderings of reality, delivered without conscious reflection. This explanation concurs with some of the literature (see Taylor et al., 2009).

Alternatively, men's occasional references to innate propensities could be viewed to highlight the sometimes contradictive nature of their understandings relating to masculinity. This might be indicative of the fact that, despite an expressed belief that men's behaviours often take on different forms to women's behaviours, the nature of this difference is often taken-for-granted. In other words, despite the men speaking of gravitating to a dominant masculine norm, these behaviours might have become automatic through practice. In this case, gender might be a subject the respondents have seldom thought about or discussed outside of the study.

According to Georgiou and Carspecken (2002), socially pre-established representations of reality constrain the behaviours of agents in ways which often remain illusive to them. Hence, social norms are likely to be internalised by agents as natural, intransitive realities and shape their behaviours in ways which go unquestioned (Corson, 1997; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Even so, the respondents' accounts predominantly referred to men having a common understanding of what behaviours constitute masculinity and being likely to feel the most pressure to gravitate to this understanding during relations between men. Moreover, they spoke of viewing this representation of masculinity as being the result of direct and indirect socialisation. Owing to its origins in the social (transitive) dimension of knowledge, respondents, such as Richard and Graham, spoke of encountering problems during interactions between themselves and men from other countries socialised with different cultural norms. Richard, for instance, spoke of feeling that his heterosexual identity was threatened in the eyes of his English friends by an Italian who was simply behaving in a way that was typical among the men of his own culture:

> *RICHARD: I had a friend who was Italian and he used to kiss me… And that for me was a problem… I mean, he was Sicilian… and that is a compliment, you know. But, to meet someone at the airport who kisses you smack on the lips… it's like, 'Thank you very much, that was a bit full on'*
> *INTERVIEWER: And was that because it was in front of other people?*

RICHARD: Yeah, and particularly because it was in front of other men... And he'd touch my hand as well. He'd reach across the table, If we were having a discussion and he wanted to make a point, he'd reach across the table and put his hand on mine... just briefly, to make the point, 'this is me talking to you' for a sort of sense of togetherness... And that used to make me... it used to send me like that, because I couldn't do it... And so, there are allsorts of non-verbal gestures like that that are just cultural, but within a different culture are problematic (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Similarly, Graham spoke of the colour pink not having any kind of feminine association within Chinese culture. He did, however, suggest that masculinity in China was demonstrated by men transcending their emotions:

Graham: [Discussing his perception of differences in the way Chinese men and women deal with bereavement] *When she died the people that showed their upset most... were... all women... I mean, she had three brothers, and they were obviously not happy, but... not that I ever saw... they did no sobbing in public... You know, it was pretty much a gender difference in terms of the reaction in that context... I suppose it would be the same over here... but it was more acceptable for the women to be showing their emotions* (Middle-Class Interview)

All of the respondents appeared to harbour the notion that the institutions of the family and the media play a predominant role in perpetuating the socially pre-established representation of masculinity. For instance, they spoke of popular television shows and cinematic presentations reinforcing a common notion of successful masculinity with characters, such as James Bond, which transcend fear and, as suggested by James, '*always get the girl*'. In addition, the media also emerged as a tool which can re-shape the common social representation of masculinity. However, this will receive further discussion in the following section.

As I have shown in the literature review, authors identify the family as a very influential institution in perpetuating socially pre-established gender norms (Reay, 2002). Some studies suggest parents unconsciously socialise their children with gender-typical behaviours (Messner, 2000), whereas others identified this practice as a conscious effort (Kane, 2006). Parents – regardless of their sex, ethnicity, social class, or sexual orientation – are suggested to work harder gendering the behaviours of their son's than their daughter's (Kane, 2006). Literature also suggests the unlikelihood of parenting constantly revolving around gender expectations (Messner, 2000). Arguably, direct socialisation will predominantly emerge when a child, and particularly a boy (Kane, 2006), is perceived to have breached a socially pre-established gender boundary (McHale et al., 2003). As such, this might explain why the respondents spoke of demonstrating their masculinity during relations between men when perceiving it to be under threat (McHale et al., 2003).

The data concurred with these assertions in the literature. Family members, friends, and work colleagues, as well as wider influences such as the media, were suggested to be at the roots of the respondents own understandings of what constitutes successful masculinity. Examples of this were among the data collected within all the interviews. Some of this data was gathered in response to questions enquiring about sayings such as 'Take it like a man' and 'Be a man about it'. Not only did most of the respondents claim to be familiar with these, they also tended to voice them as being directly related to notions that men should transcend vulnerability via the hiding of pain and emotions. Examples included: '*That's how people have said that men should be… You shouldn't be the one who's showing any emotion*' (James), and '*It all goes down to 'you're the male, you are the stronger sex… you shouldn't be doing that'… It's what society dictates… It's not socially acceptable, and it's what you've grown up with*' (Nik).

The school also emerged as a setting where boys police one another's behaviours in accordance with a common notion of what constitutes successful masculinity. This is consistent with literature documenting the school as an institution which plays a prominent role in the perpetuation of socially pre-established gender norms (Forrest,

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2000; Reay, 2002; Swain, 2002; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2005; Hatchell, 2006). All those respondents describing their own experiences of school claimed that boys demonstrating feminine-typical behaviours often became the victims of abuse. When providing detail regarding what constituted 'feminine-typical' behaviour, accounts often reached further than issues of sexuality. For instance James stated: '*If they're not interested in football, or they're not interested in rugby, if they are… hanging around with girls and like painting and cooking and stuff like that… then they're going to be, there's a chance that they're going to be picked on.*'. When asked why, James replied: '*Because they see them as weak*'. Again, this is consistent with literature suggesting that schoolboys often use homophobic abuse to expose the vulnerabilities of those males demonstrating behaviours incongruent with a common notion of successful masculinity; for instance, those who spend less time socialising in all-male groups, avoid competitive sports, and are physically late developers (Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Within school, boys have been observed ostracising and perpetrating severe verbal and physical abuse towards those peers perceived to demonstrate an inadequate masculinity (Phillips, 2005; Plummer, 2006). In this sense, boys, during relations between boys, gravitate to the socially pre-established representation of masculinity as a means of actively avoiding punishment (Kane, 2006). However, Jed and John, the two school teachers participating in this study, provided information suggesting that the same social pressure is no longer an issue within the school setting. This will be discussed in the following section.

This section of the chapter looked at data relating to where the respondents felt that masculinity has come from. Although some brief statements implied a biological essentialist notion, these were limited in contrast to nurture-related explanations. All the detailed accounts regarding the origins of masculinity presented it as a socially constructed representation (dominant masculine norm) that men learn and adhere to in order to avoid negative attention. Men's demonstrations of vulnerability were suggested to be commonly perceived by men as being consistent with the socially established realm of the 'feminine' as opposed to the 'masculine'. Consistent with the literature, the data identified the family, the school, and the media as taking a key role in perpetuating the

dominant masculine norm. The following section will look in more detail at masculinity, as constituting a transitive structure.

6.4 Notions concerning the nature of masculinity

A majority of the respondents suggested that, because its meaning is socially constructed, notions of masculinity are reliant on the way it is represented in society. This notion fits comfortably with the conception that masculinity constitutes a transitive dimension of knowledge. Transitive structures, though often resilient owing to the perceptual constrains of socially pre-established representations of reality (Dobson, 2001; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007), have the potential to change over time (Brown et al., 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Therefore, macro societal changes, such as deindustrialisation and increasing gender equality (see McDowell, 2000a), would be likely to impact on the dominant masculine norm, and this would explain relatively swift occurring differences in the ways men demonstrate their masculinity. This section of the chapter will focus on the respondents' accounts regarding the transitive nature of masculinity.

John and Jed, the two school teachers in the study, spoke of noticing big changes in the contemporary behaviour of schoolboys, compared to their own experiences of being pupils in the eighties. During their one to one interviews, they both expressed being surprised to find that feminine-typical boys no longer faced the same ridicule or ostracism during relations between boys. John and Jed did, however, suggest themselves and others being able to identify a difference between masculine and feminine typical boys, even before puberty. This implies that, in the respondents eyes, the boys still demonstrate common patterns of behaviour they can discern as either belonging to the realms of the masculine or feminine. Furthermore, rather than changes in the social representation of what behaviours constitute masculinity, John and Jed suggested that heterosexual boys now demonstrate a greater level of tolerance towards those boys not gravitating to the dominant masculine norm. Thus, such boys are still commonly seen as 'feminine' among heterosexual boys, but their behaviour is not policed to the same degree it was twenty or

thirty years ago. However, this finding is not consistent with the literature. For instance, a study by Hunt and Jensen (2007) found that two thirds of children perceived to be non-heterosexual are still subjected to homophobic abuse each year. Working-class respondent, Nik, also spoke of recently having to chastise his own son for revelations he and his friends were perpetrating homophobic abuse towards feminine-typical boys within school.

Many of the middle-class respondents spoke of a changing society, now more accepting of men behaving in ways recognisable as feminine-typical. Jack, for instance, spoke of a greater level of acceptance regarding men demonstrating their emotions, and the majority of them spoke of non-heterosexuality being more readily tolerated by heterosexual men than it was up until the 1990s. However, their accounts floundered when discussing actual changes in men's notions regarding which behaviours constitute successful masculinity. For instance, middle-class respondent, Richard stated: '*I think masculinity's still constructed as it always was within certain kinds of social alliances that men make*'. The few accounts that implied that changes had occurred referred to men's fashion becoming more feminine-typical, and women now participating more in masculine-oriented activities.

The respondents appeared to view women as making more of a concerted effort to transcend gender-typical boundaries than men. Nevertheless, their accounts regarding those women referred to them being '*more like men*' or '*wanting to be like men*', than women. Over the different focus groups and one to one interviews, such comments were attached to women who played contact sports like rugby, football and boxing, worked in physically demanding occupations, drank large amounts of alcohol, rode powerful motorbikes, and so on. For instance, when discussing the notion of women working in a foundry, Grant stated: '*She'd have to be some pretty weird, sort of... strong type of... lesbian... something with some danglers*'. Similarly, when discussing losing in a drinking contest to a woman, Tom stated: '*You can imagine what the lads said, can't you? That was it... All of a sudden, she'd a pair of bollocks and I'd grown tits and a fanny*'. Arguably, then, such women were viewed by a majority of the respondents as trespassing

onto masculine territory. Comments about their physicality and sexuality – like the working-class examples above – inferred that these women more closely approximated men than women. Despite making fewer physical and sexual inferences, middle-class respondents still spoke of viewing and treating such women as 'masculine'. The following example was provided by Richard when discussing women who ride powerful motorbikes:

RICHARD: Well... I mean, most men will then admire that woman... but what they admire her for is her masculine traits. Its not because she's a woman on a bike, they admire her because she can control the bike, and she can handle the power, and so on. So it's still a masculinised kind of admiration... And the other thing about it is that in that situation women tend to get treated more like men than women. It's like they've crossed the boundary onto male territory and so we're going to treat them more like men... So we've sat around tables as a mixed group... the people who are bikers, and we'll swear more... and we'll use more sexualised language in explaining ourselves than we would if this was a woman who didn't ride a bike (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

In other words, the respondents were not suggesting that the socially pre-established representations of masculinity and femininity had changed, but simply that such types of women inhabited the realm of the masculine. Again, this common pattern contrasts with constructionist arguments that no such distinction can be made regarding what behaviours constitute masculinity or femininity. Thus, if distinctions between the two only emerge during negotiations of reality, exclusive to the temporal and contextual influences of a specific interaction (Goodey, 1997; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006), this arguably fails to explain the common patterns emerging across the data. Hence, if notions of masculinity and femininity are subject to the numerous ways they can be constructed during different interactions (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell et al., 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003), it is unlikely that all the respondents would have arrived at the same idea of when these gender boundaries had been crossed.

Furthermore, the respondents did not suggest that the range of men's and women's behaviours fall into the realms of the masculine and feminine. Instead, only certain activities were distinguished in this way. The activities respondents referred to as 'masculine' could be viewed to be defined as such owing to them enabling men to demonstrate a transcendence of vulnerability; Hence comments like: '*It's about dominance, it's about control, it's about skill, it's about power*' (provided by Richard when referring to biking), and '*You associate masculinity with hard men, tough men... any sport were you are going to potentially get injured*', (provided by Jed when referring to competitive sport). Therefore, these accounts do not contest meta-analytic findings that men's and women's behaviours are often indistinguishable (Palan et al., 1999; Vogel et al., 2003). They just imply that a certain number of identities are perceived by men to reside exclusively within the realm of the masculine.

Within the data, the media repeatedly emerged as having a strong influence over the aforementioned changes regarding men's and women's social performances. Some representations in the media were suggested to break taboos and be responsible for many men now demonstrating a greater tolerance of those not transcending vulnerability. Thus, by desensitising society through frequent demonstrations of behaviours traditionally hidden away, this was suggested to bring them into the realm of normality. Therefore, according to an even number of working and middle-class respondents, it is no longer unusual to see men demonstrating behaviours perceived to belong to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine. The following example features the first middle-class focus group talking about how the media has shaped society's attitude towards non-heterosexual men and women:

> *JED: You see it [homosexuality] a lot on telly shows like... like Hollyoaks or something like that... They probably see it on the telly and it's the norm, it's not unusual*
>
> *JOHN: Perceptions of... lesbians or homosexual, gay men... are completely different with... Kids see it all the time when they're watching the television programmes they watch... on the internet, or just in general, you know what I*

mean, it's accepted... As opposed to when we were at school... we were ignorant of it, weren't we. It was very underground and... a taboo subject that we never spoke about

INTERVIEWER: So do you think that these changes... within how homosexual men are perceived... have been influenced by the media and television programmes?

JOHN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, I think that's made a massive difference (Middle-Class Focus Group 1)

Again, none of the respondents claimed that the media is redefining the representations of masculinity and femininity but, instead, making it more acceptable for men to gravitate to the realm of the feminine. In other words, those men embracing vulnerability were still regarded as 'feminine-typical', but were suggested to be less likely to face the same level of ostracism or abuse as before. According to Gibson (1994), Maruszas (1997) and Segal (2004), rather than challenging them, cinematic and television models of masculinity tend to perpetuate socially pre-established representations. Furthermore, despite an increasing amount of female heroines within action films, Gilpatric (2010) arrived at the same conclusion; suggesting that traditional gender representations reside at the roots of the relationships between lead male and female characters. This is consistent with respondents' accounts. Hence, through repetitive exposure, the media might exert an ability to desensitize social reactions towards previously avoided subjects but, as a market driven commodity, it plays to dominant gender representations (Gilpatric, 2010).

6.5   Conclusion

This chapter has focused on patterns that emerged in heterosexual, working and middle-class men's talk of masculinity. Moreover, how these patterns implied that men's behaviour, during relations between men, is often influenced by a dominant masculine norm that revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability.

Across the data, men's understandings regarding what constitutes successful masculine behaviour emerged as being influenced by a socially pre-established representation of reality. In every interview, men were suggested to harbour a common notion that masculinity, as a social construction, revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability. This was implied to have an impact on the social performances of white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men, particularly during exclusive male relations. As men were suggested to police one another's behaviour, the perceived threat of ostracism and abuse during their relations emerged as being the key element of this influence. In this sense, the data provided an explanation for men's common patterns of behaviour, as identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009).

On the other hand, women were suggested to exercise more understanding towards men's demonstrations of vulnerability, therefore, weakening the influence of the dominant masculine norm. Other factors also emerged as weakening its influence over men's behaviour. These included being in the company of 'less-masculine' men, occupational environments, dyadic relations with close/long term friends, and increasing age resulting in diminishing physical abilities, increased responsibilities, and less time spent socialising in all-male groups. Although not backed by the literature (Hunt & Jensen, 2007), some of the men suggested that, owing to broader sweeping changes within society, heterosexual boys and men are now more tolerant of those boys and men demonstrating feminine-typical behaviour. However, these males were still described as diverging from, rather than demonstrating a different form of, masculinity.

Common patterns regarding the issues relating to masculinity emerged across the data, regardless of a respondent's social class or whether they were collected during a focus group or one to one interview dynamic. These accounts were frequently provided after very little probing of a subject matter. In this way, the verbal practices could be argued to reflect representations the men harboured prior to the interviews. If this was not the case, it would have been likely that conflicting notions of masculinity would have emerged. Therefore, this finding contrasts the notion that discursive versions of reality are products

of contextual influence, bearing no reflection of an agent's cognitions (cf. Wetherell et al., 2003).

Another factor underlying the findings discussed within this chapter was that, although social construction has forged a relationship between them, masculinity and men remain separate constructs. This is in contrast to those authors, as critiqued within chapter two, who position the spectrum of men's identities as versions of masculinity, thus making men and masculinity indistinguishable (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006). According to the data, men's and women's actual experiences of vulnerability are the same. However, whereas a dominant social representation of femininity was suggested to facilitate women's demonstrations of vulnerability, the dominant masculine norm was suggested to inhibit men's behaviour. In this sense, masculinity and femininity emerged as social constructions that are linked to a sexed binary, but remain separate to the lived experiences of individual men and women. Although masculinity and femininity were presented as antitheses of one another, the differing treatments of vulnerability that they prescribe make them identifiable in one another's absence. In this way, men in the absence of women (and visa versa) can actually demonstrate, and be seen to demonstrate, both masculine and feminine-typical behaviours.

Consistent with the notion that men and masculinity are separate; a further key theme that emerged from the data was that men's behaviour is only motivated by the aim of appearing masculine within certain settings and social contexts. This concurs with the argument put forward by a number of authors, as discussed in chapter three (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). In order to distinguish which behaviours constitute demonstrations of masculinity, femininity or non-gendered, it is necessary to define what is meant by 'masculinity', as opposed to those anti-realist attempts to avoid doing this that were described in chapter two. In this way, the data contrasts the literature which presents a man's demonstrations of vulnerability as being a further form of masculinity (cf. Goodey, 1997; Wetherell & Edley, 2003), thus favouring a critical realist explanation over one that is anti-realist. From a critical realist perspective, the dominant masculine norm emerging from the men's talk of masculinity

would constitute a transitive structure (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Therefore, its potential to influence men's social behaviour would emanate from a transactional relationship between competing transitive structures and contextual influences (Wilson & McCormack, 2006). In other words, over differing social contexts men's behaviour is likely to be influenced by a variety of competing socially influenced representations regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour (Bergin et al., 2008). As such, each individual man could be seen to occupy multiple conflicting identities, but only a number of these are likely to be demonstrations of his masculinity.

Based on the data, men's policing of one another's behaviours in accordance with a common notion of successful masculinity plays a main role in perpetuating the dominant masculine norm. The respondents presented negative attitudes towards the dominant masculine norm and the common patterns of men's behaviour that it influences. Simultaneously, however, they spoke of themselves contributing to the pressure felt by other men, particularly their friends, to transcend vulnerability. Consistent with the literature critiqued within chapter three (Anderson, 2001; Phillips, 2007), the data suggested that within all-male domains men compete with one another, trying to hide their own vulnerability while exposing that of their rivals. These patterns of dominance and subordination emerged as being characteristic of men's general group interactions. Since these groups predominantly comprised of friends and acquaintances, the data did not imply that the perpetuation of patriarchal privilege is a primary function of men's demonstrations of masculinity.

Although the subordination of woman and gay men emerged as being a by-product of men's personal campaigns for masculine status, a further important factor underlies these findings. That is the notion that investigations into masculinity are not the equivalent of investigations into men. If men are more likely to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men than during relations between men and women, investigations into the latter should focus on 'men' rather than 'masculinity'. Ultimately, these data suggest that research relating to imbalances of social power that favour men over women are likely to miss their target if they focus on masculinity as opposed to men.

Chapter 7

Affectivity

This chapter will document the findings that relate to the theme of affectivity. Affectivity, in this instance, is described adequately by the standard dictionary definition. In the Collins English Dictionary (1998), affectivity is defined as: '*Concerned with, or arousing the emotions or affection*'. Reber and Reber (2001) suggest that the terms 'affect' and 'affectivity' can be used interchangeably with the terms 'emotion', 'emotionality', and 'feeling'; each being a synonym of the others. Therefore, when discussing data interpreted to relate to affectivity, the author is referring to those verbal practices provided by respondents which are concerned in any way with emotions, for instance, fear, sorrow, affection, and so on.

The chapter will be divided in to three main sections. Again, this thematic organisation of the data was informed by the first-order-codes emerging from the final template, this time in relation to the common theme of affectivity. The first section of the chapter (affectivity linked to femininity) will continue to look at the ways masculinity and femininity emerged as dominant, socially pre-established representations of reality. Based on the data, it will be argued that these gender models, perpetuated by the behaviour of social agents, inhibit men's demonstrations of affectivity, while facilitating affectivity in women. Rather than reflecting the essential nature of men, the inhibition of affectivity emerged as being beneficial to a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men, but detrimental to their psychological wellbeing as individuals.

The following section of the chapter (men experiencing but hiding affectivity) will take a closer look at the conflict that emerged between men's experiences of affectivity and expressing of it. This will include the ways they, as men, inhibit one another's expressions of emotion during competitions to maintain their own masculine status. It will also look at data suggesting that the pressure to hide affectivity is relieved during

relations between men and women. The third section of the chapter (men's ways of hiding affectivity) will be split into four sub-sections, each focussing on the different common strategies that repeatedly emerged in relation to men hiding their affectivity.

7.1 Affectivity linked to femininity

Across the data, masculinity and femininity emerged as socially pre-established representations that are the antitheses of one another, but distinguishable within themselves. As an opposite of masculinity, the respondents spoke of there being a socially constructed link between femininity and affectivity. This did not suggest that women are biologically more emotional than men. Instead, emerging from the data was the notion that men, during relations between men, often strive to mask affectivity in order to appear masculine.

Based on their accounts, the respondents, regardless of their social class or the interview dynamic, seemed to view emotions such as fear, sorrow and love as being indicative of vulnerability. Owing to this relationship, demonstrations of emotion were suggested to counter masculinity. This notion was at the heart of lengthy discussions relating to affectivity, and was frequently expressed through succinct statements such as:

JACK: [Masculinity] *It's about not showing fear, not showing emotion, and just getting on with something* (Middle-Class)

PAUL: [Crying] *Its not the masculine thing to do* (Middle-Class)

RICHARD: Showing emotion is seen as a weakness... if you're a man its not the done thing to do (Middle-Class)

BEN: If you can't stand up and face your fears... your not a man (Middle-Class)

STAN: Expressing fear, I think, is definitely an issue with blokes... We don't like talking about fear (Working-Class)

Particularly in relation to affectivity, femininity emerged in the data as an antithesis of masculinity, and characteristic of an embracing of vulnerability. Whereas masculinity was often defined by the respondents as 'mental and physical strength', femininity was linked to an uninhibited expression of emotions. Frequently such information constituted the first definition provided by respondents when they were asked what it meant to be 'feminine'. Short examples of this include: 'Being *more open with your feelings*' (Andrew); '*More emotional... with your feelings... Like blokes seem to bottle it up... rather than letting it out*' (Joe); and '*The general public's perception is that if you're masculine you don't cry... and you don't have any emotions, and if you're feminine you've got loads*' (Jack). John even suggested that, because vulnerability resides in the socially established realm of the feminine, women, but not men, are able to consciously use crying as a means by which to manipulate situations to their own advantage. Arguably, his account suggested that women can cry, not just to express stress or sorrow, but also to make rivals back down, allowing them to gain control over situations:

JOHN: What women seem to do is use their tears, to an extent, rather than their physical presence to get what they want… Like with a woman... if you see her crying, the first thing you seem to do is back down... and then you feel kind of guilty for upsetting her, you know what I mean ... Whereas, if a man did that... I think you might think there was something wrong with him (Middle-Class Interview)

Not only did the overt expression of affectivity emerge as the most striking feature of femininity, it was also the main characteristic that respondents referred to as distinguishing men from women. Furthermore, most of the respondents' descriptions of known women, including intimate partners, family members, work colleagues and friends, were consistent with this stereotypical representation of femininity:

JACK: With my missus, it'll all build up and she'll come home and burst into tears (Middle-Class Interview)

JOHN: The final few weeks of term, which is a very, very busy time... completely chaotic... the amount of times that certain women were tearful because they were tired and emotional, you know... and a couple of times I put my foot in it and two or three women started crying, you know... and... you would never get that with a bloke... not a chance (Middle-Class Interview)

BEN: When I'm at home I'm normally surrounded by women cackling... about one thing and another... being scared of spiders or... cats or... frogs (Middle-Class Interview)

However, this is not to suggest that the respondents' notions of femininity reflected the actual experience of being female. As this would be impossible, it is likely that their personal representations regarding it have been influenced by the transitive structures with which they have been socialised. In other words, the conceptions of masculinity and femininity are separate to the lived experiences of men and women. Other studies have highlighted how socially pre-established representations of femininity (as constituting the embracing of vulnerability) and masculinity (as constituting the transcendence of vulnerability) can influence an agent's understanding of male and female behaviour. One such example was presented by Scourfield et al. (2007), who found that both male and female respondents defined suicidal behaviour differently depending on whether it was carried out by a man or a woman. Whereas their respondents linked men's suicidal behaviour to courage, honour and impulsivity, they linked women's suicidal behaviour to emotional vulnerability and cries for help (Scourfield et al., 2007).

Consistent with the notion that femininity constitutes an embracing of vulnerability, men unable to transcend emotions during relations between men were suggested to be considered more feminine than masculine. When asked what is wrong with a man crying in public, Ted, during his one to one interviewed replied: '*Because you expect that of a*

woman... a bit of a soft touch'. Similarly, when speaking about demonstrating affectivity during relations between men, the respondents frequently referred to it negatively impacting on their perceived status as 'masculine': '*You'd probably feel less of a man... or they would view you as less of a man*' (Nik); '*I'd definitely feel less masculine*' (James). This was a common notion among the respondents, for example:

> INTERVIEWER: *And if you did cry, say in front of your mates, how would that make you feel?*
> JED: *Less masculine, I suppose*
> INTERVIEWER: *Why would that be then?*
> PAUL: *Well, I think it's one of those things where... generally a man's seen as soft if he cries in public... That's what you'd expect a woman to do*
> BEN: *Women do seem to grieve a lot longer than men... most of the time, but not always... And I think that... if you're a woman... it's seen as more appropriate*
> (Middle-Class Focus Group 1)

Most of the respondents suggested it would be appropriate for a man to express his emotions in the face of traumatic experiences, such as bereavements, marriage break-ups and severe physical injuries. However, men's initial reactions of sympathy were suggested to quickly change to mockery if another man's emotions persisted. For instance, when talking about a man demonstrating grief after a marriage break-up, working-class respondent Nik stated: '*I think that at the time you actually burst into tears, people would comfort you and try to make you feel better... But afterwards – a week later – they'd be, 'What about you breaking down last week in tears'*'. In contrast, all of the respondents seemed to harbour the notion that, owing to socially pre-established gender representations, it is acceptable for women to express their emotions over more prolonged periods of time. As such, both men and women were suggested to sustain their sympathy for as long as a woman seems to require it.

In many cases, the appropriate grieving time for a man, as presented by the respondents, was arguably inadequate for the experience they were describing. For instance, Ben

spoke of his own apparent disgust with a friend whose grief lasted beyond two months after the break up of his marriage: '*He went to pieces... absolute pieces... Again, to me it was embarrassing… To me it's like... take it like a man and move on*'. He also claimed he would require considerably less time to grieve in the same situation:

> *BEN: It would probably take me about a week to get over it... If my wife left me today... a week later, I'd be like, 'Right, what shall I do?'… And that's not because I don't love my wife, it's because I just think if she's gone, she's gone... move on... Again... take it like a man* (Middle-Class Interview)

Another example was provided by Richard. He spoke of a friend being bullied by his friends to stop crying merely moments after breaking both of his legs in a motorcycle accident:

> *RICHARD: They got him right to the hospital and he was still in tears... And one of the mates said to him, 'You know, you're going to have to stop crying soon or someone's going to notice'… And he was like, 'Yeah, but it hurts so much'… 'You're going to have to take it', is what they said... 'You're going to have to take the pain'… And they were almost like bullying him into stopping crying* (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

In relation to affectivity, some of the respondents also spoke of experiencing feelings of guilt for having an urge to express their emotions. Jack, for instance, said that crying at a friend's funeral left him feeling '*disappointed*' with himself, and Graham stated: '*I find myself very upset and find myself thinking, 'Actually, I shouldn't be like this'*' when referring to a recent bereavement. A reasonable explanation for this might be that the respondents harbour a common stereotypical representation of masculinity, and under certain social contexts make mental comparisons between it and their own behaviours as men. In this sense, masculinity - as a transitive dimension of knowledge (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008) - might cause men to question their understanding of themselves as 'masculine' during the inevitable experience of emotion.

The notion that the respondents harbour a common representation of masculinity would explain the patterns emerging across the data concerning affectivity and its inhibition. It would also explain how different men were able to agree upon which men's masculine performances are successful and unsuccessful, resulting in the consistent ostracism of those demonstrating specific types of behaviour (Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007). In addition to hegemonic, complicit, marginalised, and subordinate varieties of masculinity (Connell, 2008 [1995]), this would include the same patterns of dominance and subordination demonstrated by white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources (New, 2001; Hall, 2002). In this study, for example, the members of the focus groups often spoke of competing with one another for masculine status in accordance with a common notion that demonstrations of affectivity constitute unsuccessful masculinity.

As one way of explaining how common representations of masculinity and femininity might emerge, chapter three looked at the different ways boys and girls are socialised (Errante, 2003; McHale et al., 2003; Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005). For instance, in response to a grazed knee, the tendency to discourage a boy's demonstrations of emotion in contrast to the comforting of a girl is likely to communicate particular models of sex-appropriate conduct (Grieshaber, 1998; Carlo et al., 1999; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; McHale et al., 2001). With increasing age, boys have been observed policing the behaviours of one another (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Kane, 2006; Pascoe, 2011), and abusing and ostracising those who expose vulnerability via demonstrations of emotion (Reay, 2002; Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2007). This notion regarding what constitutes appropriate behaviour for men can be seen to resemble the model of successful masculinity that Johansson (1990) and Campbell (1949, 1993) identified in their study of myths; as critiqued within chapter three. These mythic stories were suggested to communicate the notion that to demonstrate successful masculinity a man must stay in control of his emotions (Campbell, 1993 [1949]; Johansson, 1990).

Despite the respondents repeatedly identifying passive emotions as belonging to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine rather than the masculine, the active emotion of aggression emerged as an exception to this. Respondents, regardless of their social class or the interview dynamic, seemed to harbour a common notion that aggression belongs to the socially constructed realm of the masculine. This same finding has been documented by previous authors (Errante, 2003; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). Literature suggests that the relationship between aggression and masculinity is perpetuated through socialisation (Grieshaber, 1998; Carlo et al., 1999; Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; Errante, 2003; McHale et al., 2003). Whereas emotions such as love, sorrow and fear can be viewed to symbolise vulnerability, aggression can be viewed to symbolise the verbal or physical transcendence of vulnerability, (Jordan, 2008). According to the data, men are able to express feelings of sorrow or fear through demonstrations of aggression, and this is more likely to increase than diminish their masculine status during relations between men. Chapter nine will feature a more in-depth discussion of aggression, as it emerged within this study.

This section of the chapter has explored a link between affectivity and a socially pre-established representation of femininity, as presented by the respondents. Within the data, emotions other than aggression were linked to vulnerability. Consistent with the notion that masculinity revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability (see chapter six), masculinity and affectivity emerged in opposition to one another. As such, men demonstrating affectivity during relations between men were suggested to appear feminine and, therefore, lose their masculine status and risk ostracism.

7.2   Men experiencing but hiding vulnerability

Although the data suggested that men and women demonstrate contrasting patterns of behaviour in relation to affectivity, it did not root these in nature. None of the respondents in any of the interviews suggested that men differ from women regarding the actual internal experience of affectivity. For instance, when Graham spoke of male relations,

unlike female relations, not openly grieving for the loss of a loved one, he stated: '*I know they were upset, so it wasn't that they were feeling things any less... but the way in which they expressed it was actually quite different*'. Emotions appeared to be viewed by the men as an inevitable aspect of life, and unconnected to biological sex differences. Additional to affectivity emerging within the data as a physical reality, the respondents also suggested that, like women, a man's natural desire is to express emotions. Furthermore, there were no suggestions that men are biologically structured to need less grieving time than women. As such, it can be assumed that the respondents were not inferring that men's common patterns of emotional remoteness are innate. Had an essentialist understanding been implied (Alexander, 2003; Ellis, 2006; Vandermassen, 2008; Alanko et al., 2010), men would have been presented as being internally devoid of fear, sorrow and love rather than struggling to hide them.

Contrasting an essentialist perspective, the respondents implied that men attempt to demonstrate an absence of affectivity in order to appear 'masculine'. For example, when speaking about fear, Stan stated: '*You can feel it* [fear] *... but for a bloke to say, 'We were a bit scared of that situation'... that would be something he wouldn't want to admit to*'. More specifically, data emerged suggesting that men express their emotions in private, but mask them in public to conform to a common notion of successful masculinity. Jack, for example, commented: '*I'm sure a lot of men do cry when they're out of sight of other people but, like I say, a lot of people perceive it to be a weakness*'. Similarly, Jed and Nik referred to a common social representation of masculinity during their one to one interviews:

> *JED: You're expected not to cry, and you're expected to be brave... and you're expected to be stronger... and endure more* (Middle-Class Interview)

> *NIK: To admit you've got a problem as a male is quite hard... because it all goes down to 'you're the male, you are the stronger sex... you shouldn't be doing that'... It's what society dictates* (Working-Class Interview).

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During their interviews, the respondents provided examples of men - including themselves - not crying at funerals, denying upset after intimate relationships have broken down, and hiding fear through participation in dangerous sports and risk-taking behaviour. Similarly, Bennett (2007) identified common patterns in the way widowed men use their verbal practices to emphasise an ability to think rationally and control their emotions in the face of bereavement. According to Bennett (2007), the hiding of vulnerability is directly linked to men's desires to appear masculine. In this study, the masking of emotions sometimes emerged as a common pattern of behaviour regardless of the severity of the emotional trigger. For instance, during his one to one interview, Mel provided the following account:

> *MEL: One of my mates lost his two lads... [Describes the accident] ... His wife, I think it's a mother thing... she'll sort of grieve in... you know, you mention something about it, and she's in tears... whereas, he'll go out of the way and do his grieving on his own...*
> *INTERVIEWER: So, in that case, they're both as devastated [Yeah]... But you said she'll do it in front of you and he'll go out of the way –*
> *MEL: Yeah. Yeah. That's it, you know. Yeah... I'll go around and she'll say, 'I got the old pictures out of our *** the other day, blah, blah', and then she's in tears... and he'll wonder off and then come back* (Working-Class Interview)

During the following quote, Tom provided a brief example of his thought processes at the time of a severe emotional trigger, and how he had struggled to gain control of his emotions before confronting friends. Despite this being volunteered as an example of his emotional vulnerability, Tom's use of terms like '*lose it a little bit*' and '*knocked me back a bit*' down-played the extent to which his emotions ever get the better of him. Discussing a bereavement, his talk of very consciously constraining his grieving and composure time suggested that he was forcing himself to be almost machine-like: hence, the unemotional, matter-of-fact person that is described as confronting his friends at the end of the account. Additionally, this quote is a further example of the earlier discussed

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theme of men only allowing themselves and one another a limited time to demonstrate affectivity.

> *TOM: I class myself emotional-wise as being pretty well dug in... I don't show it until I'm out of the way. But I have been known to... you know... lose it a little bit for obvious reasons, you know... Err... Death affects me badly... you know, mates and anything like that... I might not show it here and now, but... It's like when I found out about Johnny... I was in Spain... and when I got that phone call it knocked me back a bit... and I didn't come out of my hotel room for twelve hours... I just thought, 'how am I going to deal with this, what am I going to do?'... 'Well, it's happened... there you go'... But then I was thinking, 'Hold on... I'm on holiday... I'm with the rest of the lads... Get out and get down there and get on with it', like... So I came out and went straight on the piss, you know... But I just said... 'Don't worry about it'... we all knew him... 'Don't worry about it... shit happens'* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

The respondents, therefore, suggested that men and women are subject to different social pressures, influenced by vulnerability being repeatedly reconstructed as constituting the realm of the feminine. Within social settings, masculinity – as a transitive structure – was suggested to influence men to resist demonstrating some emotions. Based on the data, some of the respondents would even choose to endanger themselves in order to maintain their masculine status during relations between men. They provided examples of occasions in which they had personally ignored fear and remained in potentially dangerous contexts in order to avoid exposing vulnerability via attempts to escape, as is consistent with the documented findings of Anderson (2001) (which were discussed during chapter three). If these examples reflect actual realities they imply that, in the eyes of some men, the risk of sustaining physical injury is preferable to them demonstrating vulnerability via demonstrations of affectivity. During the following quote, Ben implied that he would prefer to risk instigating a fight with a rival man than appear fearful of him by not meeting his threatening gaze:

BEN: If someone's staring at me, I'll stare back

INTERVIEWER: Say, if a man's staring at you and you don't stand your ground and you look away... how would you feel?

BEN: No, I wouldn't do it

INTERVIEWER: You wouldn't do it?... Say, if you didn't know me and... I was sat at the other side of a bar and I'm like that [I briefly stared at the respondent with an angry face]... staring at you... and you looked away or left the pub, how would you feel?

BEN: … I wouldn't be happy... It would be playing on my mind that I didn't at least say something... You know what I mean. And say if I'm not in the mood to even... entertain... getting into a situation... I'd be disappointed that I didn't say something

INTERVIEWER: But, what would it be that you were disappointed about?

BEN: … … Again, it's just... … it's just not walking away from something. It's just facing your fears... And I've had folk look at me that are twice as big as me... I ain't no fighter by any stretch of the imagination... but I've a big thing about facing my fears (Middle-Class Interview)

In the following example, James could be understood to speak of preferring to walk into a potential physical confrontation with rival men rather than compromise his masculinity via a demonstration of fear:

INTERVIEWER: Say, if you were on your own somewhere, and you saw a couple of… like heavy duty males walking down towards you… what would you do in that situation?

JAMES: In some circumstances, I would be tempted to cross the road… so that that confrontation wasn't there… you know, coz that's what it would feel like… it does feel like a confrontation. And if they were, like, looking at you with stern eyes… you'd be thinking, 'right, it is a bit of a warrant', you know… I think turning round and walking away would be the wrong thing to do, but maybe crossing over the road…

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> *INTERVIEWER: And if you turned around and walked away, then, how would you feel inside?*
>
> *JAMES: Well, I think you'd feel a bit inferior... You'd feel a bit weak. You'd feel like you were running away from them... I'm scared of these guys... and I'm running away* (Working-Class Interview)

During ethnographic observations and interviews, Anderson (2001) documented a very similar behaviour being performed by black men in Inner City America. One example was provided in which a young man, having already been physically assaulted by a rival youth, ignored the chance to walk away, instead choosing to confront him and other members of his gang in order to show 'nerve' and maintain his 'respect'. According to Anderson (2001), men from around the world have been attempting to transcend their fears during relations between men throughout history. Bishop et al. (2009) also identified common patterns in the way men use their verbal practices to define themselves as fearless in terms of physical confrontations with rival men. Again this was suggested to be indicative of men having a common notion regarding what constitutes successful and unsuccessful masculinity (Bishop et al., 2009). According to Delamont (2001) and Phillips (2005 & 2007), those men exposing fear during relations between men often face abuse and ostracism.

Consistent with the above literature and the findings discussed in chapter six, the respondents spoke in particular of relations between men inhibiting demonstrations of affectivity. The respondents frequently attributed their personal resistance to expressing emotions to direct and vicarious experiences of men ridiculing and ostracising men for behaviours indicative of vulnerability. Speaking about ritualistic ridiculing as a common pattern of behaviour emerging during relations between men, Tom suggested that men able to transcend emotions '*get accepted*' whereas the others '*tend to be isolated*'. Similarly, Grant implied that there are severe consequences for men who socially demonstrate affectivity:

> *INTERVIEWER: And do you cry in front of other men?*

GRANT: Well, I wouldn't... There's a time and a... place... You've got to know when... I think that's what you do... should do when you're on your own... Otherwise you're going to get yourself into a situation where people are going to ... Look... some people will rib the fuck out of you if... if you've got emotions... You let them out, but in your own... space (Working-Class Interview)

Despite suggesting that relations between men inhibit demonstrations of affectivity, the respondents spoke of the therapeutic quality of expressing emotions. Moreover, some of them indicated that transcending emotions hinders the recovery process. For instance:

MEL: If you're with the blokes you hide it a bit more, so it probably stays with you... Women get it out in the open and get it out of the way (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

TED: If you were out with your lass and you started crying... it would be different. She'd cuddle you and say, 'Come on, pull yourself together, love. What's the matter?' And they'd talk about it and you'd get over it quicker (Working-Class Interview)

However, despite speaking in terms of the benefits of embracing affectivity, the respondents focus tended to remain on the detriments of exposing vulnerability during relations between men.

Consistent with their expressed notion that femininity, as a socially constructed representation of reality, constitutes an embracing of vulnerability, the respondents spoke of relations between women as facilitating demonstrations of affectivity. In this sense, the data implied that, just as men's behaviour within certain contexts is influenced by a common notion of masculinity, a similar pattern occurs with women. Although it would be impossible for the respondents to have had any direct knowledge regarding the lived experience of women, their understandings of their behaviour might also be influenced by this social representation of reality (Cabezali et al., 1990; Errante, 2003; McHale et al.,

2003). Therefore, from a critical realist perspective, these common patterns in the data might be viewed to reveal something about femininity as a dominant social construction, or transitive structure (Zembylas, 2006). This places it in contrast to the post-structuralist influenced discursive approaches critiqued within chapter two, as these authors assume that discourse does not reflect an agent's cognitions (Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006).

Congruent with the way femininity emerged within the data, a majority of the respondents spoke of feeling more able to, or preferring the thought of, expressing their affectivity to women rather than men. In terms of the research questions, this might suggest that men sometimes feel less need to gravitate to the common stereotypical notion of successful masculinity during relations with women. For instance, James, during his one to one interview, commented: '*You can talk to women about some things, maybe show more of your emotions and stuff... than you would with men*'. When asked the reason for this, he replied: '*Because... men are not supposed to show emotions*'. John also spoke of men generally feeling more able to confide their affectivity during relations with women:

> *JOHN: Men find it easier to talk to women about their feelings... You find a lot of men who are depressed can't talk about these things with their mates... If they were with a couple of women... they'd bleed their heart out, wouldn't they... they would show their feelings... It's... easier in front of women... and not necessarily their wives or their girlfriends* (Middle-Class Interview)

When referring to relationship break-ups, both Graham and Joe spoke about confiding in female acquaintances rather than other men. Graham claimed that he had cried in front of his landlady and Joe spoke of crying in front of his next door neighbour. In both cases, they suggested that the women's husbands had not been present at the time. When asked whether his presence would have made a difference, Joe replied: '*I probably wouldn't have cried then... I think that it's a bit easier in front of a woman*'. When I enquired why, he stated: '*Just for... the masculinity thing... You don't want to be known as a bit of a*

wuss'. When I asked Graham why he had confided in his landlady and not his landlord, Richard interrupted, '*Because he'd bloody laugh, wouldn't he*'. When, during his one to one interview, I asked Graham a similar question, he responded:

> GRAHAM: *I feel more at ease in the company of women... I suppose I feel inhibited talking about emotions to male friends than I do to women... I mean, I don't know why that is... Whether it's me thinking... they would find me... they would be embarrassed... I don't know... It's probably a bit of both really... you know, I might feel a bit uncomfortable talking about my feelings to another guy... as opposed to, I certainly have no inhibitions about talking about those things to my female friends* (Middle-Class Interview)

Arguably, such data is consistent with literature suggesting that it is men that police one another's behaviours in accordance with a dominant representation of masculinity, rather than women (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Light & Kirk, 2000; Maccoby, 2003 [1998]; Houtte, 2004; Pascoe, 2011). Thus, rather than the spectrum of men's behaviours being theorised as various forms of masculinity, some authors have argued that it is only when their masculine identities are perceived to be under threat that such demonstrations occur (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). Hence, if this pressure is generated during relations between their same-sexed peers, outside of these relations men might be less likely to demonstrate their masculinity (Marusza, 1997; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004).

The above analysis of the data has suggested that the internal experience of, and natural pressure to express, affectivity is the same for men and women. None of the data implied that men inherently require less time than women to deal with feelings such as sorrow and fear. Yet, it spoke of them demonstrating contrasting patterns of behaviour, with men generally displaying much lower levels of affectivity than women. These differences in behaviour were linked to men striving to hide their emotions in order to accord themselves with a dominant representation of successful masculinity. This behaviour emerged as being potentially dangerous, but necessary if men are to avoid a loss of status

during relations between men. The chapter will now focus on the ways men hide affectivity, as suggested by the data.

7.3 Men's ways of hiding affectivity

Regardless of their social class or the format of the interview, the respondents provided data regarding a number of specific strategies men commonly use as attempts to hide their emotions. These were often introduced by the respondents, not the interviewer. Moreover, they were voiced as being motivated by men's desires to appear more masculine or as a means of regaining lost masculine status. The strategies that repeatedly emerged included lying, the use of humour, physical aggression, and risk-taking behaviours. Since physical aggression will be the main theme of chapter nine, it is not necessary to discuss it here. Furthermore, the previous sub-section included some discussion of risk-taking behaviour, with data suggesting that men sometimes place themselves at physical risk in order to appear 'masculine'. On some occasions the data suggested that those boys/men taking the biggest risks tend to be the most revered by their peers:

> *RICHARD: Another big thing that I've always come across is risk taking... Risk taking... it's like, when we were kids, as we were walking home from school, we'd wait until a car was coming and it'd be, 'I can do it', and you'd nip across. And there was always somebody that was that far off of a car [Indicates a centimetre gap with his fingers]... Yeah. He nearly got run over just about every day, but he was 'the man'* (Middle-Class Interview)

The above quote suggests that boys are rewarded with increased masculine status by their male peers for transcending fear and placing themselves at physical risk. This implies that these relations both perpetuate fearlessness as an esteemed masculine quality and encourage risky behaviour. The next section will discuss the strategies of lying and the use of humour, as they emerged in relation to the hiding of emotions.

7.3.1 Lying and bravado

Lying or '*using bravado*' referred to men, during relations between men, denying existent feelings of sorrow, fear, and compassion; or constructing accounts indicative of them being devoid of emotion. At times, during the focus group interviews, a respondent's talk could be interpreted as a direct example of them presenting themselves as being devoid of emotion. The example below can be seen to concur with, and therefore perpetuate during relations between men, the aforementioned stereotypes of masculinity and femininity (as distinguished by a common notion of men's and women's differing treatments of vulnerability). In this account, Tom presented himself to his friends and I as being totally devoid of compassion or concern regarding the harm his behaviour could cause his wife and his marriage:

> *TOM: I did that six weeks after I'd got married... Our lass said, 'Where are you going?' ... 'I'm going out with the lads'... 'You can't, you're married now'... 'I can do what I want' [Laughter]... 'Well if you go out, don't come back'... 'See you' [Respondent waves]... I went out Friday night and came back on Thursday afternoon [Everyone laughs]... ... And she was the one blubbering at the door when I got back, like, 'Where have you been? Are you alright?'... I said, 'You're lucky I've come back... I've only come back because I've run out of money' [Everyone laughs]* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

Since the above account failed to explain where Tom went each night after the bar closed and issues regarding clothing changes and personal hygiene, it is unlikely that it constitutes an accurate or honest reflection of reality. Instead, it could be argued that Tom was providing a successful demonstration of his masculinity in accordance with a representation harboured by myself and the rest of the group. Our approving laughter throughout this performance could be seen as our way, as men, of encouraging and policing his and our own demonstrations of masculinity in this way.

Similarly, on those occasions when the interview focused on the notion of an intimate partner leaving the respondent for another man, they focused on the rivalry between themselves and the other man, rather than the heartbreak of their loss. Arguably, on the few occasions that affectivity did become a focus, the respondents implied they would quickly be able to transcend it. Ben provided one such example: '*I wouldn't stand there begging any woman to stay with me if she'd rather be with someone else... Good luck to her... Good luck to them both… I ain't going to shed no tears over it*'. Again, this pattern of verbal behaviour was used as a means by which such respondents demonstrated their masculinity in consistence with the common representation (as discussed within the Dominant Masculine Norm chapter). Moreover, such presentations of themselves emerged across both the focus groups and one to one interviews.

In some cases, men were suggested to use the strategies of lying and bravado after relationship break-ups, presenting themselves to other men as the person unemotionally instigating the split. One example of this was provided by Richard: '*Another marker of masculinity is breaking off relationships... You know, 'Did she finish with you?' 'No I finished with her... I just fucked her off. I couldn't be doing with her no more*''. More frequently, this strategy emerged in relation to men attempting to hide their fear of physical confrontation with rival men. The following example of this was provided by Nik:

> *INTERVIEWER: How is a man likely to feel if another man physically threatens him?*
> *NIK: … Err... Inside, personally, you probably think, 'Can I beat him or can't I beat him physically?'… But I don't think that you'd show that to others... You'd say, 'Well if he wants to come round knocking on my door, let him'… But really, you might be thinking, 'Shit, I hope he doesn't come round'*
> *INTERVIEWER: Right, yeah... Is that like masking fear, then?*
> *NIK: Yeah, masking fear... and trying to be the strong male again... It's not socially acceptable to be a cowering male is it... You've got to be up there, 'Send*

him round if he wants to come round'… And really you might lock the door and not answer it if he does come round (Working-Class Interview)

In the above account, Nik provided an example of men deliberately hiding their feelings of fear from other men in order to appear masculine. The following section will look at the way humour is used by men as a strategy for both hiding affectivity and policing one another's inhibitions of it.

7.3.2 Humour

According to the data, humour is another common strategy men use as a means of hiding their emotions. Of course, humour was sometimes used by these men to convey camaraderie, but this section will focus on the negative aspects of humour in men to men relations. The respondents spoke of men competing with one another in a form of verbal sparring. This was described as men attempting to 'laugh off' the emotions deliberately invoked by 'rivals', while employing the same strategy to expose their emotions. In this sense, 'personal' and 'hurtful' comments are wielded like weapons, but in the guise of 'humour'. These act to deflect negative attention away from the speaker, forcing rivals into defensive rather than offensive positions. This was implied by respondents from the second working-class focus group:

> TOM: *If you find something that makes you laugh, you stop on it, don't you*
> MEL: *Well, that's because it stops other folk taking the piss out of you, doesn't it*
> TOM: *Well that's it… and you've had some fucking piss taken out of you, Mel [Everyone laughs]* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

Mild examples of this strategy could be identified within each of the four focus groups. In the quote below, Graham jokily mocked Richard over his inability to grow a full beard. The comments he made implied that his attempt was a poor demonstration of masculinity. In addition to Andrew's laughter, Richard's responses to Graham's comments seem, to me, to concur with my aforementioned interpretation of this strategy:

RICHARD: I'm growing a bit of fluff on my chin

GRAHAM: Mmm, I thought I saw something there, Richard [Andrew laughs… …]

RICHARD: There you go

GRAHAM: You've got a long way before you catch up with me [Andrew continues laughing]…

RICHARD: It's only been growing two weeks

GRAHAM: Oh yeah, I believe you [Everyone laughs] …

RICHARD: You see… Graham's making a joke of it even before I say it. Do you see what's happening there (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Also emerging from the data was the notion that men are careful not to compliment one another for qualities found desirable, particularly during group dynamics. In this sense, a man's compliments towards another man might be seen as being connected to feelings of affection and compassion. Since affectivity emerged as belonging to the realm of the feminine but not the masculine, shows of affection between men would breach the masculine boundary, as described by the respondents. Therefore, rather than demonstrate their admiration, men were suggested to focus on one another's negative points via the use of humorous mockery. For example:

GRANT: Even if you admire something about one of the lads, you aren't going to fucking say that. You're just going to - even if you admire a certain thing about them - you rip fuck out of them (Working-Class Interview)

Some of the respondents suggested that 'humorous' verbal sparring, or as they called it: '*Piss-taking*' and '*Mickey-taking*', was a vital part of their interactions as groups of men:

BEN: We might not have anything else to talk about if we didn't take the piss out of one another… it's pretty much constant… With all my mates, it's pretty much… constantly taking the piss… That's pretty much all we talk about… So, any sign

of… anything being 'different'… or any sign of a 'weakness' or any sign of… anything… then somebody takes the piss (Middle-Class Interview)

During the second working-class focus group, when I asked Tom what purpose men's ridiculing of one another served, he replied, '*It's camaraderie*'. This might suggest that such humour could paradoxically be aimed at warming men to one another. Nevertheless, the response countered Tom's lengthy previous example (two pages of transcript), in which he had described himself and a group of men singling out and ridiculing one particular man for a period of several months. Thus, it is unlikely that such a victim would derive any sense of camaraderie from the men's prolonged attempts to invoke his emotions. In fact, without me having to quiz Tom about how their behaviour had affected the man in question, he went on to say: '*He'll never get over what went on*'. Mel's following remarks: '*You've got to be able to take it… you've just got to laugh it off*', place culpability with the victim for being unable to transcend his emotions, rather than the abusers for targeting his vulnerability.

The above data can again be seen to concur with the notion that successful masculinity constitutes the transcendence of vulnerability; moreover, that this stereotype is policed and perpetuated during relations between men (as discussed within chapter six). This finding was also documented by Kehily and Nayak (1997). In this sense, men use humour to hide their own vulnerability and expose the vulnerabilities of other men. For instance, those men whose emotions are perceived by men to belie wounds inflicted by a rivals tongue, or fail to retort in a non-emotive manner, have been suggested to suffer a loss of masculine status (Nayak, 2006). In this way, humour plays a role in the way masculine hierarchies are formed among groups of white, heterosexual men, and in determining - in the eyes of one another - which of them increase their masculine status and which of them lose it (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Gough & Edwards, 1998).

This section of the chapter looked at data suggesting that, in order to conform to the dominant masculine norm, men use the strategies of lying and humour to hide their emotions. In addition to accounts that referred to men in general, the respondents often

presented themselves in ways that suggested an ability to transcend their emotions. When doing so, they could also be seen to provide first-hand examples of the strategies of lying and humour. Finally, there were no identified differences in the verbal practices of working and middle-class men.

7.4   Conclusion

Masculinity and femininity emerged within the data as antitheses of one another, but also specific identities within themselves. Being presented as socially pre-established representations of reality, masculinity was characterised by the transcendence of emotions, and femininity by the overt expression of them. Therefore, a demonstration of one of these would be recognisable as such when in the absence of the other. According to the data, the behaviours of men and women tend to be influenced by these representations. At the same time, the data spoke of a man's expression of emotion being commonly viewed by men as constituting a demonstration of femininity. In this sense, the dominant gender representations emerged as separate entities to the agents gravitating to them, men and women having the essential freedom to gravitate to either.

It emerged that a man crossing the socially constructed gender boundary by demonstrating his emotions would be at risk of being ostracised during relations between men. Therefore, men were suggested to employ the common strategies of humour, lying, and risk-taking as a means of hiding their affectivity. Only during traumatic experiences was a man's expression of emotion presented as appropriate. However, relations between men were suggested to severely limit the duration of these demonstrations. Some of the respondents also spoke of feeling guilty at those times when they had felt an urge to express their affectivity. As such, this might suggest that individual men internalise the dominant masculine norm and apply pressure on themselves to conform to it. Furthermore, it emerged that, during relations between men, the pressure to demonstrate one's masculinity sometimes resulted in men placing their personal safety at risk.

In contrast, the data spoke of white, heterosexual men finding it easier to confide their emotions in women, suggesting that outside of relations between men they experience less pressure to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm. This is consistent with literature suggesting that men only demonstrate their masculinity when they perceive it to be under threat (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). It also contrasts the assumption that men and masculinity are inextricably linked, as implied by relativist influenced discursive approaches (see Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). Therefore, these findings might suggest that masculinity - as a transitive structure - is a useful conception for understanding the patterns of behaviour demonstrated by white, heterosexual men during exclusive relations between themselves. However, the notion that a man is less likely to demonstrate his masculinity when interacting with a woman implies that the focus should be on 'men' as a general category when exploring their behaviours outside of exclusive male groups.

Men's and women's experiences of vulnerability were suggested to be the same, and the data was not found to imply that men's common patterns of emotional remoteness relate to biological factors. It emerged that, when they are alone, men succumb to their emotions but mask them in public to conform to a common notion of successful masculinity. The respondents spoke of the benefits of a person being able to confide his or her feelings in others, but how these are outweighed for men by the risk of being ostracised and abused during relations between men. Nevertheless, consistent with previous findings (Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006), the respondents suggested that, unlike the demonstration of grief or anxiety, demonstrations of aggression are likely to increase a man's masculine status within all-male domains. This is because, with it being an active emotion, aggression can be viewed to constitute the transcendence of vulnerability and, therefore, be seen to relate to the dominant masculine norm.

The data suggests that men harbour a common representation of successful masculinity; this could explain common patterns of dominance and subordination demonstrated among groups of white, heterosexual men with similar resources (New, 2001; Hall, 2002). In this sense, an individual's gravitations to the dominant masculine norm would

constitute his attempts to maintain status and avoid subordination during exclusive male relations. As such, the subordination of certain identified varieties of masculinity (Connell, 2008 [1995]) could be seen as a by-product and not a conscious objective of men gravitating to the dominant masculine norm. From this critical realist perspective, white, heterosexual men's subordination of such groups is likely to also lie beyond their demonstrations of masculinity.

Chapter 8

Sexuality

The following chapter will focus on data relating to the theme of sexuality. Like affectivity, as discussed in the previous chapter, sexuality emerged as being central to the way men demonstrate their masculinity. Grounded in the data, this chapter will further the argument that masculinity and femininity constitute socially constructed representations of gendered behaviour that have an influence over, but remain separate to, the lived experiences of men and women. Discussion of the findings will be divided into four sections. Two of these are first-order-codes (gender performances linked to sexuality; sexuality and men's demonstrations of masculinity) as emerging from the final template presented within chapter five. However, I also decided to present two of the second-order-codes (occupations and recreations linked to gender and sexuality; compromised heterosexuality) as their own separate sections because the wealth of the data informing them warranted a more in-depth consideration.

The subjects of bisexuality or transgender never arose during the interviews. Men were stereotyped by the respondents as either straight or gay. Anything that was perceived to compromise a man's heterosexuality emerged as being likely to render him 'gay' in the eyes of other men. This went beyond issues of sexuality to demonstrations of vulnerability. From this perspective, if a man is married but perceived to act 'feminine', he runs the risk of being deemed 'gay' rather than bisexual. Particularly during the working class accounts, heterosexuality emerged as a standard that is in constant need of reconstruction by heterosexual men, during their group relations. Therefore, despite an emerging body of literature regarding bisexuality and transgender (see Tucker, 1995; Firestein, 1996; Monro, 2005), the chapter will be guided by, and remain consistent with, the data.

Permeating the subsequent sections of the chapter is the notion, as emerging from the data, that men are able to gravitate to a common notion of femininity, and women masculinity. Also, that when a man or a woman gravitates to the socially constructed realm of the masculine or the feminine, their gendered performances are recognisable as such. Nevertheless, pervading this data is the notion of it being 'appropriate' for men to demonstrate masculine-typical behaviour, and for women to demonstrate feminine-typical behaviour. The first section of the chapter (gender performances linked to sexuality) will look at a connection that emerged within the data regarding gay men, femininity and vulnerability. This will include an exploration of the notion that gay men have a tendency to deliberately gravitate to the socially established realm of the feminine. Relating to this theme will be a section (occupations and recreations linked to gender and sexuality) that focuses on men's activity choices, and how these were seen by the respondents to reflect their sexuality. The third section of the chapter (compromised heterosexuality) will focus on accounts suggesting that heterosexual men tend to worry that their heterosexuality will be judged as being incomplete during relations between men. The data informing the final section (sexuality and men's demonstrations of masculinity) pertains to men's common patterns of heterosexual prowess and the way that women are used as commodities through which men demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men.

8.1   Gender performances linked to sexuality

The notion of there being a close relationship between gender performances and sexuality emerged from the data. Whereas masculine-typical behaviour was associated with heterosexual men, feminine-typical behaviour was associated with gay men. The respondents frequently used the terms 'feminine' and 'effeminate' interchangeably with the words 'gay' and 'homosexual', therefore, presenting them as being synonymous. This pattern occurred across the classes.

In many cases, a respondent's statements directly implied that heterosexual men generally associate gay men with feminine-typical behaviour: '*I think that you*

automatically think that if someone is gay that they are feminine' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview); '*If you look at gay men... they always lean towards the feminine... direction*' (Nik; Working-Class Interview); '*You get some men who are... quite feminine... And you get that with the kids... at school... You know which boys are going to... end up...gay*' (John; Middle-Class Interview); '*The automatic suspicion would be that they're gay, and all those aspersions would be made about them*' (Graham; Middle-Class Interview).

A distinction between the respondents' perceptions of gay men as behaving in a feminine way and heterosexual men as behaving in a masculine way was particularly clear during Richard's 'recollections' of past events. When these reconstructions involved him impersonating interactions between gay and straight men, Richard portrayed them very differently. While adopting the role of a gay character, he used an exaggerated effeminate voice and body language and presented them as weak and submissive. In contrast, he used a deeper voice to convey the responses of the heterosexual men, and presented them as hard, protective and dominant:

> *RICHARD: [deep voice] 'Bloody hell, Dave, what's happened man?'... [effeminate voice] 'Oo, you'll never guess what's happened to me, lovey'..., [deep voice] 'Dave, what? What's the matter?' [effeminate voice] 'Well', he said, 'I was walking through the cemetery to come to the club... and this man jumped me and raped me'... And so we said, [deep voice] 'Well, where is he... Is he still there... Come on, let's go and get him'. And he said, [effeminate voice] 'Oh no, he'll be gone by now, love'* (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Many of the respondents seemed to view sexuality as residing at the heart of how men 'choose' to comport themselves. The notion that gay men 'deliberately' gravitate to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine was a theme that often emerged within the interviews. For example, this was conveyed in comments such as: '*Generally it is homosexual men who are effeminate* […] *I think it's a bit of a... put on*' (James; Working-Class Interview); '*Some gay men want to be women... but some lesbian women want to be a man...It's a role they're playing*' (Nik, Working-Class Focus Group 2); and

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'*A lot of homosexual men want to be feminine and they dress in a feminine manner and behave in a feminine manner… But that's up to them… they don't have to behave like that if they don't want*' (Jed, Middle-Class Interview). During the second working-class focus group, reasons were explored as to why the respondents thought gay men deliberately act feminine rather than masculine. The explanations they provided referred to these performances as a strategy through which gay men challenge the existing norms of society and proclaim their right to live to their own way of choosing:

> NIK: *They're trying to prove that they're there…*
> JOE: *And that it's okay to be gay*
> TOM: *Well it's because they're gay and they're proud of it, isn't it… That's why they throw that at you* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

As mentioned in chapter three, Bergling (2001) documented a rift between feminine-acting and straight-acting groups of gay men. Corresponding with the above data, this literature implied that a large number of gay men deliberately traverse the socially constructed boundary of the 'masculine' as a way of overtly celebrating their social freedom (Bergling, 2001). However, contrasting the data, an equally large number of gay men were suggested to adhere to the masculine stereotype and direct animosity towards feminine-acting men (Bergling, 2001). Nevertheless, in both cases this suggests that, like the respondents, the men from these groups are aware of what behaviours are recognisable as 'masculine' and either attempt to adhere to or resist them.

While the data predominantly suggested that gay men tend to 'deliberately' act feminine, there were some exceptions. For instance, the respondents from the first middle-class focus group spoke of a '*very masculine*' gay best friend. When describing in what ways his gay friend is masculine, John made the statements: '*He's a black belt in Karate*'; '*He goes to the gym a lot*'; and '*He is like a man's man*'. During their focus group, Ben also commented: '*He came waterskiing with me when this lot bottled it*'. Working-class respondent, Mel, also spoke of having a 'very masculine' gay friend. Like the aforementioned middle-class men, his talk of him was punctuated with the comments:

'*You wouldn't mess with him*'; '*He does martial arts*'; '*He can look after himself*''; and '*He's a big strapping lad and a hard nut*' (Working-Class Interview). Therefore, the dominant masculine norm still emerged as being consistent with the ability to transcend physical and emotional vulnerability during relations between men. As these accounts highlighted the stereotypical masculine qualities of their gay friends - thus, distinguishing them from other non-masculine gay men - they can also be interpreted as strategies the respondents used to justify their own associations with them in a way that did not compromise their own masculinity (see Kehily, 2001; Dean, 2011; Pascoe. 2011).

From this perspective, men harbour a common, relatively stable representation of what behaviours constitute masculinity and femininity. Otherwise, they would be unable to discern for themselves, let alone concur with one another, what behaviours constitute demonstrations of one or the other. Furthermore, this position refers to agents having some freedom to gravitate to the gendered realm of their choosing. As such, this is consistent with respondent accounts suggesting that common patterns in the behaviours of men and women are influenced by socially pre-established representations of masculinity and femininity (as discussed in chapter six).

To recap, the data made basic distinctions between men as either 'completely' heterosexual or otherwise gay, and either masculine via demonstrations of invulnerability or feminine via demonstrations of vulnerability. However, these distinctions between sexuality and gender performance did not emerge as neutral in terms of a man's status. In many of the respondents' accounts, heterosexuality and demonstrations of invulnerability emerged as being superior to non-heterosexuality and demonstrations of effeminacy. Even those respondents claiming that they personally felt that gay or feminine-acting men were not inferior to heterosexual or masculine-acting men, spoke of it being a common notion among heterosexual men (This is also documented in the literature; cf. Kehily, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Hunt & Jensen, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Richardson, 2007; Dean, 2011; Messner, 2011; Pascoe, 2011), for example:

GRAHAM: If there was a lad that appeared to have feminine characteristics, then I think there would be a very good chance of them being victimised and jokes made about them, or even worse, they could be bullied… I think there would be elements within our society that would think that he's not a real man (Middle-Class Interview)

The data suggested that, in the eyes of some heterosexual men, masculine status is unobtainable for non-heterosexual men. This was situated as a personal viewpoint by working-class respondents Nik, Tom and Grant. These respondents implied that the inferiority of gay/feminine-acting men - in comparison to the superiority of heterosexual/masculine-acting men - is their inability to transcend physical and emotional vulnerability. For example, this was conveyed in statements such as: '*Because they're that camp... and that effeminate... they can't fight*' (Tom); '*Masculine men... are normal, straight, heterosexual, and all your feminine looking one's... and your weaker men... are all gay*' (Nik); and '*It's a touchy subject... coz my brother did actually say that he was gay* […] *But a lot of it was brought on because he was smoking marijuana... which takes the manhood out of you... and makes you very... submissive*' (Grant).

Nik, Tom and Grant attempted to justify their negative opinions of gay/feminine-acting men by suggesting that their 'lower status' results from them deliberately gravitating to the realm of the feminine. In other words, they were careful not to suggest that they were inferior to heterosexual/masculine-acting men due to the biological aspect of their sexuality. Throughout their interviews, Nik, Tom and Grant emphasized the importance of men conforming to the masculine norm, as established by society. Arguably, this relates to the literature suggesting that the transitive dimension of knowledge constrains agents' perceptions by obscuring or devaluing other ways of viewing the world (Corson, 1997; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008):

TOM: In a textbook sort of thing, we're classed as normal... It's them that's... that's got a problem because they're not acting the way that society is supposed to see them as

NIK: They're out of the norm (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

In contrast, many of the respondents - particular those chosen to constitute a middle-class sample - provided statements suggesting that gay men can be masculine. Arguably, their positions as a police sergeant, university staff, teachers and company managers might suggest that they are better informed and also more careful to provide politically correct responses. One example of this might have been when Andrew, discussing a contrast between heterosexual and gay men, referred to the former as 'normal', and instantly realised the discriminatory connotations encapsulated by the term: '*Even for a normal… Did I say 'normal'?… That's completely the wrong word*' (Middle-Class Interview).

In summary, a close relationship emerged in the data between men's sexuality and demonstrations of gendered behaviour. Although not supported by the literature (see Bergling, 2001), this sample of respondents suggested that a majority of gay men deliberately resist the dominant masculine norm and perform stereotypical feminine behaviour. Despite this link being more prominent in the data provided by working-class men, it was still apparent in the verbal practices of middle-class men. The chapter will now focus on men's concerns of losing masculine status by having their heterosexuality appear to be incomplete.

8.2   Occupations and recreations linked to gender and sexuality

Another theme that emerged within the data was that specific recreational activities and job vocations belong to the socially pre-established realms of the masculine or the feminine. Via the discussed link between femininity and gay men, the respondents' verbal practices suggested that heterosexual men often perceive sexuality to be closely related to a man's choice of masculine or feminine occupations and recreational activities. In other words, a man working in a garage or factory might be more likely to be viewed as heterosexual, whereas a man working as a hair dresser or secretary might be more likely to be viewed as being gay. This theme will now be discussed in more detail.

Regardless of their social class, a majority of the respondents associated activities requiring physical strength or a transcendence of pain and fear with the socially pre-established realm of the masculine. For instance, Andrew referred to '*a... workplace like a garage… or engineering, or the armed forces*' as '*a masculine environment*'. Alternatively, the respondents often associated occupations and recreations not requiring these attributes with the socially pre-established realm of the feminine. Both Andrew and Graham, during their one to one interviews, suggested viewing their office-oriented work as a '*feminine environment*'. Therefore, like the working-class men in service sector employment, as documented by McDowell (2002), Andrew and Graham might view their careers as being separate from the masculine identity they demonstrate during relations between men. According to Johnston et al. (2000), men working in 'feminine-typical' environments often demonstrate their masculinity through leisure activities. This might be the case with Andrew, who kept referring to the five-a-side football team of which he is a member. This is consistent with the notion that men's varied identities do not all constitute demonstrations of masculinity – as discussed within the Dominant Masculine Norm chapter – (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005).

Many of the working and middle-class respondents spoke of perceiving a link between being gay and men participating in activities they viewed as feminine:

> *NIK: They go in a different direction... Out of two sixteen year olds, a lad's lad would go off to be a mechanic or... what's considered to be a man's role... whereas I think you would find that a gay person, or in my experience, would go off into a more... woman associated role, because I think that they feel more comfortable in that environment* (Working-Class Interview)

> *RICHARD: I always remember a friend who wanted to be a nurse... a man; well, young man... and at that time he wanted to be a nurse, and it was like, 'Hey up, he's coming out...I always thought there was something going on there' [Everyone laughs]... But it was just a genuine wish for that vocation because he*

wanted to do that kind of work...whereas if he'd have gone to be a doctor... it
would be different... So I think there are some occupations that are masculine or
feminine oriented (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Just as connections emerged between being gay and those men perceived to work in feminine vocations, similar patterns emerged regarding women perceived to work in masculine vocations. Grant provided an example of this when discussing his notion of what kind of woman might work in foundry: '*She'd have to be some pretty weird, sort of like... strong type of... I don't know... lesbian... something with some danglers* '. In this instance, Grant's use of the word '*lesbian*' suggests that he perceives there to be a link between a woman choosing to work in a masculine-typical vocation and her sexuality.

It is worth mentioning that the working-class respondents demonstrated a more negative view of women who work in traditionally male manual occupations than the middle-class respondents. Arguably, this might have related to the fact that, unlike the middle-class respondents, they held such positions and derived a sense of masculinity from them. When demonstrating their masculinity in this way, connections were made between physical labour and physical invulnerability. Hence, it was strength and not the identity of 'breadwinner' that emerged as important. Therefore, women holding manual positions might be perceived as a threat to their masculine status via similar demonstrations of physical invulnerability:

TED: In banks, and stuff like that... it's a bit different because they're all office staff... shuffling paper all day is different... they're [women] *not showing their brawn, not showing their power... They're* [women] *showing what they've got upstairs... it's a different kettle of fish altogether* [...] *When they start trying with physical strength... they can't do it* (Working-Class Interview)

In nearly every focus group and one to one interview, the respondents suggested viewing rugby, football and boxing as masculine oriented sports. Again, women's participation in these sports sometimes led to the respondents making assumptions about their sexuality.

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For instance, when talking about women rugby players, Nik seemed to view this link as inevitable: '*I mean, there used to be a load of lesbians come in the Craven... and they used to come in on a Sunday with their shin pads hanging out and covered in mud... and they were like trying to be men*'. Alternatively, the respondents from Nik's focus group suggested it would compromise a man's heterosexuality if, for instance, he won an Olympic gold meddle for baton twirling, rather than a masculine-oriented sport like boxing:

> *TOM: You would think that he hasn't come out of the closet yet, but you'd think that it's –*
> *MEL: It's on the way, it's on the way*
> *STAN: There's still a skeleton in there*
> *NIK: 'If you didn't know about his baton twirling, you'd think he was normal... But because you knew that he was a baton twirler, I think you'd approach him differently* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

The fact that everyone present, myself included, found the notion of a man winning gold for baton twirling funny might suggest that we shared a common representation of it constituting a feminine-typical pastime. Therefore, some of our amusement is likely to have emerged from the socially influenced representation we harboured regarding a connection between men participating in feminine-typical activities and their sexuality. This interpretation is consistent with the fact that discussions of men participating in feminine-typical activities always led to the respondents verbalising assumptions about those men's sexuality.

Nevertheless, a by-product of white, heterosexual men policing one another's demonstrations of masculinity in this way is the fact that such talk also trivialises women's sporting involvement. In reality, women participate in the same Olympic activities as men. Regardless of our knowledge of this, it seems that, during relations between men, we still 'other' women and gay men as physically and emotionally vulnerable and therefore unable to participate in the dangerous and strenuous activities of

'invulnerable' heterosexual men. This might suggest that the subordination of women and non-heterosexual men is to some degree rooted within relations between heterosexual men, and their individual interests to maintain masculine status within the group.

During the focus groups men's homophobic humour was always close to the surface, particularly in relation to one another's individual interests and recreational activities. When referring to Ben's passion for cycling during the first middle-class focus group, Jed quipped '*You didn't look so manly wearing your spandex trousers and your Gucci sunglasses*'. This and similar comments were innuendos regarding Ben's sexuality, and a further example of the verbal sparring discussed within the 'Affectivity' chapter. Hence, the men deliberately invoked one another's emotions via insinuations regarding recreational pursuits viewed to compromise their heterosexuality. Likewise, when working-class respondent Ross revealed that, in addition to MotoGP, he liked Tour De France, Les joked, '*So you like men in fucking pink lycra suits*'. This was followed by Grant's comment: '*If he ever goes to Scarborough he's getting bummed*'. The men's policing of one another's behaviours in this way again suggested that such respondents harbour and perpetuate a common notion that a man's sexuality is inextricably linked to his preferred pastimes.

As these common patterns emerged across the data, it might suggest that the respondents and I harbour similar, relatively stable representations of what occupations, recreations, and gender performances constitute the realms of the masculine and feminine. Moreover, that these representations 'existed' as transitive structures prior to, and independent of, the interviews. In this sense, each of us would be able to identify when these norms have been breached by men and women in one another's absence. This would explain why the respondents and I found the same scenarios of men breaching masculine boundaries humorous. It is unlikely that the same common patterns would have emerged if versions of reality are negotiated and are specific to the contexts in which they were constructed, as implied by authors adopting relativist influenced discursive approaches (see Speer, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006).

This link that men seem to harbour regarding which occupational and recreational activities reside in the realms of the masculine and feminine has been identified by previous authors. For example, men have been found to associate successful masculinity with competitive sports such as boxing, football and rugby (Light & Kirk, 2000; Plummer, 2006; Sabo, 2011), heavy drinking behaviour (Johansson, 1990; Gough & Edwards, 1998; Marja & Kirsimarja, 2005), and manual or managerial type occupations (Johnston et al., 2000; McDowell, 2002; Bishop et al., 2009). A similar pattern to the way the respondents policed one another's demonstrations of masculinity in this study was identified by Dean (2001). In this instance, a middle-school teacher faced the homophobic comments of his friends, as they considered his job as being feminine-typical (Dean, 2011). The teacher himself also referred to his job as being '*Damaging to his masculine reputation*' (Dean, 2011, page 129).

The data analysed in this part of the chapter suggested that men harbour a common notion regarding which activities and vocations belong to the socially pre-established realms of the masculine and feminine. Again, masculine practices were found to link with physical and emotional invulnerability, and frequently emerged as being territories that the research participants associated with heterosexual men. This was consistent with their accounts that linked gay men to the socially pre-established realm of the feminine, as discussed in the previous section of the chapter. The respondents' verbal practices tended to render inferior those activities perceived as non-masculine. In this way, the subordination of women and non-heterosexual men emerged as being a by-product of heterosexual men policing one another's demonstrations of masculinity. The following section will look more closely at common patterns in the way heterosexual men mock one another with homophobic abuse, and the purpose of this mockery.

8.3   Compromised heterosexuality

According to the data, relations between heterosexual men are contexts in which men feel pressure to continually reaffirm their heterosexuality as being complete and uncompromised. The data indicated that those men who are perceived to compromise

their heterosexuality run the risk of facing abuse and ostracism. In this sense, men's policing of one another's behaviour perpetuates this common pattern.

The loss of heterosexual status often emerged as something that occurs during relations between heterosexual men regardless of a man's intimate relationships with members of the opposite sex. For instance, a number of the accounts suggested that married men risk facing homophobia for associating with non-heterosexual others. In one example, the married respondents from the second working-class focus group spoke of not rooming with a gay man during a 'Wembley weekend' to avoid the homophobic ridicule of their friends: '*I couldn't cope with it... It's the stigma that you'd get when you walked downstairs... And after twenty-four hours... all the blokes would be giving you it*' (Tom). Nevertheless, in the absence of other men, it was suggested that these concerns would be alleviated: '*It's a case of, 'Hey up, I've got to room with this guy*'; '*I don't think it would really matter*' (Tom). In other words, the concern did not reside with them having to room with a gay man per se, but with their heterosexuality - and, therefore, masculinity - being perceived to be compromised during relations between men.

During his one to one interview, Grant implied that men's boasts of heterosexual prowess can be influenced by their concerns that an association with a non-heterosexual man jeopardises their own heterosexual status. When speaking about the way his friend Les (married with three children) overemphasises his heterosexuality, Grant posed the notion that this might be to avoid a negative association with a gay family member. Arguably, underlying this account is Grant's own notion that a man's masculinity is compromised by anything that renders his heterosexuality incomplete:

> *GRANT: It's like Les... he's always biggin' himself up, banging hookers this, banging hookers that... 'I'm shagging her'. He's got a missus at home... I think it could be bullshit a lot of it... but we've just got to accept that what he's saying is true... And if that's how he sees himself... or wants to be seen like that, might be more to the point... ... I sometimes think the fact that his brother is gay... he feels as though he's got to be more masculine* (Working-Class Interview)

Based on the data, then, men's homophobic behaviour might result from them fearing their own masculine status being damaged through associations with gay or effeminate men. This is consistent with previous findings (see Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). It has been suggested in the literature that the ostracising of men whose heterosexuality is perceived to be compromised is the result of the perpetrators projecting their own sexual insecurities during relations between men (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Swain, 2002). From this perspective, men are in a constant struggle to reaffirm their heterosexuality (Light & Kirk, 2000; Allen, 2005; Plumber, 2006; Richardson, 2007), which they perceive must be whole and uncompromised by any sense of femininity (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Swain, 2002). This concurs with the notion that femininity, as a dominant socially pre-established representation (thus separate to the lived experiences of women), constitutes the embracing of vulnerability (Cabezali et al., 1990; Jordan, 2008). According to Pascoe (2011), the connection between being gay and being vulnerable is rooted in the act of being penetrated. Heterosexual men are suggested to view penetration as a capitulation of power (Pascoe, 2011). In terms of the research questions, then, common patterns of homophobic behaviour could be indicative of men's concerns of demonstrating an inadequate transcendence of vulnerability.

It is important to note, however, that not all of the respondents' accounts implied that they had concerns with being associated with non-heterosexual men. During his one to one interview, John claimed that he had lived with a gay friend for ten years and had no concern about people thinking '*Well he must be gay if he's got a gay flatmate*'. John highlighted three factors contributing to this relaxed attitude. First, his statement: '*He was one of my best friends before he came out, before he told us that he was gay*' might suggest that his attitude could have been different had the man's sexuality been known at the time of their meeting. This is consistent with Andrew's expressed assumption that a gay man might be '*treated more favourably if he was already a long term friend*' at the time he 'came out' (Middle-Class Interview).

John also suggested that as well as himself, all of his friends embraced the notion that their friend was gay. In this sense, John might have been less likely to have felt that his own sexuality would be brought into question during relations between them. Therefore, the contrasting accounts of John and Tom suggested that they have differing social situations which impact on their perceived abilities to form close associations with gay men. This might translate to men's behaviours as individuals being either inhibited or facilitated by the behaviours of the majority of the men around them. Accordingly, Dean (2011) documented that those men perceiving greater threat to their masculine status might be more likely to avoid associations with gay men and provide more frequent demonstrations of heterosexual prowess.

Another aspect of the respondents' stigmatisation of femininity and gay men concerned the way that any failure to clearly demonstrate one's heterosexuality can result in the loss of masculine status. Again, it emerged that being defined as 'gay' often results from behaviours that are separate to sexuality and sexual attraction. When talking about his days as a coal miner, Richard provided an example of this. According to his account, he and the other miners ostracised one particular man because, although married with children, he '*was quite feminine*'. As well as physical characteristics, when describing why they had perceived him as feminine, Richard referred to him having an '*un-masculine hobby*' and not going '*to the club after work to have a couple of pints*' with the other men. Again, regardless of a man's marital status, femininity emerged as a key factor through which men judge one another's sexuality: '*There was that ambiguity there… it was just that, is he or isn't he?*' Owing to a common perception among the miners that the man's heterosexuality was compromised, Richard provided the following way in which this issue was acted out:

> *RICHARD: When he'd come in the shower, we used to joke… coz we used to take it in turns to wash each other's backs… but nobody would wash his back and they didn't want him to wash theirs… It got to be like… someone would come up and say, 'wash my back', and you'd do it like that [Mimics a very relaxed back washing technique]… but if he came up and said, 'wash my back, love', you used*

to wash his back like that… at arms length [Respondent makes a disgusted face and mimics washing someone's back at arms length] (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

A number of times during the study, I personally experienced pressure to reaffirm my heterosexuality. One occasion came when, in a crude and derogatory manner, Grant distanced himself from the 'gay other' by stating: '*If another man wants to stick his willy up another man's arse, that's their business*'. Despite deeming his remark as being inappropriate, I nodded and laughed in agreement with him in the attempt to also distance myself in this way. Unfortunately, my heterosexuality was judged incomplete when I later met Grant and his friends while wearing cowboy boots, PVC pants, Native American beads, and a Jim Morrison concho belt. In their eyes, my attire obviously traversed the masculine boundary. Despite them knowing that I am married with children, they referred to me with terms including 'Gay boy' and 'Queer bastard', and made it clear that they did not want to be associated with me any longer.

Further examples of men compromising and attempting to regain their heterosexual identity are evident in the data. For instance, Tom's friends demonstrated suspicion when his description of gay sex began to sound like an account of personal experience. In behavioural terms, this suggested that, at the very least, Tom had thought in some depth about the subject. This might indicate that, in the same way men's demonstrations of invulnerability are social façades to maintain masculine status (see chapters six and seven), so too are men's demonstrations of homophobia. Thus, on realising that he had compromised his heterosexual identity and would face the policing of his friends, Tom quickly stressed his disgust at the prospect of a non-heterosexual encounter:

TOM: I just can't envisage lifting somebody's potatoes up to get to a hole [Laughter and gasps from the group]… … You know what I mean, it just doesn't turn me on [Continued gasps]… You know, when you're bent down and you've got these big canockers [Laughter]… And I'd rather have our lass bent down in front of me, or any female in front of me… than a bloke… because you're looking

*down and thinking... 'Fuck, I'm not going near that', you know what I mean
[Everyone laughs]... ... And that feeling that you get when you take their
underpants down and it slaps you under the chin [Gasps and laughter]... ...*

NIK: *How do you know that then?*

STAN: *I was just thinking that*

TOM: *I've got a mate who went to Thailand... and he took one of these she-men;
he didn't know* [Brief description of what happpened] *I'd be traumatized. I'd have
to go for counselling, me... It would have done me big style that I'd actually...
picked somebody out... that's err...* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

Men's bodies also emerged as a factor that can lead to judgements about their gender and sexuality. Across the data, as they appear strong and less vulnerable, tall, muscular bodies were linked to masculinity. In contrast, shorter, less muscular men were linked to femininity. For example, during his one to one interview, middle-class respondent Jed stated: '*I always think that men who are very skinny are feminine... So physically, I suppose, you can tell*'. This is consistent with findings documented in the literature (Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Plummer, 2006) and will receive further discussion in chapter nine. Returning to Richard's account of the ostracised coal miner, the man's 'flabby body' and 'man boobs' were suggested to be another reason why the miners considered his heterosexuality as being incomplete. Despite the fact that Richard spoke of the other miners and him ostracising a man on the basis of their own prejudices, his account placed blame with the victim. Thus, Richard did not appear to recognise that their stereotypical notion of masculinity and homophobic behaviour were at the root of the problem:

*RICHARD: It was the ambiguity that used to cause 'him' problems... And it got to
the point were... we worked in one place that had very high temperatures... very
high humidity... and we used to work naked... But he used to wear a vest... and
we used to say to him, 'Get that bloody vest off'... He was absolutely soaked in
sweat and dehydrated, but he'd wear his vest to cover his boobs up... because he
knew that, although we never made a big thing of it, he knew that it was an issue,*

and that we were looking at him. He knew we were going, 'Well what's going on
here?' So he used to cover them up (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

This unequal treatment of a man because of his appearance is an example of body discrimination/fascism (Monro, 2005). Consistent with the data, the literature suggests that men's bodies are intrinsic to the ways they are judged by their peers in relation to their sexuality and gender performances (Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Plummer, 2006). This could be explained as men being attributed varying degrees of status on the basis of how close they are situated in relation to the dominant masculine norm, as pertaining to a transitive dimension of knowledge (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Based on the aforementioned findings, the miners in Richard's account might have distanced themselves from the '*ambiguous*' other as a means of preventing their own sexuality and masculine status coming into question within the group.

This section of the chapter has looked at data suggesting that men, during relations between men, fear their heterosexuality will be exposed as incomplete. The loss of heterosexual status during relations between heterosexual men was linked to factors that are separate from sexuality. Hence, men's intimate relationships with women did not necessarily protect them from homophobic ridicule. Men's bodies, clothing and failures to distinguish themselves from non-heterosexual men were identified as factors that can render their heterosexuality incomplete in the eyes of other men. As such, it emerged that men often demonstrate homophobic behaviour simply to affirm their heterosexuality and avoid ostracism; whereas, in the absence of other men, their behaviour would be less discriminatory.

8.4 Sexuality and men's demonstrations of masculinity

Regardless of social class or the interview dynamic, a common pattern emerged in the way the respondents verbally demonstrated their masculinity through discussing sexual prowess with other men. For instance, during his one to one interview, Jack made comments such as: '*I've had a few intimate partners*', '*When I was young I was a right*

tart', and '*I've had numerous one night stands... numerous short term relationships*'. Similarly, when referring to his flirtatious behaviour while being in a relationship, Ben stated: '*A lot of women wouldn't be happy with how I act when I'm out... if they knew how I acted when I was out*'. Likewise, Paul remarked: '*I can be a bit of a flirt when it comes to women*'.

Although not all the respondents made direct demonstrations of masculinity via heterosexual prowess, their accounts implied that men, during relations between men, often aggrandise their status in this way. Across the data, those men acquiring the most sexual resources were suggested to be the most revered during relations between men. Some accounts directly referred to men lying about sexual conquests in order to boost their masculine status in the eyes of other men:

> *TED: It's like those people that say, 'I've been with her... oh, I've slept with her'... and then you go up to them and say, 'Oh, you'll know so and so, won't you?' And they'll say, 'I don't even know him', and it turns out its all a complete lie*' (Working-Class Interview)

When asked why he thought men attempted to notch up more sexual conquests than their rivals, Andrew responded: '*It might be other issues that are driving him to that way. It might be a lack of self confidence that means that he has to go out and do that*'. Such accounts imply that men sometimes hide their vulnerability from other men via the verbal embellishment of their masculine status, and that heterosexual prowess constitutes a common representation of successful masculinity. Jack provided a further example of this during a focus group discussion about the reactions of men and women after the break up of an intimate relationship. Thus, in response to Jed's mention that a man might feel a need to '*prove that he's still a man*', Jack stated: '*That's when he suddenly starts trying to notch up his conquests... or, rather, saying he is*'. As discussed in chapter three, authors have identified heterosexual sex talk as a common pattern of behaviour demonstrated by men, during relations between men (Phillips, 2005; Dean, 2011; Messner, 2011; Pascoe, 2011). Consistent with the data, this practice is theorised to

emerge as men attempt to conceal their vulnerabilities from perceived rivals (Kehily, 2001; Phillips, 2005; Messner, 2011), and maintain or establish status within all-male domains (Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Hatchell, 2006; Richardson, 2007).

In the data, some differences emerged between the working and middle-class accounts in relation to sexuality and men's demonstrations of masculinity. To a greater degree than the middle-class respondents, the working-class men presented women as sex objects. For instance, Grant commented: '*If you put me in a room with a load of women... and they were all good looking... I wouldn't know which one to shag first... So... that's quite masculine*'. In further contrast, some working-class respondents spoke of being unable to resist the lure of women, regardless of existing relationship commitments. Thus, instead of speaking of 'a line that you don't cross' – as suggested by middle-class respondents Paul and Ben – their heterosexual urges were implied to be biologically unavoidable, overpowering any sense of commitment or rationality:

> *TOM: The long and short of it is... you're on this planet to do one thing... that's nature, isn't it... And you know, I'm like this, me... if a woman flatters me... I'm in... I don't want to... but if they flatter me, I can't help it... You know... if it's there, it's got to be done... I don't run round looking for them... but if it drops under me, I fall on top, it's as simple as that [Everyone laughs]...*
> *NIK: That's right, though*
> *TOM: That's how I look at it*
> *NIK: It takes someone stronger than me to say 'no'* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

Regarding the above account, the men's talk of being too weak to resist the lure of women might, at first glance, seem to be demonstrations of vulnerability. However, the men were using such talk to emphasize their heterosexuality as being 'overwhelmingly' complete and uncompromised. This is equivalent to respondents suggesting that they would not have the willpower to walk away from men who physically threaten them, as

implied by Ben during his one to one interview: '*I've had folk look at me that are twice as big as me… but I've a big thing about facing my fears*'; '*I know how hard it would be for me to walk away*' (Middle-Class Interview). In other words, rather than imply vulnerability in the sense of unsuccessful masculinity, the above accounts paradoxically demonstrate their success at harnessing the traits inferred by the dominant masculine norm. Similarly, owing to the notion that men are unable to distract themselves from viewing women as potential conquests, friendships with them were sometimes suggested to be problematic:

> *GEORGE: I think it helps if they're… like a female friend is a bit dog-ish… because you won't get that urge*' (Working-Class Interview)

> *JACK: Men have got a hidden agenda when they're friends with females… Certainly when blokes are younger… then they might say that they're being friends with somebody, but ultimately they're after something aren't they*' (Middle-Class Interview)

> *JAMES: I would think that this male friend may say he's a friend, but given half the chance, he'd be in bed with her… That's how I'd feel*' (Working-Class interview)

> *LES: With your female mates, it's only a matter of time before you want to fucking shag them, isn't it*' (Working-Class Interview)

In addition to men demonstrating masculinity via heterosexual prowess, the stealing of a rival's sexual resources was implied by some respondents to increase a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men. Many of their accounts suggested that men compete against one another for sexual resources; even to the point that attempts are made to steal one another's intimate partners. When asked why men poach attached females, Mel referred to men competing for masculine status during relations between one another: '*It's probably the challenge, isn't it*'; '*if he's good at sport… they're probably thinking,*

'I'll get one up on him… by giving his missus one''. Hence, a rival's intimate partner emerged as his Achilles' heel during perceived competitions for masculine status.

This pattern of behaviour emerged as a major concern during one to one interviews with working-class respondents Ted and Grant. Arguably, their accounts implied that a rival's intimate partner constitutes one of the main commodities through which masculine status can be obtained during relations between men: *'It's like a proving thing isn't it… 'I can have any women I want'* (Ted). As such, they spoke of viewing men as a threat to their own intimate relations with women. These and the other respondents also implied that having an intimate partner that rival men – including friends – find attractive can particularly render a man vulnerable: *'There's nothing wrong with having a fantasy… But listen, at the end of the day your back door isn't going to be safe if you've got Megan Fox living under it'* (Grant). Rather than being motivated by heterosexual urges, the notion that some men aim to attract rival men's intimate partners instead of single women infers that this particular behaviour revolves around a desire to increase masculine status during relations between men. Again, this can be linked to the transcendence of vulnerability. For instance, as the practice is likely to be met with aggression, the act of poaching another man's intimate partner could be viewed as a demonstration of physical invulnerability and fearlessness (Anderson, 2001). Moreover, if the woman is enticed away from her partner, this might be perceived to suggest the poacher possesses a higher degree of sexual prowess; this is reminiscent of Anderson's discussion (see Anderson, 2001).

It is important to note that not all of the respondents spoke of being concerned of rival men poaching their intimate partners. Instead, some suggested getting a feeling of pride from the knowledge that other men find their intimate partner attractive: *'If somebody's looking over and admiring your wife… that makes me feel good about myself…that I'm going out with somebody, and she's still attractive to other men'* (George: Working-Class). This might translate to an underlying notion that they 'own' a woman that perceived male rivals wish that they owned. Rather than countering the aforementioned perspective, then, women still emerged as commodities through which men were

suggested to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men. [See Anderson (2001), pages 150 - 156].

Based on the data, this section of the chapter has argued that men verbally assert their heterosexual prowess to hide their vulnerability and gain masculine status. Across the data, those men seen as obtaining the most sexual resources were suggested to be revered during relations between men. Some of the respondents (particularly working-class), provided direct examples of their heterosexual prowess. Emerging as a by-product of these performances was the fact that they objectify women as being the property of men and position them as a male commodity. It also emerged that men compete for sexual resources and this practice was suggested to be employed by some men as a means of increasing their masculine status during relations between men.

8.5 Conclusion

This chapter has focussed on the respondents accounts of masculinity that related to the theme of sexuality. Across the data, a close relationship emerged between men acting 'feminine' via demonstrations of vulnerability and the perception of them being gay. The male roles of husband and father were not seen to consolidate a man's heterosexuality. Gay men were suggested to have a tendency to deliberately gravitate towards femininity, in the sense of a socially pre-established representation linked to the domain of women. In some accounts, a theory was put forward suggesting that gay men perform feminine-typical behaviour to rebel against social constructions of gender and sexuality.

The notion that gay men gravitate to stereotypical femininity is congruent with the assumption - permeating this thesis - that heterosexual men harbour common, relatively stable representations of masculinity and femininity, as influenced by the social environment. In this sense, femininity is seen as the antithesis of masculinity, and behavioural gravitations to either one (whether demonstrated by men or women) are identifiable in the other's absence. Men are, therefore, able to recognise for themselves, and agree with one another, regarding which behaviours constitute demonstrations of one

or the other owing to their contrasting treatments of vulnerability (see chapter six). A further notion emerging from the data pertains to men and women having the freedom to gravitate to either representation. As such, men are not regarded as being inextricably linked to masculinity or women to femininity; and instead, their behaviour could be seen to fluctuate between the two.

Common patterns in the data suggested that men view there to be connections between types of occupational and recreational activities and the socially pre-established realms of the masculine and the feminine. Regardless of their social class, the respondents frequently associated activities requiring physical strength and the transcendence of fear and pain with masculinity. Talk of men and women participating in activities incongruent with this link often led to assumptions about their sexuality. In these instances, being gay was linked to an agent's traversing of the gender boundary and presented as a negative attribute. Although they were arguably more predominant during working-class accounts, examples of this emerged across the data. In contrast, a lot of the data is consistent with a notion that heterosexuality is seen as the most successful form of masculinity by heterosexual men (cf. Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Connell, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Kehily, 2001; Redman et al., 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Plummer, 2006; Dean, 2011).

Across the data it was suggested that heterosexual men are likely to be targeted with homophobic abuse if their practices are recognised as traversing the gender boundary. This is consistent with the literature (see Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Pascoe, 2011). In some accounts, the respondents appeared to blame the victims for not conforming to the dominant notion of successful masculinity, rather than the perpetrators for perpetrating the abuse. Such common patterns of domination and subordination - presented here as being typical among relations between heterosexual men - can be viewed to perpetuate inequalities of power that stretch beyond these relations. For instance, the data concurred with assertions in the literature that men's homophobic behaviour might sometimes result from them fearing their own masculine status being

damaged through associations with gay or effeminate men (see Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011).

Both the working and middle-class respondents suggested that men emphasise their heterosexual prowess as a way of masking their vulnerabilities and increasing their masculine status during relations between men. However, to a greater degree than the middle-class respondents, the working-class men provided more frequent demonstrations of their heterosexuality through the objectification of women as men's sexual commodities. Further accounts implied that heterosexual men constitute rivals whose demonstrations of masculinity can involve them attempting to steal one another's intimate partners. In addition to asserting heterosexual prowess, this strategy could be viewed to constitute a demonstration of physical invulnerability and fearlessness (see Anderson, 2001). As such, intimate partners were sometimes implied to render men vulnerable during relations between men. Such data does not necessarily imply that women are mindless objects that are pushed and pulled between men, as much as it reveals the sense of threat that heterosexual men experience during relations between one another. Therefore, this can be seen as a further example of the patterns of rivalry, domination and subordination that permeate these relations, as discussed in chapters six and seven.

Chapter 9

Physical Aggression

This chapter focuses on physical aggression. Within the data, connections emerged between men's notions of male bodies and their ideas regarding masculinity. Men were frequently suggested to equate large, muscular physiques and strength with successful demonstrations of masculinity. Sporting skills also repeatedly emerged as important factors. Physical disability, on the other hand, was suggested to limit men's ability to appear masculine. However, regardless of physiological variances, physical aggression emerged across the data as a common strategy that men use to demonstrate their masculinity.

During the interviews, all talk of physical aggression referred to potentially serious violence during micro social relations between men. Neither the respondents nor I raised the subject of roughhousing/play fighting. So, although the literature suggests that these behaviours are common among male friendship groups and even likely to relate to more serious forms of physical aggression (Boulton, 1992; Schafer & Smith, 1996), they will not be featured within this chapter. Also, despite providing lengthy and detailed accounts regarding the aggression of men as individuals, none of the respondents referred to physical aggression on a macro level, such as state or institutionalised violence. As such, I am assuming that none of them viewed there to be any connection between micro and macro forms of violence, and this chapter will not make any attempt to relate the two.

When discussing physical aggression, the respondents made no indication that they were referring to anything other than relations between white, heterosexual men. The data could be seen to pertain to white, heterosexual men as both the victims and perpetrators of physical aggression. Neither was any indication made regarding physical aggression as being likely to be perpetrated by men of a particular social class towards men of a different class. As such, it emerged that physical aggression, as a strategy for

demonstrating masculinity, results in common patterns of domination and subordination among men within the same social category.

The chapter will be divided into four sections. The first (nature versus nurture) will look at how men's common patterns of physical aggression were more frequently attributed to social influence than biological essentialism. Men were generally suggested to dislike and fear physical aggression, but they demonstrated it to appear masculine during relations between men. The following section of the chapter (relations between men perpetuating patterns of physical aggression) will look at contradictions the respondents made when referring to their desires to avoid violence at the same time as policing their friends' behaviours within all-male domains. Based on their accounts, the respondents themselves could be seen to play a role in the perpetuation of this practice as a necessary means of transcending vulnerability. The third section of the chapter (regaining masculine status and displacing vulnerability) will look at data suggesting that men's demonstrations of physical aggression are congruent with a common notion of successful masculinity, provided they are targeted at men and not women. Men's violence towards women emerged in the data as being rooted in relations between men. Rather than men's attempts to increase their masculine status in the eyes of other men, men's physical aggression towards women might constitute the displacement of vulnerability. The final section of the chapter (factors which impact on men's demonstrations of physical aggression) will focus on a connection that emerged between men's use of physical aggression as a strategy to demonstrate masculinity and their social skills, physique and age.

9.1 Nature versus nurture

Consistent with the literature discussed in chapter three, the respondents implied that men demonstrate common patterns of physical aggression. Like their transcendence of affectivity and demonstrations of heterosexual prowess, the respondents accounts predominantly linked men's common patterns of physical aggression to the influence of the social environment. However, some of the men's statements occasionally implied biological essentialism. For instance, during his one to one interview, Paul attributed

men's tendencies to physically retaliate in the face of threat to '*age-old instincts*', and spoke of looking at animals in order to explain the behaviours of humans. As these explanations were incongruent with the majority of their accounts on this issue, it is possible they were influenced by essentialist arguments that are dominant within society and tend to have a common-sense appeal, as suggested by Taylor et al. (2009).

Evidence of physical aggression being a common pattern of men's behaviour has led to theories of a biological connection (Graham & Wells, 2002). However, by ignoring influences of the social environment (Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001; McHale et al., 2001; Errante, 2003), they fail to explain why violence is demonstrated by some men and not others (Hood-Williams, 2001). Other limitations regarding biological essentialist theories of men's physical aggression were discussed during the literature review. These included the failure to explain the discriminate nature of men's aggression and their tendency to target weaker individuals (Mullender, 1996); testosterone levels being the same in violent and non-violent men (Clare, 2001); increases in testosterone levels being found to follow rather precede violent episodes (Cohen, 1998; Clare, 2001); and failures to identify a connection between pre-natal testosterone levels and a masculinising effect on male brain structuring during studies with humans (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005).

Within the data, essentialist accounts were few in comparison to accounts which related men's physical aggression to the influence of the social environment. Moreover, respondents, such as Paul, contradicted their essentialist talk when divulging greater detail. In particular, talk of feeling '*as if you'd let yourself down*' on those occasions when a rival's physical aggression had not been met with the like referred to the maintenance of a masculine identity rather than physical retaliation being an instinctive response. In every interview, examples could be found which implied that men, during relations between men, struggle to maintain their masculine status via demonstrations of physical invulnerability, as demonstrated in the following quotes:

> *JACL: I would have never walked away... I would have had a fight with somebody... just to save face* (Middle-Class Interview)

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> *RICHARD: There are times when I have, despite the person being a lot bigger than me... and physically stronger than me, I've not backed down... and won't back down... And there's been times when I know that it's somebody that I could just brush off..., and I've walked away... because there's no status there to fight for... And there's that thing about, he's not worth bothering with... because you wouldn't prove anything... If you thumped them and they ended up on the floor, you wouldn't be any more of a man for doing it* (Middle-Class Interview)

According to my participants, the threat of physical aggression invokes a man's fear and desire to escape to safety rather than an involuntary demonstration of rage. Retaliative demonstrations of physical aggression frequently emerged as reluctant behaviours aimed at avoiding the expected ridicule of friends and other men in response to them exposing vulnerability: '*You want them to see you as masculine... So even if you're scared you'll still not want to back down... You wouldn't want your mates to see you back down*' (Jed; Middle-Class Focus Group 1). This is consistent with the argument of Phillips (2007), that rather than men's common patterns of physical aggression being innate, they emerge from social pressures which perpetuate the dominant, socially pre-established representation of masculinity. In this sense, those men behaving in ways which are visibly distinguishable from this representation tend to be viewed as abnormal and punished by the violence of other men (Phillips, 2007).

Most of the respondents claimed that, unless – owing to his size – the rival was too great an adversary, they would rather face him in conflict than appear vulnerable to other men. In this sense, social pressure could be viewed to overpower men's urges to avoid violence. Again, such accounts were made in both the focus group and one to one interviews. As an example of this, the following excerpts are accounts made by Andrew during both of his interviews:

> *INTERVIEWER: How's a man likely to feel if another man physically threatens him?*

ANDREW: You would feel scared... That would be my automatic reaction... Again, though, I think... it's not seen as the way for a man to be scared in that kind of situation... It's not seen to be masculine to be scared in that situation... but... that's nature... If you walked away, then you would feel emasculated... because I'd say that society's perception of that kind of confrontation would be that a masculine bloke would stand up to the guy that's threatening him... and see him off kind of thing... ... whereas, Somebody who managed to evade the situation and get away... would probably be seen as more feminine (Middle-Class Interview)

ANDREW: I think that if you did walk away from somebody the same size or bigger than you... purely out of fear... if you walked away out of fear... then you would feel less masculine
RICHARD: Oh, you would, there's no doubt about it (Middle-Class Focus Group 2)

Sometimes it was suggested that men who expose physical vulnerability face difficulty in regaining their lost status in the eyes of other men: '*If somebody ever came across and... gets aggressive with you, and you back down... it takes a lot of time to get back*' (Ted: Working-Class Interview). The knowledge that lost status is difficult to regain might, therefore, increase the social pressure men experience to gravitate to a common representation of successful masculinity.

Consistent with my data, some authors have argued that men are socialised with an understanding that physical aggression is a masculine practice (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Carlo et al., 1999; Benjamin, 2001; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006; Phillips, 2007). The socially influenced notion that physical aggression constitutes a masculine, not feminine, quality has been identified in children as young as pre-school age (Tallandini, 2004; Giles & Heyman, 2005). Furthermore, in comparison to women, men have been found to demonstrate more positive attitudes towards physical aggression (Hennessy & Wiesenthal, 2001). Authors

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have suggested the likelihood of a relationship between these positive attitudes and men's patterns of violence (Carlo et al., 1999; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). However, the respondents' accounts in this study suggested that there was not a relationship between men's positive attitudes and patterns of violence. This finding will be discussed later in the chapter.

Emerging from the data, as discussed in chapter six, was the notion that the family constitutes an institution which helps to perpetuate the socially pre-established representation of masculinity. Particularly in relation to men's common patterns of physical aggression, data positioned the father as a key source of direct socialisation. Despite the respondents claiming that fatherhood was not an identity through which they derived any personal sense of masculinity, fathers were suggested to guide their sons to transcend vulnerability as a means of demonstrating their own masculinity. For instance, some of the data suggested that fathers influence their sons to demonstrate fearlessness and physical invulnerability during peer group relations: '*Your father drummed it into you and said… 'If he hits you… you hit him back*'' (Mel; Working-Class Interview) and '*I think that some parents positively encourage it in their kids… certain blokes… encourage their lad to go and bray somebody*' (Stan; Working-Class Interview). Some of the respondents also spoke of being rewarded by their fathers for transcending vulnerability during physical rivalry between boys. The following example of this was provided by Richard:

> *RICHARD: I was once coming home from school… and a kid had been picking on me… and he came and he was shoving and pushing and shouting at me… and I pushed him away and he got hold of me and smacked me straight in the eye… and it was a good one and put me on my backside… And I got up and I leathered him, and it was just in blind rage… And I went home and I thought, oh God, I've got a black eye, and I'll get it when I get in from my dad… And I walked in and my dad said to me, 'What have you done?'… I said, 'Oh, I had a fight at school'… I said, 'This kid had been picking on me for ages and I just couldn't take it anymore'… And he said, 'Right'… He said, 'Well you know what this*

means don't you', and I thought, 'Yeah, upstairs in my bedroom and no pocket money'. But he went in is pocket and he got this pound note out, and it was the first time I'd ever seen a pound note, never mind had one… I used to get ten pence a week pocket money... And he said, 'Well done lad', and he gave me a quid (Middle-Class Interview)

This finding is consistent with literature suggesting that heterosexual fathers make more of a focussed effort than mothers to masculinise their sons (Kane, 2006). They are, furthermore, suggested to take more seriously the masculinising of their sons than the femininising of their daughters (Kane, 2006). Some of the respondents spoke of following in their father's footsteps by impressing on their own sons the notion that, to be masculine, they should transcend vulnerability. For example, middle-class respondent Jed – during his one to one interview – stated: '*I mean, if it was just a grazed knee, you don't want your son blubbing, do you... But with a girl you'd be more naturally inclined to protect them and... make them feel better*'. Similarly, working-class respondent, Grant, described parenting his son to be less compassionate and love-dependent than his daughter. During his one to one interview, he spoke of holding hands with his daughter but not with his son, and sitting her on his knee for a cuddle but, instead: '*thumping him on the arm and him thumping me back*'.

In summary, men's common patterns of physical aggression were predominantly linked by the respondents to the influence of the social environment. Biological essentialist explanations were few in comparison, and were contradicted by the same respondents who had provided them during their more detailed accounts of the subject. Across the data, physical aggression emerged as a behaviour that men, during relations between men, perform when their masculine status is threatened by the exposure of physical and emotional vulnerability. As such, social pressures influencing men to employ violence were suggested to overpower their biological urges to avoid it. Although fatherhood was not presented as a means of demonstrating masculinity, it emerged as a role through which men socialise their sons to perpetuate the dominant masculine norm.

9.2 Relations between men perpetuating patterns of physical aggression

Across the data, men's patterns of physical aggression were linked to their policing of one another's behaviour. Based on their accounts, the respondents themselves emerged as agents who play a role in perpetuating the dominant masculine norm. They equivocally referred to disliking physical aggression whilst at the same time pressuring their friends to demonstrate physical and emotional vulnerability.

Respondents, both working and middle-class, demonstrated negative views towards physical aggression; for example:

> *BEN: I don't want to fight, you know what I mean... I don't want to fight with folk who are bigger than me and I don't want to fight with folk who are smaller than me... I just don't want to fight* (Middle-Class Interview)

> *TED: Why get into a pub brawl where theres glasses, knives... you know... You might even win the fight... But have you won, when you've got a slash down your face with ten stitches… And even if you haven't got a scar, all the time you're thinking to yourself... I'm going in this pub, I wonder if his mates are in tonight, waiting for me now?* (Working-Class Interview)

Despite expressing these negative viewpoints, the respondents presented contradictory accounts saying they would ridicule friends who showed fear by backing down during physical confrontations with rival men. For instance, when I asked them how they would react if one of their friends backed down from an aggressive rival, Jed and Ben stated: '*I'd probably 'take the mick' out of him*' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview); '*I'd find it necessary to take the piss*' (Ben; Middle-Class Interview). Moreover, the respondents spoke of men feeling a loss of status at times when they had failed to mask fear with physical aggression: '*You'd feel a bit inferior... You'd feel a bit weak. You'd feel like you*

were running away from them... I'm scared of these guys... and I'm running away (James; Working-Class Interview); '*You always feel like a bit of a coward and that you've let yourself down*' (Ted; Working-Class Interview); '*You feel like your masculinity has been challenged*' (Richard; Middle-Class Interview).

In this sense, social pressure to demonstrate behaviours likely to get them recognised as 'masculine' in the eyes of other men were suggested to overpowered their personal dislikes of physical aggression: '*If you were with your mates you'd definitely be more likely to get into a fight... because you want to appear masculine... you don't want to let some man emasculate you*' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview). Hence, their verbal practices suggested that, in contrast to their individual negative attitudes towards physical aggression, they each play a role in perpetuating it as a valuable masculine quality; this is reflected in the literature (see Graham & Wells, 2002).

It is possible, however, that the respondents voiced their dislike of physical aggression in order to present themselves in a more socially desirable way. Many of them did, after all, speak of their own past demonstrations of it (for examples, see Richard's account in 9.1: *Nature versus Nurture* and John's account in 9.4.3: *Age*). The fact that, without me asking them, the respondents spoke of occasions in which they had emerged victorious from skirmishes with rival men suggests that they were not that unashamed, and maybe even proud, of these experiences. Nevertheless, rather than these accounts implying that they went out looking for fights, the respondents demonstrated their masculinity by presenting themselves as willing and able to stand their ground with aggressive male rivals. Therefore, even if the men were less adverse to physical aggression than their accounts suggested, it still emerged as a behaviour that increases, rather than diminishes, a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men. Some men were even suggested to instigate fights with perceived rivals as a deliberate attempt to increase their masculine status among men via the transcendence of vulnerability, as demonstrated in the following excerpts:

INTEVIEWER: And what do you think he'd be wanting to prove there then... if a man's wanting to start a fight?

JACK: ... That he's a bigger man than he is... Maybe because he feels inadequate... he might be using that sort of behaviour to shield his own vulnerabilities (Middle-Class Focus Group 1)

INTERVIEWER: And what do you think that they're trying to achieve from that [fighting]*, then?... Is it just enjoyment?*

TED: ... Err... No, it's to be... the big swinging dick around town... Young pride... You know what I mean? A lot of them like to do it, you know, and then when they get older... You hear about it now don't you: 'God, he was rock hard when he was younger... He was a hard bastard' (Working-Class Interview)

As suggested by some of the respondents, a negative aspect of this type of behaviour was the notion that once a man gains a reputation for being a '*hard bastard*', rival men want to fight him to aggrandise their own masculine status:

LES: But, in some ways, you can get provoked into getting a reputation, can't you

ROSS: Well that's what we did. We ended up getting one –

LES: And if, just say for arguments sake, something fucking kicked off and you brayed fuck out of somebody... there'd be somebody out there who'd hear about it and they would feel that they had to bray you... to make them harder than you, you know what I mean –

ROSS: Yeah, that's what it was, that's what it was... you'd have one fight, and they'd get their friends, and then they'd get their friends –

GRANT: It's a long issue, you know what I mean (Working-Class Focus Group 1)

In contrast, those men actively avoiding physical aggression during relations between men were suggested to be viewed as demonstrating emotional and physical vulnerability: '*You wouldn't want to walk away from something like that in front of your mates. I think that they'd know that you'd 'bottled it', and they'd say so*' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview);

'*If you do that, you're going to get the piss taken out of you*' (Ben; Middle-Class Interview). It emerged that such men would be likely to lose masculine status in the eyes of other men: '*They'd always think, 'What a coward''* (Ted; Working-Class Interview); '*They would view you as less of a man*'; '*You're not the alpha male and you're just... a little coward*' (Nik; Working-Class Interview). Previous authors have also documented that men demonstrate negative opinions of those men who avoid physical conflict, thus perpetuating physical invulnerability as an important tenet of masculinity (Anderson, 2001; Graham & Wells, 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Phillips, 2007). Therefore, this is consistent with the notion that men's common patterns of physical aggression are motivated by their individual desires to avoid subordination as opposed to a collective desire to perpetrate violence (Graham & Wells, 2002).

An important point emerging from the data was the notion that, in the eyes of a woman, this strategy of avoidance would be likely to increase a man's status. Hence, in many of the interviews, women emerged as the complete opposite to men regarding their attitudes towards physical aggression: '*I think that more women would want you to avoid it... and they don't want you fighting*' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview); '*If you're with you're wife you're not going to win any prizes for getting into a fight*' (Paul; Middle-Class Interview); '*I once got into a fight when I was out with my wife... Now, if that had happened when we were all out... I'd have been treated like a hero... But she was livid*' (John; Middle-Class Focus Group 1). However, an alternative viewpoint was provided by Ted. He presented women as more being fickle, suggesting that if a man was to retaliate with violence and win, '*you'd come in a hero and she'd be all over you*'. However, if his retaliation was to end in defeat, along with his physical injuries, he was suggested to be viewed with disgrace: '*Why did you go outside? Why didn't you just give in to them and say let's go?*' From this different perspective, a man's assumptions regarding the socialised expectations of women emerged as a further pressure motivating him to transcend physical invulnerability.

This section of the chapter has identified a contradiction in the way the respondents demonstrated negative views towards physical aggression but spoke of policing their

male friends to transcend vulnerability during relations between men. Across the data, men were suggested to afford masculine status to those men transcending vulnerability via demonstrations of physical aggression, but to ridicule those perceived to expose vulnerability by actively avoiding it. According to some accounts, the presence of women can deter men from attempting to maintain their masculine status via physical aggression.

9.3 Regaining masculine status and displacing vulnerability

Additional to retaliatory violence, physical aggression emerged as a common strategy that men use to rescue their masculine status if it is perceived to have been rendered vulnerable in the eyes of other men. The respondents implied that men instigate fights with those perceived to have diminished their masculine status in a non-physical way. For instance, losers during competitions for sexual resources were implied to use this strategy as a means of forcibly stealing back their status from the victorious male. In particular, this was suggested to be a common response to having one's intimate partner stolen by a rival male: '*I suppose that some men might want to deck the man she'd run off with... just to prove he wasn't more masculine than them*' (Jed; Middle-Class Focus Group 1); '*If he then actually... physically attacked that man and bettered him... that would be one way of getting your image back up there*' (James; Working Class Interview).

Men were also suggested to use physical aggression as a means of retaliating for what constitute very mundane threats to their masculine status. Ben, for instance, spoke of men becoming irrationally aggressive when another man has accidentally spilled their drink. Another example was provided by Stan, speaking about an incident that had happened when he was walking home from the pub with a friend:

> *STAN: It can be the most mundane, trivial things that make them feel that way, you know what I mean... like spilling a drink in the boozer in the past... Anything can fire them up... Me and Daz: a lad I used to knock about with... It'd have been about three o clock in the morning... in good spirits; you know what I mean... We were off for a kebab, walking down the road... This guy walks between us...*

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shoved between us and just walked past... I mean, I never even broke my stride, and I just carried on talking like; you know what I mean... I turned round and Daz isn't there... Daz is in front braying [beating] this lad up, who'd barged between us... you know what I mean [Laughs]... Just for walking past... I don't even think the lad had particularly barged past on purpose... he'd just sort of cut through... He might have stumbled, but he'd just cut through the middle of us, you know what I mean... It never even entered my head that he was trying to be funny or anything like that... But Daz was straight onto him...Knocked fuck out of him (Working-Class Interview)

Accounts like the one above contrast the notion that men reluctantly use physical aggression to preserve their masculine status simply on those occasions it becomes threatened. Instead they imply that certain men demonstrate acts of violence after very little provocation. Such men were presented as being paranoid in the sense that they perceive the acts of other men, however impersonal or accidental, as being deliberate, personal attacks against them. This point was emphasised by Ben:

BEN: If someone knocks your drink over... so what?... so what? Do you know what I mean, it's like... obviously you expect an apology... but expect an apology, don't... fight over it... [...] And there's folk who get angry ... 'Go buy me another fucking beer'... Wow, wow, wow, do you know what I mean... It's like... they're mental (Middle-Class Interview)

Data implying that some men become aggressive after little or no provocation can be seen to correspond with the aforementioned notion that relations between men are fragile and permeated by tension and the sense of threat; furthermore, that this threat emanates from men (white/heterosexual) viewing one another as rivals locked in competitions for masculine status. This picture can be seen to emerge across the data regardless of whether the respondents' view men's demonstrations of physical aggression as the product of willingness or reluctance.

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In contrast, tension was not apparent in the data regarding relations between men and women. For instance, when Stan was asked if his friend would have behaved the same had the person pushing past been a woman, he replied: '*Certainly not with Daz... he wasn't that way inclined... So that was definitely a masculinity thing for Daz*'. A similar answer was also provided when asked whether aggression would be demonstrated if it was a woman who spilt a man's drink: '*Not with most blokes, no... Not with anybody that I've ever known*' (Stan, Working-Class Interview). Many of the respondents were, however, aware that physical aggression occurs during relations between men and women. All such examples referred to men demonstrating physical aggression towards intimate partners: '*My father used to knock my mother about a bit, so I know that it happens*' (Stan; Working-Class Interview). In relation to this distinction emerging from the data, the literature also suggests that men's violence towards women is less often on public display than their violence towards men (Graham & Wells, 2002). Police statistics and ethnographic evidence suggest that men are twice as likely as women to be the victims of men's physical aggression within the public sphere (Graham & Wells, 2002; Hall, 2002; British Crime Survey 2006-07; Nayak, 2006). Alternatively, men's violence towards women is documented as being more predominant within the private sphere (British Crime Survey 2006-07).

During the interviews that broached this subject, the respondents suggested that men's demonstrations of physical aggression towards women exposed their vulnerability, thus damaging their masculine status in the eyes of other men. The notion that men should not show violence towards women was suggested to be perpetuated through socialisation: '*Its how you get brought up, isn't it – You don't hit a bird*' (Ross, Working-Class Focus Group 1); '*You don't take it from men, but you take it from women ... And that was the way I was brought up*'; '*You never ever, ever, ever, ever hit a woman*' (Richard, Middle-Class Focus Group 2). In one example, Paul spoke about witnessing a male friend demonstrate his masculinity by not fighting back and actually allowing his girlfriend to physically assault him in a public setting:

> *PAUL: It's probably becoming more common for women to hit men... and, of course, a lot of men, then, will not fight back... you know, and that's what happened in this situation... and she just gave him a good old pasting... the guy just let her do it and didn't report it or anything*
> INTERVIEWER: Why do you think that he let her do it then?
> *PAUL: I suppose with a lot of men, it's drilled into them... you don't hit a woman*
> (Middle-Class Interview)

To recap, the respondents suggested that, when targeting rival men, men's physical aggression demonstrates emotional and physical invulnerability and, therefore, increases their masculine status within exclusive male settings. In contrast, men's demonstrations of physical aggression towards women were suggested to diminish their masculine status in the eyes of other men. In this sense, the data implied that a different motivation underlies these patterns of behaviour.

According to the literature, as discussed in chapter three, men's violence towards women can be linked to their struggles to maintain masculine status during relations between men (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). From this perspective, a man's experience of vulnerability arises from his relations with other men and is projected in the form of aggression onto intimate partners as these are perceived to pose less of a threat to his physical and social wellbeing (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). However, not all of the literature links male violence towards women to men's relations between men (Benson et al., 2003; Connell, 2008 [1995]). For instance, Benson et al. (2003) situated it as a strategy through which individual men – particularly those with fewer social and material resources – maintain their dominance over women. Although this study gathered no first-hand accounts of male violence towards women, or enough data to discuss the motivations behind it, the respondents' accounts were consistent with the theory of Hearn and Whitehead (2006). They expressed a perception that male aggression towards women constitutes the displacement of vulnerability, occurring when men are too fearful to target those men perceived to have diminished their masculine status. For example:

> *TOM: He'll end up going out of the pub with his tail between his legs, coz everyone will start laughing at him, and he can't hack it... He'll probably go home and kick fuck out of his dog, or bray his missus, if he's got one... or something like that; you know what I mean... Because his missus will be used to it... and that's how it goes* (Working-Class Focus Group 2)

Emerging from this section of the chapter was the notion that relations between men are often plagued by tension arising from them perceiving one another as rivals competing for masculine status. Again, this implies that masculinity is not an intrinsic aspect of men's every identity, but instead, an esteemed quality that is won or lost during relations between men. Rather than being demonstrated through contradicting identities, the data suggests that masculinity is recognised when men demonstrate the transcendence of physical and emotional vulnerability. As a result, men were suggested to demonstrate physical aggression towards perceived rivals who were seen to have challenged their masculine status. In contrast, men's violence towards women was distinguished as being detrimental to their masculine status. Instead, such violence emerged as being a strategy through which men displace the vulnerability arising from relations between men onto a weaker target. The next section of the chapter turns to factors that impact on men's demonstrations of physical aggression.

9.4 Factors which impact on men's demonstrations of physical aggression

There were a number of factors that were suggested to have an impact on men's attitudes regarding physical aggression. This section will be divided into the three sub-sections: social skills, physique and age. The section will look at how each of these emerged in the data as factors which can have an effect on a man's likelihood of employing physical aggression as a strategy of demonstrating masculinity via the transcendence of vulnerability.

9.4.1　　Social skills

Although none of them claimed that physical aggression is exclusive to a particular group of men, the working and middle-class respondents suggested that it is more frequently used by those with limited social skills. For instance, when asked what men are trying to achieve from making other men fear them, Paul stated: '*Well, I think that their communication skills are so bad that they can't talk their way out of an issue or talk or try to... reason out an issue, so they use their physicality and let their fists do the talking*' (Middle-Class Interview). In this example, men's physical aggression emerged as a strategy they use to compensate for an inability to use verbal skills to secure themselves during relations between men. From this perspective, the respondents equated a man's lack of social skills with his limited ability to transcend vulnerability. This connection was also expressed more directly by some of the respondents: '*They bully people because they're quite vulnerable themselves... they've got inadequacies or personal hang-ups about themselves... and they bully people as a shield... so that they don't get flack*' (Jack; Middle-Class Interview). Again, talk of men '*shielding*' themselves from the '*flack*' of other men referred to them interacting as rivals, competing to expose one another's vulnerabilities and simultaneously demonstrating their own invulnerability.

Despite identifying a connection between physical aggression and limited social skills, neither the working nor middle-class respondents spoke of social class as a being factor impacting on men's demonstrations of physical aggression. Based on the literature reviewed within chapter three, it is possible to speak of a connection between social skills and social class. For instance, owing to factors such as less parental encouragement with education (Gorman, 2003; McDowell, 2003), greater levels of peer pressure to resist education (Archer et al., 2001; Reay; 2002), poorer schooling (Kosut, 2006), and limited finances through which to fund higher education (Cohen, 2005), more working-class men seem likely to have limited social skills than middle-class men (Gorman, 2003; Kosut, 2006).

9.4.2   Physique

As mentioned within chapter eight, male physicality emerged in the data as an important marker of masculinity. This was particularly evident when the respondents spoke of smaller men's bodies acting as obstacles to how they are perceived by others in relation to the physical transcendence of vulnerability. This notion relates to previous literature which suggests that the body impacts on a man's capabilities to play sport and ward away negative attention (Messerschmidt, 1999; Forrest, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000).

The respondents suggested that height and stature are important factors for men; taller, heavier-built men being considered more masculine than shorter, slightly-built men. During the humour and camaraderie that developed during the second middle-class focus group, Graham provided an example of this:

> *INTERVIEWER: Are there any physical characteristics that might help or hinder a man being considered masculine?*
> *GRAHAM: Body size, definitely... I've never felt comfortable with being very small, and that's one of the reasons why I like living in Hong Kong, because I'm big there* (Middle-Class Focus Group 2).

Graham also referred to his physical size during his one to one interview:

> *GRAHAM: I've never had the physical build to sort of come over as a macho guy... Certainly, when I was younger I was always the seven stone weakling... not the fifteen stone guy who had a very large physical presence* (Middle-Class Interview).

Some of the respondents even spoke of having personal perceptions of short men being less masculine than themselves: '*Very short guys... you don't think that they are as masculine as you, even if it's just like a few inches shorter... You don't want to think like that, but it's something you do think*' (Jed; Middle-Class Interview); '*If they're not tall, you think, 'Little shit, who's he talking to?*' (Ted; Working-Class Interview).

Furthermore, the same respondents spoke of experiencing threat to their masculine status when in the company of men taller than themselves: '*Certainly, if I'm talking to someone who's six-foot-five and they're towering over me… you feel… I wouldn't say intimidated, but you certainly feel like… a little bit competitive towards them*' (Jed); '*It's because they're looking down at you … they're already a step ahead of you, kid. [Right] Coz you're looking up and you're thinking, 'God, they're tall buggers'. You know what I mean? They've got the power*' (Ted).

Respondents, such as Paul and Ted, claimed that height is so important that it determines which men are victorious when competing for higher status occupations: '*I bet if you had a percentage… they'd be a lot more taller men more confident and more successful in business… than the smaller man*' (Ted; Working-Class Interview). Again, this is consistent with the literature. Light and Kirk (2000) suggested that the height, stature and posture of men's bodies during social interactions communicate, at a subconscious level, powerful social and cultural meanings. According to Forrest (2000) and Cohane and Pope (2001), taller, earlier maturing boys display higher levels of self-confidence and popularity among their peers than shorter, later developers. Moreover, height is suggested to increase a man's chances of being identified as a leader, and positively impact on his stratification within masculine hierarchies (Forrest, 2000; Plummer, 2006).

Many of the respondents spoke of a link between the use of physical aggression and men who are short in height. This was directly attributed to shorter men feeling animosity towards taller men:

> *BEN: You get more anger from little people… You know, they look up at you and think… 'You're bigger than me, so I'm going to leather you* (Middle-Class Interview).

> *JOE: Going back to the masculinity thing, I'd say that smaller blokes seem to want to show that they're big and hard […] You seem to get a load of lads with chips on their shoulders when they are small…One of my old mates, like… he's*

got a bit of a chip on his shoulder and... he'll act up towards the bigger lads (Working-Class Interview).

When asked why they thought short men behave more aggressively, the respondents referred to them being aware that a lack of height exposed them to other men's negative perceptions regarding their masculinity. Ted suggested that because their bodies appeared more child-like than manly, it rendered them targets of anti-masculine remarks: '*'You can't go on this ride because you're too small'... 'You're not getting served in this pub without any ID'... 'We don't do that size shirt'...'Go into the kiddies department and you might be able to get some pants that fit you'*' (Working-Class Interview). Referring to it as '*the small man syndrome*', Ted claimed that short men's physical aggression is a direct rebellion against their bodies rendering them vulnerable during social interactions:

> *Ted: They're always getting pulled down... So then you get the aggressive small guy: 'Alright mate.' 'Who are you talking to? Who are you looking at? I can take you, you know... I'm not scared of you', and before you know it they're rolling up their sleeves. [Right, yeah, yeah] Because they're a small person, they've got to show they're as hard as you, or that they're harder... because they've always been the underdog* (Working-Class Interview)

John, also referred to '*men suffering from small man syndrome*', stating: '*I think that they're over-compensating for the fact that they in themselves may think that... they're not truly... a man*' (Middle-Class Interview). Similarly, Jed claimed that their aggressive behaviour results from them '*over-compensating*' because '*maybe they feel a bit more feminine*' (Middle-Class Interview). Joe also spoke of their aggression being used to '*compensate*', '*Just so they don't feel insecure*' (Working-Class Interview). Standard dictionary definitions of the term 'compensate' include: 'to counterbalance' and 'to supply an equivalent' (New Penguin English Dictionary, 2001). In this sense, by exposing the emotional and physical vulnerabilities of men whose bodies appear more masculine, and simultaneously demonstrating their own invulnerability, shorter men might be gravitating to the same representation of masculinity.

As stated above, the data linked men's bodies to their demonstrations of physical aggression. However, the respondents' accounts did not imply there to be a link between physical aggression and men whose bodies are large, muscular and potentially advantageous for fighting. On the contrary, their accounts implied them having experience that it is those men with bodies that are likely to limit their fighting abilities that make the most demonstrations of physical aggression. In this sense, the pattern of behaviour emerged as something that is connected to men's bodies but ultimately motivated by social factors; namely the will of men to appear physically and emotionally invulnerable as a means of maintaining masculine status in the eyes of other men. The data, therefore, referred to those men whose self-image, as influenced by their physical appearance and its effect on their social interactions, feel that they must work harder to meet the dominant masculine norm, as explored in chapter six.

9.4.3   Age

As suggested in chapter six on the Dominant Masculine Norm, the respondents spoke of feeling a decreasing need to transcend vulnerability as they get older. In some cases, their diminishing physical abilities were given as a reason for them feeling less willing to get into physical conflict with rival men. In particular, working-class respondents spoke of avoiding physical confrontations with rival men much younger than themselves owing to the effects age has on the body:

> *MEL: I'm fifty-four… so if it happened to be a bloke that was twenty or thirty-four… a lot bigger than me... you'd try to talk your way out of it* […] *As you get older you can't do it the same, can you?... You can't start wrestling with a fellow who's half your age… You realise you're not invincible* (Working-Class Interview)

> *GRANT: I'm not as quick [Laughs] So, you've got to think a little bit, especially… messing with younger… if a younger person came up to you… you've got to think*

about what you was like when you were in your twenties... I wouldn't have wanted to fight me in my twenties... I'd rather fight me now that I'm fifty... that's all I'm going to say (Working-Class Interview)

LES: When you get to a certain age you know you're going to come fucking second... and there's going to be some young fucking buck that's going to knock your fucking head off (Working-Class Focus Group 1)

According to the above accounts, then, men's bodies play a role in the ways they are able to demonstrate their masculinity. Younger men's bodies emerged as commodities facilitating their campaigns for masculine status during relations between men; age emerging as a factor which brings about a gradual loss of this commodity. This relates to literature suggesting that men's bodies are inextricably linked to masculinity (Messerschmidt, 1993; Messerschmidt, 1999).

In addition to physical factors such as speed, stamina and strength, Grant also spoke of internal changes relating to his decreasing demonstrations of physical aggression. With comments like: '*I'm less fired up these days*' and '*My adrenaline doesn't run as fast*', he referred to a physical concomitant effect in the sense of changes to his glandular secretions. However, during this account, Grant also referred to changes in how he processed information as a factor differentiating his old and new patterns of behaviour. For instance, his past aggressive tendencies were attributed to him thinking, and not letting go, of thoughts that he should always retaliate to threats made against him. Linking this to the research questions, it might relate to the aforementioned pressure the respondents' spoke of regarding men's attempts to maintain their masculine status via a transcendence of physical invulnerability:

INTERVIEWER: So, say if someone's threatened you and you walk away from it... how are you likely to feel then?
GRANT: It bothered me more when I was younger... I can let it go away now... I used to get into allsorts of bother driving the car... driving the car, I was fighting

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in Leeds... getting into allsorts of pickles... because of the masculine...
aggressive... As I've got older, now I just think, 'Whatever, you knob-head'...
then ten minutes, five minutes down the road: it's gone... it's over with... I don't
stay angry now... I used to stay angry for a long time, but I don't stay angry now
(Working-Class Interview)

Alternatively, middle-class respondents, such as John and Jack, spoke of now avoiding such skirmishes owing to increased '*responsibilities*' and '*priority changes*'. For instance, Jack spoke of the threat of loosing his job: '*At the end of the day... I've walked away* [from a fight] *and I know that I'm still going to have an income... ... Prior to being in the police force I'd have never walked away from a fight*'. John also presented this as the main reason for changes in his behaviour:

JOHN: I went down to the police station and got a conviction... for basically
beating them both up... which it was completely wrong of me to do... but they'd
started something off... I would never do that now... because I've got a conviction
that might have some kind of affect on my future career. I mean the school know
about it, you've got to let them know... But I would never do that now (Middle-Class Interview)

In this way, John and Jack verbally attributed their unwillingness to fight to external situations. In other words, they did not claim to have diminishing physical capabilities or to have become more fearful of such conflict. Their accounts also suggested them being very successful regarding past demonstrations of masculinity via retaliatory demonstrations of physical aggression. As such, their verbal practices enabled them to simultaneously excuse themselves from physically transcending vulnerability while maintaining their masculine status via what had emerged as a common representation among all the respondents.

Across the data, connections emerged between men demonstrating their masculinity through physical aggression and having limited social skills or bodies that are under

average height and build. The respondents' accounts implied that men's competitions for masculine status often involve them attempting to expose one another's vulnerability. Physical aggression was suggested to be employed more frequently by those men unable to shield their vulnerability with verbal skills or through their physical appearance. Increasing age emerged in the data as a factor that reduces men's likelihood of demonstrating their masculinity through physical aggression. Whereas the working-class men tended to link this to their diminishing physical abilities, the middle-class men tended to link it to their increased responsibilities and priority changes.

9.5   Conclusion

This chapter addressed the way in which physical aggression emerged as a common strategy that men use to demonstrate their masculinity in accordance with the dominant masculine norm. The data predominantly linked men's patterns of physical aggression to the influence of the social environment. Those respondents providing essentialist-typical statements contradicted these when discussing men's physical aggression in greater detail. Even when the data referred to a link between physical aggression and men's bodies, it was still the social environment that emerged as being the key motivation. Hence, men with bodies seen to hinder their abilities to appear masculine in accordance with the socially pre-established representation were suggested to use physical aggression as a compensatory behaviour. Emerging across the data was the notion that, as individuals, men tend to fear physical aggression and experience an urge to avoid it. During their group relations, however, men were suggested to pressure one another to counter these personal interests and urges and engage in physical aggression.

According to the data, men perceived to expose vulnerability by demonstrating a fear of physical aggression tend to lose masculine status and risk being ridiculed by men, including their friends. Lost masculine status was said to be hard to regain. This is consistent with previous literature (Graham & Wells, 2002; Phillips, 2007). Despite demonstrating negative attitudes towards physical aggression, a majority of the working and middle-class respondents claimed that they would ridicule friends who demonstrated

vulnerability through the fearful avoidance of it. In this way, the data suggested that the respondents themselves play a role in perpetuating emotional and physical invulnerability as the dominant masculine norm. This can be seen to contrast literature suggesting that men's common patterns of physical aggression reflect pro-aggressive attitudes with which they have been socialised (Carlo et al., 1999; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006).

The data implied that men's physical aggression towards women is indicative of vulnerability rather than the transcendence of it, and therefore damaging to a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men. According to their accounts, the respondents perceive that there is a link between men experiencing pressure to transcend vulnerability during relations between men and the violence that some men perpetrate against women. This notion concurs with previous literature suggesting that men's violence towards women is rooted in relations between men, and constitutes the displacement of vulnerability (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). This theory counters the notion of it being a direct strategy employed for maintaining patriarchy, as suggested by Benson et al. (2003).

The working and middle-class respondents spoke of men employing physical aggression to compensate for an inability to transcend vulnerability through verbal skills. They also linked physical aggression to men with physiques that, according to their expressed viewpoints, are likely to hinder their demonstrations of masculinity. In relation to this, they spoke of perceiving themselves as being more masculine than men shorter in height than them, but feeling less masculine than men taller than themselves. Finally, it emerged that, with age, men either experience a decreasing need to transcend vulnerability or find different, less physically aggressive ways of doing so. Diminishing physical abilities, increased responsibilities, and less time spent in all-male domains emerged as reasons for a man's diminishing pressure to demonstrate invulnerability via physical aggression.

Within this chapter, masculinity did not emerge as a label that can be attached to men's multiple identities and social performances. Rather than being inextricably linked to men

and men's behaviour, the data presented masculinity as an esteemed quality that is won or lost during relations between men. In every interview, respondent accounts spoke of tension underlying these relations, emanating from them perceiving one another as rivals competing for masculine status. White, heterosexual men emerged as being the perpetrators and victims of physical aggression, this practice resulting in common patterns of domination and subordination within their own social group. From this perspective, when viewed as 'individual members' of the dominant group, the subordination of women and certain groups of men can be seen as a by-product rather than primary goal of their patterns of behaviour. Therefore, the transcendence of physical and emotional vulnerability can be seen to reflect men's individual desires to avoid subordination rather than a common goal to maintain power within society.

Chapter 10

Discussion and Conclusion

This thesis has developed a critical realist analysis of masculinity. The data were gathered from focus groups and one to one interviews with white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men. When discussing masculinity, common patterns emerged in the verbal practices of the respondents indicating that masculinity is a socially constructed representation that influences men to attempt to transcend vulnerability. This chapter looks at the contribution to knowledge that the study has provided regarding men's behaviour during their micro social relations with one another. The first section provides an overview of the main findings that emerged from my analysis of the data. This is followed by a section looking at the data in relation to theory and literature, and how the respondents' accounts distanced masculinity from the ways of viewing it suggested by the approaches discussed in chapter two, but fit with the critical realist philosophical perspective. Two further sections will focus on my experience of the general methodological approach adopted, and what I consider to be the limitations of the investigation. The conclusion summarises the study's main contributions to knowledge, and looks at its real world implications and ideas for future research.

10.1   Overview of the findings

This investigation looked at the verbal practices of four groups of white, heterosexual, working and middle-class men. I am also a white, heterosexual, working-class man and, therefore consider myself as being a member of this target population and a part of the research. Consistent with critical realism, the data were assumed to bear incomplete and imprecise reflections of the respondents' representations of social reality (Dobson, 2002). The findings of the analysis constitute my interpretations of the data and aim to provide a further contribution to current thinking within the area. I realise that this data set is limited in a number of ways, and that generalisations made regarding theory may not be

relevant to men in other circumstances. In particular, these data would not be expected to translate to upper class, non-heterosexual or non-white groups of men.

This section of the chapter briefly summarises the main findings of the investigation. Four themes were found to permeate all of the findings. These were highlighted in chapter six but were also integral to the data discussed in chapters seven, eight and nine. The four themes will be individually summarised in subsections 10.1.1 to 10.1.4. Subsections 10.1.5 to 10.1.7 will then focus on findings that emerged regarding masculinity in relation to the broad themes of affectivity (chapter seven), sexuality (chapter eight) and physical aggression (chapter nine).

10.1.1   Masculinity: A socially pre-established representation

In every focus group and one to one interview, a theme that emerged from the data was the notion that masculinity constitutes a socially pre-established representation (dominant masculine norm) that is perpetuated via direct and indirect socialisation.

Based on the data, this thesis has argued that men's representations of masculinity and femininity are influenced by a dominant, socially pre-established representation of reality. Such a conception of masculinity is consistent with the critical realist assumption that, through their construction and reconstruction, social and cultural meanings constitute a transitive dimension of knowledge which spans the agency and social structural divide (Pilgrima, 2000; McEvoy & Richards, 2003; Stewart & Usher, 2007; Sayer, 2008; Bhaskar, 2009). That is: transitive representations of reality, such as those that constitute appropriate masculine behaviour, are assumed to have an impact over an agent's social practices (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). Therefore, via this impact, agents themselves are viewed to play a role in perpetuating pre-established ways of viewing reality (Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006).

Concurring with the critical realist philosophy, the respondents' accounts did not imply that men's behaviour is determined by the dominant masculine norm but that, within

different contexts, men feel varying levels of pressure to gravitate to it. According to Archer et al. (2001), even if specific transitive structures are activated, agents can be very creative in the ways they adapt their behaviour to suit the novel circumstances in which they find themselves. These social practices will also be shaped around the individual's social and material resources (Archer et al., 2001; Demetriou, 2001; Gorman, 2003); agents maintaining the potential to demonstrate the same attributes with a multiplicity of different behaviours. Therefore, this approach can be used to explain the different social practices performed by working and middle-class men, as identified in the literature (Connell, 2000; Gorman, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006). In other words, men with different social resources might demonstrate different patterns of behaviour while still being influenced by the same representation of masculinity (Blackledge, 2001; Brown et al., 2002; Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006). However, during this investigation, similar patterns emerged in the verbal practices of both the working and middle-class respondents.

10.1.2   Masculinity: The transcendence of vulnerability

In every interview, the respondents' accounts implied that the dominant masculine norm (as discussed above) revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability. This was also a theme that was integrated within, and integral to, all of the men's accounts regarding masculinity.

Based on the respondents' accounts, masculinity and femininity, as transitive structures, are distinguishable by the differing treatments of vulnerability they prescribe to men and women. As defined in chapter one, vulnerability in this study was taken to mean those behaviours that expose physical and emotional weakness. The data implied that, because societal behaviour is influenced by these pre-established gender representations, men and women are subjected to different social pressures. Whereas women were suggested to be able to embrace their vulnerabilities, the respondents spoke of men being pressured – primarily by men – to transcend (hide) their vulnerabilities. As such, men who demonstrate vulnerability were suggested to appear feminine and women who transcend

vulnerability were suggested to appear masculine. In this sense, the differing patterns of male and female behaviour were not implied to reflect the internal experiences of men and women, and their personal experiences of vulnerability were presented as being the same.

As discussed in the previous subsection, the respondents suggested that within different contexts individual men feel different degrees of pressure to transcend their vulnerability. From this perspective, the behaviours of men were not implied to be motivated by the aim of appearing masculine within every setting. This issue will be the focus of the following subsection.

10.1.3   Masculinity: Only one aspect of men's behaviour

Across the data, demonstrations of masculinity via gravitations to the dominant masculine norm emerged as being but one aspect of men's behaviour. Common patterns emerged across the respondents' accounts which implied that they perceive there to be a sex and gender binary, with masculinity relating to men and femininity relating to women. At the same time, men and masculinity did not emerge as being inextricably linked. Instead, they emerged as being separate constructs in the sense that men (and women) were suggested to have the theoretical freedom to gravitate to masculine and feminine gender norms. Hence, the socially pre-established representation of masculinity (dominant masculine norm) was implied to influence men's behaviour within certain social contexts, but not dictate it. 'Masculinity' was suggested to constitute but one of a multitude of men's social identities and, therefore, only be an aspect of a man's overall behaviour. An example of this emerged from the respondents' accounts regarding the roles of 'father', 'husband' and 'breadwinner'. Although these roles were presented by them as being male identities, the respondents distinguished them from men's demonstrations of masculinity. According to the respondents, being a breadwinner, husband and a father does little to enhance a man's masculine status in the eyes of other men. In many of their accounts, hard working, married men were suggested to have been ostracised during relations between men for appearing non-masculine via demonstrations

of vulnerability. These accounts included married fathers being targeted with homophobic abuse. However, as I noted during chapter six, recent macro societal changes, particularly deindustrialisation and increasing gender equality, have impacted on the ways men demonstrate their masculinity (McDowell, 2000a). Therefore, with fewer men being the sole breadwinner or family head, this might explain why men might now see a distinction between masculinity and these particular identities.

The activation of masculinity, as a transitive structure, emerged in the data as being contextually influenced. Even in the contexts where men feel pressure to demonstrate their masculinity, they were very rarely presented as having no control over, or having no responsibility for, their own behaviour. So, although it might have been socially desirable for the respondents to purport that men's behaviour is the product of free will rather than determinism, blaming it on biology could have been used by them as a means to justify and excuse men's undesirable practices. The notion that men's behaviour is not 'determined' by the dominant masculine norm highlights an important aspect of critical realist thinking. Although the transitive dimension of knowledge is assumed to constrain societal behaviour via the influence it has over agents' representations of reality, their behaviours are not assumed to be dictated by it (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). Thus, rather than inferring a cause/effect relationship mirroring the laws of scientific realism (Ellis, 2005; Psillos, 2005), transitive structures are theorised to constitute potentialities which agents might or might not act upon (Carspecken, 1996; Zembylas, 2006). From this perspective, the activation of masculinity - as a transitive structure - would be subject to the complex relationship between competing generative mechanisms and the novel contextual influences of the social environment (Wilson & McCormack, 2006). Relations between white, heterosexual men repeatedly emerged as being the main context in which men gravitate to the dominant masculine norm, and this will be the focus of the following subsection.

10.1.4 Masculinity and relations between men

Another integrative theme permeating the data was the notion that men are particularly likely to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm during relations between men. All of the respondents suggested that men often gravitate to the dominant masculine norm as a way of avoiding abuse and subordination for appearing 'non-masculine' or 'feminine' in the eyes of other men. They attributed this understanding to their direct and vicarious experiences of men acting as rivals, ridiculing and ostracising one another for exposing vulnerability. Patterns of domination and subordination emerged as being common among groups of white, heterosexual men with similar social and material resources. The respondents even spoke of themselves perpetrating ridicule towards men whose vulnerabilities became exposed, and masking their own vulnerabilities to avoid the same reaction.

The tension, rivalry and threat perpetuated by men during relations between men emerged as being the main factor distinguishing these relations from relations between men and women. Thus, the respondents' accounts of men feeling less pressure to transcend vulnerability in the presence of women was consistent with data implying that the perception of threat often motivates men's gravitations to the dominant masculine norm. This notion concurs with the literature documented in chapter three (Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Whitehead, 2005). According to McHale et al (2003), this is because socialisation pressures predominantly arise when boys/men compromise their masculinity by traversing the gender binary (McHale et al., 2003).

Although 'relations between men' constitute a very broad social context, the respondents' accounts referred to factors that tend to have a mediating influence over men's behaviour. Contexts that were suggested to increase the likelihood of men demonstrating their masculinity included recreational environments, and group, rather than dyadic, relations. The data also implied that a man's experience of pressure to appear masculine tends to be mediated by the levels of masculinity exhibited by the men within his company. The respondents suggested that their interactions with men perceived to be performing more frequent and extreme gravitations to the dominant masculine norm were likely to

influence their own demonstrations of masculinity. However, with increasing age, characterised by long term intimate relationships, having children, more responsibilities, and diminishing physical abilities, men were suggested to experience fewer contexts in which they feel pressure to appear masculine.

During my analysis of the data, I found that accounts regarding the 'transcendence of vulnerability' and 'relations between men' permeated the frequently emerging themes of 'affectivity', 'sexuality' and 'physical aggression'. I will now provide a brief recap of these findings.

10.1.5   Masculinity in relation to affectivity

Across the data, demonstrations of affectivity were associated with vulnerability. Therefore, in order to appear masculine in accordance with the dominant masculine norm, the respondents suggested that men attempt to hide their inner experience of some emotions from others. In contrast to emotions, such as fear, sorrow and love, the respondents implied that aggression is linked to the socially pre-established realm of the 'masculine' because it is expressed in an active, rather than passive, manner. Aggression was, therefore, suggested to be a resource that men - unable to mask their fear or grief - employ for the same purpose. When faced with traumatic experiences, relations between men were suggested to inhibit men's expressions of affectivity to very limited time periods. Some respondents even spoke of feeling guilt/disappointment for having the internal experience of emotions. Other than demonstrations of aggression, various strategies emerged as a means by which men hide their affectivity. These included lying, the use of humour, and risk-taking behaviours. On those occasions when affectivity was discussed as being too difficult to hide, the respondents spoke of men being more likely to express emotions to women rather than other men.

10.1.6 Masculinity in relation to sexuality

Some of the data, mainly those which were gathered during working-class interviews, were consistent with a notion that among heterosexual men heterosexuality constitutes the most dominant form of masculinity. This is a finding that has been identified by a number of authors (see Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Connell, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Kehily, 2001; Redman et al., 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Phillips, 2005; Plummer, 2006; Dean, 2011). Across the data, heterosexual men frequently emerged as being concerned about rival men perceiving their heterosexuality as being incomplete. In addition, heterosexual men, during relations between one another, were suggested to demonstrate common patterns regarding attempts to increase their masculine status by verbally emphasising their sexual prowess. Some of the respondents - particularly the working-class men - provided direct examples of this behaviour. During these examples, women tended to be constructed as sex objects.

Most of the respondents spoke of a relationship between gay men, femininity, and demonstrations of vulnerability. They often implied that gay men tend to embrace rather than transcend vulnerability. Consistent with this notion, it emerged that, during relations between heterosexual men, those who expose their vulnerability are often seen to compromise their heterosexuality via a display of stereotypical femininity. Accounts of sexual diversity never arose during any of the interviews, and the respondents always referred to men as being 'completely' heterosexual or otherwise gay. According to the data, being married and having children does not consolidate a man's heterosexuality in the eyes of other heterosexual men. Instead, the data suggested that, during exclusive male relations, heterosexual men are in a constant struggle to maintain their heterosexual identities. The data concurred with literature suggesting that many heterosexual men use homophobia to consolidate their own masculinity (Kehily, 2001; Dean, 2011; Pascoe, 2011) and subordinate other heterosexual and non-heterosexual men who expose vulnerability (Phillips, 2005; Plumber, 2006; Pascoe, 2011).

10.1.7   Masculinity in relation to physical aggression

Physical aggression between men was distinguished in the data from that which is perpetrated by men towards women. Whereas the former was linked to the transcendence of vulnerability, the latter emerged as a displacement of the vulnerability born out of relations between men. This is consistent with the findings of Cowan and Mills (2004) and Hearn and Whitehead (2006). A man's demonstration of physical aggression between men emerged as being likely to increase his masculine status within all-male settings. As such, the data suggested that it constitutes a strategy some men use to reassert their masculinity when they feel that it is in a position of threat. This strategy was perceived to be most frequently employed by physically small men and those with fewer social and material resources through which to achieve the same goal. However, regardless of their body-size or resources, any man seen to actively avoid physical aggression during relations between men was, according to the data, likely to lose masculine status. A majority of the respondents claimed they would rather face another man in conflict than appear vulnerable during these relations. On this note, the data presented the conflicting notion that respondents simultaneously harboured negative views towards men fearful of physical aggression, and yet a personal fear and dislike of it themselves.

Having summarised the main findings that emerged from my analysis of the data, I will now make comparisons between the respondents' accounts and the masculinity approaches discussed in chapter two. In doing so, I aim to show how the data fit with a critical realist analysis of masculinity.

10.2   The data in relation to theory and literature

This section of the chapter looks at the way the respondents' accounts fit with the critical realist analysis of masculinity. This will involve focusing on the way the men's verbal practices avoided certain ways of presenting masculinity, highlighting differences from the kinds of representation suggested in the theoretical approaches discussed in chapter

two. I will begin the section by looking at an absence in the respondents' accounts of biological essentialist explanations of masculinity.

None of the respondents suggested that men are, by nature, emotionally or psychologically stronger than women. In contrast, they spoke of men and women having the same internal experience of vulnerability. The social behaviour of men, however, was suggested to be less likely than women's to reflect this internal experience. According to the respondents, men who demonstrate their emotions lose masculine status in the eyes of other men, and are ostracised for appearing 'feminine'. Emerging from the data was the notion that it is difficult for agents to control their behaviour in ways that hide vulnerability and, therefore, status is afforded to those that are able to do so. One frequently emerging example of this revolved around the notion that everyone experiences fear in the face of physical danger but that masculine-typical men hide all signs of it. Across the data were accounts claiming that, provided they are able to both transcend their vulnerability and resist social pressure to appear feminine, women can also perform and be perceived to perform masculine-typical behaviour. Likewise, the respondents spoke of some men deliberately wanting to appear feminine, and being able to demonstrate behaviour instantly recognisable as such.

The practice of transcending, rather than embracing, vulnerability is, according to the respondents, detrimental to an agent's mental and physical wellbeing. In other words, it was seen to counter the best interests of men as a social group. Confiding one's vulnerabilities to those who care about you was suggested to help men deal with, and overcome, their problems. During rich descriptions, patterns of aggression, risk-taking, and remote affectivity were frequently implied as being facades that men use in their struggles to hide their vulnerabilities. Instead of reflecting their internal worlds, these patterns of behaviour were presented, by the respondents, as being men's behavioural gravitations to a common social representation of masculinity. Again, the motivation behind this behaviour was repeatedly suggested to be the will to maintain positive social relations with their peers.

My analysis of the data found that, in comparison to social explanations, the respondents presented very few accounts that linked masculinity to biology. On the limited occasions when this link did emerge, it tended to be expressed in brief statements. These were mostly contradicted as soon as respondents began divulging detailed information regarding their understandings of gender acquisition. In both the focus groups and one to one interviews, every detailed account presented masculinity and femininity as socially constructed concepts that are separate from the lived experiences of men and women. This meant that the respondents tended to avoid biological essentialist explanations of masculinity, as provided by authors discussed in chapter two (see Cahill, 2003; Ellis, 2006; Alanko et al., 2010). This section will now look at an absence in the respondents' accounts regarding the subordination of women and marginalised groups of men as a conscious objective.

The subject of macro social relations was neither raised nor discussed during any of the interviews. My questions regarding the meaning of masculinity, what it looks like, its origins, and the motivations behind agents' demonstrations of it, generated answers regarding micro social relations, and particularly relations between men. At no point during the investigation did any of the respondents refer to the patriarchal structuring of society, as documented by Connell, (1995/2008). From a relativist influenced discursive approach, as used by Gough and Peace (2000) and Peace (2003), this might be interpreted as men avoiding the subject to deliberately downplay any imbalances of power favouring men over women. Alternatively, I played a role in steering the interactions, and feel that, as individuals, we were simply more preoccupied with our immediate social relations.

Based on the data, the respondents tended to be more interested in the behaviour of, and relations between, men than in the behaviour of women and relations between men and women. The majority of the interviews revolved around talk of men appearing, or failing to appear, masculine. Rather than referring to heterosexual men demonstrating their masculinity through interactions between themselves and women or non-heterosexual men, their demonstrations of masculinity were suggested to more frequently occur during their interactions between one another.

Men's micro social relations were not discussed in terms of being motivated by the will to exercise dominance over women or certain types of men. Instead, the motivation behind men's 'masculine' patterns of behaviour emerged as a will to avoid being subordinated by their peers. According to the data, those men failing to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm risk facing ostracism and abuse within exclusive male forums. This is consistent with the literature (see Plummer, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Pascoe, 2011). To avoid the negative treatment, the data implied that boys and men develop a representation of what is considered 'appropriate' and 'inappropriate' masculine behaviour and, within specific contexts, behave accordingly. This raises the issue that, even if a man desires to resist masculine-typical behaviour, his social performances within certain contexts might contrast with this desire.

Models of unsuccessful masculinity emerged from the respondents' accounts regarding what constitutes successful masculinity. For instance, the men's talk frequently situated heterosexuality as being the most successful form of masculinity, consequently positioning non-heterosexual men as being inferior to heterosexual men. Furthermore, while focussing on the behaviour of men, not women, masculinity was often positioned as being superior to femininity. Hence, men who embrace vulnerability were implied to be inferior to men who transcend vulnerability. Whereas many of the respondents showed disdain at the notion of women gravitating to the dominant masculine norm, they *all* showed disdain at the notion of men not gravitating to it. Many of the respondents' accounts involved negative talk of men whose behaviours are recognisable as 'feminine' and of non-heterosexual men. Regardless of their sexuality, those men perceived as being non-masculine were suggested to be likely to face ostracism and abuse during relations between men. According to Kehily and Anoop (1997) and Kehily (2001), such behaviour might not necessarily reflect the attitudes of individual heterosexual men towards individual gay men, but be a means through which they consolidate their own masculinity in the eyes of other heterosexual men.

Therefore, despite this study not specifically seeking to collect data in relation to hegemonic masculinity, the respondents' accounts suggested that, on a micro level, relations between men contribute to its perpetuation. Even when the motivation behind men's personal gravitations to the dominant masculine norm are presented as an aim to avoid subordination, these practices can still be seen to benefit men as a collective social group, as discussed in the literature (see Connell, 2008 [1995]). In this particular study, with the strategy emerging as a by-product of men's campaigns to maintain masculine status, masculinity - as a transitive structure - can be seen to play a role in men's subordination of certain social groups. As such, this fits with a critical realist approach to masculinity but is separate and additional to hegemonic conceptions of masculinity that focus on the maintenance of patriarchal privilege as being a primary objective of men's behaviour (see Carrigan et al., 1985; Forrest, 2000; Demetriou, 2001; Connell, 2008 [1995]). Underlying the data was the notion that demonstrations of masculinity only constitute a small aspect of men's behaviour and that the focus on masculinity is most helpful in understanding men's practices during exclusive male relations. Alternatively, these data suggest that studies aiming to gather information regarding the hegemony of men might limit their scope if they focus specifically on masculinity rather than men as a general category. This is consistent with the recommendations of Hearn (2004, 2006).

Having discussed the data in relation to the conceptions of biological essentialist and hegemonic masculinities, this section will now look at the respondents' accounts in comparison to the concept of multiple masculinities.

Many authors, as discussed in chapter two, have adopted the notion that individual men demonstrate multiple masculinities that are temporally and contextually influenced (see Speer, 2001; Wetherell & Edley, 2003; Allen, 2005; Paechter, 2006). In this study, however, the respondents did not speak of masculinity as being a fluid identity that has to be negotiated and renegotiated within each novel context. Neither did they refer to it as an identity that constantly requires a constructed representation of femininity as an antithesis through which it is brought into being. Though the men did speak of

masculinity as being an antithesis of femininity, it was described as an identity that can be performed and recognised in the complete absence of other identities.

Emerging from my analysis of the data was the notion that individual men perform multiple identities, but that these are not all variants of masculinity. The respondents suggested that men's identities within certain contexts are considered by them and other men alike as being more consistent with a common representation of femininity. As such, masculinity emerged as a specific identity that can be distinguished from the various other identities that men perform. The respondents also implied that masculinity is identifiable in the absence of men because women, if they resist social pressure to appear feminine, can also transcend vulnerability. Consistent with literature suggesting the behaviours of men and women are indistinguishable ninety-eight percent of the time (Vogel et al., 2003), the respondents implied that men only gravitate to the dominant masculine norm within certain social contexts; masculinity constituting but one of men's numerous identities. In this respect, the data do not challenge the literature documenting complexities and contradictions identified in men's behaviour, but refer to these as serving functions as diverse as the behaviours themselves.

Authors adopting the multiple masculinities approach tend to regard the conflicting behaviours that individual men demonstrate across various social settings as being different constructions of masculinity (Goodey, 1997; Speer, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Wetherell & Edley, 2003). For instance, a man demonstrating emotional vulnerability and a man demonstrating emotional invulnerability might be discussed in terms of them constructing contrasting 'masculinities'. As a result of this, the conception of multiple masculinities positions masculinity and men (and femininity and women) as constructs that are inextricably linked. Therefore, masculinity and femininity only become definable as discursively positioned antitheses of one another (see Wetherell and Edley, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006). In this study, however, the respondents only saw demonstrations of physical and emotional invulnerability as being 'masculine', and linked all demonstrations of vulnerability to the socially pre-established realm of the 'feminine'. Hence, women that demonstrated invulnerability were suggested

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to appear masculine, and men that demonstrated vulnerability were suggested to appear feminine.

The common patterns that emerged across the data can be seen to favour a critical realist interpretation over a post-structural influenced discursive approach, as underlying the conceptualisation of multiple masculinities (Wetherell & Edley, 1999 & 2003). Despite the open-ended nature of the interview questions, the respondents produced similar detailed accounts of masculinity. This was regardless of the men's social class or whether the data were collected in focus groups or one to one interviews. Furthermore, these data were often provided after little or no probing of the particular subject matter. Had the respondents' accounts not reflected a common, underlying representation, masculinity would have been likely to emerge as a complicated tangle of different behaviours and identities. As such, the respondents' patterns of speech did not appear to be the products of negotiation nor coincidence. Instead, it is reasonable to make the argument that the data reflected representations of masculinity that the respondents harboured prior to the interviews.

To make such a claim relies on the philosophical perspective that some form of reality resides beyond the temporally and contextually influenced renderings constructed by discourse (Sayer, 2008). Relativist assumptions that there is no underlying reality, or that no essence of truth can be reached through discourse (Belsey, 2002), place this philosophical perspective in an oppositional position to the study. If the respondents harboured idiosyncratic representations of the subject matter, or these were discursive constructions reflecting no common representations of reality, it is unlikely that the identified common patterns would have emerged so frequently. This is especially true regarding the many occasions when respondents, rather than the interviewer, introduced these data to the conversations.

Interpreting the data from a critical realist perspective enables an explanation of how masculinity can emerge as a distinct identity amidst a multiplicity of fluctuating and contradictory behaviours. The men's accounts regarding masculinity fit with the notion

that it constitutes but one of a multitude of transitive mechanisms influencing men's social practices. This concurs with the argument that men only attempt to demonstrate their masculinity within certain social contexts, as discussed in chapter three (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Sabo, 2011). In this case, masculinity – as a transitive mechanism – could be viewed to exert a minimal influence over men's behaviours during many of the contexts into which they enter. The multiple other identities men perform within these differing contexts could be viewed to be influenced by, and be indicative of, various other transitive representations of reality. Therefore, from this perspective, it is these other identities that, when viewing masculinity and men as inextricably linked, obfuscate the 'appearance' of masculinity.

This section of the chapter has looked at the data in relation to the masculinity approaches discussed in chapter two. Whereas the respondents' accounts distanced masculinity from some of the key assumptions of these conceptions, they were found to fit with a critical realist approach to masculinity. As such, they have provided a further contribution to knowledge within the area. For instance, this section of the chapter has argued that, to their own detriment and the detriment of others, men police one another to hide their physical and emotional vulnerabilities. Despite talk of men being influenced by social pressure, their common patterns of behaviour (as discussed in chapter three) were not presented as being the product of social or biological determinism. The conception of masculinity emerging from the data suggests that, despite multiple identities being demonstrated by individual men, only certain ones constitute demonstrations of masculinity. The data not only provided a means by which to distinguish the constructs of men and masculinity but also suggested that, outside of exclusive male relations, men's behaviour is less frequently motivated by the will to appear masculine. As such, I have argued that, although useful for understanding micro relations between men, it might be problematic to reduce men to the concept of masculinity when investigating macro social structures and relations between men and women. These and further contributions to knowledge will be discussed in section 10.5.1 of the conclusion.

10.3   Methodological implications

This section of the chapter will be divided into two subsections. During the first subsection, I will focus on my experience of using the chosen data collection and analysis techniques and the role that these played in the research. During the second subsection, I will be reflexive and report the possible impacts of my own position within the research.

10.3.1   Data collection and analysis techniques

As a general approach for collecting the data, I used a semi-structured strategy to conduct focus group and one to one interviews. After collecting the data, I then thematically organised and analysed them using template analysis. As I discussed during chapter four, these chosen techniques are compatible with my adopted position in critical realism.

By using both focus group and one to one interviews to generate the data, this enabled me to compare the ways the respondents presented the nature of masculinity within both dyadic and group contexts. Therefore, because I was able to identify common patterns in the data across both of these dynamics, this suggested that the respondents' accounts were not solely influenced by the settings in which they were constructed. Instead, this strategy of data collection assisted with my assumption that the presented conception of masculinity was something that the respondents had harboured prior to my interactions with them. This is consistent with the notion that agents' representations of the world are influenced by the transitive dimension of knowledge (Sayer, 2008). As such, the inclusion of focus groups as well as one to one interviews played a key role in providing data for this critical realist analysis of masculinity.

With the respondents first being interviewed among their pre-existing friendship groups, this was likely to have contributed towards the relaxed, jovial atmospheres that I felt characterised each of the interactions. Other than the second middle-class focus group, none of the men had previously participated in this type of social research, so being among their friends was likely to have facilitated their composure. Then, by the time of their one to one interviews, each of the men had already made a contribution to the study,

and this experience might have helped them feel more at ease. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the inclusion of focus groups was a factor that was conducive to the rich data that each of the men divulged.

I did, however, find organising focus groups far more difficult than organising one to one interviews. In the first instance I had to find groups of middle-aged men and persuade them to participate in the study. Then, even when I had a pre-established group of willing participants, it was difficult finding a day and time that they were all available. Often, a time that was suitable for some, was unsuitable for others. During chapter five, I also discussed the problems I had with acquiring the second middle-class focus group which did not constitute a snowball sample.

The semi-structured interview technique assisted me in providing data that was ideal for this particular investigation. Because I used the same interview schedule as a rough guide for both the focus group and one to one interviews, this made it easier to identify patterns that emerged across the two contexts. Having a prepared schedule of questions prevented me from missing, or having to focus more intently on, my pre-established points of interest. This meant that I could pay more attention to the respondents' accounts and allow them to divulge novel information and guide much of the interaction. I found it reassuring to know that I could leave the schedule to probe the different topics that arose, and then when these had been exhausted, simply revert back to my guide rather than take a long pause to contemplate my next line of enquiry.

Template analysis was ideal for identifying and hierarchically organising patterns that emerged in the data. As such, I found that the construction of the template was particularly useful in assisting me to structure my write up of the analysis. In addition, my early applications of the developing template also helped me to refine my analysis of the data. For me, one of the strengths of template analysis is that it is not a rigidly defined technique regarding a linear process in which one procedure is completed before the next procedure begins. In particular, I found it beneficial being able to start with an integrated analysis of the data, rather than conducting an idiographic approach, as is the case with

interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA: see Smith, 2008). The practice of being able to apply the template during its construction helped me to identify and single out further integrated themes that might have otherwise remained hidden. Furthermore, this practice also helped me to recognise those occasions when my preliminary codes were inadequate for accommodating the themes that emerged in the data. For instance, sometimes a code seemed appropriate when applied to certain sections of text, but inappropriate when applied to different accounts that divulged further details relating to the same subject. During chapter four I provided a number of reasons why template analysis was more suitable for this particular investigation than IPA and grounded theory.

Having discussed the methodology in relation to the data collection and analysis, I will now focus on my position within the research and the impact this is likely to have had on the investigation.

10.3.2   Author reflexivity

While conducting this investigation, I have attempted to remain reflexive. Within this subsection, I will address some of the ways that my position as the researcher is likely to have impacted on the findings.

Based on the guidelines of Neill (2006), being a member of the investigation's target population is one way that I was able to balance the power dynamics of the interviewer-interviewee interaction (see chapter five). Furthermore, the notion that men are particularly likely to demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011) suggests that my sex was beneficial for this investigation. Being a man, the respondents are likely to have expressed themselves in more openly masculine ways than they would have done had I been a woman. Some of the respondents even stated this, for example: '*You get a group of men together and we've done it, I mean we wouldn't be talking like this if there were any women here*' (Graham, Middle-Class Focus Group 2).

At the same time, my position within the research will have inevitably had an impact on the study. Being a white, heterosexual man and from the same region as my respondents (see chapter one), I assume that my representations of sex and gender will have been influenced by the same transitive structures. This is likely to have prevented me from perceiving, and responding to, their accounts in the same way as a researcher who was on the outside of this group. Some of the data that eluded me might have appeared striking to a group outsider (Holmes & Smyth, 2005). Although I appreciate that, while being reflexive, I could never be fully aware of my own consciousness (Cutcliffe, 2003), I will now explain the ways that my position within the research was likely to have impacted on the data.

Because some of the respondents spoke of viewing social research as a non-masculine/feminine occupation, it is possible that I did not appear to them as being overtly masculine. Hence, I was occasionally asked questions regarding my reasons for wanting to work within this area. The possibility that some of the respondent's perceived me as being 'non-masculine' might have had an impact on the data. After all, one of the findings of this investigation was the notion that men tend to judge the level of masculinity demonstrated by those men with whom they interact, and match their behaviour accordingly (see chapter six). This factor would have most likely impacted on the one to one interviews, during which the respondents were not in the company of their friends. The individual men might not have felt the same need to gravitate to the dominant masculine norm as they would have, had they perceived me as being an 'alpha male' or someone who posed a threat to their own masculine identity. Nevertheless, the data did not suggest this as being the case in the sense that consistent patterns emerged across the focus groups and one to one dynamics.

In both the focus group and one to one interviews, however, the respondents' perceptions that social research belongs to the realm of the feminine might have had an impact on the way they spoke about women. Had they perceived me as being pro-feminine or anticipated that the thesis would be read by women, they might have toned down any negative comments they would have otherwise made regarding women. Indeed, some of

the respondents might have doubted my explanation regarding the aim of the research, and assumed that its true focus was concerned with what men think about women. In my opinion, the respondents did, at times, present themselves more positively in terms of their views regarding women, than they did during other 'unrecorded' interactions I had with them. This might have been a reason why the investigation failed to collect data regarding the conscious and direct ways that men subordinate women. Instead, the data relating to this area highlighted the way this factor emerges as a by-product of white, heterosexual men attempting to avoid ostracism and abuse during relations between one another. While emphasising this limitation, it seems reasonable to argue that, had I been a woman, the respondents' accounts in relation to this issue would have been diluted further still.

During my interactions with the first working-class focus group, I became the target of some of their homophobic humour. This, again, seemed to be spurred by the fact that the project I was undertaking crossed the boundaries of what the men verbally regarded as being appropriate 'masculine' practice. Although I felt that their joking was done in good humour, during subsequent interviews I became concerned that the respondents would doubt my heterosexuality. This feeling was particularly apparent to me when I probed their accounts regarding feminine-typical and non-heterosexual men. For instance, when they spoke in terms of seeing men as being either 'completely heterosexual' or otherwise 'gay', I failed to enquire about their understandings of bisexuality. Although I certainly have nothing against gay or feminine men, my concerns were likely to have resulted from a fear that my own masculine status would be exposed as inadequate during these relations between heterosexual men. I felt concern that if I interrogated their views too deeply they might begin to assume that I was gay and react negatively towards me. As such, my intention to avoid abuse resulted in me complying with the respondents' demonstrations of masculinity, thus playing a role in perpetuating the dominant masculine norm.

10.4   Limitations

As with all research, this study is not without its limitations. During this section, I will provide a brief account regarding what I consider as being its main limiting factors.

Small, non-random samples and questionable generalisability tend to be raised as a limitation against qualitative investigations (see Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2010). Nevertheless, generalisability remains an important attribute of social research (Payne & Williams, 2005). Unlike relativist-based approaches, it is congruent with the critical realist philosophy to assume that theoretical inferences can be applied to agents and contexts beyond those identified during specific investigations (Davies, 2008). This is because the members of a society are assumed to harbour relatively stable representations of reality that, although unique, are influenced by their exposure to the same transitive structures (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In my view, the findings of this study are likely to have some level of transferability across white, heterosexual men exposed to the same dominant representation of masculinity that emerged from the respondents' descriptions. However, concurring with the recommendations of Payne and Williams (2005), I would stress that a reader exercises caution when judging for him or herself whether, or how well, the findings transfer to any men beyond this sample. Of further importance to the critical realist philosophy is the notion that a researcher's generalizations are treated as explanations, rather than predictions, of social behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Davies, 2008). Instead of identifying cause/effect relationships from patterns that emerge in the data, critical realists seek to provide rich descriptions regarding transactional relationships between social contexts, transitive structures, and patterns of behaviour (Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Davies, 2008). Regardless of the social context, all men retain the ability to behave in novel ways.

During chapter five I identified some of the ways my adopted methods were likely to have an influence over, and limiting effect on, the data. I will now address some further possible limitations regarding my sampling techniques and the chosen respondents. Ideally, I would have used the same sampling technique to acquire all of my respondents. However, I used snowball sampling to obtain the first three focus groups and

convenience sampling for the fourth. To recap, my aim was to interview pre-established groups of middle-aged, working and middle-class men who already had good rapport between them. Unfortunately, I had difficulty in finding groups of men that were willing to participate in the study. For safety reasons, I was not granted ethical clearance to recruit groups of strangers from public houses, working men's clubs, golf clubs, cricket clubs, and so on. Therefore, snowball sampling appealed to me as being the most appropriate technique for the investigation, and I decided to recruit the focus groups via known individuals. Because I had grown up and predominantly socialised with working-class people, most of my acquaintances were working-class. Unfortunately, having found two middle-aged, working-class men that each spend a lot of time socialising as a member of an exclusive male group, I could only acquire one middle-class focus group via this strategy.

Owing to my concerns of being unable to obtain two middle-class focus groups within the necessary time constrains, I opted to recruit a convenience sample of university staff for the second middle-class focus group. In contrast to the men who spent their recreational time together, as recruited through the snowball strategy, the university sample comprised of men that knew one another as work colleagues but did not socialise together outside of their work environment. This was coupled with the fact that their occupations required them to work to strict ethical guidelines. Theoretically, this was likely to have had an effect on the data. However, as I have already discussed, the men's camaraderie and rapport during this focus group was similar to that demonstrated by the groups recruited via the snowball sampling, with common patterns emerging across the data.

As noted in chapter five, a limitation of conducting focus groups that consist of friends and acquaintances is their potential to increase respondent conformity (see Leask et al., 2001). In this study, however, comparisons were made between the data collected in the focus groups and one to one interviews and these were found to be consistent across the two dynamics. Other than these patterns in the data suggesting that the different contexts had little impact on the respondents' accounts, it could be argued that the respondents felt

the need to present a consistent impression of themselves across both of their interviews. In this sense, rather than reflecting their actual representations of masculinity, they might have simply remembered the way they presented it during the focus group and discursively maintained this construction in the following interview. This point highlights a limitation regarding the order in which I conducted the focus group and one to one interviews. Hence, it would have been easier to assess the effect of the interview contexts had I conducted the individual interviews and focus groups in the opposite order. At the same time, even if the respondents' accounts in the one to one interviews were influenced by those that were constructed during the group dynamics, this does not explain why the same patterns emerged across the data provided by the different focus groups, whose members had never met.

In chapter one, I highlighted regional issues as being a factor that was likely to impact on the data. The majority of the respondents live in neighbouring locations and, as such, their practices are likely to have been influenced by this environment (see Stewart & Usher, 2007). However, the above account regarding the problems I faced in finding middle-aged men who still socialise in exclusive male groups also draws attention to a possible limitation regarding the social location of the respondents. The fact that, by middle age, only certain men continue to spend much of their recreational time within exclusive male groups suggests that these might be in some ways different to those men who do not. Based on the data and the literature discussed in chapter three (see Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Reay, 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Cowan & Mills, 2004; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007; Sabo, 2011), even if these men are not dissimilar, the fact that they spend more time in all-male company will heighten their need to, and the frequency with which they, demonstrate their masculinity.

During the above sections of this chapter, I have summarised the main findings of the investigation and showed how these fit with a critical realist approach to masculinity. I have also looked at the study's methodological implications and its limitations. I will now provide a conclusion to the investigation.

10.5   Conclusion

The following conclusion will be divided into three sections that focus on the main contributions to knowledge, potential real world implications, and ideas for future research.

10.5.1   Main contributions to knowledge

Critical realism has enabled me to explain the respondents' accounts which referred to men having multiple contextually influenced identities, but only some of which constitute demonstrations of masculinity. As such, this perspective was pivotal in providing me with a means of distinguishing the constructs of men and masculinity, and in defining a conception of masculinity that can be identified in the absence of femininity. Furthermore, this critical realist analysis provides an explanation regarding accounts of women demonstrating masculinity and men demonstrating femininity. It also helped me to explain common patterns that emerged across the data, regardless of the men's social class or the type of interview in which they were constructed.

At first glance, this critical realist approach to masculinity, like biological essentialist, psychodynamic, and socialisation approaches, might seem to justify, or assume an uncritical position regarding, the imbalances of power between the sexes. However, I feel that this study has instead drawn attention to an important factor that, if unattended, might continue to impede explorations of patriarchy. According to my interpretations of the data, white, heterosexual men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between one another. This is consistent with the findings of a number of authors (see Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Moreover, the data suggested that men are particularly likely to demonstration their masculinity when perceiving threats to their masculine status. This finding is again consistent with previous literature (see Maccoby, 2000; McHale et al, 2003; Vogel et al, 2003; Whitehead, 2005). Although the data suggested that these demonstrations can be linked to the subordination of women and

marginalised groups of men, this emerged as being a by-product of individual men attempting to avoid being subordinated during exclusive male relations. From this perspective, then, men's demonstrations of masculinity only constitute a small part of the picture, and primarily impact on their own lives during relations between one another. Therefore, when thinking in terms of macro social structures and strategies that link directly to the perpetuation of patriarchal privilege, my findings ultimately suggest that the focus should remain with men rather than with masculinity. In this way, the data can be seen to concur with Hearn (2004 & 2006) and indicate that research into men's imbalances of power over women should focus on the *hegemony of men*, and should not reduce it to the concept of masculinity.

At the same time, this critical realist analysis of masculinity has provided an important contribution to knowledge regarding the motivation behind white, heterosexual men's patterns of behaviour during relations with one another. Although some authors recommend that the focus of research should remain on relations between men and women (see Carrigan et al., 1985; Smiler, 2004; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005; Kane, 2006; Swain, 2006), studies have suggested that micro relations between men are often punctuated with risky and potentially harmful behaviour (Anderson, 2001; Phillips, 2007). Therefore, such common patterns of behaviour warrant attention, and this critical realist analysis of masculinity has provided a means of understanding the dynamics behind them.

In this study, masculinity emerged as a transitive structure that revolves around the transcendence of vulnerability. According to critical realism, transitive structures are perpetuated through the reproduction of societal values and conventions but ultimately have a temporal nature (Archer, 1995; Dobson, 2001). This means that changes in macro social structures are likely to impact on men's ways of gravitating to the dominant masculine norm, and that this in turn could result in changes to masculinity as a transitive dimension of knowledge. Therefore, this critical realist approach to masculinity can be used to explain relatively swift occurring changes in men's common patterns of behaviour that cannot be explained in terms of biological essentialism (Smiler, 2004).

Whereas biological essentialist theories have also been criticised for their failure to explain the nature of men's aggression (Mullender, 1996), this critical realist analysis of masculinity explains why men tend to vent their aggression onto weaker targets. Hence, the respondents referred to men's patterns of aggression as being their premeditated attempts to appear masculine rather than to them having frequent, uncontrollable urges to express their annoyances. This implies that men often make careful decisions regarding whether or not they should demonstrate their aggression, and that a key factor impacting on this decision relates to the risk in terms of their masculine status during relations between men. According to the findings of this analysis, the same factor lies at the heart of men choosing to enter into, or not removing themselves from, dangerous contexts, and men avoiding seeking support for their emotional problems.

Four interrelated factors were identified regarding men's patterns of homophobic behaviour. First and most obviously, was the notion that homophobic practices stigmatise non-heterosexual agents. In the literature, homophobic abuse has been identified as a serious problem that negatively impacts on the lives of many individuals (see Hunt & Jensen, 2007). In this study, the respondents' accounts predominantly focused on exclusive micro relations between heterosexual men and, therefore, only provided a partial insight into this problem. Nevertheless, the data suggested that, even when it is used by heterosexual men in their policing of one another's demonstrations of masculinity, it still constructs all forms of non-heterosexuality as being inferior to heterosexuality. An additional factor emerging from the data was the notion that men's homophobic practices perpetuate the notion of there being a connection between femininity, women, gay men and vulnerability. As such, men's patterns of homophobia can also be seen to render women and femininity as being inferior to men and masculinity. The notion that homophobia is used during relations between heterosexual men to ostracise those who expose vulnerability leads to a third factor regarding the stigmatising of vulnerability. In this sense, those agents exposing vulnerability are rendered inferior to those who hide it. However, since physical and emotional vulnerability is an inevitable aspect of life, and the embracing of it beneficial to the

general wellbeing of social agents, its stigmatisation is detrimental to society. This issue is emphasised in the data, via the respondents' accounts linking the transcendence of vulnerability to men's patterns of physical aggression, risk-taking, and suggested obstacles in their overcoming of emotional problems. A forth factor that emerged as being a consequence of men's patterns of homophobic behaviour was the notion that this practice perpetuates the dominant masculine norm so that men feel they must demonstrate certain patterns of behaviour. In this sense, within certain contexts, those men not necessarily harbouring homophobic attitudes might still play a role in perpetuating the notion that heterosexuality constitutes the most successful form of masculinity. These contributions to knowledge have potential real world implications, and will be the focus of the following section.

10.5.2   Real world implications

In this study, the respondents spoke of social pressures, particularly during relations between men, making it difficult for them to embrace their inevitable vulnerabilities. Based on the data, this issue is linked to men's patterns of behaviour, as identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Phillips, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). These patterns include risk-taking, physical aggression, and demonstrations of homophobia.

The notion that men strive to hide their emotional and physical vulnerabilities highlights the concern that they are less likely than women to seek or accept help when it could be beneficial or even necessary for them. This issue, arising in the data, concurs with literature suggesting that, compared to women, men have a greater tendency to avoid or procrastinate seeking medical intervention for mental and physical health problems (Lee & Owens, 2002; Bennett, 2007), and are less likely to report being the victim of a physical assault (Fontes, 1999; Lee & Owens, 2002; Kingsnorth & Macintosh, 2004; Felson & Pare, 2005). According to Lee and Owens (2002), behavioural rather than biological factors can explain men's shorter life expectancies than women's. Congruent with authors, such as Fontes (1999) and Kingsnorth and Macintosh (2004), the data

implied that the socialisation of a dominant masculine norm that revolves around the transcendence of physical and emotional vulnerability lies at the heart of this issue. From this perspective, the critical realist approach to masculinity, as emerging from this investigation, is more suited to assisting interventions aimed at improving men's health behaviours than the conception of multiple masculinities which tends to overlook patterns of masculine-typical behaviour.

Emerging from the data was the notion that men sometimes mask their vulnerability with physical aggression. According to the literature, men are socialised with the notion that passive emotions are 'feminine' and aggression, being an active emotion, is 'masculine' (Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006). Biological essentialist conceptions of masculinity tend to focus on an assumed link between male aggression and the hormone testosterone (Simpson, 2001; Beek et al., 2004; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). An implication of this is that men's patterns of aggression are viewed to derive from a transactional relationship between innate and environmental influences (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). To some degree, this suggests that, regardless of whether or not they are able to control their behaviour, within certain contexts men experience more extreme propensities to demonstrate aggression than women (Clare, 2001). Therefore, interventions that have been informed by this approach revolve around anger management, teaching men to recognise the contexts that trigger their anger and ways of controlling it (Redman, 2005). However, service interventions informed by the discussed critical realist perspective might focus more specifically on individual men's experiences of, and ways of hiding, vulnerability. This support would involve helping men to find different ways of asserting themselves and establishing positive social relationships.

The respondents also presented the idea that a key motivation behind men's violence towards their intimate partners is the displacement of vulnerability emanating from man to man competitions to maintain masculine status. Previous literature has also documented this link (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006). This suggests that the tension arising during relations between men impacts on their behaviour within different social contexts. As such, a man's violence towards his intimate partner is not

necessarily rooted in the relationship. In this case, being the symptom but not the motivation behind the behaviour, interventions that focus exclusively on relations between men and women might fail to target the problem. Instead, this study suggests that programmes developed to work with perpetrators of domestic violence should also focus on men's relations within exclusive male groups. If perpetrators of domestic violence can learn positive ways of asserting themselves during relations between men, some of them might feel less need to gain a sense of invulnerability by exerting power against individuals that are perceived to pose less threat.

Ultimately, the findings of this investigation suggest that it is necessary to teach young males how to be more humane with their own vulnerabilities and the vulnerabilities of others. However, the findings also indicate that simply educating boys that the transcendence of vulnerability is unhealthy would, on its own, have a limited benefit. For instance, the respondents spoke of the importance of embracing vulnerability as a means of maintaining good mental and physical health, but its detriment to their masculine status and relations between men if they did. Therefore, this finding implies that it is necessary when working with young people to meet head on and challenge dominant representations of masculinity and femininity in relation to the behaviour they prescribe regarding the treatment of vulnerability. Young people need to be taught that the expression of vulnerability is neither masculine nor feminine, but demonstrates strength of character, and that to hide one's vulnerability is a sign of weakness as it demonstrates the fear of being judged negatively by others. In the final section of this conclusion I will now present some ideas for further research, as highlighted by the investigation.

10.5.3   Future research

Emerging from this study are areas that require further research. For instance, investigations could be conducted to see if the dominant masculine norm, as identified within the study, emerges from the data generated with different samples of men. This could include interviews with men from different regions and of different ethnicities.

Interviews could also be conducted with samples of women to see if their understandings of gender can be linked to the transitive dimension of knowledge.

Data could be collected and used to identify whether, or in what ways, the presence of women impacts on men's discussions, and demonstrations, of masculinity. For instance, comparisons could be made between interviews conducted with exclusive male and mixed sex focus groups. Moreover, data could be compared between interviews conducted by male and female researchers. The notion that men temper their demonstrations of masculinity to match those of the men with whom they interact could also be investigated via comparisons between one to one interviews conducted by 'stereotypically-masculine' and 'stereotypically-feminine' interviewers.

If similarities are identified between this study's data and the data gathered with different samples of men, semi-structured interviews could be developed to gather richer information regarding specific points of interest. These could include investigations that attempt to unpick heterosexual men's understandings of sexuality, particularly the simplistic notion that emerged regarding there being no middle ground between heterosexuality and homosexuality. Deeper exploration should also be carried out with regards to the notion that men demonstrate multiple identities but only link certain ones to masculinity, and the contexts most likely to trigger men's demonstrations of masculinity.

Although critical realism was a central focus of this investigation, the transcendence of vulnerability emerged as being a key factor regarding the motivation behind men's social practices, particularly during relations between one another. According to the discussed findings, men's attempts to transcend vulnerability often result in harmful patterns of behaviour. Therefore, this suggests that it is important to conduct further investigations into agents' socially influenced representations of vulnerability, and the impact these have on their social practices. With this subject as the central focus, this could include investigations into the behaviours of both men and women and also cross-cultural studies.

This investigation has helped me to understand the often hurtful behaviour of the men I have encountered. While not aiming to mitigate any individual for his actions, it has comforted me with the feeling that the victors of white, heterosexual men's competitions for masculine status are those to be pitied the most. Whereas previously I felt intimidated by the notion that most men did not experience the vulnerabilities that I experienced, now the notion of them struggling to hide their vulnerability fills me with feelings of amusement and sympathy. The project has also been a voyage of self discovery. I have become more mindful of my own behaviour, the contexts in which I also attempt to appear invulnerable, and the damage that this practice can cause to others as well as myself.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

The Interview Schedule

Interview Schedule

What does it mean to be masculine?

What does it mean to be feminine?

Is it possible to tell the difference between a masculine and feminine person?

Between the choices of 'masculine', 'feminine', and 'other', which best defines you?

In what ways do you regard yourself as [masculine/feminine/other]?

Are there any sports that are masculine or feminine oriented?

In your opinion, are men and women competitive?

Are there any differences in the types of things men and women compete over?

Are there any consequences for 'feminine' men:
>   1. At school?
>   2. At work?
>   3. In the company of 'masculine' men?
>   4. In the company of 'feminine' women?

Can a man be considered 'masculine' if he isn't heterosexual?

Are there any physical characteristics that can help or hinder men being considered 'masculine'?

Are you familiar with the term: 'some men have all the luck?'

In your opinion, what does it mean?

Are there any differences in the ways men and women are likely to **feel** if their intimate partner spends lots of time with the opposite sex?

Are there any differences in the ways men and women are likely to **react** if their intimate partner spends lots of time with the opposite sex?

How is a man likely to feel if another man physically threatens him?

How does this relate to masculinity?

Are you familiar with the terms: 'Take it like a man' and 'Be a man about it'? In your opinion, what do they mean?

Do men and women seem to exhibit similar emotions?

(e.g. Sorrow – Fear – Affection)

Are friendships between men and women the same as those between men and men?

In your opinion, how important are the concepts of masculinity and femininity?

Appendix 2

Development of the Interview Schedule

Key aspects of what appears to come out of the masculinity literature as important

Sexuality

Embodiment

Emotionality

Rivalry

Humour

What is dominant masculinity?

What does a 'real' man look like?

My Key Areas of Interest:

1. Common patterns in the ways men are using their verbal behaviour to gravitate to a pre-existing dominant masculine norm indicative of a transcendence of vulnerability via the underlying tenets of strength, independence, heterosexuality, and the transcendence of fear, pain and emotions: as identified in the literature (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009).
2. Men's Awareness of a Dominant Masculine Norm
3. Men gravitating to the dominant Masculine Norm during Relations between Men

Good

General Questions

These questions have been developed to elicit general information about the area of interest. Although they cannot be placed into one specific category, they carry the potential to generate data relative to answering the research questions. The main aim of these is to determine whether the respondents share similar understandings of what characteristics constitute masculinity, and differences between masculinity and femininity. These responses can be compared with the dominant masculine norm

identified in the literature. If common patterns emerge among these responses, and are consistent with the tenets identified in the literature, this is likely to suggest that the men have been socialised with an understanding of the same dominant masculine norm.

What does it mean to be masculine?

What does it mean to be feminine?

Is it possible to tell the difference between a masculine and feminine person?

Between the choices of 'masculine', 'feminine', and 'other', which best defines you?
In what ways do you regard yourself as [masculine/feminine/other]?

Are there any sports that are masculine or feminine oriented?

Are there any consequences for 'feminine' men:

> 1. **At school?**
> 2. **At work?**
> 3. **In the company of 'masculine' men?**
> 4. **In the company of 'feminine' women?**

In your opinion, how important are the concepts of masculinity and femininity?

Sexuality:

According to masculine literature, heterosexuality constitutes the most celebrated form of masculinity, with homosexuality symbolising its antithesis (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Connell, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Kehily, 2001; Redman et al., 2002; Levinson & Sparkes, 2003; Vogel et al., 2003; Allen, 2005; Plumber, 2006). Owing to a widespread use of homophobia, transcending social class boundaries, it has been suggested that men constantly struggle to reaffirm their heterosexuality (Light & Kirk, 2000; Allen, 2005;

Plumber, 2006). In this sense, for a man to be considered 'masculine' his heterosexuality must be whole and uncompromised by any sense of femininity, such as fear, weakness, and displays of 'feminine' emotions (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Swain, 2002). Literature suggests that such reconciliations of masculinity in the face of contingent reality results in men's feelings of inadequacy and vulnerability (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Whitehead, 2005).

Can a man be considered 'masculine' if he isn't heterosexual?

Are there any specific things men look for in intimate partners?

Simply asking a question of this nature might provide a man with the opportunity to place emphasis on his sexuality. Furthermore, depending on the dynamics of the interview, it could enable him to make sexual innuendos that are frequently linked to men's demonstrations of their masculinity within the literature (Kehily & Nayak, 1997; Gough & Edwards, 1998; Nayak, 2006; Connell, 2008).

Question Revision

Over a number of interviews this questioned failed to elicit any specific data other than men's attraction to intimate partners being a completely subjective thing. Therefore this question was later dropped from the interview schedule.

Embodiment:

Emerging from the literature, men with fewer financial resources tend to define their masculinity through displays of nerve (Anderson, 2001) and an emphasis on male physicality (Johansson, 1990; Hall, 2002; Levinson and Sparkes, 2003). Although men with greater financial resources might demonstrate their masculinity through consumerism (Gorman, 2003; Nayal, 2006), it appears that the value they place on male physicality coincides with this option (Collins, 1998; Swain, 2002 & 2004; Whitehead

[S], 2006). The following questions, therefore, have been developed as attempts to elicit data regarding the importance of embodiment, as constructed in verbal demonstrations of masculinity.

Yes

Are their any specific things women look for in intimate partners?

If the respondents choose to talk about specific physical traits, this question might carry the potential to elicit information regarding the importance men place on certain aspects of male physicality. However, as the respondents' might instead refer to non physical characteristics, for instance, wealth and personality traits, this it might suggest that the speaker does not readily place value on embodiment as a means by which to define masculinity. Alternatively, if aspects of embodiment are flagged by respondents', and common patterns emerge regarding these, this might suggest that those men defining them share a socially influenced understanding that specific physical qualities are important for men in society.

Question Revision

Over a number of interviews this questioned failed to elicit any specific data other than women's attraction to intimate partners being a completely subjective thing. Therefore this question was later dropped from the interview schedule.

Are there any physical characteristics that can help or hinder men being considered 'masculine'?

Unlike the previous question, this aims to take a more direct approach, probing men's views regarding specific aspects of the male body and whether, and in what ways, these help or hinder men's gravitations to the dominant masculine norm. According to the literature, for instance, penis size plays an important role in the ways men determine successful masculinity (Clare, 2001; Connell, 2008).

Male Rivalry/Competition:

Some masculinity literature suggests that, rather than during relations between men and women, men demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson, 2001; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Moreover, that men only gravitate towards stereotypical masculine behaviours when experiencing emotional vulnerability (McHale et al., 2003; Vogel et al., 2003). From this perspective, men can be viewed to use women as commodities to regulate their relations with other men (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Hearn & Whitehead, 2006).

Informed by this literature, then, the following questions have been developed to probe issues of men's vulnerability arising from relations between men. Relevant to the research question, these will attempt to elicit data regarding the ways men gravitate to the dominant masculine norm and whether rival men are perceived as a threat in the sense of them exposing the inadequacies of these gravitations. For instance, this type of threat might be evident in respondents' accounts which present women as commodities which can leave men vulnerable. Alternatively, such a perceived threat might be evident in men's negative accounts of alpha males, womanisers, and moneymen; especially if these focus on their greater success in obtaining desired resources. Furthermore, evidence of this vulnerability might present itself in accounts which emphasise the importance of having friends who constitute a means of protection.

Good

Are you familiar with the term: 'some men have all the luck?'
In your opinion, what does it mean?

If respondents' tend to be familiar with this saying and provide similar explanations regarding its meaning, this might suggest that they are aware of the dominant masculine norm identified in the literature. As the saying seems to refer to certain men having more success than others in areas undisclosed, the question might also have the potential to elicit data regarding issues in the area male competition for desired resources.

In your opinion, are men competitive?

Other than sport, what things do men compete over?

Probing an area that emerged from the working-class focus group, this question was developed with the aim of enabling a respondent to divulge, if any, what resources they consider men to compete over. This may lead to further questions regarding what are the consequences for the winners and losers of these competitions:

What things seem to determine who wins these competitions?
How does winning these competitions make a man feel?
How does losing these competitions make a man feel?

Question Revision

When asked this question, the respondents tended to suggest that, nowadays, women are equally as competitive as men. This highlighted the fact that the question could be 'leading' in nature. Therefore, in an attempt to probe the area more thoroughly, the question was changed to:

In your opinion, are men and women competitive?
Are there any differences in the types of things men and women compete over?

How is a man likely to feel if his intimate partner spends a lot of time with male friends?

Additional to attempting to get a more detailed account of the area covered by the previous question, this is also aimed at getting an understanding of a respondent's possible vulnerabilities emerging from perceived competition with rival males.

Question Revision

Note that, although the question did indeed tend to elicit data regarding how the situation would be likely to instigate men's feelings of vulnerability owing to the perceived threat of rival men, it was: A, later considered to be 'leading' in its nature, and B, would be likely to elicit similar responses if it focused on women instead of men. It was, therefore, changed to:

Are there any differences in the ways men and women are likely to <u>feel</u> if their intimate partner spends lots of time with the opposite sex?
Are there any differences in the ways men and women are likely to <u>react</u> if their intimate partner spends lots of time with the opposite sex?

How is a man likely to feel if he is he is threatened by another man?

Affectivity:

Are you familiar with the terms: 'Take it like a man' and 'Be a man about it'? **In your opinion, what do they mean?**

Like with a question in the male rivalry section, if respondents' tend to be familiar with these sayings and provide similar explanations regarding their meanings, this might suggest that they are aware of the dominant masculine norm identified in the literature. Furthermore, as these sayings seem to refer to male individuals being told to deal with testing situations in mature and, arguably, female-contrasting ways, the question might carry the potential to elicit data regarding the respondents notions of emotionality.

Do men and women seem to exhibit similar displays of sorrow?
This question aims to delve into an area that emerged from both the literature and the pilot interviews, which both tend to suggest that women feel more a t ease with displaying their emotions in public.

Do men and women seem to cope with their problems in the same way?

This question and the one that follows aim to further explore issues that emerged from the literature (Particularly Bennett et al., 2007; Bishop, 2009) suggesting that, unlike women, men display common patterns in trying to deny their fears and inabilities to cope with testing situations.

Do men and women seem to exhibit similar displays of fear?

Question Revision

Note that the three questions: '*Do men and women seem to exhibit similar displays of sorrow? - Do men and women seem to cope with their problems in the same way? - Do men and women seem to exhibit similar displays of fear?*' were producing the same data as they all elicited discussions about differences in women's and men's shows of emotion. Therefore, these were later condensed into the question:

Do men and women seem to exhibit similar emotions?
(e.g. Sorrow – Fear – Affection)

Are friendships between men and women the same as those between men and men?

Appendix 3

Invitation for participant recruitment sent to
organisers/representatives of clubs and groups run within the
University of Huddersfield

Hi ****

I'm a PhD student with a bursary from the ESRC. I'm hoping to explore how a dominant masculine social norm might impact on the verbal behaviours of working and middle-class men (Brief details of the study can be found in the attachment).

I'm wondering if there are any men, aged roughly between 30 and 55yrs, who are part of your **** club that might be willing to participate in a focus group and one to one interview with me. I'm aware that you won't be able to provide me with their contact details, but if you would be so kind as to mention my study to them you would be doing me an enormous favour. Of course, the invite to participate is also open to you.

The interviews could be arranged at a time that would suit the club members, and all contributions would be kept totally anonymous.

If you can be of any help at all, I can promise it would be greatly appreciated.

I look forward to hearing from you

Take care,

Marcus

Appendix 4

Invitation for participant recruitment sent to a representative of the student union (University of Huddersfield)

Hi ****

I'm a PhD student with a bursary from the ESRC. I'm hoping to explore how a dominant masculine social norm might impact on the verbal behaviours of working and middle-class men (Brief details of the study can be found in the attachment).

The thing is, I've been having quite a lot of trouble finding people to participate in my research. **** from **** has told me that, through your position in the student union, you might be able to help me get some interested parties.

Basically I'm looking to conduct a focus group interview with approximately six men (aged between 35 & 55) who could be regarded as, or may regard themselves as, middle-class. The participants will also be requested to participate in a one to one interview. The interviews can be arranged at times which suit the respondents, and their contributions will be kept totally anonymous.

If you can be of any help, it would be greatly appreciated.

Appendix 5

Invitation to participate circulated via the university email system
to all the members of staff (University of Huddersfield)

Dear member of staff

I am a PhD student with a bursary from the ESRC. I am hoping to explore how a dominant masculine social norm might impact on the verbal behaviours of working and middle-class men, and I am writing to ask for your help.

I am looking to conduct a focus group with approximately six academics. Brief details of the study can be found in the attachment.

I am hoping to have conducted these interviews by the end of July. However, I am fully aware that people are really busy, and if necessary would be willing to compromise if potential contributors could not make this deadline. The interviews can be arranged at times which suit the contributors, and any time donated to the study will be very much appreciated

Discussions about masculinity can be very topical, and I am hoping that the focus groups and interviews will provide space for men to talk about issues that are of interest to them. Contributions will of course be anonymous.

Thank you

Marcus Lumb

Appendix 6

Invitation to participate circulated via the university email system specifically to male members of staff (University of Huddersfield)

Hi ****

I am a PhD student with a bursary from the ESRC, investigating common patterns in the discourses of working and middle-class men.

I'm hoping to put together a focus group consisting of about six academics/university staff, and was wondering whether you'd be interested in participating. You will also be given the opportunity to participate in a one to one interview with myself. Both interviews will last approximately 60 minutes and will be very easy going, allowing you freedom to discuss issues that are of personal interest. All your contributions will be kept totally anonymous.

I'm aware that your occupation and family life will keep you busy, and if you do not wish to participate I fully understand. However, if you could help, that would be fantastic.

Cheers,

Marcus

Appendix 7

Invitation to participate sent to male acquaintances via Facebook

Hi ****

I know we haven't spoken in a long time, so I'm sorry for this out-of-the-blue message. I'm currently doing a PhD, investigating common patterns in the discourses of working and middle-class men.

I'm hoping to put together four focus groups consisting of about six men in each, and was wondering whether you'd be interested in participating in one of these, along with some of your friends. You and your friends would also be invited to participate in a further one to one interview with myself. The interviews will last approximately 60 minutes each, and will be very easy going, allowing you freedom to discuss issues that are of personal interest. All contributions will be kept totally anonymous.

I'm aware that your occupation and family life will keep you busy, and if you do not wish to participate I fully understand. However, if you could help, that would be greatly appreciated.

Appendix 8

Participant Information (University Staff)

Common Patterns in the way Working and Middle-Class Men Gravitate to

a Dominant Masculine Norm

Aims: I wish to use my ESRC funding to conduct a qualitative investigation to see whether or not common patterns emerge in the verbal behaviours of working and middle-class men. A primary assumption of this investigation is that men exposed to the same social representations of reality will exhibit common patterns of verbal behaviour. I am, therefore, particularly interested to investigate whether, and in what ways, a dominant social representation of masculinity (masculine norm) can be viewed to impact on working and middle-class men's understandings and presentations of gendered behaviour. Dominant social representations, in this understanding, are the pre-established social and cultural meanings, understandings, values, and conventions.

Methods: I am hoping to conduct two working and two middle-class* focus groups, with about five men in each. If possible, I then wish to conduct one-to-one interviews with all of the men from each of the focus groups. All the interviews will take a semi-structured format and are likely to last between 60 and 90 minutes each. I am hoping to borrow a room in the university as a venue for the focus groups, but respondents will be given the chance to decide a venue for the one to one interviews.

The interview questions will focus on:

- Men's understandings of gendered behaviour; particularly masculinity and the ways it can be viewed to differ from femininity.
- How the respondents understandings of themselves as men relates to socially pre-established notions of gender
- How the respondents general understandings of other men and women relates to socially pre-established notions of gender
- Differences in relations between men and men, and men and women.

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[1] Class will be defined by socioeconomic status (academic attainment – income – occupation prestige).

A template analysis will be used to organize the data into themes, providing me with a structure for setting out my analysis. The study will be written up as a PhD thesis.

Confidentiality: Before any interview is conducted, respondents will be asked to read and sign a consent form. Provided permission is granted by respondents, extracts from the interview transcripts will be used in a written report that may be read by others. All respondents will, however, be given pseudonyms and no information will be included that is likely to compromise their identities. If requested by a respondent, he will be given access to a layperson's report of the study and the chance of withdrawing information he would rather not share with others. In the case of focus groups, it will be requested that respondents do not discuss with non-group members information that was disclosed during the interview. After the analysis, all raw data will be destroyed, or with a respondent's permission, stored in the ESRC data archive.

My Background: I am a PhD student with a degree in Psychology and a MSc in Social Research Methods and Evaluation. My previous dissertation focused on the ways that men use their discourse as a tool to mitigate the severity of 'domestic' violence and alleviate the culpability of men who are abusive to their intimate partners.

While working on a voluntary basis for the Kirklees Domestic Violence Team, I also conducted a qualitative evaluation of the services which provide help and support for victims of 'domestic' violence (Police, Social Services, Solicitors, Kirklees Domestic Violence Team, Housing Options, Health visitors). Please note that my PhD research does not have a direct link to the area covered by these previous projects in the sense that it is not focused on 'domestic' violence.

Appendix 9

Participant Information (Non-University Staff)

The Study:

I am a post graduate student conducting a PhD study on men's common patterns of behaviour. I am hoping to conduct four focus group interviews; two with working-class and two with middle-class men. I would also like to conduct an individual interview with each of the men from these groups.

The interviews are likely to last between 60 and 90 minutes each.

The respondents are free to choose where they would like the interviews to take place.

Interview Questions:

The interview questions have no right or wrong answers. Their aim is simply to collect information that men consider to be relevant to the areas they pertain to.

The questions will focus on:

- Men's understandings of masculine and feminine behaviour
- How the respondents understandings of themselves as men relate to their understandings of masculinity and femininity (if at all)
- How the respondents understandings of other men and women relate to their understandings of masculinity and femininity (if at all)
- Any other issues that a respondent feels are related to the areas of men, women and gender

Confidentiality:

- Respondents are free to withdraw from an interview at point, and no explanation needs to be given
- Respondents have the right to refuse to answer any question they desire

- The interviews will be tape recorded and transcribed

- All respondents will be given pseudonyms to hide their identities

- Any information that might reveal a respondent's identity will either be changed or excluded from the transcript

- Extracts of the interviews will be included in a written report that will be read by other members of university staff

Appendix 10

Focus group consent form

University of Huddersfield Focus Group Consent Form

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Common Patterns in the way Working and Middle-Class Men Gravitate to a Dominant

Masculine Norm

NAME OF RESEARCHER: Marcus Damian Lumb

Please tick the boxes following the statements you agree with

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research and consent to taking part in it.	
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving nay reason, and a right to withdraw my data if I wish.	
I give my permission for my interview to be audio recorded.	
I give my permission to be quoted (by use of pseudonym).	
I understand that the recording will be kept in secure conditions at the University of Huddersfield.	
I understand that only the interviewer and his two supervisors will have access to the recording.	
I understand that I must not discuss with non focus group members information that was disclosed within the focus group.	
I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym in the research report.	
I understand that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.	
I understand that, if I chose, I will be given access to a layperson's report of the study.	
I understand that I will be asked, but can decline, to participate in a further interview.	

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 11

Interview consent form

University of Huddersfield Interview Consent Form

TITLE OF PROJECT:

Common Patterns in the way Working and Middle-Class Men Gravitate to a Dominant

Masculine Norm

NAME OF RESEARCHER: **Marcus Damian Lumb**

Please tick the boxes following the statements you agree with

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research and consent to taking part in it.	
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the interview at any time without giving nay reason, and a right to withdraw my data if I wish.	
I give my permission for my interview to be audio recorded.	
I give my permission to be quoted (by use of pseudonym).	
I understand that the recording will be kept in secure conditions at the University of Huddersfield.	
I understand that only the interviewer and his two supervisors will have access to the recording.	
I understand that my identity will be protected by the use of a pseudonym in the research report.	
I understand that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.	
I understand that, if I chose, I will be given access to a layperson's report of the study.	

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 12

Participant Questionnaire

Participant Details Questionnaire

The following information simply acts as a guide for placing respondents into general categories.

For whatever reason, if you do not wish to answer any of the following questions, simply leave them blank. No explanation needs to be given for this.

No information will be used if there is any chance of it leading to a respondent's identity.

If you are willing, please place a tick beside the answer which most closely defines you

What is you current marital status?
Single
In a relationship
Married
Divorced
Among the following, how would you define yourself?
Straight (heterosexual)
Gay (homosexual)
Bisexual
Other
If any, what is your highest academic qualification?
CSE/GCSE
A-Level
Degree
Other
What is you current employment status?
Employed
House husband
Student
Long-term disabled/ retired
Unemployed

If employed, please provide a brief job description or title

What is your current salary?

Below £10,000

Between £10,000 - £15,000

Between £16,000 - £20,000

Between £21,000 - £25,000

Between £26,000 - £30,000

Above £30,000

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher

Signature

Date

Appendix 13

PhD Research Plan

Common Patterns in the way Working and Middle-Class Men Gravitate to a Dominant Masculine Norm

Research Questions:

Can common patterns be found in the verbal practices of working and middle-class men, during interactions between men?

Is it helpful to understand these common patterns as being indicative of a dominant social representation of masculinity (dominant masculine norm)?

Introduction:

This proposal details a research project that aims to investigate common patterns in the verbal practices of working and middle-class men and look at how helpful it is to understand them as being influenced by a dominant social representation of masculinity (dominant masculine norm). The study is based on research findings suggesting that, despite the observed multiple and contradictory nature of men's masculine identities (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006), common patterns of male-typical behaviours still emerge (Anderson, 2001; Cowan & Mills, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Rather than actual concrete modes of conduct, these can be viewed to be a variety of verbal and behavioural practices indicative of a transcendence of vulnerability. Hence, behaviours which suggest the underlying tenets of strength, independence, heterosexuality, and the transcendence of fear, pain and emotions (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009).

The review will show how the proposed study corresponds with previous research and has the potential to generate further information relevant to the area. The reader will see how the documented project guides the proposed method and methodology, each detailed within subsequent sections.

Background to the Project

Some masculinity theories have already provided explanations for the aforementioned common patterns of male typical behaviour. For example, essentialist theories provide an unambiguous conceptualisation of masculinity, suggesting it to be an inherent product of nature. In addition, essentialist theories do not exclusively rely on masculinity and femininity being defined in relations between men and women. Evolutionary explanations, for instance, suggest that men demonstrate their masculinity while competing with one another for desired resources (Roach & Pease, 2010).

Nevertheless, essentialist theories of masculinity can be seen to justify the imbalances of power between the sexes (Crompton & Lyonette, 2005; Gaunt, 2006; Taylor et al., 2009). Arguably, they also fail to explain the multiple and contradictory nature of men's masculine identities, identified by authors rooted in feminist methodology (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006), and how changes to men's masculine behaviours occur in relatively short spaces of time (Smiler, 2004). Much of the empirical research supporting these theories is derived from animal studies despite a vast gulf in complexities between the social worlds of humans and animals (Clare, 2001; Cahill, 2003; Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005). Furthermore, human studies are often inconclusive (Cohen-Brendahan et al., 2005), or produce findings which refute essentialist arguments (Cohen, 1998; Clare, 2001).

Despite their acknowledgment of environmental influences, both Freudian and Jungian psychodynamic theories view a boy's acquisition of specific male-typical behaviours to be the only healthy outcome (Bly, 2001 [1990]; Segal, 2004). Like essentialist theories, therefore, these provide unambiguous conceptualisations of masculinity (Jefferson, 2002; Gadd & Jefferson, 2007; Stevens, 1991; Segal, 2004) which, while not relying on the notion that masculinity and femininity are defined in relations between men and women (Stevens, 1991; Kahn, 2002), explain the identified common patterns of men's behaviour. Nevertheless, psychodynamic theories could also be used to justify and perpetuate imbalances of power between the sexes (Whitehead, 2006). Additionally, there is a lack of empirical evidence to support these theories, and findings which refute suggestions

made by authors of the paradigm (Patterson, 1992 ; Carlo et al., 1999; Reay, 2002; Tallandini, 2004; Gartell et al., 2005; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Coulomb-Cabagno & Rascle, 2006).

Socialisation theories of masculinity can also be viewed to provide an unambiguous conceptualisation of masculinity, as well as explaining the identified common patterns of men's behaviour (Kimmel, 1994; Anderson, 2001; Phillips, 2007; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009). Like essentialist theories, socialisation conceptualisations of gendered identities do not exclusively rely on masculinity and femininity being defined in relations between men and women. However, in contrast to essentialist theories, these arguably do not justify the subordination of women to men (Houtte, 2004; Phillips, 2005; Kane, 2006). Also, as men's common patterns of behaviour are viewed to reflect transitive social realities (Blackledge, 2001; Holmes & Smyth, 2005; Averill, 2006), socialisation theories seem to explain recent, relatively fast occurring changes to men's masculine identities. Despite this, they have been criticised for not explaining the multiple and contradictory nature of masculine identities (Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Sheff, 2006).

Adopting a relativist approach, researchers rooted in feminist theory suggest that masculinity is not a unitary conception that can be defined as representing a fixed number of behaviours (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Speer, 2001; Demetriou, 2001; Whitehead [J], 2003; Allen, 2005; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Instead, these theorists argue that men demonstrate a multiplicity of masculinities (Benjamin, 2001; Moita-Lopes, 2003; Smiler, 2004; Kane, 2006; Whitehead, 2006; Sheff, 2006; Connell, 2008). Such masculine performances are viewed to be temporally and contextually influenced (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Speer, 2001) and, being in a constant state of flux, are assumed to have no underlying reality (Goodey, 1997; Campbell & Wasco, 2000; Segall, 2001).

Rooted within this paradigm, Connell's theory of hegemonic masculinity is based on the notion that men maintain and legitimate the subordination of women to men on a global

basis through a strategy of behaviours, identities and role expectations (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). Rather than an actual personality type, hegemonic masculinity is conceived as a number of prescriptive social norms that men adhere to at varying degrees (Wetherell & Edley, 1999; Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). For Connell (2008), the state, the labour market and the family are structured in ways that favour men over women, granting them social and material advantages (Demetriou, 2001). This way, hegemony is said to be sustained through consent, owing to the legitimising of patriarchy (Zosky, 1999; Speer, 2001). Configuring social practice, therefore, does not refer to the coercion of women through violence, although this can be applied by individual men to impose their power over women (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005).

Acknowledging the fluid nature of men's performed identities, hegemonic masculinity is assumed to be representative, not of specific men within society, but of the ideas, fantasies and aspirations of large numbers of men (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005). In this sense, all men are viewed to situate themselves in relation to it, as it represents the most honoured way of performing masculinity at a given time in history (Gadd and Jefferson, 2007; Connell, 2008). Even those men not enacting high levels of masculine dominance are still viewed to benefit from the subordination of women and, by allowing the patriarchal order to continue, are considered to be displaying a complicit masculinity (Connell, 2008).

This theory, however, fails to explain the identified common patterns of men's verbal and behavioural practices (Anderson, 2001; Nayak, 2006; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007; Bishop et al., 2009) which cannot be attributed to the subordination of women to men (Hall, 2002). Additionally, it seems to imply that all men are united in a conscious and deliberate attempt to subordinate women (New, 2001). In contrast to essentialist, psychodynamic and socialisation theories, it can also be viewed to provide an ambiguous definition of masculinity (Hood-Williams, 2001) which, in order to maintain the gender binary, relies on the notion that masculinity is defined in relations between men and women. This conception, therefore, ignores evidence that men predominantly demonstrate their masculinity during relations between men (Marusza, 1997; Anderson,

2001; Hall, 2002; Kimmel, 2003; Houtte, 2004; Whitehead, 2005; Nayak, 2006; Phillips, 2007). Furthermore, in treating all men's varied identities as demonstrations of masculinity (Maccoby, 2000; Whitehead, 2005) – when, according to Maccoby (2000), McHale et al. (2003) and Vogel et al. (2003), this unlikely to be the case – it arguably assumes that there are as many masculinities as there are men (Whitehead, 2005), reducing masculinity and men to one and the same thing (Hood-Williams, 2001).

In light of these limitations the proposed study will attempt to provide a non-essentialist explanation of men's common patterns of verbal behaviour during relations between men. A primary assumption of this investigation will be that men exposed to the same social representation of masculinity will discursively gravitate to this during man to man interactions.

In the area of masculinity research, a number of authors have also suggested that working-class men demonstrate a different masculinity to that demonstrated by middle-class men (Willis, 1981; Messerschmidt, 1993; Collier, 1998; Connell, 2000; Gorman, 2003; Cohen, 2005; Cullen et al., 2006; Gayo-Cal et al., 2006; Nayak et al., 2006). As a number of these authors take the position that masculinities are multiple and contradictory, with no underlying reality, it seems incongruent to assume that there is a 'real' difference between the masculinities performed by working and middle-class men.

Some studies have, however, found that working-class boys demonstrate a greater resistance to education than middle-class boys (Archer et al., 2001; Reay, 2002; Whitehead [J], 2003; Nayak, 2006), and are more likely to define their masculinity through hard, physical graft (Gorman, 2003; Whitehead [J], 2003), the transcendence of fear (Anderson, 2001; McDowell, 2003), fighting skills (Reay, 2002; Nayak, 2006), and street crime (Archer et al., 2001; Hall, 2002; Nayak, 2006). Nevertheless, other authors suggest that men from both social classes' seem to exhibit risk-taking behaviour (Houtte, 2004), emphasised heterosexuality (Allen, 2005), and an adversity to effeminacy (Cowan & Mills, 2004; Plummer, 2006; Bennett, 2007).

Furthermore, common patterns that transcend class boundaries have been suggested to appear in the ways men place importance on competitive sports and physical strength (Skelton, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Swain (2002 & 2004), their drinking behaviour (Lewis & O'Neill 2000; Marja & Kirsimarja, 2005; Faulkner et al., 2006; Keller et al., 2007), criminal activity (Moore & Mills, 1990; Cullen et al., 2006), and use of discourse to emphasise their masculinity (Gough & Edwards, 1998; Redman et al., 2002; Hatchell, 2006; Bennett, 2007). Arguably, then, the common patterns of behaviour observed in working-class men are likely to be more pronounced examples of those observed in middle-class men.

In the proposed study, then, I will be particularly interested to investigate whether, and in what ways, a dominant social representation of masculinity (masculine norm) can be viewed to impact on working and middle-class men's understandings and presentations of gendered behaviour.

Theoretical Perspective (Critical Realism)

An underlying assumption of this research is that individuals harbour relatively stable understandings of the world (Archer, 1995, Dobson, 2001) which are unique to them, but at the same time, influenced by their social environment (Zembylas, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In this sense, the behaviours of social agents are influenced and constrained by a society's pre-established representations of reality, for instance, meanings, beliefs, values, and conventions (Corson, 1997; Madison, 2005; Wilson & McCormack, 2006; Bergin et al., 2008). In critical realist terms, this is referred to as the 'transitive dimension of knowledge' (Sayer, 2008). Owing to the limited vantage points of social agents, this transitive dimension of knowledge is often internalised as natural and inevitable (Georgiou & Carspecken, 2002; Madison, 2005; Stewart & Usher, 2007).

Consistent with this standpoint, then, is an assumption that a 'dominant masculine norm' resides in the cognitions of men as a relatively stable, socially influenced understanding of what constitutes appropriate masculine behaviour; furthermore that it resides 'outside'

men as its social existence depends on them perpetuating it through their common patterns of behaviour. Contrary to a radical relativist standpoint, then, I am suggesting that the dominant masculine norm would 'exist' as a transitive dimension of knowledge beyond my interpretation of it, for as long as it was perpetuated in society. This is not to suggest that men's 'masculine' attributes are innate, but rather that the 'artificiality' of the dominant masculine norm is obscured from the vantage point of men by the ideological preferences of their society and the ways that they as social agents continuously represent and perpetuate it.

From this perspective, respondents' accounts, though neither complete nor precise, will be considered to bear some reflection to their cognitions (Fade, 2004). During analysis, therefore, I will be attempting to form a meaningful interpretation of respondents' experiences of reality, while accepting that these could never be complete nor precise representations of them (Sayer, 2008; Bergin et al., 2008). As I will be an analytical tool within this process (Fade, 2004), I acknowledge that, along with my own standpoints, values and experiences, I am also a member of the target population of my research. Therefore, I consider reflexivity to be a vital part of this investigation.

Methodology:

Consistent with it's standpoint in critical realism, a Template Analysis will be employed as a means of thematically organising and analysing the data (King, 2004). In contrast, strategies of analysis which take a radical relativist standpoint like, for instance, Discourse Analysis, are ontologically incompatible (Bergin et al., 2008). Unlike a Grounded Theory technique, Template Analysis enables researchers to begin with a tentative theory and a number of a priori codes (Waring and Wainwright (2008), and has fewer restrictions regarding participant selection. Since the proposed study is based on a tentative theory that has been informed by identified limitations in the existing literature, this makes Template Analysis more compatible. Moreover, unlike an Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), the chosen methodology has fewer restrictions regarding the point at which a researcher conducts an integrated analysis of the data (King, 2004).

Rather than a single, specifically defined technique, Template Analysis can be characterised by its flexible nature, enabling a researcher to adapt it in accordance with his or her own requirements (King, 2004; Slade et al., 2009). A key feature is that codes, referring to interpreted themes within the data (Richardson et al., 2002), are identified and hierarchically organised into a template of related higher and lower level categories (King, 2004; Waring & Wainwright, 2008). A final template usually consists of between two and four levels of codes, ranging from broad (high level) to narrow (low level) themes, which are supported by relevant exerts from interview transcripts (Slade et al., 2009). In some cases, specific segments of text can be used to support more than one code at the same level (King, 2004). By organising data in this way, the researcher has a detailed summary from which to anchor his/her analysis (Stratton, 2006), making it easier to identify common patterns in the presented experiences of respondents (King et al., 2004).

Method:

I am hoping to conduct two working and two middle-class focus groups, consisting of about five men in each. Upon their agreement, I then wish to conduct one-to-one interviews with all of the men from each of the focus groups. The intention is for the focus group interviews to draw-out common themes, which can then be explored in greater depth during individual interviews. In addition, these individual interviews - being conducted with the men from the focus groups - would be a further means of identifying common patterns in the ways the men chose to present themselves. This is bearing in mind that, being a male researcher, these individual interviews will still constitute interactions between men.

Congruent with the chosen methodology, data will be generated through semi-structured interviews, each interview lasting approximately between 60 and 90 minutes. This technique enables respondents to provide rich discursive accounts regarding an area of investigation and, while guiding the focus of an interview, allows them to diverge into unanticipated areas (Mason, 1996; Smith, 2004). Semi-structured interviews are also a

method in which the analyst can acknowledge his or her role within the data generation process (Banister et al., 1994), enabling him or her to account for the constraints and limitations that are present during the analysis production.

In accordance with the guidelines of Smith (2004), the interviews will be tape recorded because, in comparison to note taking, this assists the natural flow of communication between the interviewer and interviewee. Furthermore, each respondent will be given the opportunity to negotiate the time and location of the interview because this is likely to facilitate composure (Smith, 2004) and reduce the interviewee's perception of power in the interviewer (Busso, 2007).

Sample Selection:

Snowball sampling will be used as a means of acquiring all the research participants. Four acquaintances, which already have a very basic understanding of my research, will be asked to participate in the study. These men are unfamiliar with one another, and have their own social networks. Initially, on their acceptance, I intend to join them during a number of their regular get-togethers with friends and, during these gatherings, become acquainted with the four groups of men. During my initial meetings with them, they will be informed of my PhD research and provided with a basic outline of the study.

Social-class will be defined by socioeconomic status (academic attainment, occupational prestige, and income). In addition to measuring variables which provide a clearer definition of social class (Crompton and Scott, 2003), these are suggested to be easier to employ than those which attempt to define class via non-economic means (Edgell, 1997). Moreover, as economic issues remain at the heart of social class, they can be viewed to be too serious to ignore (Devine & Savage, 2000).

Owing to the potentially fluid nature of the transitive dimension of knowledge (Bergin et al., 2008), although working and middle-class men of similar age groups are likely to have been exposed to a similar dominant masculine norm, this is arguably less likely to

be the case with men of differing age groups. Thus, young, middle-aged, and old men might have been exposed and, therefore, gravitate to different representations of social reality (Averill, 2006; Stewart & Usher, 2007). Furthermore, it has been argued that one way of reducing data distorting differences in the power dynamics of the interviewer-interviewee interaction is for the researcher to select respondents with matching age, sex, ethnicity, and so on (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2006; Neill, 2006). Therefore, as I would identify myself as a middle-aged man, it arguably makes sense to select samples of men which could be viewed to constitute a similar age category.

Ethical Considerations

All participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, and will be given pseudonyms to protect their identities (Wetherell et al., 2001). Although participant harm seems unlikely, anyone who has been affected by the study will be provided with the details of help services that they can contact for professional advice and support.

These are:

> **Samaritans**
> Phone: 08457 90 90 90
> Email: jo@samaritans.org
> Website: www.samaritans.org
>
> **Supportline**
> Phone: 020 8554 9004
> Email: info@supportline.org.uk
> Website: www.supportline.org.uk

Also, in the unlikely event of personal distress, the interviewer would consult his project supervisor.